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MS 630 Ministry and Evangelism in the Small Church

Ronald K. Crandall

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Prospectus for the Course
MS 630 / ME 760
MINISTRY AND EVANGELISM IN THE SMALL CHURCH

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course examines historical, theological, sociological and pragmatic dynamics of smaller congregations with special attention to the challenges and opportunities for effective evangelism in such settings.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Smaller congregations and the pastors who serve them frequently find it difficult to function effectively in ministry and outreach using many models and strategies 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 evangelistic ministry in the context of smaller congregations.

At the conclusion of this course students should be able to:

1. Articulate important biblical perspectives on “smallness” and smaller congregations;
2. Understand historical and economic developments that have led to the establishment and survival of smaller congregations, particularly in North America;
3. Appreciate and work with the social dynamics inherent in smaller churches;
4. Evaluate and improve their own leadership skills as pastors of smaller churches;
5. Design effective ministry and evangelism for a small church based on recent research;
6. Experience and better utilize the special tensions that exist between relationships and task-accomplishment in smaller churches;
7. Develop a long-term sense of mission and vision owned by the congregation;
8. Anticipate and prepare for conflict over proposed and actual changes;
9. Exercise the basic skills of a consultant for smaller churches using field research; and
10. Prepare a composite consultant’s report addressed to local church leaders.

III. PROCEDURE AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course consists of thirteen class sessions meeting Wednesdays from 2:30 to 5:15 p.m. Instruction will include lectures, guest speakers, videos, discussion, field work, reading and analytical reflection.

A. READING REQUIREMENTS (25%)
MS630 students must read 1200 pages for the course; ME760 students, 1500 pages including at least one of the texts marked with an asterisk*. The required texts account for about 880 pages. The remaining pages should be selected from the recommended texts or material approved by the professor. The reading and the Reading Reports constitute 25% of the grade. Failure to complete the reading assigned (see Completed Reading Form) and the five Reading Reports will affect the final grade.

Required texts:
1. Lyle Schaller, Small Congregation, Big Potential, Abingdon (2003)—190 pages
Reading reports:
Each of the above texts will require a 1-2 page single-spaced reading report (5 points each) using a format attached to your syllabus. Your reports will be due and discussion of each text will take place following the schedule noted below.

First (Schaller) due on February 22nd.
Second (Pappas) due on March 8th.
Third (Bierly) due on March 29th.
Fourth (Crandall) due on April 12th.
Fifth (Steinke) due on April 26th.

Additional texts recommended include:
8. Cosgrove and Hatfield, Church Conflict, Abingdon, 1994.
27. James L Killen, Jr., Pastoral Care In The Small Membership Church, Abingdon, 2005.
34. John Rowell, Magnify your vision for the Small Church, ACW Press, 1999.
40. Laurence Wagley, Preaching With the Small Congregation, Abingdon, 1989.
B. **CLASS PROJECT (50%)**

Each student will participate in a class project constituting 50% of the final grade: 35% from the written group report, 5% from the group class presentation, and 10% from a personal reflection paper, both **due May 10th**.

1. Participate as part of a team (3-5 persons) interviewing a minimum of 8 members (4 long-term, 4 new) and the pastor of a smaller congregation in the area. The preference is for a church showing greater than 20% growth (or decline) in the last 3 years. Using an interview guide provided (adjustments welcome), consolidate your information, observations, insights and recommendations into a “Report” (35% of grade) to be sent to the pastor (copied to the instructor) with an appropriate cover letter. Samples of such reports will be available on line in the **CLASS ICON MS630/ME760**. In addition each student will separately submit to the professor a 5-page personal reflection paper (10% of grade) of additional observations not mentioned in the report, lessons, self-evaluation of your part in the project, and difficulties and values of the team-interview experience. During our last class each “team” will be expected to present a brief (5-10 minutes) summary of their experience and most important discoveries (5% of the final grade).

2. Under **very special** circumstances alternative projects may be approved. Details for how to conduct this assignment apart from the team will be worked out on an individual basis.

C. **MS630--MA and M.Div STUDENTS: NOTEBOOK (25%)**

Each student will be required to produce a notebook (paper or electronic) graded on: (1) class notes (your own notations whether or not you copy the powerpoint slides), (2) reading reports on the required texts and similar notes on additional reading, (3) articles copied from journals, magazines, or off of the web, (4) additional research, correspondence, websites contacted and/or internet conversations, and (5) overall appearance and order (table of contents, notebook tabs, etc. help). The “notebook” will be **due** either on disk (CD or DVD if powerpoint slides, PDF files and/or photos are included), or as a 3-ring notebook **May 17th**.

An alternative to completing this assignment may be arranged with the professor. Possibilities include: writing a second 10-12 page paper on a related and approved subject or on 200 pages of additional reading. To make this change please submit a written description of your proposal.

D. **ME760--TH.M., D.MISS, or Ph.D. STUDENTS: ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS (25%)**

For advanced degree students 25% of the final grade will be based on: (1) a critical book review of 750 words following a guide provided (10%, **due April 19th**), (2) an annotated bibliography of texts on the small church of at least 40 entries (5%, **due May 17th**), and 30 minutes of class teaching examining a critical issue raised by the text reviewed (10%). Schedule this with the instructor.

IV. **PROPOSED TOPICS AND SCHEDULE**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biblical and Theological Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smaller Churches through History</td>
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<td>The Sociology of Smaller Churches</td>
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<td>Pastors and Small Church Revitalization</td>
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<td>Rekindling the Spirit</td>
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<td>Overcoming Obstacles</td>
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<td>Mission and Evangelism</td>
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<td>Developing Leaders and Disciples</td>
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<td>Churches In Transition</td>
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V. **DUE DATES**

The Group Projects and Personal Reflection Papers are due by **WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2006**. The notebook is due by **WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2006**
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives.</td>
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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.

Course Icon

Each registered student should have on his or her First Class Desktop an icon for the course. Materials related to assignments, subjects addressed, and Powerpoint slides will be posted on the site. If you have questions about accessing the site please notify me.
Following the outline below and labeling your sections, expand on each of the review items below to compose a 1 and ½ to 2 page single-spaced evaluation of the text.

Name__________________________________________________   Date ____________
Book Title__________________________________  Author/Editor ______________________

Review

1. Evaluation: 1 (low) – 10 (high) ___   Elaborate, citing strengths & weaknesses:

2. Summary of the primary contribution of the text:

3. What new insights have you gained from reading this text? (cite pages or chapters)
   1. pp. _____
   2. pp. _____
   3. pp. _____
   4. pp. _____
   5. pp. _____

4. What are some ministry applications of these insights?
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 
   5. 

5. What are some issues, concerns, or questions you would like to see discussed?
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
MS 630 / ME 760 COMPLETED READING FORM

NAME (PRINT) __________________________________________ (Signature below)
I have read all of the following pages for MS 630, or ME 760, 2006.

REQUIRED ASSIGNED READING: (Sign below at Bottom of Page)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Small Congregation, Big Potential (2003)</td>
<td>__________</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Steve Bierly</td>
<td>How to Thrive as a Small Church Pastor (1998)</td>
<td>__________</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Peter Steinke</td>
<td>Healthy Congregations: a systems approach (1996)</td>
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TOTAL PAGES OF ASSIGNED READING __________

COLLATERAL AND ELECTIVE READING:

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TOTAL PAGES OF COLLATERAL READING __________

Any WEB SITES contacted?
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