

Church Health / Growth and Christian Mission

PRTH/MISS 4133

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Course Description

This course introduces "church health/growth" as a scientific field of study and as a philosophical framework for fulfilling the Great Commission. We will look at the historical roots of the Church Growth movement and learn the terminology used by Church Growth scholars. Special attention will be given to theological, sociological and cultural aspects affecting the rate and patterns of church expansion. In addition to an overview of the whole church growth movement, we will deal specifically with John Wesley's approach to evangelism and church growth.

Specific Objectives

By semester's end, my goal is that students taking this course will have the ability to:

1. Identify and describe the significance of major figures in the church growth movement
2. Describe how Wesley implemented various strategies credited to today's church growth movement
3. Analyze the validity of arguments relating to church growth including an identification of their presuppositions and consequences
4. Analyze a specific congregation and its surrounding community
5. Describe a plan for discipling and assimilating new converts into the church
6. Identify social and congregational factors that influence church growth
7. Conceive and articulate purpose, mission, vision and strategic plans for a local church
8. Develop team building skills, identify and cultivate spiritual gifts, recruit volunteers, diagnose and intervene in problems
9. Ability to synthesize, analyze, reason logically for discernment, assessment, and problem solving as it relates to church growth

Course assignments are planned with the student's career objective in mind. Students planning on a ministry in North America will do reading and study of church growth in that environment. Students planning on a cross-cultural ministry will be encouraged to do reading and study of global church growth.

Nazarene ordination requirements

This course should contribute to producing in students the following outcomes:

- CN 19 Ability to identify and explain the main characteristics of the nature of the Church
- CN 21 Ability to describe the significance of some major themes of the Wesleyan revival
- CP 1 Ability to communicate publicly through oral and written mediums with clarity and creativity for the sake of fostering meaning.
- CP 2 Ability to write clearly and in a grammatically correct manner in the modes of discourse used in the ministry.
- CP 4 Ability to write an integrative philosophy of ministry that will answer a "why I do what I do when I do it."
- CP 6 Ability to manage ministry resources (time, human, financial, etc.) in a way consistent with a church's size and characteristics
- CP 7 Ability to conceive and articulate purpose, mission, vision and to develop strategic plans in a local church
- CP 8 Ability to develop team building skills, identify and cultivate spiritual gifts, recruit volunteers, diagnose and intervene in problems
- CP 10 Ability to synthesize, analyze, reason logically for discernment, assessment and problem solving and live with ambiguity
- CP 20 Ability to be engaged with and equip others in personal and congregational evangelism
- CP 21 Ability to lead the church in disciplining and assimilating new converts into the church

- CP 22 Ability to identify social and congregational factors that influence church growth
- CX 1 Ability to discover sociological dynamics and trends and to apply that information to specific ministry settings
- CX 2 Ability to analyze and describe congregations and communities
- CX 3 Ability to describe socialization and to apply its dynamics to the life of the Christian community
- CX 4 Ability to explain the operational culture
- CX 9 Ability to apply historical analysis to the life of a local congregation in order to describe its historical and cultural context

Textbooks

Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Church*
 George Hunter's *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit*

Requirements

1. Class attendance and participation
2. Reading
 - a. Both textbooks (with double-entry notes)
 - b. Two journal/periodical articles
 - c. One additional book on church growth
3. A comparative statistical graph of two churches or districts w/ analysis
4. An in-depth look at a local church
5. In-class teaching of a chapter from Hunter's book
6. Three exams

Note: Graduate students must contract with the professor concerning what will be needed to earn graduate credit.

Class Calendar, Course Outline, Textbook Reading Assignments

Date		Double-entry notes
Aug. 25	Course overview	
30	Historical Perspective: Forerunners / Birth and development of a movement The right questions	Reading 1: Warren 11-46
2	Theology of Church Growth / Theological underpinnings Where do Wesleyans fit in?	Reading 2: Hunter: Foreword, 13-18, 211-212
7	Initial progress report on local church report due Researching and Reporting Church Growth: Digging for the facts / Causes of "fog" / Church Growth Eyes / Church Growth Surveys / Statistical data / Decadal growth rates	Reading 3: Warren 47-71
9	Biblical principles: Search Theology / Theology of Harvest / Verdict Theology / The role of the Holy Spirit / God's Gifts and Growth	Reading 4: Warren 75-94
14	Journal article comparison due	
16	<i>Exam</i> / Comparative graphs (with 1-page of analysis) due	
21	Student presentation — Hunter: The Recovery of Apostolic Confidence	Reading 5: Hunter 19-38
23	Student presentation — Hunter: Wesley as Church Growth Strategist	Reading 6: Hunter 39-62
28	Student presentation — Hunter: Identifying Receptive People	Reading 7: Hunter 63-89
30	Student presentation — Hunter: Reaching Out Across Social Networks	Reading 8: Hunter 91-108
Oct. 5	Progress #2 report on local church report due Student presentation — Hunter: Multiplying Recruiting Units	Reading 9: Hunter 109-129
12	Student presentation — Hunter: Ministering to People's Needs	Reading 10: Hunter 131-150

14	No class	
19	Student presentation — Hunter: “Indigenizing” the Church’s Ministries	Reading 11: Hunter 151-181
21	Student presentation — Hunter: Strategic Planning for a Church’s Future	Reading 12: Hunter 183-209
26	<i>Exam</i>	
28	Collateral Reading Book Outline Due	Reading 13: Warren 95-119
Nov. 2	Progress report #3 on local church study	Reading 14: Warren 111-152
4	Identifying and reaching unreached people / Evangelism readiness and the Engel scale / Receptivity and Resistance / Incorporation versus assimilation	Reading 15: Warren 155-172
9	Sociological Factors and Growth: The culture mosaic / Unchurched Americans / Bridges of contagious evangelism / The Homogeneous Unit principle	Reading 16: Warren 173-203
11	Typology of Church Growth / Varieties of Growth and Loss	Reading 17: Warren 207-238
16	Growth restricting factors // Why churches decline / Changing the focus of ingrown churches / Diagnosis and prescription for nongrowing churches	Reading 18: Warren 239-277
18	Models of church planting: Parenting / satellite / multi-congregational / brothering / colonization / district / catalytic / fusion	Reading 19: Warren 279-292
23	Creating a climate for growth / Strategic planning for church growth	Reading 20: Warren 293-306
30	Closing the back door on attrition Leadership factors: Evaluating leadership / Classes of leaders	Reading 21: Warren 309-329
Dec. 2	Progress report #4 on local church study Recruiting, training and employing laity in ministry	Reading 22: Warren 331-364
7	Local church report due -- Report and reflection on local church reports	Reading 23: Warren 365-392
9	Report and reflection on local church report	Reading 24: Warren 393-398
14	8:00-9:50 — <i>Final Exam</i> (Tuesday)	

Explanation of Course Requirements

1. **Regular attendance** is expected. Everything that goes on in the classroom — lectures, debates and even spontaneous discussion — is part of the learning experience. Therefore, absences after the first four will reduce one’s course grade.

2. **Reading**

a. **Double Entry Notes on textbook reading.** Turn in a page or less of “double-entry” notes for each assigned section. Create two columns on your sheet. At the top of the left column write: “Insight, concept, principle.” Above the right column, write: “This makes sense /I can use this/This relates to/Now I know why . . .” As you read the assigned section, use this double-entry sheet to record your thoughts. These are due at the **beginning** of the class period.

Sample Double-Entry page

Insight, concept, principle	This makes sense /I can use this/This relates to/Now I know why . . .
<i>Unity between pastor and people</i>	<i>I need to learn ways to unite people to do team building</i>
<i>Facilities can hinder or help growth</i>	<i>I wonder just how much this really is true</i>
<i>“evangelistic fishing pond”</i>	<i>It makes sense for local church leaders to have a feel for the limits of “reasonable driving distance” from their building</i>
<i>Applying different standards of conduct to members and attenders</i>	<i>Ask about in class (page 36)</i>

b. **Journal/Magazine Articles.** Read *at least* two significant journal or magazine articles on church growth subjects and compare them with each other.

c. **Book outline.** Outline thoroughly a book on church growth. This should take as many as five pages, single-spaced. In addition to your outline, write down your favorite quote from the book(s). The report must cover at least 200 pages of reading. If you have selected a book shorter than that, supplement it with an additional source. Don't be content with selecting the easiest or the quickest to find. Look for something dealing directly in your area of special interest. A suggested bibliography appears at the end of this syllabus.

3. **Statistical graph.** Make a 10-year comparative statistical graph of two churches (or districts or mission fields).

- You may chart either year-end church membership or yearly average Sunday School attendance.
- You may either draw this by hand on graph paper or use computer graphing software.
- To construct this decadal graph you will need **11 years** of statistics.
- Many districts produce such local church graphs for their district assembly each year. Y
- You can construct your own from the statistical tables can be found in the back pages of the annual District Assembly Journals at the SNU library periodicals desk.
- This information is also available at the Church Growth Research Center in Kansas City.

To the graph itself, add one page of observations and preliminary hypotheses concerning the similarities or differences in growth patterns.

4. **In-depth study of a local church.** Select a smaller church (under 200 in attendance) in the OKC metro area to analyze in detail. Missions students are urged to do their study on an ethnic congregation (such as an Hispanic one, First Indian, Korean or OKC Providence). On the first day of class of each month students must submit a 1-page progress report on their local church research study.

Among the sections into which a good church growth diagnostic study can be divided are:

- a. Decadal graphing of attendance in Sunday school and in morning worship
- b. Neighborhood demographic data and how the realities behind that data are affecting the church
- c. Historical sketch of congregation: How started, high and low points, key events and people whose influence is still felt
- d. Mission statement and objectives as articulated by pastor and key leaders. What does the church leadership want? In which areas are they achieving their objectives? In which areas are they not?
- e. What people and finances are being employed to effect church growth
- f. Report on interviews/survey of selected members

- g. Analysis of facilities
- h. A look at administrative, structural and procedural strengths and weaknesses
- i. A look at the entry points for new people as well as the exit points for those who are leaving or have left (Why do new people come? Why do people leave?)
- j. Based on what you see and feel, what part do you think the Lord envisions for this church to play in achieving His Great Commission?
- k. Is there any significant data which you think local church leaders are misreading or ignoring?
- l. Some realistic goals for the next few years and what it would take to achieve those goals
- m. A plan for action (“If I were the pastor . . .”)

As you work on the growth projections, remember that this is not to be simply “day-dreaming.” They are to be defensible decisions based on the data you have accumulated. Your analysis must build on course material; it must not be something you could have written last summer before the course ever started. The written report, which will probably run 15 to 30 pages, must include at least 3 quotes from the textbooks or direct references to material in them.

5. Classroom presentation. In groups of 2 or 3, students will make a 20-minute teaching presentation of a chapter from Hunter’s book to the class. The use of overheads, PowerPoints or other visuals is greatly encouraged. Creativity will be rewarded. Grades will be based on how effectively the content of that chapter is communicated to students.

Grading

Article Readings and Comparison Report	100
Double entry notes on textbook readings 24 readings @ 15 pts	360
Collateral Book Reading (200 pages) and outline	100
Comparative Graph with One-Page Analysis	50
Monthly reports on local church study @ 25 pts	100
Diagnostic Analysis of Local Church	200
Three Exams, 100 each	300

If you need assistance with a learning or physical disability that may affect your academic progress, I encourage you to contact the Academic Center for Excellence at 491-6694. In addition, specialized services are available for first-generation (neither parent earned a bachelor's degree), low-income, disability, and international students. Students are encouraged to seek assistance from the ACE office.

Bibliography

(Most of the annotations are by C. Peter Wagner)

<p>Appleby, Jerry L. <i>Missions Have Come Home To America</i>. 108 pp. A look at ethnicity in America with the view of motivating Christian leaders to plant churches among ethnic groups.</p> <p>Arn, Win and Charles Arn. <i>The Master's Plan for Making Disciples</i>. 176 pp. One of the key concepts of church growth theory is to identify people movements which travel along webs of natural networks of relationships. The Arns call this "oikos" evangelism and develop the principle in detail in this book.</p> <p>Barna, George. <i>Turnaround Churches: How to Overcome Barriers to Growth and Bring New Life to an Established Church</i>.</p> <p>Bast, Robert L. <i>Attracting New Members</i>. 173 pp.</p>	<p>Benjamin, Paul. <i>The Growing Congregation</i>. 95 pp. A brief summary of church growth principles by one of the pioneers of American church growth</p> <p>Bennett, Charles. <i>Tinder in Tabasco: A Study of Church Growth in Tropical Mexico</i>. 213 pp.</p> <p>Bradshaw, Malcolm. <i>Church Growth Through Evangelism-in Depth</i>. 127 pp.</p> <p>Braun, Neil. <i>Laity Mobilized: Reflections on Church Growth in Japan and Other Lands</i>. 221 pp.</p> <p>Brock, Charles. <i>The Principles and Practices of Indigenous Church Planting</i>. 96 pp.</p> <p>Bustle, Louis. <i>Keys for Church Growth</i>. 99 pp.</p> <p>Chaney, Charles. <i>Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century</i>. 175 pp.</p>
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- Cho, Paul with R. Whitney Manzano. *More than numbers*. 153 pages
- Dudley, Carl S. *Where Have all our People Gone?* 120 pp. A popular and subjective study of growth and decline patterns in mainline U.S. churches.
- Dunagin, Richard and Lyle Schaller. *Beyond these walls: Building the church in a built-out neighborhood* 170 pages.
- Ellas, John. *Measuring church growth : a research-based tool for evaluating and planning* 130 pages
- Enns, Arno W. *Man, Milieu and Mission Argentina: A Close Look at Church Growth*. 240 pp. A historical view of how Protestant churches have grown in the Argentine cultures.
- Estep, Michael R., ed. *Great Commission Church Planting*. 78 pp.
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- Gibbs, Eddie. *I Believe in Church Growth*. 302 pp.
- Grimley, John B. and Gordon E. Robinson. *Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria*. 375 pp. One of the earlier books written under McGavran's supervision. Excellent background material for West Africa.
- Hale, J. Russell. *The Unchurched: Who They Are and Why They Stay Away*. 192 pp. A complete book on America's unchurched listing ten reasons why unchurched Americans who live in eight selected counties stay away from churches.
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- Hunter, Kent with David Bahn. *Confessions of a church growth enthusiast : an evangelical, confessional Lutheran takes a hard look at the church growth movement* 277 pages
- Johnston, Jon and Bill M. Sullivan, eds. *The Smaller Church in a Super Church Era*. 150 pp. A group of Nazarene sociologists and church leaders have produced one of the best books on the small church. While it affirms the values of the small church, it also deals realistically with growth potential and growth dynamics.
- Kelley, Dean M. *Why Conservative Churches are Growing*. Published 1977; reprinted 1986. 180 pp. This was probably the most discussed religious book in the decade of the seventies. It deals with the function that churches have in society and shows how liberal churches usually turn out to be socially weak institutions.
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- Logan, Robert E. *Beyond Church Growth*. 220 pp.
- Maner, Robert. *Making the Small Church Grow*. 101 pp.
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- Martin, Glen and Gary McIntosh. *The issachar factor: understanding trends that confront your church and designing a strategy for success* 207 pages
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- _____. *Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate*. 162 pp.
- _____. *Ethnic Realities and the Church: Lessons From India*. 260 pp. A penetrating analysis of the homogeneous unit principle showing how it has affected church growth in India. The insights apply to peoples all over the world.
- _____. *How Churches Grow: The New Frontiers of Mission*. 185 pp. This contains much of McGavran's thought which cannot be found in other writings.
- _____. *Momentous Decisions in Missions Today*. 231 pp. This book highlights theological and methodological issues in missiology with a strong appeal for cross-cultural missionaries to plant churches among the unreached.
- _____. *Understanding Church Growth*. rev. ed. 450 pp. The classic textbook by the father of the Church Growth Movement, this is the essential starting point for any serious student of the field. Originally published in 1970, the revision has many allusions to American churches. Dr. McGavran died in 1990.
- McGavran, Donald, ed. *Church Growth and Christian Mission*. 252 pp.
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- Orjala, Paul R. *Get Ready to Grow*. 120 pp. Written as a denomination-wide study book by a veteran missionary and professor in the Nazarene Theological Seminary, this book sold over 50,000 copies in the first three months and has circulated all through the Church of the Nazarene
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- Ruffcorn, Kevin. *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision*.
- Schaller, Lyle E. Schaller is undoubtedly the most knowledgeable and skilled church consultant in America today. A United Methodist, he works both independently and for the Yokefellow Institute. Schaller, who comes to the church from the field of city planning, writes a book a year for Abingdon as well as editing the influential *Creative Church Leadership Series*. His books are all highly relevant to the student of church growth.
- _____. *44 Steps up off the plateau* 144 pages
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