

BUILDING A CHURCH FOR THE UNCHURCHED

MSS550– Lyle Pointer, Professor
Fall 2007

PURPOSE:

This course is designed to explore the biblical and theological basis for body life evangelism. Sociological issues and leadership factors inform the evangelistic endeavor. Principles of church growth are applied to the local congregation as an analysis and projection of ministry is required.

OUTCOMES:

- Students will describe how theological and sociological concepts relate to local church evangelism.
- Students will apply church growth principles to a congregation which they attend.
- Students will stimulate spiritual and numerical gains.

TEXTS:

Rick Warren. The Purpose-Driven Church
George Hunter III. To Spread The Power
Robert E. Logan. Beyond Church Growth
Thom S. Rainer. The Book of Church Growth, History, Theory and Principles

REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE:

1. Read texts.
 - a. Highlight Logan (show professor your highlighted text on Sept. 17).
 - b. Compare Hunter to Warren in a 5-page paper due Oct. 8.
 - c. Rainer will be read in preparation for the final test (Dec. 10).
2. Complete 4 evaluation gauges:
 - a. Analyze the decadal growth rate of your local church by charting statistical information on a graph and answering the questions from “Attendance Graph Analysis.”
Due Sept. 24.
 - b. Assimilation Assessment--Evaluate the process by which new people first attend and are brought into the life of your church. Due Oct. 1.
 - c. Evangelistic Readiness—Secure twenty completed surveys and evaluate results.
Due Oct. 1.
 - d. Analyze the climate of a local congregation to assess (4 pages), due Sept. 24:
 - a. Openness to change
 - b. Eagerness to evangelize
 - c. Spiritual vitality
 - d. Holiness of life
3. With class members, develop a set of questions directing local church leadership to a strategy of outreach. Your questions should show evidence of church growth principles. Due Oct. 15.
4. Re-write a 60-minute teaching/learning module on an agreed upon topic. Develop a leader’s guide, a participant’s handout, and a PowerPoint presentation. Due Nov. 5.
5. Write a minimum twenty page paper analyzing your local church and projecting plans for optimum growth. The paper is to show evidence of applying the principles discovered in the books and taught in the class coupled with the uniqueness of your given situation. Project

- the rate of growth for the next 5 years giving your rationale and proposed ministries to ignite new growth. Due Nov. 19.
6. Interview 6 unchurched people asking them if they expect to return to church, why or why not, and what kind of church would interest them? Write a 4-page report on your interviews. Due Oct. 8.
 7. The student will be asked to make a class presentation of information and growth projections for his/her local church. Due Nov. 12.

GRADING:

The assignments are worth the following points:

Comparative paper	100 pts.
Completed reading of Logan	50 pts.
Interview Report	100 pts.
Four evaluative gauges (4 @ 50 pts.)	250 pts.
60-minute teaching/learning module	100 pts.
Church Analysis paper	200 pts.
Strategy (group work)	100 pts.
Final Exam	<u>100 pts.</u>
Total points	1000 pts.

Grading will be based on:

91 – 100%	=	A
81 -- 90%	=	B
71 – 80%	=	C
61 – 70%	=	D
below 60%	=	F

No work will be accepted later than one week after it is due. Late work will count 10% less.

CLASS OUTLINE:

- I. A Theology of Church Growth
 - A. Theological underpinnings
 - B. Biblical bases
 - C. How spiritual vitality affects numerical growth

- II. A Historical Perspective on Church Growth
 - A. Church growth at the turn of the century
 - B. Development of the church growth movement—Donald McGavran
 - C. North American church growth (1972-)
 - D. Principles of church growth

- III. Sociological Factors That Affect Growth
 - A. Unchurched Americans
 - B. Reaching unreached people
 - C. Incorporation vs. assimilation
 - D. Applying sociological principles

- IV. Growth Restricting Factor
 - A. Pathological considerations
 - B. Why churches decline
 - C. Changing the focus of an ingrown church
 - D. Diagnosis and prescription for nongrowth churches

- V. Leadership Factors in Growing a Church
 - A. Evaluating leadership
 - B. Recruiting, training, and employing laity in ministry
 - C. Creating a climate for growth
 - D. Closing the back door on attrition

- VI. Key Studies (time permitting)
 - A. The urban church
 - B. The rural church
 - C. The suburban church
 - D. The passive church
 - E. Church size characteristics