



reNEW: Skills for Leading New and Renewing Progressive Churches

Instructors Rev. Michael Piazza
Rev. Cameron Trimble

Phone 888.249.8244
E-mail Mike@progressiverenewal.org
Cameron@progressiverenewal.org

Description

This course teaches practical skills for starting a new progressive church or leading the renewal of a church that is stagnant or in decline. It is designed around the premise that churches are rarely resurrected, but can be born again, hence the skills needed in both situations are very similar: creating compelling vision, an effective communication strategy, data management, community development, external mission, transformational worship, etc. This class is designed by the Center for Progressive Renewal and offered for credit or continuing education units through Pacific School of Religion.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Design approaches to worship that are diverse, meaningful, inclusive, and vibrant,
- Articulate a definition of leadership that encompasses issues such as visioning, marketing, stewardship, change, and conflict resolution,
- Research contextual implications of location and population in their local ministry setting,
- Name and describe types of diversity that impact community formation.

Pre-Course Assignment

Each class participant must take the Gallup Assessment prior to the course. There is no fee for students to take the assessment. Contact Cassie Reed at cassie@progressiverenewal.org to schedule.



Format

The class will meet daily in Berkeley (Monday-Friday) from 9am to 1pm for one week. The class will be highly engaging, blending peer-learning, video conferencing, and lecture. Students will have readings and/or writing assignments to be completed each night that we are in Berkeley. Writing assignments are intended to incorporate concepts derived from in-class work and readings.

Course Structure and Schedule

Day One – The Future Church

Facilitators: Cameron Trimble and Michael Piazza

- Understanding the Great Emergence: We begin by understanding major global, national and local shifts that are changing the Church.
- Why Are We in Such a Mess? Looking at the impact of these shifts on congregations, we will talk about what systemic decline means for local churches. We will also interview pastors across the country through video conferencing and explore the dynamics of growth and decline in those settings.
- Assessment Tools: Given the change we are living in, how do we assess the needs and opportunities in your church? How do we decide what kind of church to start in the community? We will briefly touch on Appreciative Inquiry, Strategic Planning, Mission Insite and other research tools.

Required Reading (to be completed BEFORE class):

- The Great Emergence by Phyllis Tickle
- Chapter 1 of Liberating Hope by Mike Piazza and Cameron Trimble
- MissionInsite PDF

Assignment:

Complete the online 30-question quiz covering the reading material by midnight Monday night.



Day Two – Leadership, Change and Conflict

Facilitators: *Cameron Trimble, Michael Piazza*

- We will examine specific skills transforming leaders need. To be a catalyst for change in an existing congregation or to start something new a leader must have the ability to elicit from the community a vision of what is needed.
- Creating change is both an art and a science. There are skills that can be learned, and an awareness that must be created. The effective leader can learn how to be a midwife of change. Failing to acquire this knowledge, sensitivity, and skills dooms the community to stagnation and decline.
- Conflict is inevitably produced in a dynamic community which is seeking to change and to be an agent of change. Learning to anticipate conflict, and to lead a group through the various stages is a critical learning. It must begin by the leader identifying her or his own conflict style. Using the DISC profile and materials from other assessment systems, we hope to assist the student's self-realization in this important area.
- Finally, to renew and create progressive communities of faith it is critical that all leaders learn the wisdom of people who have been traditionally marginalized in our society. People of color, women, and wise ones from the margins have much to offer and one-third of this objective will be given to this learning.

Required reading:

- Chapter 8 and 11 of *Liberating Hope* by Mike Piazza and Cameron Trimble
- *Discovering Your Conflict Management Style* by Speed Leas
- *5 Dysfunctions of a Team Executive Summary*
- Chapter 2 of *Memories, hopes and conversations* by Mark Lau Branson

Assignment:

Complete the online 30-question quiz covering the reading material by midnight Tuesday night.



Day Three – reVision

Facilitators: *Cameron Trimble, Michael Piazza*

- Churches that have compelling, externally focused missions grow. In this session, we will explore the skills needed to facilitate a congregation identifying and clarifying a compelling, externally focused mission.
- Leaders must be able to guide congregations through the ever-changing landscape of discipleship in this age. We will examine a process we have developed called *reVision* as one way to renew the heart and soul of your church.
- While people are increasingly rejecting formalized religion, we still crave community. In the final session, we will examine how to start small groups that feed the soul of your faith community and support the spiritual formation of your participants.

Required Reading:

- *reVISION* by Michael Piazza and Cameron Trimble
- Chapter 6 of *A Faith of Our Own* by Sharon Kim
- Chapter 1 of *Walk with the People* by Juan Francisco Martinez

Assignment:

After reading *reVISION*, write a 500 word response paper. What strengths does a program like this offer? What are its weaknesses?

Day Four – Managing and Growing The Church of Facebook (Communication, Ad-Ministry-ation and Fundraising)

Facilitators: *Cameron Trimble and Michael Piazza*

- The Basics of Church Communication: Successfully starting or renewing a church is highly dependent on your ability to get the word out about your church. We will talk about the basics of marketing and branding and how to use social media to increase awareness of your ministry.
- Ad-Ministry-ation: Once people hear about your church and start coming, you have to find ways to keep them coming back. We will talk about ways to create and cultivate an administrative structure that gives permission for creative ministry rather than trying to control ministry.



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- Stewardship and Fundraising Principles: In this age of online giving and social media campaigns, the Church now has access to a number of new tools for engaging stewardship. We will review the theological grounding of giving and the tools your church should use as it encourages generosity in and from its people.

Required Reading:

- Read the Introduction and chapters 1 and 2 of *Tweet If You Love Jesus* by Elizabeth Drescher
- Chapters 3-5 *Liberating Hope* by Michael Piazza and Cameron Trimble

Assignment:

Set up a trial account on Constant Contact or Mail Chimp. Develop an e-newsletter template for your church as if you were going to send it to your congregation. Be creative with graphics, text and flow. What are you communicating? What do you want people to do after reading it? Email a copy to Cameron and Mike for review.

Day Five – Transformational Worship

Facilitators: Cameron Trimble and Michael Piazza

- Principles guiding the crafting of worship experiences that are diverse, compelling, relevant and emotive.
- Utilizing technology to connect worship with the contemporary human experience.
- Reclaiming ancient practices in ways that intersect contemporary needs; ancient doors to new experiences of the Divine.
- Preaching to the Inter-netted.
- Exploring the wealth of resources available to those who craft worship.
- Creating effective worship teams.
- Facilitating change without launching a worship war.

Required Reading:

- *Beyond the Worship Wars* by Thomas Long (Chapter 1, 9, 10)
- *Prophetic Renewal* by Michael Piazza (Chapter 6)
- *Delivering the Sermon* by Teresa Fry Brown (Chapter 5 & 6)



Assignment (Due within 2 weeks of completing the course):

Design a worship experience for your church that engages all of the senses. Develop the multimedia plan, the sermon, and the order of worship. This assignment is a culmination of all we have covered in this class and should be at least 8-10 pages in length.

Required Texts

- Drescher, Elizabeth. *Tweet If You Love Jesus*. New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2011.
- Leas, Speed. *Discovering Your Conflict Management Style*. St. Louis: Alban Institute, 1998.
- Piazza, Mike and Cameron Trimble. *Liberating Hope: Daring to Renew the Mainline Church*. New York: Pilgrim Press, 2011.
- Tickle, Phyllis. *The Great Emergence*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008.

Grading Criteria

For Academic Credit

- Class participation (consisting of your physical presence and creative verbal engagement with material during our time together in the classroom) – 20%
- Assignments, days 1-4 – 40%
- Assignment, day 5 – 40%

For CEU Credit

- Class participation (consisting of your physical presence and creative verbal engagement with material during our time together in the classroom) – 80%
- Assignments – 20%



Principal Instructors



Rev. Michael Piazza currently serves as the Co-Executive Director of the Center for Progressive Renewal, specializing in church multiplication and renewal. Rev. Piazza served as the senior pastor of the Cathedral of Hope during a time of unprecedented growth. When he arrived in Dallas in 1987, the church had 280 members and a budget of \$280,000. When he retired to become Dean of the Cathedral, the church's membership was more than 3,500, with a consolidated budget of more than \$3 million. This growth took place in a setting that was hostile to the church's constituency and during a time in which the church performed more than 1,500 funerals for persons with HIV/AIDS. He is a recent recipient of the "Leading Voice" award from the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry at Pacific School of Religion. Today Rev. Piazza lives in Atlanta, GA where, in addition to his full-time work with the Center he is the pastor of Virginia Highland Church.



Rev. Cameron Trimble is the Co-Executive Director, CEO of the Center for Progressive Renewal. She most recently served as an advisor to the Congregational Vitality and Discipleship Team of Local Church Ministries for the United Church of Christ, and as Associate Conference Minister of Church Development in the Southeast Conference of the UCC. She has both started and renewed churches and has coached dozens of churches across the country in numerous denominations. Each setting has given her a unique perspective on the challenges of cultivating leaders equipped to meet the needs of the future of mainline Protestantism. Rev. Trimble lives in Atlanta, GA (though she feels like she lives on Delta).