

Abilene Christian University
Graduate School of Theology
Church Planting and Development
Sept. 21-23, Oct. 19-21

BMIS 648
3 credit hours

Dallas Education Center
Dallas, Texas

Class Times: 1:00-5:00 and 6:00-10:00 p.m. on Thursdays
8:00-12:00 a.m.; 1:00-5:00 p.m. on Fridays
8:00-12:00 a.m. on Saturdays

Place: Dallas Education Center at LeTourneau University, 5710 LBJ Freeway, Suite 150, Dallas, Texas 75240 (Telephone: 800-688-5327)

Professor:
Dr. Gailyn Van Rheenen

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Web Sites:
www.missionalive.org
www.missiology.org

Meeting with Teacher:
By appointment

Mission

The mission of ACU *is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.* Located within the College of Biblical Studies at Abilene Christian University, the Graduate School of Theology (GST) seeks *to equip men and women for effective missional leadership for ministry in all its forms, and to provide strong academic foundations for theological inquiry.* By equipping students with the requisite skills, knowledge, and experience, the GST aspires to produce graduates with trained minds and transformed hearts.

Purpose

Church Planting and Development is designed to equip passionate leaders to become evangelists and church planters among post-modern peoples through an interrelated process of *theological reflection* upon the nature of mission and the church, *cultural analysis* of urban church planting contexts, *historical understanding* of the narratives that form perspectives of church planting, and *strategy formation* outlining practices reflecting the will of God in specific cultural contexts (<http://www.missiology.org/mmr/mmr26.htm>). The course focuses on practically equipping missional leaders to plant contextualized, reproducing churches in various cultural contexts.

Audience

Church Planting and Development is especially important for those with passion for evangelism and church planting. Learners pursuing the M.A. in Missions or the MDiv Missions Track will take this course to fulfill a degree requirement. Others will elect to take this class to enable local churches to become church planting churches or in preparation for becoming church planters. Auditors are welcome depending on availability of seats in the classroom.

Course Description

Church Planting and Development provides the theological, cultural, and practical preparation for planting new churches and developing church planting movements.

Course Goals

Church Planting and Development enables learners to . . .

- evaluate their call and abilities as evangelists and church planters.
- explain theological paradigms formative to incarnational, missional ministry.
- develop a biblical theology of the church to facilitate clarity of the task of church planting.
- analyze contexts of church planting.
- perceive the historical narratives that form both the evangelists and the cultural contexts of their church planting ministry.
- implement theologically-focused, culturally-relevant strategies to plant and mature new churches.

Required Textbooks and Readings

- Frazee, Randy. *The Connecting Church: Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2001.
- Stetzer, Ed. *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*. Broadman & Holman Publishers: Nashville, 2003.
- Webber, Robert E. *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids, 2002.
- Van Rhee, Gailyn. Learning . . . growing . . . collaborating . . . phasing out. *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. 36 (Jan. 2000):36-47. (Can be accessed at www.missiology.org/missionsprocess/index.htm)

Suggested Texts

- Garrison, David. *Church Planting Movements*. Richmond, VA: International Missions Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1999. (Supplied by the teacher).

- Jones, Tom (ed). *Church Planting from the Ground Up*. Joplin, MO: College Press, 2004.
- McLaren, Brian. *The Church on the Other Side*. Zondervan, 2000.

Competencies and Measurements

<i>By the end of this course, learners will be able to:</i>	<i>Achievement of the competency will be measured by:</i>
1. Evaluate their call and abilities as evangelists and church planters.	1. Group reflections in class; personal interaction with mentors, including the teacher of this course.
2. Explain the theological paradigms formative to incarnational, missional ministry.	2. Class discussion, reading report on the Webber and Stetzer texts.
3. Develop a biblical picture of church through theological reflection on specific biblical texts.	3. Class discussion, integrative project.
4. Analyze contexts of church planting.	4. Class discussion; integrative project
5. Perceive the historical narratives that form both evangelists and the cultural contexts of their church planting ministry.	5. Class discussion; integrative project.
6. Implement theologically-focused, culturally-relevant strategies to plant and mature new churches.	6. Class presentation and final paper; class discussion; final project.

Preliminary Course Outline

- I. Why Plant Churches?
- II. Qualities of a Church Planter
- III. Missional Leadership
- IV. The Missional Helix: From Theology to Practice
- V. Thinking Theologically (about Church Planting)
 - A. Theology of Mission
 1. *Missio Dei*
 2. The Kingdom of God
 3. Incarnation
 4. Crucifixion
 - B. Theology of the Church (Ecclesiology)

- VI. Navigating the Culture (Developing a Cultural Profile)
 - A. Participant-Observation
 - B. The Ethnographic Interview
 - C. Demographics
 - D. Comparing Life Histories
 - E. Worldview Analysis
- VII. Perceiving Historical Flows
 - A. Personal Histories
 - B. Restoration Histories
 - C. Cultural Histories
- VIII. Developing Contextual Strategies
 - A. Defining Strategy
 - B. Starting with the End in Mind
 - C. Developing Ministry Flow Charts
 - D. Congregational Processes of Spiritual Formation
 - E. Spiritual Formation in Small Groups
 - F. Intergenerational Small Groups
 - G. Missional Worship
 - H. Building Shared Vision
 - I. Team Building
 - J. Making Disciples
 - K. Children's Ministry
 - L. Launching with Momentum
 - M. Missional Connection to Community
 - N. Personal Care
 - O. Examples of Strategy Models for Church Planting
 - P. Stages of Mission Movement Development

Class Attendance

Regular attendance is expected of all students. If learners are absent for any reason during this short course, they must talk with the professor.

Course Assignments

Pre-Course Readings: Before the commencement of the course, learners will write a three-page, single-spaced reflection on each of the texts listed below. These reflections should (1) give the major thrusts of the readings and (2) critically engage its content by raising implications, questions, and objections and by applying the material to church-planting ministry. If you register late for the class, please contact the teacher personally for a rescheduling of this first assignment.

- Webber, Robert E. *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002.

- Stetzer, Ed. *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*. Broadman & Holman Publishers: Nashville, 2003.
2. **A Theology of the Church**. Based on the readings, research into significant texts about the church, and class lectures and discussions, learners will write a five-page ecclesiology in preparation for church planting ministry. This ecclesiology should reflect (1) effective exegesis of two significant passages from 1 Peter, Ephesians, and/or other books of the New Testament and (2) application of the meanings of these texts to church planting in a specific cultural context. In regard to the second aspect, the learner will answer the question, “What will a missional church look like in this specific cultural context?”
 3. **A Historical and Cultural Analysis for Church Planting**. Based upon class lectures and discussions, learners will write a five-page historical and cultural analysis of some specific prospective church-planting context of personal interest. This analysis will present the results of effective participant-observation, ethnographic interviewing, and demographic analysis.
 4. **Mid-Course Readings**. Before the second weekend of the class, learners will write a one-page, single-spaced reflection on the following journal article: Van Rheezen, Gailyn. Learning . . . growing . . . collaborating . . . phasing out. *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. 36 (Jan. 2000):36-47. (Also available at www.missiology.org/missionsprocess/index.htm). These reflections should (1) give the major thrust of the readings and (2) critically engage its content by raising implications, questions, and objections and by applying the materials to church-planting ministry.
 5. **Post-Course Reading**. Learners will write a three-page, single-spaced reflection on Randy Frazee’s *The Connecting Church: Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2001) in preparation for writing their contextual strategy model. This reflection should (1) give the major thrusts of the reading and (2) critically engage its content by raising implications, questions, and objections and by applying the material to church-planting ministry.
 6. **A Contextual Strategy Model**. Learners will develop a contextual model of strategy for a specific church planting which builds on the theological and historio-cultural perspectives of their previous papers. This paper will describe the practice of ministry of a proposed church planting based upon critical research and imagination.

Course Grading

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percentage of Final Grade</u>	<u>Date Due</u>
Pre-Course Readings	20%	Sept. 21*
Theology of the Church	20%	Oct. 19
Mid-Course Reading	5%	Oct. 19
Historical and Cultural Analysis	15%	Oct. 19
Post-Course Reading	10%	Nov. 4
Contextual Strategy Model	30%	Nov. 25

* If you register late for the class, please contact the teacher for a rescheduling of this first assignment.

Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined in ACU's Academic Integrity Policy, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying and represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Violations will be addressed as described in the Policy. While the university enforces the Policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one's desire to imitate God's nature in his/her life. Every member of the faculty, staff and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship and research. The full Policy is available for review at the Provost's office web site (<http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost>) and the following offices: provost, college deans, dean of campus life, director of student judicial affairs, director of residential life, and education and academic departments.

Professor Role and Availability

The role of the teacher during this course is that of mentor in equipping class participants to think through the nature of missional ministry and the process of developing contextual strategies for church planting based upon theological reflection. He is available for personal advising on each project of this course by telephone or email.