

Church Planting Theology

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1. Course Description

Literature on church planting is abundant, but can largely be classified as practical in the sense that it is characterized by case studies, development of strategies, goal setting, demographic surveys, church planting project reports, etc. Although such study is important, this course instead emphasizes theological reflection upon church planting. This reflection will require reading and critically interacting with theological source material for the purpose of integrating that material with issues encountered in church planting. The theological source material is taken from the fields of biblical theology, systematic theology, and missiology. The integration of theology with church planting praxis will build upon issues either raised in the practical literature concerning church planting or, in appropriate cases, upon the church planting experiences of the participants. Although church planting experience is not a prerequisite for this course, at least one year of theological study is required.

2. Course Objectives

The purpose of the course is to encourage students to think theologically about church planting so that their own theological foundation for church planting will be strengthened. By the end of the course it is hoped that students...

- will be motivated and competent to identify and evaluate the theological bases or presuppositions of various church planting projects; and
- will be able to use their particular theological understanding to develop theologically sound church planting strategies and projects.

3. Course Assignments

The assignments cover material falling within three categories: (1) Theological material relevant to church planting; (2) Practical material dealing with church planting (e. g., case studies, reports, strategies, etc.); and (3) Integrative work, bringing together the theological and practical aspects of church planting.

(1) Assignments in the first category (theological material) are: (a) Read all required material (4 books consisting of about 950 pages total). (b) Read a minimum of 200 pages of material selected by the student. Selections may be taken from the Recommended Reading and Other Reading lists below. Alternatively, students may choose their own reading materials not listed below. In this case, however, the professor must approve the selection(s). (c) Write a 900 word response to one of the books read in step (a) or (b) above. About half of the response should be accurate content summary and the remaining half should be critical integration of theology with church planting.

(2) Assignments in the second category (practical material) follow two tracks. Track one is for students with experience in church planting. Track two is for students without church planting experience. In each track students must read at least three articles or chapters (minimum 50 pages) dealing with practical problems encountered in church planting. This reading material is to be selected by the student but approved by the instructor.

Track one assignment: Write a 300 word case study from your church planting experience which is related to issues in the practical material just read. The purpose of the case study is to present a problem in church planting. The case study should not include an answer to the problem. The professor will select some of these case studies to discuss in class. The discussion will focus upon thinking theologically about the church planting issues raised in the case studies.

Track two assignment: Write a 300 word response to one problem described in the practical material just read. The response should consist of a description of the problem and a suggested answer to the problem.

(3) The assignment in the third category is an integrative paper. Write a paper of about 3500 words describing your theological reflections about church planting. This paper must adhere to Turabian style. You should identify a paper topic as early as possible so the readings you choose can help you develop your paper. Paper topics must be approved by the professor. You may use issues which have surfaced in either your own church planting experience or in this class. If you wrote a case study in the preceding step you may reflect theologically about it in your paper. Because this is intended to be a theological paper, limit your practical writing to about 10% of the paper. This should be adequate space to describe the practical issue which your paper will theologically address. The first draft of the paper must be sent to the professor by e-mail two weeks before the last day of semester exams. One week later the graded paper with comments will be sent by e-mail back to the student. If desired, students may submit by e-mail a second draft of their paper by the end of semester exams. This second draft should reflect the professor's suggestions. If a second draft is submitted to the instructor, it may improve the student's grade, but not necessarily so. The integrative paper will be evaluated in light of the following assumption: *because any theological thinking about church planting is better than none at all, such thinking should be encouraged by providing significant positive reinforcement.*

4 Course Schedule

If students follow the schedule below they will complete all assignments. The number in the left hand column indicates the class number. Each class is two class periods.

#	Lecture	Discussion	Assignments Due
1	1. INTRODUCTION: THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT CHURCH PLANTING (CP)		
2	2. BIBLICAL THEOLOGY AND CP		Complete practical material reading (50pp)
3	2.1. CP in Luke-Acts		Submit 300 word case study or response to practical reading material
4	2.2. CP in Pauline Context I (Paul as Theologian)	Case studies	Submit reading record #1 (300 pp)
5	2.3. CP in Pauline Context II (Paul as Church Founder)		
6	3. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND CP	Case studies	Submit reading record #2 (300 pp)
7	3.1. CP in Trinitarian Context		
8	3.2. CP in the Context of Theological Anthropology	Case studies	Submit 900 word book review
9	3.3. CP in Ecclesiological Context	Paper topics	Submit reading record #3 (300 pp)
10	3.4. CP in the Soteriological Context of Postmodern Religious Plurality	Paper topics	
11	4. MISSIOLOGY AND CP		Submit 1 st draft of integrative paper
12	4.1. CP in Intercultural Context	Cross-cultural case studies	Submit reading record #4 (250 pp). Optional submission of 2 nd draft of integrative paper by the end of exams

5. Course Grade Determination

There is no exam in this course. Attendance at a minimum of 75% of the class meetings is required for a passing grade. The chart below reflects the intent of the course in that 80% of what is evaluated (that is, theological material and the integrative paper) concerns the theological nature of the course.

Points	Item of Evaluation	Track 1 Points (Students with church planting experience)	Track 2 Points (Students without church planting experience)
40	Theological Material Required Reading (1000 pp.)	5	5
	Selected Reading (200 pp.)	5	5
	Book Review (900 [450 + 450] words)	30	30
10	Practical Material Reading (50 pp.)		
	Track 1: Case study (300 words) Track 2: Response (300 words)	10	10
40	Integrative Paper (3500 words)	40	40
10	Class Participation	10	10
100		Maximum: 100	Maximum: 100

The following grade scale will be used, but can be varied according to institutional guidelines:

First Class	Second Class	Pass
A+ = 100-97	B+ = 89-85	C+ = 74-70
A = 96-93	B = 84-80	C = 69-65
A- = 92-90	B- = 79-75	C- = 64-60

6. Course Reading Lists

Entries in the lists below were selected on the basis of their actual or potential theological interaction with church planting issues. In many cases only part of the selected entry is relevant.

6.a. Required Reading

- Köstenberger, Andreas J. and Peter T. O'Brien. *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2001.
- Murray, Stuart. *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*. Cambria, U.K.: Paternoster, 1998.
- Shenk, David W. and Ervin R. Stutzman. *Creating Communities of the Kingdom of God: New Testament Models of Church Planting*. Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1988.
- Timmis, Stephen, Tim Chester, Tim Thornborough. *Multipling Churches: Reaching Today's Communities Through Church Planting*. UK: Christian Focus, 2003.

6.b. Recommended Reading

- Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2002.
- Kirk, Andrew. *The Mission of Theology and Theology as Mission*. Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1997.
- Little, Dale W. "Thinking Theologically About Church Planting." [Http://www.cptheo.net](http://www.cptheo.net). (Regular column in *Japan Harvest*, quarterly from 2002 to 2007).
- O'Brien, P. T. *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.
- Stone, Howard W. and James O. Duke. *How to Think Theologically*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- Van Engen, Charles. *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991.
- Van Gelder, Craig. *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Volf, Miroslav. *After our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

6.c. Other Reading (from which recommended readings may be taken)

- Amberson, Talmadge R., ed. *The Birth of Churches: A Biblical Basis for Church Planting*.
- Bowers, Paul. "Church and Mission in Paul." *Journal for the Study of New Testament* 44 (1991): 89-111.
- _____. "Fulfilling the Gospel: The Scope of the Pauline Mission." *JETS* 30 (1987): 185-98.
- Boydston, Bradley Leigh. "Getting Started: Foundations for Church Planting in the Evangelical Covenant Church and a Church Planting Handbook for Laypeople." D.Min. diss., Fuller, 1993.
- Brock, Charles. *The Principles and Practice of Indigenous Church Planting*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981.
- Chaney, Charles L. *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1991.
- Dollar, Harold. *St. Luke's Missiology*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1996.
- Gardner, Harry George. "A Home Mission Board Strategy for Church Planting in the Atlantic United Baptist Convention." D.Min. diss. Fuller, 1993.
- Glasser, Arthur F. "The Evolution of Evangelical Mission Theology since World War II." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 11: 53-64.
- Graham, Steven Douglas. "Starting Healthy Churches; Wagner's Seven Vital Signs Applied to Church Planting." D.Min. diss., Fuller, 1991.
- Green, Michael. *Evangelism in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.
- Hesselgrave, David. *Planting Churches Cross Culturally: A Guide for Home and Foreign Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980.
- _____. *Scripture and Strategy: The Use of the Bible in Postmodern Church and Mission*. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1994.
- _____. "Brian McLaren's Contextualization of the Gospel." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 43 (January 2007): 92-100.
- Hiebert, Paul G. "The Missionary as Mediator of Global Theologizing." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practise in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, 288-308. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.
- Kingdon, David P. "Church Planting in the New Testament." *Searching Together* 13 (Summer 1984): 16-21.
- MacDonald, John, A. "New Structures for Cross-Cultural Church Planting." *Sewanee Theological Review* 37 (1994): 381-98.
- May, Flavius Joseph. "The Book of Acts and Church Growth." D.Min. diss., Fuller, 1989.
- McKain, Larry Dale. "Leadership in Church Planting." D.Min. diss., Fuller, 1993.
- Ott, Craig. "Conclusion: Globalizing Theology." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practise in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, 309-36. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.
- _____. "Matching the Church Planter's Role with the Church Planting Model." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 37 (July 2001): 338-344.
- Plummer, Robert L. "Imitation of Paul and the Church's Missionary Role in 1 Corinthians." *JETS* 44 (June 2001): 219-235.
- Richardson, Kim Leslie. "Sponsoring New and Growing churches: Helping Local Churches Fulfill the Great Commission Through Church Planting." D.Min. diss., Fuller, 1992.

- Rommen, Edward. "Church Planting: Theory and Practice." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 20 (October 1984): 387-89.
- Savage, Kenneth Wayne. "A Biblically Based Model for Church Planting in Cancun, Mexico." D.Min. diss., Oral Roberts University, 1991.
- Sawatsky, Ben A. "A Team Approach to Church Planting in World Class Cities." D.Miss. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1988.
- Scott, Waldron. "Karl Barth's Theology of Mission." *Missiology* 3: 209-24.
- Senior, Donald and Carroll StuhlmueLLer. *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1983.
- Shenk, Wilbert R., ed. *The Transfiguration of Mission: Biblical, Theological and Historical Foundations*. Herald Press, 1993.
- Stackhouse, John G., ed. *Evangelical Ecclesiology: Reality or Illusion?* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.
- Towns, Elmer L. *Getting a Church Started: A Theological and Practical Manual for Those Who Would Plant a Church*. Lynchburg, Virginia: Privately printed, 1982.
- _____. "The Relationship of Church Growth and Systematic Theology." *JETS* 29: 63-70.
- Trites, Allison A. "Church Growth in the Book of Acts." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145: 162-73.
- Van Engen, Charles. *The Growth of the True Church: An Analysis of the Ecclesiology of Church Growth Theory*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1981.