Course: **Mission Amidst the Covid-19 Crisis: Biblical Resources and Contemporary Models for a Time of Chaotic Change**

November 2021, Alpha Omega International College

Richard Lamb, MA

DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to look at Biblical stories of renewal and revival, from the time of the Kings of Israel to the post-exilic narratives, when the people of God experienced tremendous external forces imposing change, or when God’s leaders were raised up to help the people of God respond to crises with resilience and fortitude. We will draw general principles for the leadership of God’s people in times of crisis, but also specifically apply these principles to the context of the church today impacted as it is by the COVID-19 pandemic. We will look Paul’s “Plan B” ministry activity in the book of Acts, and at contemporary models that can help the church retain and advance its evangelism and discipleship mandate and mission. The course will model the use of scripture study as a source of insight into ministry, specifically in discipleship, ministry vision, equipping and empowerment, organizational development and change.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: The course seeks the following goals for each student: (1) *Cognitive:* theoretical knowledge relating to the stories in Scripture of leadership and ministry in a time of crisis and change; (2) A*ffective:* deepened appreciation for both biblical and contemporary models of effective change leadership; (3) *Skills*: capacity to use interpersonal and organizational change dynamics insights to prepare for and execute evangelism and discipleship ministry strategies in the current COVID crisis and in future societal crises.

COURSE FORMAT: The course will meet for ten 2.5-hour sessions, with work prepared before and after the class time. Much of the discussion-based class time will be spent in inductive scripture study led by the instructor, incorporating small group discussion and large group discussion formats. …

REQUIRED READING: 400 pp. of required reading, plus numerous Scripture passages as per the course schedule.

1. **Argyris**, C., “Teaching Smart People How to Learn” *Harvard Business Review* (16pp)
2. **Bennis**, Warren G, and Thomas, Robert J, “Crucibles of Leadership”, *Harvard Business Review*, September 2002 (14pp).
3. **Blanchard**, Dave, Crouch, Andy, Hart, Jon, Kauffmann, Scott and Nardella, Jena Lee, “Strategies for Winter: Redemptive Leadership in Survival Times”, *The Praxis Journal*, April 24, 2020. (9pp)
4. **Bolsinger**, Tod, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. (Selections, 95pp)
5. **Christiansen**, Clayton M, and Overdorf, Michael, “Meeting the Challenge of Disruptive Change”, *Harvard Business Review*, March 2000 (19pp).
6. **Cormode**, S., “Multi-Layered Leadership,” *Journal of Religious Leadership, July 2002* (35pp).
7. **Coyle**, Daniel, The Culture Code: Secrets of Highly Successful Groups. Bantam Books, 2018 (130pp).
8. **Crouch**, Andy, Keilhacker, Kurt and Blanchard, Dave, “Leading Beyond the Blizzard: Why Every Organization Is Now a Startup”, *The Praxis Journal*, March 21, 2020. (13pp)
9. **Evener**, Vincent, “Spirit and truth: Reckoning with the crises of Covid-19 for the Church,” *Wiley Theology Update,* July 2020 (7pp).
10. **Garvin**, David A and Robert, Michael A., “Change Through Persuasion,” *Harvard Business Review*, February 2005 (17pp).
11. **Heifetz**, Ronald A, and Laurie, Donald L, “The Work of Leadership”, *Harvard Business Review*, January 1997 (22pp).
12. **Kegan**, Robert, and Lahey, Lisa Laskow, “The Real Reason People Won’t Change,” *Harvard Business Review*, November 2001 (18pp).
13. **Kim**, W Chan, and Mauborgn, Renee, “Tipping Point Leadership,” Harvard Business Review, April 2003 (19pp).

**Biblical Texts:** We will have Bible passages to prepare for each class period. Read over each passage several times, looking for questions, problems, and the answers to any study questions given. Come to class prepared to discuss in small and large groups what you have found.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT:

1. **Book Report:** Students will write a five-page report on selected readings for the course. Summarize the main points of each author briefly. Then, comment on what you found most helpful, what resonated with your context and what did not, areas of disagreement with the readings, etc. Share at least two things you will try to do differently as a result of doing this reading. (25%).
2. **Post-COVID Ministry In-Class Case Study:** Students will prepare a written case study that succinctly describes a current or recent scenario to illustrate a typical COVID-related (or other crisis-related) ministry issue in the life of your church, organization or ministry. Include questions for discussion and lead the discussion. Follow the model presented in class for good case study development. The final case study (1/2 page), and a 1 page self evaluation and reflection will be turned in at the end of term. (25%)
3. **Congregational or Organizational Use of a Biblical Character Study in teaching, training, or preaching:** Students will prepare an in-depth study of an Old Testament or New Testament leader (other than Jesus) used or referenced in class, or one of your own choosing, for use in a congregational or organizational teaching or training setting. The study should help your congregation, team, or small group consider some insights regarding post-COVID ministry challenges and opportunities. The paper should include an analysis of your congregational setting, specifically answering the question “Why did I choose this leader or passage for our congregation to learn from today?” A four-page exegetical paper and a one page reflection and self evaluation will be submitted after the presentation. (40%)
4. Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory, as is enthusiastic participation in class discussions and exercises. Participation in class Whatsapp discussions will also count toward attendance grade. Grade will be reduced for unexcused absences or persistent lateness. (10%)

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

* Case Study for In-Class Discussion due the sixth day of class for use in class, November 25.
* Remaining assignments due the last week of term.

**Course Schedule:**

* **Dates November 16 through December 1, 2021, as detailed below.**
* **Weekdays, 8:00PM-10:30PM**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **TOPIC** | **Biblical Leader and Passages Studied** |
| 1  Nov 16 | Leading Change When You Know What to Do | Vision, Recruitment, Enlistment. **Read (13) Kim and Mauborgn, “Tipping Point Leadership.”** |
| Nehemiah: Sketch 22 Prayer and Planning |
| Nehemiah: Sketch 161 Recruitment and Resentment |
| 2  Nov 17 | Opposition to Change | **Read (12) Kegan and Lahey, The Real Reason People Won’t Change** |
| Nehemiah: Sketch 162 Opposition to Change. |
| Nehemiah: Sketch 163 Leaders Share and Lift Burdens. |
| 3  Nov 22 | The Work of Leadership | **Read (11) Heifetz and Laurie, The Work of Leadership, and Cormode (6) Multi-Layered Leadership.** |
| Moses and Peter: Sketch 61 Delegation (Exodus 18 and Acts 6) |
| Amos: Sketch 67 The Plumbline and the Chaplain (Amos 7) |
| 4  Nov 23 | Leading Change When You Don’t Know What to Do | Values, process, discernment. **Read Crouch (8) and Blanchard (3).** |
| Hezekiah: Sketch 157 The Great Restoration |
| Hezekiah: Sketch 158 The Great Passover |
| 5  Nov 24 | Leadership Process | **Read Evener (9) and Christiansen and Overdorf (5).** |
| Hezekiah: Sketch 159 God’s Commitment to his Name |
| Jehoshaphat: Sketch 155 Leading When You Don’t Know What to Do |
| 6  Nov 25 | Understanding God’s Hidden Role | What in the World is God Doing? **Read Bolsinger (4) *Canoeing the Mountains*.** |
| Habakkuk: Sketch 140 How Long Oh Lord? |
| Habakkuk: Sketch 141 Mocking Riddles and Worshipful Silence  (Sketch 142 In Wrath Remember Mercy) |
| 7  Nov 26 | Plan B Leadership | **Read Argyris (1) and Garvin (10).** |
| Paul Plan B Leadership: Sketch 56 Creative Evangelism |
| Sketch 57: Plan B Ministry Vision, Sketch 58: Chaos, Discernment and Plan B Ministry. Sketch 60: Leadership without Authority |
| 8  Nov 29 | In Class Case Studies | **Read Bennis and Thomas (2) and Coyle (7).**  Present and Discuss Case Studies from Students’ ministry/professional contexts in small groups with large group summary discussion. |
| 9  Nov 30 | In Class Case Studies | Present and Discuss Case Studies from Students’ ministry/professional contexts in small groups with large group summary discussion. |
| 10  Dec 1 | Final Topics | Elisha: Sketch 154: Calamities Large and Small, 2 Kings 6 |
| Summaries and Take-Aways |
|  |
| ?? | Final Due Date | End of Term all remaining assignments due. |