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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Introduction to Church Growth is a basic introduction into the thought, principals, and actions which make up Biblical Church Growth. Because of all of the “mudslinging” at Church Growth in the last two decades we will discuss the problems that have been mentioned and talk about what real Biblical Church Growth is.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

**Cognitive Objectives**

In this course you will be expected to learn the basic framework which makes up the Church Growth world of thinking. Since Church Growth is a different way of thinking even from basic mission understanding, you will have to learn a new terminology.

**Affective Objectives**

The affective objectives of this introductory course will be that any negative passions or thought patterns that you have developed towards Church Growth can be dealt with. There are strong feelings concerning this body of thinking and we will discuss this.
Reflective Objectives
Students will be encouraged to commit themselves to be open to learning what Church Growth really is, and to understand how it can be used in evangelism and mission work. In my opinion, Church Growth has been the greatest contribution to mission thinking in the modern era. Because of the work of Donald McGavran and those who have followed after him, I estimate that millions of people have come to know Christ that would not have if Church Growth understanding not been utilized.

Course Requirements

Textbooks

This book is vitally important, because it was the first true church growth book that was written, and because of this book the church growth movement was initiated.

This key book is at the heart of the Church Growth movement. If I only had one Church Growth book this would be the one I would want.

Because of all the negative feedback concerning Church Growth, Gary McIntosh’s book is extremely important, because it carries us back to the biblical basis of Church Growth.

This book is certainly dated, but it contains my favorite thinking concerning American church growth. In this book you will find seven key principles concerning the growth of American churches.


All of your work will be put on Moodle—not emailed to me, please. You will read each of these books in the order given in the course calendar. You should do a book review on each of the books which contains NO MORE than 2 pages double-spaced text. In the book review first put a bibliographical entry at the top of the first page. Next allow about half a page and put the heading “What this book is all about.” After half page put another heading “Key things in the book,” allow half of a page and the last section is “An evaluation of the book.” Then allow a half page. In the evaluation section you should discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the book and your likes and dislikes. Be sure to type about two full pages for each book review, I want to see your thinking. At the end of the second page at the bottom put “I have read this book in its entirety,” and check it.

You will do 2 projects for this vital course.

1. First you will do a church growth study of the church where you attend, or another church if you do not have a church home yet. Please consult with me before you do a church other than your church. Thorough instructions will be given later concerning how to do your church growth study.
2. The second project will be an interview study of 2 growing churches that you choose. These churches can be Memphis churches, or in the surrounding area, or they can be churches you know about that are growing in your home area. In this study you will ask key questions that you will design. Key questions such as; can you tell me how your church has grown, transfer or baptismal growth, and the approximate ratio of these two? What are the cultural factors surrounding your church that contributed to your growth (a new community, a major tragedy that created openness, etc)? What were the methods you used to help your church grow? How did your church do evangelism? From here you should be able to make up several other questions which you will ask.

It’s always best to interview the senior pastor, but if you cannot get an interview with the senior pastor go for the associate pastor or the educational director. If you would like to interview a church planter of a new church plant that has experienced growth this would be good. Just make sure that the church has experienced some growth. You will submit the churches you will study to me before you do them so we do not study the same churches more than once.

Grading Scale

Grading Percentages are as follows;

Class Participation 10%
Book Reviews 20%
Examinations 30%
Study of your Church 20%
Interviews 20%

Course Attendance

Of course you will not come to class but you will sign on at least three times every week to the course. This a requirement for all courses.

Late Papers

A late paper is penalized 10% for each day that it is late. This includes Saturday but not Sunday. I will not accept papers after the last day of the class.

General Class Rules and Understandings
This is probably my favorite subject to teach along with Spiritual Formation. They simply go hand in hand. I hope you get a heart for church growth and understand the dynamics of it and how it can help you in your church. Let’s have fun in this class. I plan to be cordial and kind to you, and I expect the same in return. I want to help you in any way I can, so feel free to contact me even if it’s at home. My home number is 662-349-0407. I really want to help you any way I can.

**Syllabus May Change at the Discretion of the Professor**

Please be aware that every week I will be putting 2 to 4 items up for you to answer. Most of these will be simple discussion items, and they will be straightforward and very understandable. You must do all the items which I suggest, or you will lose a point off your final grade for any item you do not address.

Thank you for your participation, understanding, and good attitude. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus during the semester.

**Course Schedule**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 30th</td>
<td>Book review due on Wagner</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 10th</td>
<td>Book review due on McIntosh’s book</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 19th</td>
<td>Book review due on McGavran’s <em>Bridges of God</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>February 27th</td>
<td>Critique of Bright’s tract</td>
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<td>February 28th</td>
<td>Submit churches you will interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 3rd</td>
<td>Book review due on <em>Understanding Church Growth</em> (UCG) part 1 and 2, page 1-90</td>
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<td>March 3-6th</td>
<td>Interview presentations should be put online for all students you will volunteer for a certain date, first come first serve</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 6-23rd</td>
<td>Spring break</td>
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<td>March 26th</td>
<td>Mid-Term examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 30th</td>
<td>Book review due on McGavran (UCG) part 3 &amp; 4 page 91-152</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2nd</td>
<td>Book review due on McGavran (UCG) part 5 &amp; 6 page 153-295</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 27-30th</td>
<td>Church Growth study of your church—should be put online for all students to see</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Check Seminary Calendar</td>
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**CHURCH GROWTH BIBLIOGRAPHY**


Gates, Alan Frederick. *Christianity and Animism in Taiwan*. San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1979. 250 pp. A thorough study of how animism and traditional religion has penetrated Taiwanese life through the ages, and suggestions as to how Christianity can meet the challenge.


Hunter, Kent R. *Your Church Has Personality: Find Your Focus-Maximize Your Mission*. Corunna, IN: Church Growth Center, 1997.


From this case study, Kwast extrapolates many universally-valid principles of church growth.


A study of the homogeneous unit principle as illustrated by the Hakka Chinese in Taiwan. The lack of growth there may be due to poor methods rather than inherent resistance.


This book highlights the theological and methodological issues in missiology with a strong appeal for the ongoing need for cross-cultural missionaries and church planting among the unreached.


A very insightful case study of why churches have or have not grown.


A very important analysis of the dynamics of growth of one of the fastest growing churches in Africa.


Six audio cassettes and workbook. The tapes are a condensation of Wagner’s course MC 520 in which he comments on McGavran’s Understanding Church Growth. The book is included in this self-study pack.

A model of thorough, extensive, and sensitive church growth research. This won the McGavran Church Growth Award.

A criticism of the CG Movement – yet he misses their point and calls them “user friendly movement” the CG Movement


This digs deeply into the history of the church in Brazil and looks optimistically into the future.

The remarkable saga of the growth of the Foursquare Church in the Philippines. This church grew with very little help from foreign missionaries or foreign funds.

While Madras is considered the most Christian city in India, Nelson shows that much more growth can take place if the proper strategy is followed. An excellent contribution to urban literature.

The huge Aymara tribe living in the high Andes in Bolivia and Peru is very receptive to the Gospel. Here is a challenging story of how God is working there with universal growth insights.

A ground-breaking book which is opening many doors to more effective strategy planning for reaching Muslims. How to be a Christian in a Muslim way.
This is especially good on predicting resistance or receptivity of people groups.


Rainer, Thom S. *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001

One of the original, ground-breaking studies of church growth written under McGavran’s supervision.

To date the only continent-wide church growth study ever made. This is a treasure house of information about churches in Latin America.

A skillfully planned and executed strategy for multiplying urban churches that actually is working.


One of the pioneer country-wide studies done under McGavran. Essential for understanding dynamics of growth in Korea.

A skillfully designed strategy for the spread of the Gospel in one of the key areas of the world.
A complete view of Indonesia and how churches have grown in the distinct regions of this huge nation.

Much more than a focus on Bolivia, this draws out principles of ethnohistory, ethnotheology, and ethnostrategy for missiology in general.

Contrary to some reports, there are growing churches in Japan. Snider describes some growing from 20 percent DGR to 400 percent DGR.

A complete history of Presbyterian missions in Pakistan with comparisons with many other denominations as well.

An analysis of the spread of the Gospel among Tahitians, Maoris, and Tongans with valuable theoretical conclusions.

A collection of forty of the best writings of a pioneer anthropologically-oriented missiologist.

A notable and carefully documented account of the spread of the faith in one of the world’s most explosive growth areas.


Case studies of the superchurches of the world (including U.S.A.) with analyses of the growth factors which have made it happen.
How Protestant churches can take advantage of a new openness in Spain for the spread of the Gospel.


Wagner’s important study of America’s church diseases—a classic.


A complete history of all the Protestant groups in Bolivia from the beginning to 1968.
Includes a section on Evangelism in Depth.

One of the early church growth studies of a nation, focusing on Christian and Missionary Alliance, Evangelical Covenant, and Foursquare.

An SBC study of the relationship of worship to growth.

A fresh look at missions in Africa with well-researched case studies from Liberia.

An excellent study of urban church growth by a practitioner who has applied church growth theory effectively.

The pioneer research on Third World missions. This book is a classic.