



2007 Course Outlines

Evangelism in a Post-Modern Era

Evangelism is the process of communicating the Good News to those who have not heard it or who have not yet responded to it. As such, evangelism is a prime responsibility of the Church. Unfortunately, in North America evangelism is often conceived of (both inside and outside the church) as something that is coercive, manipulative, and bad mannered. In fact, genuine New Testament evangelism is characterized by a warm-hearted, loving desire on the part of "one beggar to tell other beggars where to find bread" (D. T. Niles).

In this course, students will be challenged to:

- Rethink evangelism with broader understandings of sharing the Good News,
- Rethink our ideas of conversion which often define our methodologies of evangelism,
- Look at possibilities of evangelism in our post-modern age

Students will be asked to reflect upon how we have historically approached evangelism and then look at new ways of engaging in the ministry of evangelism that are more wholistic. We will examine New Testament evangelical practices and imagine ways we might recapture a deeper understanding of sharing the Christian story in a post-modern age.

Suggested Reading:

Abraham, William J. *The Logic of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989, 233 pp.

Finney, John. *Emerging Evangelism*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Lts., 2004.

Kallenberg, Brad. *Live to Tell: Evangelism for a Postmodern Age*. Grand Rapids, Brazos Press, 2002.

Peace, Richard. *Conversion in the NT: Paul and the Twelve*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999.

Peace, Richard. *Holy Conversation: Talking About God in Everyday Life*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.

Stone, Bryan. *Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness*. Brazos Press, 2007.

Richard Peace is the Robert Boyd Munger Professor of Evangelism and Spiritual Formation at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. Dr. Peace is a graduate of Yale University (B.E.) and Fuller Theological Seminary (M.Div.). He earned a Ph.D. in biblical studies at the University of Natal (South Africa). A prolific author, Dr. Peace has over a hundred and fifty titles to his credit including *Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), which proposes a new paradigm for evangelism. His most recent book is entitled *Holy Conversation: Talking About God in Everyday Life* which seeks to help lay people learn how to talk about their faith in natural, non-confrontational ways (InterVarsity Press, 2006). He has been involved in starting three church-based outreach and training ministries.



Spiritual Formation in a Post-Modern Age

Spiritual formation has become a catch-phrase for the modern church wrestling with ways to connect people to practices of discipleship. Yet the practice of spiritual formation has roots that go back to the founding of our faith. Spiritual formation points to the forming of one's soul into the likeness of the God who created us.

In this course, students will be asked to explore:

- Spiritual formation in the early Church,
- Spiritual formation of church planters,
- Spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines

We will explore the idea of evangelism not only being grounded in the outgoing, robust telling of the Christian story, but also in the silence of reflection, meditation and contemplation. We will look at practices of spiritual formation that provide a foundation for progressive evangelism as well as keep church planters rooted in the passion and vision that drives them to plant a church.

Suggested Reading:

Chase, Steven. *The Tree of Life: Models of Christian Prayer*. Baker, 2005.

Chittister, Joan. *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today*. HarperCollins, 1991.

Collins, Kenneth, ed. *Exploring Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Reader*. Baker, 2000.

Holt, Bradley. *Thirsty for God*. 2nd ed., Augsburg, 1993, 2005.

Peace, Richard. The Spiritual Formation Series: *Spiritual Journaling; Spiritual Autobiography; Contemplative Bible Reading; & Meditative Prayer*. NavPress, 1998.

Rolheiser, Ronald. *The Holy Longing*. Doubleday, 1999.

Thompson, Marjorie. *Soul Feast*. Westminster/John Knox, 1995.

Richard Peace is the Robert Boyd Munger Professor of Evangelism and Spiritual Formation at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. Dr. Peace is a graduate of Yale University (B.E.) and Fuller Theological Seminary (M.Div.). He earned a Ph.D. in biblical studies at the University of Natal (South Africa). A prolific author, Dr. Peace has over a hundred and fifty titles to his credit including *Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), which proposes a new paradigm for evangelism. His most recent book is entitled *Holy Conversation: Talking About God in Everyday Life* which seeks to help lay people learn how to talk about their faith in natural, non-confrontational ways (InterVarsity Press, 2006). He has been involved in starting three church-based outreach and training ministries.



Church Planting in a Multi-Cultural World

In a world which is increasing in its diversity, we must pay particular attention to creating Christian communities sensitive to the needs, traditions, and practices of all the people in our communities. While there is still reason to argue that Sunday mornings are the most segregated hour in our week, the United Church of Christ honors a commitment to bring radical inclusion and welcome into its worshiping communities and experiences. We truly believe that “no matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome” in the United Church of Christ.

In this course, students will hear from presenters about the challenges and opportunities they face in their diverse settings. Students will have the chance to dialogue with the presenters, ask questions and learn from one another as we seek to understand our differences.

Suggested Reading:

Anderson, David. *Multicultural Ministry: Finding Your Church’s Unique Rhythm*. Zondervan, 2004.

Cone, James H. *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation and Black Theology*. Eerdmans, 1986.

Francis, Hozell C. *Church Planting in the African American Context*. Zondervan, 1999.

Lee, Jung Young. *Journeys at the Margin: Towards an Autobiographical Theology in American Asian Perspective*. Liturgical Press, 1999.

Ortiz, Manuel. *The Hispanic Challenge: Opportunities Confronting the Church*. InterVarsity Press, 1994.

Recinos, Harold. *Who Comes in the Name of the Lord? Jesus at the Margins*. Abingdon Press, 1997.



Edwin Aponte is Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean at Lancaster Theological Seminary in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he also serves as Professor of Religion and Culture.



Cindy Andrews-Looper is the founding pastor of Holy Trinity Community Church, UCC in Nashville, Tennessee. Holy Trinity is a predominantly LGBT congregation and is one of the fastest growing in the SE Conference.



Susan Mitchell is the co-pastor of Sankofa UCC, a new church start in Atlanta, Georgia. Susan offers a “shared leadership” model for church birthing, focusing on empowering lay leadership in her church.



Andrew Kim is the co-pastor with his wife, Sarah, of Salim UCC, a Korean congregation in Roswell, Georgia. Andrew also works as a financial planner.

Leadership for Vital Congregations

We have learned over the years of planting new churches that the key to successful church starts is leadership. The leader is the vision-caster, spiritual guide, motivator, organizer and director. The leader sets the tone, pace and health of the new church in the ways that she or he develop the church from the very first day. Having the skills and talents to lead effectively are essential.

In this course, students will:

- Examine the key qualities of effect church planting leaders,
- Learn about practices of discernment as we listen for the call of God,
- Determine methods of efficient service which furthers the vision and mission of your new church,
- Explore creative ways to engage the community in worship,
- Envision articulate ways helping your church members share their faith with others.

Through looking at the Old Testament story of King Solomon, students will learn modern leadership principles vital to Christian leaders today. They will use biblical models from several different versions of the Bible to understand the dynamics of good leadership so they can become more effective leaders and grow their congregations.

Suggested Reading:

Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books, 1995.

Samuel, Kenneth L. *Solomon's Success: Four Essential Keys to Leadership*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006.

Wood, Stanley. *Extraordinary Leaders in Extraordinary Times*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006.

In March of 1987, Doctor Samuel organized the Victory for the World Church which has dual standing as an independent Baptist Church, and an active congregation of the United Church of Christ. Situated in a growing eastern suburb of Atlanta called Stone Mountain, the Victory Church seeks to address the total needs of the total person through a broad array of ministries and services which promote the spiritual development, educational enhancement, physical fitness and social empowerment of every child of God – regardless of race, gender, culture, class or sexual orientation. In 2001, Dr. Samuel and the Victory Church completed construction on a 3000 seat Worship Center, replete with classrooms, offices, a library, a bookstore, a recording studio and a 500 seat Fellowship Hall. In addition, the Kenneth L. Samuel (KLS) Community Life Center houses a full court gymnasium, additional classrooms, offices and a computer lab. The 25 acre Victory campus also houses the Victory Christian Academy, which serves grades K3 through 5th grade. Doctor Samuel is the proud parent of one daughter, Kendalle Marye, and resides in Lithonia, Georgia.



Church Planting 101: Vision and Mission Field

Proverbs tells us that “where there is no vision, the people will perish.” Vision is important to the success of a new church. In fact, a compelling vision grabs hold of people and will not let them go. They have a clear sense that not only *could* this new church exist; they feel a moral obligation that this church *should* exist. But most churches share similar visions, values and missions. Their effectiveness in growing and connecting with the community comes from two things – an ability to communicate their vision and sensitivity to the mission field. New churches must be rooted and connected to the communities in which they are planted.

In this course, students will learn:

- How to articulate their vision and mission,
- How to connect with the people living in their mission field,
- The basic lifecycle of a church and the types of church starts.

Students will engage in interactive exercises that allow them time to experiment with talking about their church with people who might be potential members. They will also receive feedback from their facilitator and fellow classmates on ways to improve their vision expressions and ideas for connecting with the people in their demographics.

Suggested Reading:

Buckingham, Marcus. *First, Break All the Rules*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999.

Malphurs, Aubrey. *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.

Stanly, Andy. *Visioneering*. Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 1999.

In January of 1996, Rev. Cynthia Andrews-Looper moved from Greenville, South Carolina to Nashville, TN. In August of that same year she started a Bible Study that grew into what is today Holy Trinity Community Church, an affirming Christian community, the largest predominately gay and lesbian congregation in Tennessee, with 350 members. Locally, she is on the board of directors of the Interfaith Alliance of Middle Tennessee.

She considers the events of the past several years to be of great significance in her spiritual journey. "Today I live with hope, peace and joy that I only dreamed of in the past. I came face to face in spirit with a Holy God and found an unconditional love that inspired me to share this hope. We serve a God whose arms are open to anyone who will walk into them. Discovering that love is truly life-changing. We want people to find God's loving embrace at Holy Trinity. If we accomplish that, we have succeeded in our mission."



Church Planting 101: Discovering Your Mission Field

Knowing who God has called you to reach is among the first steps to building a new church. Many times, planters assume that they know a community if they get to know a few people and walk around for a weekend. But knowing your mission field is more than just assumptions and good guesses. It involves demographic research, interviews, census research and building personal relationships.

In this course, students will learn:

- How to use basic demographic research services,
- How to discover social patterns, stories and values of your mission field,
- Ways to connect to the stories of those living in the area you feel called to serve,
- Developing promotional material that speaks to your mission field.

Students will reflect on the development of the national Still Speaking campaign and the learnings from its implementation. They will also hear stories of how churches are creatively living into marketing and promotion of their congregations around the country.

Suggested Reading:

Barna, George. *Growing Your Church from the Outside In*. Ventura: Regal Books, 2002.

Stevens, Tim and Tony Morgan. *Simply Strategic Growth: Attracting a Crowd to Your Church*. Loveland: Group Publishing, 2005.

Easum, William and Bandy, Thomas. *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.

Hunter, George. *Radical Outreach*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003.

Patton, Jeff. *It Could Happen Here*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002.

Ron Buford is a consultant with the UCC Congregational Vitality Initiative Team. As the creator of the national Still Speaking Campaign, Ron Buford, birthed a brand and marketing strategy for the UCC that has changed the face of denomination. Ron, who enjoyed a distinguished career in corporate marketing before joining the UCC's national staff in 2000, brought organization and vision to the marketing strategy of the UCC in ways that will be felt for years. A 1977 graduate of the University of Rochester in New York, Buford first served as the denomination's public relations and marketing manager. Ron currently lives in Cleveland.



Church Planting 101: Engaging Your Mission Field

So now you have a small group of people signed on to help you birth a church, you have studied your mission field and have a sense of the people living around you, and now you need to start pulling together a new church. Where do you start? How do you connect with the people in your community and introduce them to your new church? How do you move this from being a “dream” to being a real, worshipping Christian community?

In this course, students will:

- Learn how to host “umbrella” events that attract the community,
- Learn how to create a culture of “inviting” in your church,
- Determine when is the best time to “launch” your church,
- Develop timelines for the first phase of a church launch,
- Learn the basics of networking and connecting to leaders in your community,

Students will have the opportunity to develop timelines for their own church planting projects and receive feedback from the facilitator and their peers. They will also learn the basics of assembling a launch team and gathering the needed resources to have a strong launch.

Suggested Reading:

Barna, George. *Evangelism That Works*. Ventura: Regal Books, 1995.

Hunter, George. *How to Reach Secular People*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.

Reese, Martha Grace. *Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2006.

A music scholar and teacher who answered God’s call to ministry would be an appropriate description of the life of Dr. Ozzie E. Smith, Jr. Having earned a Masters of Education in Music, and the Master of Divinity and the Doctor of Ministry degrees, Dr. Smith has established a wonderful way of using his music and the Gospel message to bring hope and encouragement to God’s people everywhere.

Ordained in 1994 at Trinity United Church of Christ, Dr. Smith served this congregation as Associate Pastor/Music Staff Supervisor for six years. In 1996 Dr. Smith was called to organize Covenant United Church of Christ, a new church start in South Holland, Illinois. It is there that he serves the congregation of Covenant and its surrounding community through affiliations as an Executive Board and Board Member of Advocate HealthCare, Chair, Governing Council Advocate Trinity Hospital. He shares his life with his wife, Barbara, of 32 years, and their three children, Lauran, Dr. Ozzie III, and Brian.



Church Planting 101: Fundraising & Stewardship

As church planters, you are working to promote growth – both in the number of people attending and in their spiritual development. Growth takes place in the real world of practical plans and mundane activities. Growth occurs in spite of the imperfections of individuals and groups. As your community grows, the needs of the group will change and the financial needs and obligations will grow. One of the greatest skills of a new church start pastor is the ability to raise money and to teach their members about stewardship.

In this course, students will learn:

- Effective strategies for finding “virtue” capitalists
- Ways to ask for money and raise money within your community
- Ways to expand our understanding of stewardship beyond money,
- Techniques for teaching stewardship from the very beginning of your church.

Students will have the chance to brainstorm with one another funding strategies for their new churches. They will also learn about the UCC commitment to OCWM and ways they can teach their members about the various forms of Christian stewardship.

Suggested Reading:

Ahern, Tom. *How to Write Fundraising Materials That Raise More Money: The Art, the Science, the Secrets*. Medfield: Emerson and Church Publishers, 2007.

“Inspiring Generosity.” For Stewardship resource information contact: Tracy Carnes, Associate Minister for Stewardship Resources, 216.736.3858, carnest@ucc.org.

Searcy, Nelson and Kerrick Thomas. *Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch*. Ventura: Regal Books, 2006.

Rev. Michael S. Piazza is a spiritual visionary, author and social justice advocate who currently serves as Dean of the Cathedral of Hope as well as President of Hope for Peace and Justice, a non-profit organization whose mission is equipping progressive people of faith to be champions for peace and justice. A native of Georgia, Rev. Piazza has served in ministry for more than three decades, pastoring churches in Texas, Georgia, Oklahoma and Florida. He holds Bachelor Degrees in history and psychology from Valdosta State College in Georgia and a Master of Divinity from the Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta.

Rev. Piazza has six published books, *Holy Homosexuals*, *Rainbow Family Values*, *Mourning to Morning*, *Growth or Death*, *Queeries: Questions Lesbians and Gays have for God*, and the recently released *The Real antiChrist: How America Sold its Soul*. He is currently at work on *Prophetic Renewal*, a book designed to help restore vitality to liberal congregations. Rev. Piazza and his partner Bill have been together since 1980 and have two daughters.



Church Planting 101: Worship and Discipleship

People today are ready to hear the Good News of God's love through Jesus Christ from a church that can show them how it matters to their lives. Relevancy has been a challenge for the Christian church in this century. But it should not be this way. As Yvette Flunder says in her book, *Where the Edge Gathers*, "It is not necessary to choose between a Spirit-filled oppressive church and a cold, dead, liberal church. Church can be very effervescent and joyful while simultaneously being theologically liberating, justice oriented, culturally appropriate, and inclusive." Worship and discipleship are at the heart of creating this kind of church.

In this course, students will discuss:

- The importance of relevant, Biblically-based, inclusive preaching,
- How to prepare for the preaching moment in worship,
- The power of music in a worship experience,
- Ways to intentionally strengthen discipleship within your community,

Students will be challenged to create vibrant, life-giving worship experiences for the people within their mission field. They will be inspired by the stories of transformation through Christian worship. Through the synergistic relationship between the pastor and congregation in call and response, the students will learn to listen for God's call to new ways of preaching, teaching and leading the people of God.

Suggested Reading:

Flunder, Yvette. *Where the Edge Gathers: Building a Community of Radical Inclusion*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005.

Mitman, Russell. *Worship in the Shape of Scripture*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001.

Rev. Yvette Flunder founded the City of Refuge Community Church UCC in 1991 in order to unite a gospel ministry with a social ministry. Preaching a message of action, the church has experienced steady numerical and spiritual growth and is now located in the south of Market area of San Francisco at 1025 Howard Street. A native San Franciscan, Rev. Flunder is a third generation preacher with roots in the Church of God in Christ. In 1984 Rev. Flunder began performing and recording with "Walter Hawkins and the Family" and the Love Center Choir. Rev. Flunder is an ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ and a graduate of the Ministry Studies and Master of Arts programs at the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California. She received a Doctor of Ministry degree from San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo California.

In June 2003 Rev. Flunder was consecrated Presiding Bishop of Refuge Ministries/Fellowship 2000 a multi-denominational fellowship of 50+ primarily African American Christian leaders and laity representing churches and faith-based organizations from all parts of the country and Africa.



Church Planting 101: Ten Challenges New Church Starts Face

Every church start pastor makes mistakes in the process of birthing a new church. This is high-risk ministry with great rewards and great dangers. The key to navigating this adventure wisely is to learn from the successes and mistakes of those who have gone before. In this course, we will look at the top ten challenges that many new church start pastors face in their first three years.

In this course, students will:

- Learn about the common mistakes church planters make,
- Hear stories from research gathered from new church start autopsies
- Learn how to put warning systems in place to protect your new church

Students will learn the basic “dos” and “don’ts” as they get their new church off the ground. They will also have the opportunity to talk with pastors who have birthed churches in the past 10 years and learn from their experience.

Suggested Reading:

Malphurs, Aubrey. *Planting Growing Churches*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.

Moore, Ralph. *Starting a New Church: The Church Planter's Guide to Success*. Ventura: Regal Books, 2002.

The Church Planting Notebook from the Local Church Ministries Evangelism Team, UCC

Rev. Paul B. Nickerson is an ordained UCC Minister of 27 years and serves on the Massachusetts Conference Staff working on evangelism, vitality and new church starts. Paul is also a Senior Associate with Griffith Coaching of Denver, Colorado, the leading coaching outfit in the country. Paul trains coaches, sets up new church start systems, and works with new and turnaround pastors.

Paul resides in Beverly, Massachusetts with his wife, Rev. Dr. Marlayna Schmidt and he has two sons, Kyle 24 and Blair 20, as well as a 9 year-old golden retriever named McAuley.

