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MB 730 The Change Agent in Mission

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Course Description

In this postmodern age, everyone has a mission. Wherever one positions oneself, one has a perspective. Missionaries, indigenous church leaders, new Christians all have spiritual, political and economic interests. This course recognizes that, by definition, cross-cultural witnesses for Christ are agents of change, but not the only agents for change in a society.

The issues then are:

1. How does change occur?
2. How can change be introduced effectively into organizations and communities?
3. How can we evaluate situations so that we know when to introduce change and when not to introduce change?
4. What is the theological foundation for our involvement?

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

1. Models of Culture Change.
2. Insights from Applied Anthropology.
3. Problems in Community Development.
4. The Challenge of Integral Human Development (the Kingdom).

Course Outline

Class Presentations:
Introduction to change agent and culture change.
Models of culture change and cultural dynamics.
Insights from applied anthropology.
Problems in community development
Challenges of integral human development.
Summary

Videos:
“Becoming American”
“Barefoot Doctors of Rural China”
“Controlling Interest”
“Hungry for Profit”
“One Kingdom Divided”
“Transformation”
Required Reading


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, during lectures and 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 sentence.
2. List the important issues addressed in the book, with a paragraph about each.
3. Critically interact with at least one issue in the book, about two pages.
4. Suggest this issue’s application to ministry, about two pages.

Papers are due on the day before we discuss the book in class, as indicated in the course schedule. Papers should be about five pages long, double-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 first draft of the case itself is due first, as indicated in the class schedule. Then, a first draft of the whole case study is due. Then, the final copy 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 20 and 30 pages double-spaced and should include at least ten references to articles and books about change.

**Course 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.)

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