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ME 860 Revitalizing Small Churches

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Prospectus for the Course
ME 860
REVITALIZING SMALL CHURCHES
January 25-29, 1999
Dr. Ronald Crandall

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

An intensive examination of the historical, theological sociological and pragmatic dynamics of smaller congregations with attention to the special challenges and opportunities for evangelism and effective ministry in such settings.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Smaller congregations and the pastors who serve them frequently find it difficult to function effectively in evangelism using models and strategies most commonly publicized. An abundance of recent research and literature brings encouragement and new challenges. It will be the purpose of this course to acquaint the student both with the heart of this literature and with a field experience in order that a confident, new perspective and commitment might be achieved for renewal and evangelistic ministry in the context of smaller congregations.

III. PROCEDURE AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course consists of ten class sessions meeting mornings and afternoons, Monday through Friday. In addition to the readings, instruction will include lectures, videos, discussion, field work, and guest pastors. The required texts are to be read before arriving on campus and a **Reading Reflection Form** on each (enclosed) must be turned in at the opening class session. A class project involving field consulting and a final exam round out the course.

A. READING REQUIREMENTS (25% of grade, part due on January 25, 1999)

Reading and completing Reflection Forms for the required texts, along with reading an additional 500 pages from collateral sources is considered part of the curriculum. A reading report form showing all reading completed (provided) must be turned in by February 26, 1999. Failure to complete all the reading will affect the final grade.

Required texts:

1. Carl Dudley, Making the Small Church Effective, 1978.
2. Nancy Foltz, ed., Religious Education in the Small Membership Church, 1990.
3. Steve Bierly, Help for the Small Church Pastor, 1995.
4. Ron Crandall, Turnaround Strategies for the Small Church, 1995.
5. Lyle Schaller, The Small Membership Church: Scenarios for Tomorrow, 1995.

Additional texts recommended include:

1. Lyle Schaller, The Small Church Is Different, 1982.
2. Dudley and Walwath, Developing Your Small Church's Potential, 1988.
3. Steven Burt, Activating Leadership in the Small Church, 1987.
4. Laurence Wagley, Preaching With the Small Congregation, 1989.

5. Speed Leas & Paul Kittlaus, Church Fights, 1973.
6. Cosgrove and Hatfield, Church Conflict, 1994.
7. **Marshall Shelley, Well-Intentioned Dragons, 1994 (Bethany House ed.)**
8. Dobson, Leas and Shelley, Mastering Conflict and Controversy, 1992.
9. R. Robert Cueni, What Ministers Can't Learn in Seminary, 1988.
10. Rick Chromey, Youth Ministry in Small Churches, 1990.
11. -----, Children's Ministry Guide for Smaller Churches, 1995.
12. Rose Sims, The Dream Lives On or It Can Happen Anywhere, 1989.
13. David Young, A New Heart and a New Spirit, 1994.
14. Doran McCarty, Leading the Small Church, 1991.
15. Will Willimon & Robert Wilson, Preaching & Worship in the Small Church, 1980.
16. Steve Bierly, How to Thrive As a Small-Church Pastor, 1998.
17. **Ron Klassen & John Koessler, No Little Places, 1996.**
18. Anthony Pappas, Money, Motivation and Mission in The Small Church, 1989.
19. Bill Sullivan, Ten Steps to Breaking the 200 Barrier, 1988.
20. Robert Wilson, The Multi-Church Parish, 1989.
21. Robert Coote, ed., Mustard-Seed Churches, 1990.
22. Gary Exman, Get Ready, Get Set, Grow, 1987.
23. Lyle Schaller, The Middle Sized Church, 1985.
24. Carl Dudley, Where Have All Our People Gone, 1979.
25. Kent Hunter, The Lord's Harvest and the Rural Church, 1993.
26. **Aubrey Malphurs, Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins, 1993.**
27. James Cushman, Beyond Survival, 1981.
28. Douglas Walrath, New Possibilities for Small Churches, 1983.
29. -----, Making It Work: Effective Administration in the Small Church, 1994.
30. Wayne Zunkel, Growing The Small Church, 1983.
31. **Deborah Cronin, O for a Dozen Tongues to Sing, 1996.**
32. **Nancy Foltz, Caring for the Small Church: Insights from Women in Ministry, 1993.**

Other reading related to the sociology or history of smaller churches, or ministry and leadership for church growth in smaller churches are acceptable collateral reading materials. Search the worldwide web and come ready to share any additional resources you find.

B. CLASS PROJECT (50% of grade, due March 31, 1999)

Each student will need to be involved in a consulting project which will constitute 50% of the final grade.

1. Using an interview guide provided, interview a minimum of 8 members (4 longterm, 4 new) and the pastor of a smaller congregation in your area. The preference is for a church showing greater than 10% growth (or decline if you wish) per year over the last 3 years. Consolidate your information, observations, insights and recommendations into a "Report" (with an appropriate cover letter) to be sent to the pastor and congregation (copied to the instructor). In addition submit to the professor a summary of additional observations, lessons, difficulties and values of the consulting experience.
2. Under special circumstances alternative projects may be approved by the professor.

C. FINAL EXAM (25% of grade, due February 26, 1999)

Although we may vary slightly from the plan below, our intended course outline is as follows:

TOPIC
Biblical and Theological Issues
Smaller Churches through History
The Sociology of Smaller Churches
Pastors and Small Church Revitalization
Rekindling the Spirit
Overcoming Obstacles
Mission and Evangelism
Developing Leaders and Disciples
Churches in Changing Communities

Copies of the overheads and/or powerpoint slides are available either as hard copies (in the Library at the Reserve Desk) or on disk (at the Beeson Media Center).

Two sites on the Internet might prove interesting.

1. An International -- Interdenominational Discussion Group of pastors & lay persons interested in the small church. Brian Yeich (ATS Grad) is Moderator. To subscribe, address your message to:
macjordomo@ls1.ats.wilmore.k.us (NOTE, the ls1. is "el,s,one")
in message type: Subscribe SCR-L "Your Name"
2. The *Church and Rural Social Science Information Exchange (CHASSIE)*
<http://www.seorf.ohiou.edu/~xx042/>
Lots of good links to other rural and small church centers and resources.

See you soon.