

SOWING SEEDS OF GLADNESS:  
CHURCH PLANTING AND ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP  
Tentative Syllabus  
IDS 8450

“I defy the tyranny of precedent. I go for anything new that might improve the past.” — Clara Barton, *The Story Of My Childhood*

Spring Semester 2018

HYBRID - online with bi-weekly small group meetings via ZOOM

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Limit: 5-8 (pin # required)

3 Units

### I. Description

This innovative hybrid course is designed for students interested in new church planting and entrepreneurial leadership in congregations and beyond. Course material will include historical and theological reflections on when and how new faith communities have been seeded and cultivated in Unitarian Universalist contexts. Participants will design a research project that could take the form of a comprehensive plan and prospectus for their own future church plant project, a survey of recent UU church plants and best practices, a comparative theology of progressive and evangelical church planting; all which would add to a growing body of knowledge in this field. SKSM and GTU students interested in enrolling should submit a brief introduction and project proposal with PIN request.

### II. Course Aims and Learning Objectives:

#### Aims

This course will introduce students to historical precedents for “church planting” and explore the leadership gifts and graces necessary for contemporary entrepreneurial ministries both in congregational contexts and alternative structures.

#### Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Develop and present an integrative research project on a theme from the class (in consultation with course instructor) ;

- Articulate an historic and theological framework for congregation planting in UU contexts
- Demonstrate agility and competency with a variety of online and social media technologies as tools of the entrepreneurial pastor
- Identify evaluative and self-reflective tools for meeting personal and organizational/institutional goals in a new start, church plant or alternate model of faith community formation

### III. Format and Procedures:

Sessions will be designed in a “collaborative” format. Sessions will typically weave three strands of experience:

1. Learning from practioner-leaders via video lecture and video conference/discussion;
2. Reflective writing and peer dialogue in online sharing spaces, including public, social media platforms;
3. Guided discussion on the topics set forth in the schedule, by way of conference technology and small group gatherings.

### IV. Assumptions

The class will be designed with a context of Unitarian Universalist congregational polity and ecclesiology. Students are expected to have high speed online access as required via skype/google hangout/FUZE and/or Facebook or other platforms as explained in advance of the first session.

### V. Course Requirements:

Class attendance and participation in exercises, conversation and all assignments \*two or more absences (or 3+ partial class attendance days) will require a meeting to discuss the students ability to complete the course and may result in a need for the student to drop or fail the course.

### Assignments:

1. Regular participation in video conferences and design/record/upload one interview with a leadership practitioner.
2. Participation in small group discussion/resource labs and online workspace to share bibliographic materials and insights/best-practices
3. Using technology to present and lead course projects
4. Research Project (in consultation with instructor)
5. Weekly Readings and Reflections

### Readings:

A selection of readings for the course will draw from these (and other) texts.

### **The Books:**

New England Synod, The Cambridge Platform (1648)

Pastrix: The Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner & Saint

Author: Nadia Bolz-Weber

ISBN-10: 1455527084

Publisher: Jericho Books; 1 edition (September 10, 2013)

The Definitive-ish Guide for Using Social Media in the Church

Author: Bruce Reyes-Chow

<http://www.reyes-chow.com/portfolio/brc-book-social-media-church/>

ASIN: B008FCXKXE

Publisher: Shook Foil Books

The Fellowship Movement: A Growth Strategy and Its Legacy

Author: [Holley Ulbrich](#)

ISBN: 9781558965300

Publisher: Skinner House

The Handouts/Downloads:

New England Synod, The Cambridge Platform (1648)

Joseph Tuckerman, The Principles and Results of the Ministry at Large, pp. 158193 (1838)

James Freeman Clarke, The Church as it was, as it is, and as it ought to be (1848)

Quillen Shinn, Our Mission Field (1898)

Clarence Skinner, "A Free Church" in The Social Implications of Universalism (1915)

John Haynes Holmes, "The Community Church: Principles" in New Churches for Old (1922)

Cynthia Grant Tucker, "Prophetic Sisterhood" (part 4, Prophetic Ministries)(1990)

UUA New Congregations Guide (and current demographic study)

Peter Morales, "Congregations and Beyond" (2012)

### V. Grading Procedures

It is expected that most students will be following the SKSM student handbook guidelines and the Pass/Fail option with a narrative evaluation in support of the SKSM pedagogy. Students requesting a letter grade will be evaluated on the timely completion of all assignments and the quality of work presented and should meet with the instructor to discuss grading scale.

## VI. Outline of Course Content

This outline offers a preliminary frame work for planning purposes.

### Unit 1 - History and Theology: Knowing Our Contexts

Theology of the Progressive Church

weeks 1-3

How have Unitarian/Universalists conceived of the Church throughout history? How have their models of church reflected their ecclesiologies? In what ways do/can contemporary church-plants honor this heritage?

Looking Forward at the Past: Histories of UU Growth

What has been the trajectory of Unitarian Universalist reach? How has the been affected by regionalism?

Understand our Present Contexts

How does our local and regional context intersect with larger social realities affect how we think about church planting?

### Unit 2 - Discerning Leadership Qualities: Exploring Self and Supports

Theology of Risk/Planting a Church

weeks 4-6

Why do people of faith plant new religious communities? What sustains them in the process? What are the opportunities and challenges of our contemporary situation?

Ego, Call and Charisma

The spiritual challenges of entrepreneurial ministry

What are the personality archetypes of "entrepreneurial" ministers and the associated spiritual dangers? People called to plant churches need to engage in some very careful discernment work about the allures of charisma, boundary setting, continuity planning, and overall careful attention to personality- and work-style issues.

Entrepreneurial Leadership and Me

Focused on discernment/personal skills and vocational "fitness" for entrepreneurial style leadership. What role does the planter play in starting a new church? What spiritual work must be done to stay centered and focused?

### Unit 3 - Models and Visions

weeks 7-10

Vision: Church Where No Church Existed

What inspires a person of faith to plant a new church? What is the process of implementing that vision? What should new planters know going into the process?

Vision: Revitalized Church

How can we plant a church within a church that already exist? How can existing church benefit from the mentality of a plant?

Vision: Multi-site churches

Why are religious communities opting for the multi- site model? What are its strengths and weaknesses? How can churches draw on the best of small groups?

Vision: Social Enterprise as Church

Foundations: Administration

Foundations: Fundraising

What are the financial considerations associated with planting a church? How do church plants raise seed money? How do they ensure long-term financial sustainability?

Foundations: Lay Leadership

Foundations: Building Community

Unit 4 - And Beyond

weeks 11-12

Covenant and Associations in Church Plants

Remembering that mutually covenanted community exists so that we all might be connected to the "privileges of covenant"... what role does the community of autonomous churches have in your vision of this new church plant? Where are the supports, connections, and accountabilities to the wider UU/faith community?