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MS 615 Foundations of Church Growth
ME 700 Principles of Church Growth

Fall Semester, 2001
E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism,
Asbury Theological Seminary
Wednesday 2:30 - 5:15 p.m.
Instructor: Ron Crandall

I. Course Description:

"The foundational principles and strategies of the Church Growth movement pioneered by Donald McGavran, seen as one informed approach to strategy development in mission and evangelism and as a means to inform congregational and denominational outreach and expansion. Focus upon North American and Third World cases."

II. Course Objectives:

1. To raise consciousness regarding the "strategy" dimensions of the practice of Christian evangelism and mission.
2. To orient the student to the Church Growth approach to informing mission strategy and Christian evangelization.
3. To equip the student with the key, proven, universal, reproducible principles discovered by Church Growth research.
4. To develop the capacity to critique ministries and approaches to evangelism and mission, and thereby advance the practice.
5. To facilitate the student's beginning contribution to Church Growth research, reflection, and literature.

III. Textbooks:

The following textbooks are **required reading for all students**, MS615 and ME700 level. The literature, especially McGavran's Understanding Church Growth, should be perceived as the heart of the course. Class sessions will stimulate deeper reading, provide perspective, headline some themes and expand upon others, fill gaps, provide for discussion, suggest implications and applications, and facilitate learning and strategic thinking. Class sessions will involve varied technologies including: instructor lectures, student presentations, case studies, visiting speakers, films, data generation, simulations, reports, processing of assigned readings, etc.

1. Donovan, Vincent J. Christianity Rediscovered. Orbis, 1979. This autobiographical case study, one of the most engaging and moving books in all of missiological literature, focuses on the planting of indigenous Catholic Christianity among Masai people in East Africa. It dramatizes the central issue of starting a Christian movement from scratch among an unreached people.
2. McGavran, Donald A. Understanding Church Growth, Third Edition. Eerdmans, 1990. The authoritative text in the field of Global Church Growth, written by "the Father of the Church Growth Movement." The second and third editions include "Eurica" within the world's mission fields, thus making this a definitive general text.

3. Hunter, George G. III. To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit. Abingdon, 1987. A "second generation" Church Growth text, and the first written from within the Wesleyan framework and drawing upon John Wesley's strategic mind as well as contemporary research and reflection.

4. Arn, Win and Charles. The Master's Plan for Making Disciples, second edition. Baker Book House, 1998. A widely used Church Growth perspective on the ministry of Friendship Evangelism.

5. Schaller, Lyle E. 44 Steps Up Off the Plateau. Abingdon, 1993. Schaller knows more about local church health, growth, and effectiveness in a North American context than anyone. This book summarizes many of his insights--focused on overcoming the numerical barriers that churches typically experience in their growth history.

6. Winter, Ralph D. and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds. Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, Third Edition. William Carey Library, 1999. In this course, we assign only a "bakers dozen" articles (primarily from the "Strategic Perspective" section) from this widely used collection, but every serious mission student will own this book.

7. Acquire, from the ATS bookstore, a packet of readings containing eleven articles to be referred to in some class sessions, so bring them to each class session:

- a. Hunter, "The Legacy of Donald McGavran"
- b. C. Peter Wagner, "Church Growth Research: The Paradigm and Its Applications."
- c. Eddie Gibbs, "Through a Glass Darkly"
- d. Hunter, "Learn Why Some Churches Are Growing"
- e. Hunter, "Top Ten Reasons for NOT Leaving Evangelism to the Pastor"
- f. Paul Hiebert, "Conversion, Culture, and Cognitive Categories."
- g. Ralph Winter, "Quality or Quantity?"
- h. Allen Swanson, "Decisions or Disciples"
- i. McGavran, "Discipling Urban Populations"
- j. Reginald Bibby, "Religion in the Canadian 1990's"
- k. Charles Trueheart, "Welcome to the Next Church."

Some additional handouts will be distributed in class and materials will be available on RESERVE in the Library.

The following books are also **required reading** for students taking **ME700**.

*8. Donald A. McGavran. The Bridges of God. New York, Friendship Press, 1955. McGavran's 1955 "bombshell", challenging the widespread arrested (mission station stage) development of the world Christian movement, and delineating his early strategic conclusion about how the gospel characteristically spreads along social network lines within people groups.

*9. Donald A. McGavran. How Churches Grow. New York, Friendship Press, 1959.

*10. Read one of the field studies in which McGavran was a principal writer, such as the following: Multiplying Churches in the Philippines; Church Growth in Jamaica; Ethnic Realities and the Church: Lessons from India; Church Growth in Mexico; Zaire: Midday in Missions. (The student may choose some other field study if he or she is particularly interested in the field.)

Each text and the reading packet as a whole will require a one to two page single-spaced response: (1) following a form distributed in class, **or** (2) following the guidelines assigned in this syllabus. These written responses and a class presentation will count for **20% of the final grade**. Due dates are indicated with a **(P)** below.

IV. Writing Assignment Options for the Course:

The instructor expects the student to accept responsibility for his/her own learning. This responsibility will normally be exercised through regular and involved class attendance, the thorough reading of the assigned textbooks and readings, a final examination, and the completion of the writing assignments.

All students will need to submit to the instructor, by the class session on **December 5th**, a 12 to 15 page **research paper**, which should be based upon some appropriate blend of library research **and** field research. This assignment constitutes **40% of the final grade**. 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, the student would normally focus on the recent growth of the church, say within the past decade, but a more historical study would also 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 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.
4. One **may** submit a more traditional term paper, on a Church Growth topic, instead of one of the field research assignments. Students so inclined may see the instructor to get feedback on a proposed topic. The supplementary bibliography at the end of this syllabus will be especially useful to students doing a traditional term paper.

For any of the first three options, the student needs to identify, early in the course, the local church (or churches) in which to do the field research. The student 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.

The student who chooses the fourth option will need to identify the topic early, especially in regard to a topic that might require inter-library loan or data to be sent from some field. The project could research and summarize the main insights of some specific writer in, or near, the field of Church Growth.

Whichever option you choose, write the paper so that it can be understood by someone who has not taken a Church Growth course. ME700 students should consult and follow the standard form and style used in ESJ.

V. Final Exam:

All students will need to complete, **December 12th (9-11)** a **final examination** covering the assigned readings, class sessions, and other course resources and constituting **40% of the final grade**. The exam will call for short essays and students should bring at least two blue books to the examination.

Those taking ME700 will need to prepare for an "extra" question on the final exam: "Trace the development of Church Growth insight in the mind of Donald McGavran, and delineate some of the major strategic conclusions of Church Growth research, with some regard to a particular field of mission."

Students taking MS615 will have 1 and 1/2 hours to complete the exam. Students taking ME700 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.

Course Outline

(Subject to Modification)

Wednesday, September 5: *Introduction to Church Growth Lore*

1. Origins, Distinctives, and Relevance of the Church Growth tradition.
2. Representative Strategic Insights from Church Growth lore.
An early VIDEO: "How to Grow a Church"

Wednesday, September 12: *The Process of Planting a Christian Movement in an Unreached People.*

Come to class having read Donovan's Christianity Rediscovered, and with a **one-page paper (P)** to be turned in during class:

MS615 Students answer these questions:

1. What was THE MAJOR PROBLEM that Donovan perceived, early, relating to the mission station's relationship and ministries to the Masai? State it succinctly and then describe it in more detail.
2. Where else have you observed some form of this problem? Describe briefly.
Be prepared to present these insights to the class orally (3 minutes maximum).

ME700 Students present your own list of the 10-20 GENERIC STEPS that Donovan took to reach the Masai people. (For example, Donovan learned the Masai language. A generic version of that step might be "Learn the language of the receptor population.") Do not copy Donovan's own (partial) internal summaries of his principles, such as the material on pp. 162-3. Create your own summary of the steps involved in planting Christianity among an unreached people. Feel free to add, with an asterisk *, any essential steps that are not prominent in Donovan's case study. Be prepared to present these insights to the class (3 minutes). A one-page handout for each class member is encouraged.

1. Several student presentations on THE PROBLEM Donovan identified.
2. Several student presentations on "Generic Steps in Reaching a People."
3. Presentation: The Stages in the History of a Mission

Wednesday, September 19: *Characteristics of Growing Churches.*

Come to class having read (1) Hunter, "The Legacy of Donald McGavran" Also read McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, **chapters 1-8 (P)**.

1. Presentation: Several Perspectives on the Characteristics of Growing Churches.
 - a. Lyle Schaller b. Peter Wagner c. and Others
2. Arn's Characteristics of Growing Churches.

Wednesday, Sept. 26: *Perspectives on Church Growth from Congregational and Field Studies.*

Come to class having read (1) Wagner, "Church Growth Research: The Paradigm and Its Applications," (2) Gibbs, "Through a Glass Darkly" and (3) Hunter, "Learn Why Some Churches Are Growing." Also read McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, **chapters 9 to the end (P)**.

1. Presentation: Church Growth and Church Health
2. Presentation: Doing a Congregational Church Growth Consultation

Wednesday, October 3: *Sociological Perspectives and Typologies.*

1. Presentation: How Church "Typology" Can Inform Church Growth
2. Presentation: The "Stages" in the History of a Congregation

Saarinen's "Life Cycle" Theory

Wednesday, October 10: Mission Strategy and Church Growth Strategies

Come to class having read Hunter, To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit.

Come with your paper **(P)** and prepared for a three minute report in which you:

- a. State **one** of the five major Church Growth strategies featured in To Spread the Power.
- b. From your church experience or observation, present a case illustrating the principle.
- c. Suggest the principle's implication(s) for a congregation's growth strategy.

1. Presentation: Essential Questions, Historical Landmarks, and Pivotal Decisions in Mission Strategy
2. Class presentations (three minutes):
 - a. Moving Toward Receptivity
 - b. Reaching Across Social Networks
 - c. Multiplying Units
 - d. Multiplying Ministries.
 - e. Employing Indigenous Forms

Wednesday, October 17: Mission Strategy and The Kingdom Conference

Read in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, articles: **35, 37, 44, 75, 76, 86, 88, and 91 (P)**.

1. Guest Presentation on "Reaching Unreached Peoples" (*Winter*)
2. Guest Presentation on "High Impact Church" VIDEO "Europe: The Lost Continent"

Wednesday, October 24: The Quality vs Quantity Debate

Come to class having read (1) Winter, "Quality or Quantity?" (2) Hiebert, "Conversion, Culture, and Cognitive Categories," and (3) Swanson, "Decisions or Disciples." Come with your one to two page report on the articles in the Reading Packet **(P)**.

1. Presentation: Finding One's Way through the "Quality vs. Quantity" Debate
2. Presentation: H.U.Principle vs Multi-cultural VIDEO: "Brooklyn Tabernacle Church"

Wednesday, October 31: Evangelism in the Church Growth Tradition

Come to class having read (1) Hunter, "Top Ten Reasons for Not Leaving Evangelism to the Pastor," and (2) Arn and Arn, The Master's Plan for Making Disciples (P).

1. Presentation: "The Dynamics of Conversion and Equipping Christians as Witnesses"
2. ALPHA and other new evangelism models (Steve Beard, Jeff Kirby)

Wednesday, November 7: Breaking Barriers and Moving Off Plateaus

Come to class having read Schaller, 44 Steps Up Off the Plateau (P) and be prepared for a 3-minute class presentation.

1. Class Presentations (3 minutes):
 - a. State **one** of Schaller's strategic steps for moving off of a plateau, and Illustrate the step from your experience in, or observation of, a church **OR**
 - b. Describe a church and show why the step might be a promising intervention for that church.
2. Presentation by Wayne Bishop, Pastor, Southern Hills United Methodist Church

Wednesday, November 14: Growth and Small Groups

1. Presentation by *Dale Galloway*: The Importance of Small Groups for Church Growth
2. Presentation: The Cell Church phenomenon

Wednesday, November 21: Reading Week, no class

Wednesday, Nov. 28: The Mega-Challenge: Reaching People in Cities.

Come to class having read (1) McGavran, "Discipling Urban Populations," and (2) **articles 38, 62, 72, 77, and 90** in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement (P).

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|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Presentation: Reaching <u>People Groups</u> | VIDEO: D.A.W.N. |
| 2. Presentation: How the Church Grows in Cities | VIDEO: "God is Building a City." |

Wednesday, December 5: The Emerging Mega-Challenge: Reaching Secular and Postmodern People

RESEARCH PAPERS DUE! Submit to the ESJ secretary's office.

Come having read (1) Reginald Bibby, "Religion in the Canadian 1990's," and (2) Charles Trueheart, "Welcome to the Next Church" (part of last week's reading report).

1. Presentation: Profiling & Reaching Secular People VIDEO: "A Church for the 21st Century."
3. Presentation: Growth through need-oriented "ministry evangelism"

Wednesday, December 12: FINAL EXAMINATION. **(9:00--11:00 a.m.)**

Students taking MS615 will have 1 and 1/2 hours to complete the exam. Students taking ME700 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.

Supplemental Selected Bibliography

(Not all of these studies are done by authors within the Church Growth missiological tradition, but they nevertheless provide helpful insight or perspective)

Themes in Church Growth (and related) Studies:

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- Barrett, David B. Evangelize!: A Historical Survey of the Concept. New Hope Press, 1987.
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- _____. Groups of Twelve: A New Way to Mobilize Leaders and Multiply Groups in Your Church. Touch Publications, 1999.
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- _____. Leading and Managing a Growing Church. Abingdon, 2000.
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- _____, ed. Crucial Issues in Missions Tomorrow. Moody Press, 1972.
- _____. Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1988.
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CHURCH GROWTH RESOURCES

Videos:

"How to Grow a Church" **(old and foundational)**
 "But I'm Just a Layman" **(old)**
 "For the Love of Pete" **(old but updated)**
 "The Great Commission Sunday School" **(old)**
 "Who Cares About Love?"
 "Europe: the Lost Continent"
 Craig Miller's video on Postmoderns (?)
 "Next Church.Now" video (DR) **ORDER**
 Brooklyn Tabernacle (two videos)
 Core Values and Vision (Interview or Mike Breaux by Dale Galloway)
 Presentation of Vincent Donovan (select a segment)
 Prayer: Emphasis of Jim Cymbala presentation
 Lyle Schaller series with UCC (small churches, medium size, large)
 The Paradigm Shift with Joel Barker?
 Adam Hamilton (?) Church of the Resurrection K.C. **(check N.R.)**
 God is Building a City (Lausanne)
 DAWN video **(? Check Hunter's shelf)**
 "A Church for the Twenty-first Century" **(Check Hunter's shelf)**

Audio Cassettes:

Robert Schuller

Speakers/V-Tel/Phone:

J.T. Seamands (?)	Dale Galloway
Warren Bird	Mike Breaux
Glen Schneiders	Wayne Bishop
Linus Morris (?)	Bill Hinson
Maxie Dunnam	Jimmy Buskirk
Jorge Acevedo	

Sections/Issues:

Church Health -- Christian Swartz, Rick Warren, (Lutheran ?)
 Small Churches -- My work and orientation to resources
 Conversion -- My work and whole field of study

Articles:

Swanson, "Discipleship"
 Crandall, "AETE Journal on Small Churches"
 Crandall, "One Story of Good News to the Poor" (?)

Internet sites:

City Voices (www.cityvoices.com)
Church Growth Institute (<http://www.churchgrowth.org/>)
Net Results (<http://www.netresults.org/>)
Percept (<http://www.perceptnet.com/pn4/companyFP.htm>)
Barna Research OnLine (<http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/Home.asp>)
Coach Net (<http://www.coachnet.org/>)
Willow Creek Homepage (<http://www.willowcreek.org/>)
Easum, Bandy and Associates (<http://www.easum.com/>)
Missiology Home Page at Abilene Christian University (<http://www.missiology.org/>)
Ron Water's Web Page at Ashland Seminary (<http://www.ashland.edu/~rwaters/>)
Lilly--American Religion Database (<http://www.arda.tm/ardahome.htm>)
Anti-Church Growth Website (<http://home.density.com/churchgrowth/index.html>)
Try a search of "church growth" and get more than 4000 sites.

Ideas for sessions:

Small groups / cell churches / evangelism / Hunter's "ports of entry"
Alpha program
Reviews or reflection papers on readings
Groups to serve as panels for discussion of readings
Church Health and growth
Small church "Church Growth"
Research on "Conversion" and "witness" training