

PMCM2375, Principles of Church Planting and Revitalization

Leavell College

Dr. Jack Allen, Jr. and Dr. Ed Stetzer

Academic Workshop, May 28-June 1, 2007

Communication

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Course Description

This course is designed for students interested in identifying key principles related to church planting or church revitalization. Emphasis will be given to the similarities to these areas, but the differences will also be discovered and discussed. Emphasis will be given to the biblical basis, the motivation, the principles, and the personnel for church planting and church revitalization.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand data that indicate a critical need for new and revitalized churches
2. Define a church in a manner that is consistent with the Bible, Southern Baptist church planting strategy, and a particular culture
3. Discover the common principles required to start and to revitalize churches
4. Learn to evaluate the health of a local church body
5. Examine approaches to church growth that are biblically consistent and culturally wise

Learning Methodology:

Students will learn from reading, classroom discussions, lectures by the professor(s) and experts in the field, and course assignments.

Learning Resources

Jack M. Allen Jr. *Heart Attitudes*, audio download at <http://daycenteronline.com>.

John M. Bailey, Ed. *Pursuing the Mission of God in Church Planting*. Download from www.churchplantingvillage.com.

Christian Schwartz, *Natural Church Development*, 3rd ed.

Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and How Yours Can Too* (available May 1)

Course Schedule (tentative due to Dr. Allen's and Dr. Stetzer's travel schedule)

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|----------------------|--------------------------|
| • Mon, May 28 | • Thu, May 31 |
| ○ 1:30 PM - 5:30 PM | ○ 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM |
| • Tues, May 29 | ○ 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM |
| ○ 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM | ○ 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM |
| ○ 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM | (tentative) |
| • Wed, May 30 | • Fri, Jun 1 (tentative) |
| ○ 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM | ○ 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM |
| ○ 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM | |

Course Requirements

1. **Reading Report.** Read or listen to all texts *before* class begins on May 28. Submit completed form (attached).

2. **Ditties.** Write 10, one page ditties (exactly one page)—one on each of the four texts and six on any course outline topics that interest you (one ditty per topic). Get to the point quickly; use 1” margins; 12 point, Roman font; parenthetical citations; and skip the cover page.
3. **PLACE Ministries Online Assessment.** Obtain an online assessment code from Dr. Allen’s assistant, complete the assessment, and submit a printed copy.
4. **Exam.** One, comprehensive exam will cover material offered in readings and lectures. The exam will be open book and found on Blackboard on the dates listed in the course calendar. If you have trouble with Blackboard, contact blackboardhelpdesk@nobts.edu (not your professor).
5. **Case Study.** Evaluate a Southern Baptist church according to Schwartz’s criteria and the principles set forth in the class. Professor will base grades on the student’s research, critical assessment, and graduate-level communication skills. Include:
 - a. Ten-page double-spaced, paper, Turabian form, including footnotes and at least three written resources and two personal interviews;
 - b. Written evaluation of the student’s findings by the leadership of the church studied (evaluation form online).

Evaluation of the Student’s Work

Dr. Allen assigns letter grades per the NOBTS course catalog. Should a student’s final numerical grade come within a fraction of the next higher letter grade, professor may—at *his discretion*—consider promoting the student to the next higher grade based on his or her attitude, positive contributions to the field, and preparedness for classroom discussions.

Assignment	Distribution	Due Date
Reading Report	15%	May 28
Ditties	25% (average of 10 individual grades)	Jun 1
PLACE Assessment	10%	Jun 5
Exam	25%	Jun 1
Case Study	25%	Jun 22
Absences	-1% per hour absent	

Late Assignments

Late assignments receive a 20 point penalty. Dr. Allen will entertain pleas for mercy due to unforeseen circumstances. “I caught the flu,” is not considered an unforeseen circumstance, but, “I caught the flu and ended up in the hospital,” is.

Student/Professor Conferences

Due to the concentrated nature of an academic workshop, the professor is *only* available to meet with students by appointment made through his assistant (ph. 504-816-8112).

Disclaimer

This syllabus proposes a course of study for a given time period. Occasionally, however, things change. The professor(s) reserve the right to adjust the syllabus when he reasonably thinks that doing so will enhance the learning experience of his students. The professor(s) will not add assignments or change the grading standards of the course.

COURSE OUTLINE¹

PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH PLANTING AND REVITALIZATION

1. ASKING QUESTIONS like “Ought we to use more of God’s money to plant new churches or to revitalize old ones?” usually leads to bickering; and thus, it is a bad question. A good question is this: in light of your alleged belief that Jesus is the smartest and best man in the world (Dallas Willard, Bertrand Russell), what principles guide us?
 - 1.1. Are you are in a safe place?
 - 1.2. Do you really want to make disciples? (Are you sure of exactly what that means or how to get it done?)
 - 1.3. Do you think Jesus wants *all* His churches to be missionary? (You probably do not yet realize the difference between a mission-*friendly* church and a missionary church [Boar, Allen, Stetzer, et al], but once you do, you will never be the same.)
 - 1.4. You really want an A in this class, but will you do what it takes to get one?
 - 1.5. Stetzer I’ve heard of, but I don’t know Jack . . . (introductions, go over syllabus)
2. RELATIONAL EVANGELISM produces the most consistent fruit (Bill Hybels).
 - 2.1. The crucial *human* factor in conversion is not the delivery of the gospel, but whether or not the unsaved person can *understand* the gospel and its implications for his or her life (Acts 8:30-31; Hunter, *Celtic Way of Evangelism*).
 - 2.2. A realistic evangelism strategy must allow people to grasp the gospel’s meaning.
 - 2.3. True evangelism done by a church body is systemic. Making and incorporating new converts impacts the way the church contacts people, greets people, conducts Sunday School, preaches and worships, makes announcements, and interacts with people in the foyer or parking lot.
 - 2.4. Evangelism and discipleship are best thought of as circular, interrelated environments rather than linear events.
3. ATTRACTION EVENTS help *church people* meet *looking-for-church people*, some of whom will be believers and some of whom will not, but all of whom are demonstrating their interest in finding God (Col. 3:1-2, Rick Warren).
 - 3.1. In attraction events, we can be kind (Jesus was);
 - 3.2. we can be striking (Jesus was);
 - 3.3. we can be interesting (Jesus was);
 - 3.4. we cannot compromise holiness (Jesus didn’t).
 - 3.5. To produce a good event requires prayer, thought, effort, and holy imagination.
 - 3.5.1. We have not observed much post-event fruit among postmodern, pluralist, creative neo-Bohemian or neo-Barbarian crowds.
 - 3.5.2. Events do, however, work very well among marginally churchd suburbanites and low income Southerners (or folks with Southern roots).

¹ The outline for this course is an ongoing process that has, so far, lasted three good years. The version you are reading was developed with the help of Harold Bullock in personal conversations in December 2006.

4. PEOPLE COMMIT to a church where they find relationships and meaning.
 - 4.1. A well designed small group ministry helps people find deeper discipleship relationships.
 - 4.1.1. Church life can exist without members learning to walk with the Lord, but it goes much better if they do.
 - 4.1.2. The perspective and values of adults change primarily based on their experiences, especially with role models present to help them interpret the experiences in the light of Scripture.
 - 4.1.3. The best kind of context for such *mentoring* is in small group life where people are engaged with one another beyond a mere meeting.
 - 4.1.4. Bible teaching can help if it deals practically with how to live what the Scriptures say.
 - 4.1.5. Acts 2:42 offers a basic model for small groups and house churches.
 - 4.2. The social needs of people are such that a small group can meet only a limited range of needs. A broader community of mind (congregation) is needed to expand one's vision.
 - 4.3. People function out of their perspective and values. Whoever shapes a person's perspective and values is the one who guides his or her life.
 - 4.3.1. Fifty years ago, it was common for teachers, pastors, and community leaders to shape perspective.
 - 4.3.2. In North America, secular media, especially TV and movies, shape most peoples' perspective and guide their values. The church must, therefore, teach people to interpret the media, and make good decisions.
 - 4.3.3. Without lived experiences and reflective thinking based on them, the media remains in charge of the average person's (even the Christian's) mind and life (Rom. 12:2).
 - 4.4. The Overseer's (Pastor's) preaching sets direction as the lead teacher and expositor of the Scriptures.
 - 4.4.1. A solid preaching ministry can help shift perspectives as long as it does not come off as aloof, condescending, or unrealistic.
 - 4.4.2. Preaching alone is not enough—even the most dynamic preaching can lead to a shallow church without consistent help from the other areas of contact within the church (men's and women's groups, discipleship classes, children's and youth ministries, music programs).
 - 4.4.3. Unless peoples' hearts change to follow Christ, their words will conform to the Pastor's words until they leave the Sunday service—then they will break from conformity and their actions will reflect their hearts' desires. Heart change requires ministry not only to peoples' intellect, but also to their emotional and physical needs, and it requires a free environment where they can be loved toward change (this was Jesus' phenomenal contribution to leadership theory).
5. A CHURCH IS A SPIRITUAL ORGANISM THAT WEARS ORGANIZATIONAL CLOTHES. It does not appear in public without clothes. For this reason, leaders need to understand how people work together in organizations.

- 5.1. Churches are made up of people who “got saved” because Christ died for them, not because they were good. Church leaders must understand how to work with this fact.
- 5.2. The most important factor in church planting and revitalization is the character of the leader and his wife. If they are genuinely spiritual, likeable, and offer good judgment, the effort will do well.
- 5.3. Their hard work is the second most important factor.
- 5.4. Third, the plan they are working matters. If it fits the people they are trying to reach, things will go well. If not, they will have a lot of problems, and the work may fail.
- 5.5. Leadership (lay and staff) is the most critical factor in church health. Upright and inverted pyramids can demonstrate biblical church structure.
- 5.6. Organizations (including churches) move forward when leaders agree on the group’s purpose, mission, values, and tactics.
6. THE CHURCH IS ALSO A CULTURAL PHENOMENON. It does not easily get outside its own skin (Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*).
 - 6.1. A few missionaries and some leaders are gifted to stretch and look back at their own culture. Most, however, will live with cultural blinders and must be repeatedly challenged to rethink how God’s ways are higher than the culture’s ways and how to reach people outside their “comfort zone.”
 - 6.2. The church organizes itself according to cultural patterns. Its value system is set on cultural default. Strategies for renewal must be evaluated with a critical eye: the driving ideas behind many renewal efforts often reflect new forms of the values of the surrounding culture, not the values God commands.
 - 6.2.1. Christ *against* culture.
 - 6.2.2. Christ and culture in *paradox*.
 - 6.2.3. Christ *transforming* culture.
7. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SATAN ARE REAL. For this reason, a leader needs to be grounded in the Word, genuinely humble, teachable, faithful, perseverant, and walking in dependence on the Lord (Ed Murphy, Neil Anderson).
 - 7.1. Truth and reality as understood by modernism, postmodern, and Biblicism
 - 7.2. Spiritual warfare
 - 7.3. Warfare prayer
 - 7.4. Prayer walking
 - 7.5. Deliverance
8. THE KEY POINT FOR CHANGE IN DENOMINATIONAL (SBC) LIFE IS THE LOCAL CHURCH—no one can tell it what to do. Changes at other points are subject to undoing at the whim of the next bureaucratic administrator.
 - 8.1. The key leverage point to enable change to spread is found in the denominational leadership pools—the places where people go for ministry training: church colleges and seminaries. The next important places are the student ministries at secular colleges where leaders may be won and trained. Weak strategies at key leverage points lead to limited movement in the future.

- 8.2. Widespread change is less dependent on the spread of great ideas than it is on the spread of trained change agents. Ideas are needed, but they have to be implemented by people with good judgment, the right skills, and the character to endure through the mess that change brings (Dale Galloway).
9. NOT ALL STRATEGIES ARE CREATED EQUAL.
 - 9.1. It is the nature of the contemporary forum (Christian media) that the coolest ideas dominate discussion. Ironically, cool Christian ideas often mimic secular ideas but with far less excellence and far more naiveté regarding where those ideas will lead people. Effective ideas—those that Christ blesses—rarely get much press.
 - 9.2. When it comes time to implement a strategy, the marketplace is ruthless (Peter Drucker). It is not the nobility of the idea, its proponent, or his zeal that makes a strategy effective. A strategy either fits the environment, and the character and skill set of the implementers or it does not. Some strategies are wiser than others.
 - 9.3. Most often, a “hurry up and get the world saved right now” strategy does not work. We need strategies that look a century ahead, and that can adjust and thrive amid change. If Jesus comes back before our strategy is effective, we will be happy if we are found doing the things that Jesus really wants done.
 - 9.4. Jesus may have offered us a simple strategy for starting and revitalizing churches when He sent out the 72 disciples in Luke 10.

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Reading Report
Submitted to Dr. Jack Allen Jr.

	Student (print name):	Total # of pages read.	Total # of pages in book.
	Course Title:		
	Books Read (print author and title below):		
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

I certify that this Reading Report is a true and complete statement of my work.

Signature _____