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ME 630 Planting New Churches

Ronald K. Crandall

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Prospectus for the Course
ME 630
PLANTING NEW CHURCHES

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
An orientation to the theological, sociological, and practical dimensions of starting new churches in North America along with a brief look at case studies and opportunities for new church planting in other lands.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES
With the much welcomed and long overdue renewal of interest in the new congregational development by many denominations, we intend to provide students with the best literature and insights available for successful leadership in this critical ministry of church planting. By the conclusion of the course, students will have confidence for launching a new congregation based on a strong theological rationale and an array of practical skills including: philosophy of ministry, demographic analysis, site selection, prioritizing of time and energy, management skills, evangelizing secular peoples, cross-cultural and urban sensitivity, strategic planning, worship design, discipling models, leadership styles, architectural planning, etc. In sum, students will be ready to begin a new church ministry starting with day one.

III. PROCEDURE AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS
The course consists of weekly class sessions meeting Thursday evenings from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. in room SH 408 and possible travel to field sites. Classes will include lectures, videos, discussion, field observation and interviews, personal research, and guest resource leaders. The reading, both required and collateral, is considered part of the curriculum and a reading report must be turned in on a "Reading Report" sheet (attached) by Dec. 9th. One point will be lost for each 50 pages not completed. Also due on Dec. 9th will be a class notebook and a course project OR take-home final exam. Any student absent for more than one class period will need to read 100 extra pages for each class missed and consult with the professor regarding other possible assignments.

A. READING REQUIREMENTS (25% of Grade)
The following texts are considered required reading:

2. Church Planting for a Greater Harvest, Peter Wagner, 1990 (150 pages).
3. The Purpose Driven Church, Rick Warren, 1995 (390 pages).

In addition to required reading, 250 pages of collateral reading must be read from the texts below, items on reserve, or other materials approved by the professor. Materials read previously cannot be counted as collateral for this course.


OR Various denominational materials and other resources available through the library or your own initiative.

B. **THE NOTEBOOK** (25% of Grade)

Each student will be required to keep a notebook and hand it in at the end of the course for evaluation. Included should be: notes on all reading and classes, articles, additional research outside of class, a bibliography, correspondence, etc. It will be graded on thoroughness and appearance.

C. **CLASS PROJECT** (50% of Grade)

Each student will be responsible for a class project and a written report (or a take home final examination) due the last day of class. The following projects are considered to be most helpful, but other projects may be accepted after consultation with the professor.

1. Choose a political area (a county, city, census tract, etc.) and study the census and/or current demographic reports. Compare this with earlier demographic studies or census for trends. Identify and interview at least one knowledgeable person who can interpret trends being noted and projected for the next decade. Then, do a "windshield survey" and identify at least one tract or other section of your area "ripe" for new church development. Write a simulated (or actual) proposal for such development to your judicatory office and make your case. Copy it to your professor.

2. Participate in a community survey seeking out the unchurched in a neighborhood or area. Evaluate their receptivity and identify basic human, social and spiritual needs.
Project the kinds of ministries and emphases that would best reach these people for Christ if a new church were to be started. Give a brief description of how you would plant a new church in this area, including a philosophy of ministry.

3. Work with and interview a local pastor and/or denominational official involved in new church development. Evaluate the experience and report on lessons learned, contributions made, recommendations, etc.

4. Interview three new church planting pastors and at least two lay persons in each church. Write up your interviews in the form of three case studies not to exceed four double spaced typed pages each. Include in each case study the basic historical, demographic and statistical information, problems faced, special awareness of God's presence, special gifts and emphases of the pastor, and other similar ingredients emphasized in our texts or in class.

5. Write or phone your own church extension board or agency requesting all available information on preparing you for a church planting ministry. Write up an evaluation of their program and materials including such matters as alternative models for new churches, cross-cultural and ethnic minority focus, mission opportunities, the relationship of your polity to successful new church development, etc. We would appreciate an extra copy of any material not currently on file from your denomination or agency.

D. FINAL EXAMINATION (50% of Grade)
Students may elect to complete a take home final examination in place of one of the projects above. The exam will be available on November 18th and will be due on Thursday, December 9th, in class. Five questions will be selected from a larger field and turned in as a typed double spaced paper of 12 to 15 pages (2 to 3 pages per answer).

IV. PROPOSED SCHEDULE
Although we may vary slightly from the order listed due to the availability of our "outside guests" and field contacts, our intended course outline is below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/09</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Biblical/Historical Rationale for Church Planting</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Church Planting Pastors: Gifts, Personalities, Style</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>Philosophy of Ministry (POM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Models and Strategies for New Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/07</td>
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<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/14</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Kingdom Conference Guest(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/21</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Contextual Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/28</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Understanding and Reaching the Unchurched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/04</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Advertising, Initial Contacts, and Evangelism</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Designing Worship</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/18</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Leadership and Discipleship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/25</td>
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<td>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>Site Selection, Architecture, Construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/9</td>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Odds and Ends, &amp; Final Assignments Due</td>
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