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ME 700 Principles of Church Growth

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I. Course Description

In this course, we will study the foundational principles and strategies of the Church Growth Movement as one approach to the issues in mission strategy and evangelization, and as a means to inform congregational outreach and expansion. This we will do in concert with a review of the historical emergence and articulation of the apostolic vision and legacy of Donald McGavran. Along the way, we will examine both Western and Two-Thirds World Case Studies.

II. Course Objectives

1. To raise consciousness regarding the history and logic of the Church Growth approach to evangelism and mission.
2. To equip the student with the classical principles, and some of the newer insights, discovered by Church Growth (and similar approaches to) research.
3. To develop the capacity to critique ministries and approaches to evangelism and mission, and thereby advance the practice.
4. To facilitate the student’s beginning contribution to Church Growth research, reflection, and literature.

III. Required Reading


PLEASE NOTE: WE WILL BE USING THE 1980 EDITION OF *UNDERSTANDING CHURCH GROWTH*, WHICH YOU WILL HAVE TO BUY USED.


THE FULL TEXT IS ACCESSIBLE ONLINE [The first couple of pages are clipped and incomplete, but the rest is fine. The online address is:

http://www.archive.org/stream/MN41581ucmf_3/MN41581ucmf_3_djvu.txt

Or this later version:


**In addition to the books and articles above, read one of the following:**


Or, if you are pressed for time this semester, this condensed version:


**IV. Writing Assignment Options for the Course**

You will need to accept responsibility for your own learning. This responsibility will normally be exercised through (1) regular and involved class attendance; (2) the thorough reading of the assigned textbooks and readings, and submission of a reading report for each one listed under “Required Reading”; (3) the writing of a research paper; and (4) the satisfactory completion of a final examination.

The **Reading Report**: Photocopy and use one reading report form (sample attached to this syllabus) for each of the “Required Readings” (not the individual reading assignments in the class schedule). Bring the reports to class for reference on the day(s) they are being discussed. Staple all of them together (don’t use a paperclip) and turn them in on December 4.

The **Research Paper**: By Thursday, December 4, you need to submit a research paper of 2,500 to 2,800 words. It should be based upon some appropriate blend of library research and field research. Consider the following options for the paper:

1. The story and analysis of the growth history of a local church, emphasizing the causes of the growth that might be reproducible or adaptable for other churches. In most cases, you would normally focus on the recent growth of the church, say within the past decade, but a more historical analysis of a significant growth period would be welcome.

2. The story and analysis of the growth history of a unit of a (presumably large) local church, emphasizing the causes of the growth that might be reproducible or adaptable for other churches. “Unit” here refers to, say, a specific worship service, or the Sunday School, or even a specific Sunday School class, or the youth ministry, or the recovery ministry, or some other organized part of the church.

3. The story and analysis of the local spread of the gospel among some distinct target population, such as “builders” or “boomers” or “busters,” or unchurched men, or youth, or single adults, or retarded adults, or deaf people, or addictive people, or a distinctive ethnic population or socio-economic class. (Students will find the categories (and modeling) in Arn’s White Unto Harvest to be very useful for this option.

4. A more traditional term paper, on a Church Growth topic or the main insights of some specific writer, instead of one of the field research assignments. If you are so inclined, see the
instructor to get feedback on a proposed topic. The supplementary bibliography by George Hunter at the end of this syllabus will be especially useful to students doing a traditional term paper.

For any of the first three options, you need to identify, early in the course, the local church (or churches) in which to do the field research. You will negotiate and do on-site “field research” (interviews, observation, and focused historical analysis) to determine causes for the growth. Base the paper upon the most insightful and promising data that you collect -- much of which will illustrate some established church growth principles, some of which may lead you to suggest new hypotheses. The paper may include anecdotal, and even inspirational, material derived from the field research.

Many of you will need to identify their topic early, especially in regard to a topic that might require inter-library loan or data to be sent from some field.

Whichever option you choose, write the paper so that it can be understood by someone who has not taken a Church Growth course.

Follow precisely the guidelines in Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertation*, the 7th edition. Only papers that do will be accepted and graded. Proofread and edit every paper; two edits are better than one.

V. Final Exam

All students will need to complete a final examination covering the assigned readings, class sessions, and other course resources. The instructor expects the exam to call for short essays--for which you should bring several blue books.

Those taking the 700 level version of the course will want to prepare for an “extra” question on the final exam:

“Trace the development of key Church Growth insights in the mind of Donald McGavran, and delineate what you regard as the most strategic ones for Church Growth research today.”

Students taking the 600 level version of the course will have 1 and 1/2 hours to complete the exam. Students taking the 700 version will have 2 hours. In each version of the exam, international students (for whom English is a second language) may take an additional half hour to complete the exam.
VI. Grading

One-third of your grade for the course will be based upon performance on the examination, another third on the research paper, and the final third on class involvement, presentations, and reading reports.

VII. Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

(The reading assignments for some weeks are light. Therefore, I strongly suggest that you read ahead during those weeks in the three books that come due in the final weeks of the course, beginning November 6.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading Assignments</th>
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| September 4 | Course Introduction  
|           | Historical Overview of Church Growth  
|           | Indian Roots  
|           | Americanization  
|           | Read: The Road to Delhi, pp. 95-134; 177-252 (Complete the book by December 4)  |
| September 11 | The Logic of Church Growth (Part 1)  
|           | Church Growth Eyes  
|           | Church Growth as Faithfulness  
|           | The “Evangelism Versus Social Concern” Debate**  
|           | Read: Understanding Church Growth, chapter 1 (Be sure you are reading the 1970 edition.)  |
| September 18 | The Logic of Church Growth (Part 2)  
|           | God’s Will and Today’s Task  
|           | Dispelling the Fog  
|           | The “Quantitative Versus Qualitative” Debate**  
|           | Read: Understanding Church Growth, chapters 2-4  |
| September 25* | The Logic of Church Growth (Part 3)  
|           | Diagnosing Church Health  
|           | Where to Search for Causes of Growth  
|           | The “Discipling Versus Perfecting” Debate**  
|           | Read: Understanding Church Growth, chapters 5-7  |
| October 2   | The Logic of Church Growth (Part 4)  
|           | Helps and Hindrances  |

* Instructor: Sangwoo Cho
Revival and Church Growth
The “Evangelism Versus Revitalization” Debate**
Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapters 8-9

October 9*
The Logic of Church Growth (Part 5)
Homogeneous Units
The “Homogeneous Unit” Debate**
Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapters 10-11

* This week’s lecture will be recorded by Professor McPhee who will be in New Orleans; it will be followed by small group discussion under Mr. Sangwoo Cho’s guidance. In the second session, the small groups will report, and a panel made up of the ME 700 students will lead a discussion on the reading assignment from McGavran.

October 16 The Logic of Church Growth (Part 6)
Church Growth in Social Classes
Resistance and Receptivity
Redemption and Lift
Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapter 12-14

October 23 The Logic of Church Growth (Part 7)
Discipling Urban Populations
Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapter 15

October 30 The Logic of Church Growth (Part 8)
People Movements
The Church Planting Emphasis
AD 2000: Applause and Dissent**
Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapter 16-18

November 6 The Contribution of George Hunter
Church Growth Perspectives on Two Historical Movements
Apostolic Congregations and Their Leaders
Church Growth and Ministry Groups
Catalytic and Proliferation Growth
Read: *Radical Discipleship*

November 13* Church Size and Church Growth
Plateaus and Barriers
The Seeker Church Phenomenon
The “Large Versus Small Church” Debate**
Read: *How to Break Growth Barriers*
*Today’s class will be led by Sangwoo Cho.

November 20  Church Growth and Church Planting
               An Overview of Church Planting Methods
               Assimilating New Members
               Ten Insights for Church Planting Success
               Read: Christianity Rediscovered

November 27  (No class, Thanksgiving/Reading Week)

December 4  Wither Church Growth?
               Evaluating the Church Growth Movement
               New Directions
               Read: Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views

December 11  Final Exam

VII. Class Presentation and Discussion

All ME700 students are to lead a class presentation and discussion. Sign up the first week: choose from one of the double-asterisk (**) topics in the Class Schedule. The length of time is 40 minutes: 20 minutes for the presentation and 20 minutes for class discussion.
Reading Report Form

Name:

SPO:

Course Title and number:

Book or article (author or editor, title, place, publisher, date):

Pages read:

For books, list the number and title of the chapter (and author if different from above) you found most helpful:

Copy one quotation from the above chapter or article that seemed particularly important to you: (Page ____):

Interact in your own words with the portion you quoted above:

Offer one well-conceived question for class discussion of the book or article:
Themes in Church Growth (and related) Studies:


________. *Church Growth Through Groups*. Center for Church Growth, 1990.


Hunter, George G. III. *Church for the Unchurched*. Abingdon, 1996.


Neighbor, Ralph W. *Where Do We Go From Here?: A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church*. Torch. 1990.


______. *Your Church Can Be Healthy*. Abingdon, 1979.


______. *Churchquake! How the New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking Up the Church As We Know It*. Regal, 1999.


Studies relevant to Church Growth in Europe, North America, Australia:

Many available from Church Growth Institute. ph. 1-800-423-4844


Where Have All Our People Gone? Pilgrim, 1979.


_______.* How To Reach Secular People*. Abingdon, 1992.

_______.* Church for the Unchurched*. Abingdon, 1996.


_______.* Your Church Has Doors: How to Open the Front and Close the Back*. Church Growth Analysis and Learning Center, 1983.


McCalep, George O. *Faithful Over a Few Things: Seven Critical Church Growth Principles.* 1996


_________. *One Size Doesn’t Fit All.*


_________. *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church.* 2003


_________. *Back to Basics in Church Growth.* Tyndale House, 1981.


Murrow, David. *Why Men Hate Going to Church*. 2005


Oswald, Roy M. and Speed B. Leas. *The Inviting Church: A Study of New Member Assimilation*.


Discontinuity and Hope: Radical Change and the Path to the Future. Abingdon, 1999.


44 Ways to Increase Church Attendance. Abingdon, 1988


Hey, That’s Our Church. Abingdon, 1975.


The Middle Sized Church. Abingdon, 1985.

The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church. Abingdon, 1980.


Smith, Glenn C. ed. *Evangelizing Adults*.


Teykl, Terry. *Pray and Grow*. Discipleship Resources.


_____. Your Church Can Be Healthy. Abingdon, 1979.
_____. Churchquake! How the New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking Up the Church As We Know It. Regal, 1999.


______. *Dare To Grow*. David C. Cook, 1993.

**Notable Studies of Church Growth Among Third World and Ethnic Minority Peoples:**


Gates, Alan Frederick. *Christianity and Animism in Taiwan.*


_______. *Discipling the City.* Baker, 1979.


Han, Gil Soo. *Social Sources of Church Growth.* University Press of America, 1994.


Latourette, Kenneth Scott. History of the Expansion of Christianity, seven volumes.

Lawrence, Carl. The Church in China.


McGavran, Donald A. Church Growth in Jamaica.


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________. *Where Do We Go From Here?* Houston, TX: Touchstone Publications, 1990.


Classroom Identification Label

INSTRUCTIONS:

A. PRINT YOUR NAME WITH BOLD, DARK LETTERS AS INDICATED IN THE SPACES BELOW. USE MARKERS IF PROVIDED BY THE PROFESSOR.

B. FOLD DOWN ON THE DASHED LINE

C. PLACE THIS PART ON THE DESKTOP UNDER A BOOK OR NOTEBOOK AND HANG THE NAME TAG OVER THE FRONT EDGE.

D. PLEASE PRESERVE THIS AND USE IT IN ALL CLASS SESSIONS.

Fold here

First name or nickname

Last name