

1-1-2005

## MB 730 The Change Agent in Mission

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### Recommended Citation

Rynkiewich, Michael A., "MB 730 The Change Agent in Mission" (2005). *Syllabi*. Book 2823.  
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### **Course Description**

In this postmodern, postcolonial age, everyone has a mission. Wherever one positions oneself, one has a perspective and a strategy for change. Anthropologists, missionaries, indigenous church leaders, development agencies, drug dealers: all have spiritual, political and economic interests to pursue. All are different, all are based on a different view of society, and all hope to be able to direct change.

This course recognizes that:

- *Culture is constructed*: All cultures are in a process of change, under construction every day. There is no such thing as lasting stasis. Thus, culture is always emerging.
- *Culture is contingent*: Cultures change by mixing and matching materials at hand, drawing from tradition as well as from the diffusion of persons, materials and ideas through global channels. Thus, what emerges depends in part on what was there to begin with and what is adapted from the outside.
- *Culture is contested*: There is a contest going on to see who will define and direct culture and society. This is played out in a variety of arenas, none more deeply embedded than the arena of core beliefs or worldview. Thus, at any given time, there are competing models of culture in the arena.
- *Culture change is complex*: Though culture is contingent, people are able to construct something that was not there before. Though culture is contested in many arenas, the most deeply embedded is the arena of core beliefs or worldview. Thus culture, once created by men and women, creates men and women.
- *Culture change among Christians is the work of the Holy Spirit empowering local leaders*: Cross-cultural witnesses for Christ are inherently agents of change, but they are not the only agents for change in a society, nor are they usually the most effective. Thus, culture is best understood and best redeemed from the inside out.
- *Culture change follows identifiable patterns*: Since God works through humans to build the Kingdom, recognizable patterns emerge over time. The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed....

The issues then are:

- (1) How does change occur? (Patterns and processes)
- (2) How can change be introduced into organizations and communities?
- (3) How can we evaluate situations so we know when and how to introduce change?
- (4) What is the theological foundation for our involvement in culture and society?

To speak to these issues, this course is divided into four parts:

- (1) Historical models of Culture Change.
- (2) Insights from Applied Anthropology.
- (3) Problems in Community Development.
- (4) The Challenge of Integral Human Development.

## Required Reading

1. *Diffusion of Innovations, 4<sup>th</sup> edition.* 1995 Everett M. Rogers.
2. *Applied Anthropology, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.* 1993 John van Willigen.
3. *Change Across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation.* 2002 Bruce Bradshaw.
4. *The Church in Response to Human Need.* 1987 Vinay Samuel & Chris Sugden. (WIPF reprint)
5. *The Good News of the Kingdom Coming.* 1997 Andrew Kirk. (WIPF reprint)

The books should be read in the order listed. As you read, underline, take notes and reflect on what you are reading. Be prepared to discuss the book on the day devoted to that discussion.

After reading each book, students are expected to prepare and submit a “Critical Reflection Paper.” It is critical because it is not just a book report. It is a report on the issues that have been raised that will be important to the Kingdom and to your particular calling in mission. The paper should be programmatic:

1. Summarize the book in one long sentence.
2. List the important issues addressed in the book, with a paragraph about each, one page.
3. Critically interact with at least one issue in the book, one page.
4. Suggest this issue’s application to ministry, one page.

Papers are due on the day we discuss the book in class, as indicated in the course schedule. Papers should be about four pages long, single-spaced. Students who have not submitted a paper are assumed to be unprepared for the discussion.

## Case Study

The research paper in this course is for you, to help you develop your theology of mission. Please choose a case of a person or agency attempting to introduce change into a society or organization. The change may be a success, a failure, or a qualified success or failure. The object of the paper is for you to be able to apply the insights from the reading, lectures, and additional research that you do to a case of directed change. Your assignment is to explain what worked and what failed to work in the project. You may use a case developed from personal experience, develop a case from interviews with a change agent, or develop a case found in the literature. The focus may be evangelism, church growth, human development, or relief work.

A good case study will:

1. Develop a written account of the case first, without analysis or interpretation.
2. Focus on interesting problems arising in the case.

3. Draw widely from the literature on cultural dynamics, agency, development, syncretism, etc.
4. Apply the literature in insightful ways that clearly reveal why the attempt to introduce change worked or did not work, or why parts were successful while other parts were not.

A draft of the case itself is due first, as indicated in the class schedule. Then, a draft of the whole case study is due. This graduated process is designed so that the instructor is able to offer criticism and guidance along the way.

The final study should convince the reader that you understand and can use the literature about directed culture change and development, that you are developing a theology of mission that includes an understanding of the kingdom, and that you are able to critically analyze attempts by missionaries and indigenous change agents to bring about change.

The final paper should be between 10 to 15 pages single-spaced and should include at least ten references to articles and books about change.

### **Student Evaluation**

Your final grade will be composed of an evaluation of your work from the following areas.

- 50% - Critical Reflection Papers (5 of them, each worth 10% of grade).
- 50% - Case Study (consideration will be given to those who follow the process, i.e, hand in a case for evaluation, hand in a first draft for criticism, and hand in the final draft on time.)

### **Course Grading**

The unit of credit is a semester hour, which is defined as one hour of classroom work per week for one semester, or its equivalent. The 4.00 point system is used to compute grade point standing. The grading system is:

A	4.00	Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives.
B	3.00	Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives.
C	2.00	Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives.
D	1.00	Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives.
F	0	Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives.

### **Incomplete Work**

The official end of each term is 4:00 p.m. on the last day of the examination schedule. This hour is the deadline for handing in all course work. Each instructor may set an earlier deadline for submission of any or all course work. The student must petition the faculty person involved and the student's advisor for permission to receive an "I" at the end of the semester.

A grade of "I" denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment. If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F."

Incomplete grades shall be removed one calendar month prior to the close of the following semester unless an earlier date is designated by the Office of the Chief Academic Officer on the individual petition. If the work is not completed by the time designated, the "I" shall be changed to an "F" unless a passing grade can be given based on work already completed or unless special permission is granted by the Chief Academic Officer.

Professors are required to give either a grade or an "I," if approved, to each student registered for credit in a course. Students with Incompletes in two or more classes will not be allowed to enroll in a new semester or term without permission from their Dean.

### **Office Hours**

Office hours will be Tuesday 1-3 p.m. and Thursday 1-3 p.m. It is best to make an appointment in advance, but you may check during hours to see if others have not taken a time slot. Other times may be available by appointment. My office is in the ESJ School on the third floor of the McPheeters Center, Room 308. Telephone: 858-2218.

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