

Syllabus

URB790 “URBAN CHURCH PLANTING” Nazarene Theological Seminary In Collaboration with the Bresee Institute for Metro-Ministries Fall Semester, 2008

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DESCRIPTION:

A study of biblical, historical and contemporary models of urban churches with attention to the theological and practical underpinnings for such models. The study will include local examples of urban churches, leaders and leadership qualities for the establishment of such, a Nazarene perspective of urban church planting, and offer contrasts with non-urban church planting. Special attention will be given to ministries among ethnic and cultural groups, among Gen-Xers, among unreached peoples. Also, insights to church planting as understood by “emerging” and “organic” church movement will be shared.

The Church of the Nazarene, from its origins, understood the urban context to be a major part of its unique calling. However, over time, as a denomination, we have lost incentive, adjusted to white flight, avoided the complexities that urban areas entail and, seen major declines in urban ministry commitments. This seminar will examine the sociological issues that describe this history, and offer hopeful possibilities for recommitment and presence in the urban core of our cities.

FORMAT:

The class will meet daily as a one-week module from Sept 1-5, 1:30-9:30. At least one day will be devoted to field visits. Lectures, research projects, site visits, panel groups and guest presentations will and other formats will comprise the daily sessions.

Because this is a newly introduced seminar, specific topics will be tailored to the interest, involvement and needs of those participating.

SEMINAR OBJECTIVE:

- To understand the biblical and historical record of urban church planting
- To understand the sociological movements that have enticed Christians away from the City
- To recognize the presence and effectiveness or lack of it in current Christian urban expression
- To look at a range of possibilities for urban church planting
- To have face-to-face encounters with effective urban ministers and ministries
- To experience the challenges, difficulties, and opportunities that face urban church planters
- To encourage those engaged in urban church planting
- To strategize with others effective and news models of urban church planting
- To re-think what the Church can and ought to look like within the urban context
- To acquaint oneself with the resources, literature, and networks related to the field
- To self-examine one’s own calling to urban church planting

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Five required texts are listed below that must be read and reported (or substituted with approval of the professor). Reading reviews will be given on only three of these books of one's choice. Book reviews should be about three pages long with one third, given to overview of the material presented, one third to personal critique, and one third to personal application ("What do I take away from this that I can apply to my present or proposed ministry?").

Texts:

Bakke, Ray and Jon Sharpe: *Street Signs: A New Direction in Urban Ministry*
Conn, Harvie, ed.: *Planting and Growing Urban Churches*
Keel, Tim: *Intuitive Leadership: Embracing a Paradigm of Narrative Metaphor and Chaos*
Marti, Gerardo: *A Mosaic of Believers: Diversity and Innovation in a Multiethnic Church*
Searcy, Nelson and Kerrick Thomas: *Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch*

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Attendance and Participation:** In accordance with the policy of NTS. Each participant will be expected to engage in meaningful discussion and interactive exchanges. However, because of the rare privilege of having Dr John Perkins, the founder of the Christian Community Development Movement, on our campus on Tuesday, September 16, where he will be speaking several times during the day, it will be obligatory to attend these sessions and write synopses of his presentations along with your personal reflections.

2. **Written Reviews:** Of three of the texts selected from the list above. Book reviews should be about three pages long with one third, given to overview of the material presented, one third to personal critique, and one third to personal application ("What do I take away from this that I can apply to my present or proposed ministry?").

Also, all five books are to be read and reported on, with attention to name of text, author, publishing company, date and pages read.

3. **Magazine and Journal Reviews:** Five articles related to urban church planting are to be selected from major journals such as Christianity Today, Christian Century (even one article from the Nazarene publication, Grow is acceptable), Ministry Magazine, Leadership, etc. Each of these articles should be read and concisely reviewed in about half a page.

4. **Interviews with Urban Planters:** Two interviews with urban church planters will be required. They will respond to the following questions:

- A. What is your experience in urban church planting?
- B. What motivated you to engage in urban church planting?
- C. What are five principles that you have learned that help you in urban church planting?
- D. What do you see as the greatest challenges, difficulties, in urban church planting?
- E. Who is your model, or greatest influence in encouraging you in church planting?
- F. What do you see as your strongest gifts in planting churches?
- G. How is urban church planting different from planting churches in other environments?
- D. In what ways should I prepare to plant effective urban churches?

5. **Seminar Project:** Pick a context (real to your current situation, or possible in a future situation), and develop an urban church planting process that addresses the issues, resources, possibilities talked about both within class, in the literature, and in your experience. You may design it as a power point project, a formal proposal to a District Superintendent or church board, or as a research project.

The special project will be presented to the class on the night of October 27 from 7-10 p.m. and all assignments due on Oct. 31st.

GRADING SCALE

1.	Attendance and Participation	10%
	Synopsis of Perkins' Presentations	10%
2.	Written Reviews:	15%
3.	Magazine and Journal Reviews:	15%
4.	Interviews with Urban Church Planters:	20%
5.	Seminar Project:	30%
	Total:	100%

Extra credit can be obtained by special means, i.e. assignments, conference participation, workshops, etc., with the permission in advance of the professor.

The grading scale follows the norm of 90%+ as an "A"; 80%+ as a "B", etc.

THE WEEK'S SCHEDULE:

Throughout the week there will be guest lecturers, and special inclusions within the seminar times of 1:30-9:30 p.m.

Mon. September 1: **Themes:** Session 1: "Biblical, Historical Models of Urban Church Planting"
Session 2: "Theological Perspectives of UCP"

Tues. September 2: **Themes:** Session 1: "Contemporary Contexts of UCP"
Session 2: "Contemporary Styles of UCP"

Wed. September 3: **Themes:** Session 1: "Sociological Issues of UCP"
Session 2: "Leadership Issues of UCP"

Thurs. September 4: **Site Visits:**

Fri. September 5: **Themes:** Session 1: "Strategic Issues in UCP"
Session 2: "Personal Issues and Assessment in UCP"