

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Continuing Education Session
In partnership with the
Penn/Del District Assemblies of God
Ministers Institute
October 6-8, 2003

PTHE 640 SPECIALIZED STUDIES: REVITALIZING THE LOCAL CHURCH
(2 or 3 Credits)

Paul F. Martinez, D.Min. (Cand.)

Fall 2003

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the foundational biblical principles of church growth as well as existing barriers that inhibit church growth. These barriers or “plateau stages” in church development will be analyzed, with particular emphasis being placed upon removing and exceeding those barriers. Additionally, the life cycle of churches will be examined as it relates to church growth.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Each participant should demonstrate through the academic, relational and spiritual requirements of this course that he or she has satisfactorily met the following objectives:

Knowledge

1. Have a good understanding of the biblical foundation for church growth,
2. Be familiar with the current body of literature pertaining to church growth, and other existing resources for ongoing church development,
3. Have an awareness of the barriers that inhibit church growth,
4. Be familiar with specific strategies that can be utilized to break barriers to church growth,
5. Have an awareness of the unique challenges of church growth in a postmodern society, and
6. Be familiar with principles and techniques proven effective in reversing the course of declining or plateaued churches.

Attitudes

1. Have an appreciation for the significant factors involved in growing a church,
2. Continued development of a burden for growing a church that reaches unsaved people,
3. Have an appreciation of the importance of understanding barriers to church growth,
4. Have a realistic understanding of the efforts required to grow a church,
5. Have a healthy self-critical perspective toward one's church and its existing growth barriers,
6. Demonstrate a sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit for breaking growth barriers, and
7. Share in the burden of prayer to see churches grow.

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Skills

1. Develop a network of people who can be of assistance throughout the process of breaking church growth barriers,
2. Be able to articulate church growth barriers and the specific strategies needed to move beyond those barriers,
3. Be able to evaluate the life cycle stages of a church,
4. Be able to formulate a strategic plan and process for identifying and breaking growth barriers in one's church, and
5. Be able to identify and lead one's church through the strategic plan and process for breaking growth barriers.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barna, George. *Turnaround Churches*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997.

_____. *The Second Coming of the Church*. Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998.

Gainsbrugh, Jonathan. *Winning the Back Door War*. Elk Grove, CA: self-published, 1993.

George, Carl F., Warren Bird and Ted Engstrom. *How to Break Growth Barriers: Capturing Overlooked Opportunities for Church Growth*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993.

Herrington, Jim, Mike Bonem and James H. Furr. *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Rainer, Thom S. *Effective Evangelistic Churches*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996.

_____. *High Expectations*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999.

Schaller, Lyle. *44 Steps Up Off the Plateau*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.

Southerland, Dan. *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

Towns, Elmer, C. Peter Wagner, Thom S. Rainer. *The Everychurch Guide to Growth: How Any Plateaued Church Can Grow*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998.

METHODOLOGY

This course will be structured around the Minister's Institute seminar being sponsored by the Pennsylvania-Delaware District Council of the Assemblies of God. In addition to participating in this intensive seminar, the student will be required to interact with the resources and develop a

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strategic plan and process for breaking through church growth barriers. This course is intended to be highly practical and useful in the student's personal ministry setting.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. *Required reading.* Read 1000 pages (2 credits) or 1500 pages (3 credits) from the selected bibliography above. If the participant has previously read any of the books included in the selected bibliography for academic credit and has difficulty in accumulating the number of total pages required, another book may be substituted from the additional bibliography at the end of the syllabus. Complete a reading report noting the book read and the number of pages in each book.
2. *Conduct an interview.* Interview, by phone or in person, a pastor who has broken through a growth barrier in his or her church within the past two years. Ideally, this growth barrier will be the same one faced in your church. Write the results of this interview giving attention to strategies/methods used, difficulties encountered, what would be done differently, where would greater emphasis be placed, what help was needed, what help was or was not available, etc. Interview report should be 4-5 pages.
3. *Complete church growth project.* Complete a 10-12 page paper (2 credits) or a 15-20 page paper (3 credits) outlining a strategy for breaking the barriers to growth in the participant's church. Fully develop a strategy that includes planning, implementation and evaluation phases. This is intended to be a step-by-step process that could be followed in your church situation. Engage all significant church growth issues, including the following: growth barriers, church and community demographics, church mission and vision, personnel, finances, church organizational structure, facilities, etc.

All course work is due postmarked no later than January 10, 2004.

Submit all assignments to:

**AGTS Continuing Education
ATTN: Paul Martinez
1435 N. Glenstone Avenue
Springfield, MO 65802
agts-ext@agts.edu**

GRADING PROCEDURE

Reading and Reading Reports	30%
Interview	20%
Church Growth Project	45%

NOTE: Late papers will be penalized at the discretion of the instructor. Work received after the post-session due date will result in a change of grade fee (\$15.00) being charged, even when an extension has been granted by the instructor.

SOME KEY CHURCH GROWTH QUESTIONS

Following are suggested questions to assist you in doing the church growth project. You should answer these types of questions as thoroughly as you can.

- A. Whom are you currently reaching? Whom are you trying to reach? Do you have a specific target group? Give a demographic profile of your church.
- B. What are your goals for converts, growth, and financial development?
- C. What barrier(s) are you facing and what is the appropriate strategy and plan to overcome those barriers?
- D. How much money will you need to invest in your growth strategy? How will you obtain it? When will you need it? Develop a working budget plan.
- E. What specific steps will you take in the planning, implementation and evaluation phase of the process?
- F. Will your church have to change its philosophy of ministry or any other significant factor in its structure such as purpose, priorities, style of ministry, style of worship, ministry groups, or types of ministries offered?
- G. What specifically are you known for and what would you like to be known for--what is your mission and vision? Include an action plan (steps you will take and when).
- H. What steps will you take to bring your current constituents (i.e. Board or Council members, ministry teams, paid or volunteer staff, church members) along in the process? What considerations will be made for those unwilling to change?
- I. What structural or organizational changes will need to be made to produce growth?
- J. Who will serve as your prayer partners?
- K. How will you effectively assimilate new people into the church?
- L. What specifically would you like to see accomplished in your church? Numerical or spiritual growth? Spiritual health? Ministry growth?

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, Leith C. *Dying For Change*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1990.

Barna, George. *Marketing the Church*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1988.

_____. *User Friendly Churches; What Christians Need to Know About the Churches People Love to Go To*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1991.

Bast, Robert L. *Attracting New Members*. Monrovia, CA: Reformed Church in America and Church Growth in America, 1988.

Callahan, Kennon L. *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.

Hadaway, C. Kirk. *Growing Off the Plateau*. Baptist SS Board, 1989.

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Hybels, Lynne & Bill. *Rediscovering Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

Kotter, John. *Leading Change*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.

Logan, Robert E. *Beyond Church Growth*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, Co., 1989.

Martin, Glen and Gary McIntosh. *Finding Them, Keeping Them*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992.

_____. *The Issachar Factor: Understanding Trends That Confront Your Church And Designing A Strategy For Success*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993.

McCarty, Doran. *Leading the Small Church*. Nashville: Broadman, 1991.

McIntosh, Gary L. *Three Generations*. Grand Rapids, Fleming H. Revell, 1995.

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McLaren, Brian. *Reinventing Your Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.

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Miller, C. John. *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986.

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McGavran, Donald and George G. Hunter III. *Church Growth Strategies that Work*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980.

Roozen, David A. and C. Kirk Hadaway, eds. *Church and Denominational Growth*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.

Schaller, Lyle E. *Assimilating New Members*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978.

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Spader, Dan and Gary Mayes. *Growing a Healthy Church*. Chicago: Moody, 1991.

Towns, Elmer L. *An Inside Look at 10 of Today's Most Innovative Churches*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990.

Wagner, C. Peter. *Leading Your Church to Growth*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984.

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Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church; Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

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SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus revised by Paul Martinez, September 2003.