

# BRIERCREST

## CM 734 Dynamics of Small Church Ministry Winter 2021

Professor: Ron Johnston, DMin  
Email: rjohnston@briercrest.ca  
Phone: 519-500-8560  
Course Dates: March 1-5, 2021

3 Credit Hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

An exploration of the advantages, challenges and opportunities present in small church ministry in both urban and rural settings. Students will develop a biblical ecclesiology that promotes effective small church ministry.

### COURSE INTEGRATION

Approximately 75% of all churches in Canada have fewer than 150 people attending on a Sunday morning. For the past fifty years most of the attention in the church world has been placed on the less than 1% of churches that qualify as mega-churches. Church health has been largely measured by numerical growth often leaving small-church leaders feeling like failures. This course will look at the unique value of the small church in the Canadian church mosaic. It will consider a biblical understanding of the church and how the small church fits into that understanding. The importance of leadership and the challenges in building a leadership team will be studied. Finally, the course will look at a number of practical implications unique to small-church life.

### COURSE TEXTS

Vaters, Karl. *Small Church Essentials: Field-Tested Principles for Leading A Healthy Congregation of Under 250*. Chicago: Moody Press, 2018.

Reimer, Sam and Michael Wilkinson. *A Culture of Faith: Evangelical Congregations in Canada*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015.

Cloud, Dr. Henry. *Integrity: the courage to meet the demands of reality*. New York: Collins, 2006.

Johnston, Dr. Ron. *Reality Check For The Church: Discovering a Unique Vision for the Small Church*. Winnipeg: Word Alive Press, 2013.

*Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.*

*These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.*

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

## COURSE OUTCOMES

### Know and Understand

1. A biblical understanding of the value of the small church
2. A clear understanding of what gives a church value
3. The contrast between small and large churches
4. The importance of leadership in a small church
5. The unique characteristics that a small-church leader needs
6. The centrality of the Great Commission in the life of a church
7. The importance of impact as a measurement of success in a small church

### Value

1. The importance of the small church
2. The value of the small-church leader
3. The unique character of the small church
4. The potential of the small church to have an impact

### Skills

1. The ability to instill into the church family a sense of self-esteem and value
2. The ability to evaluate one's value as a small-church leader
3. The ability to see potential for impact in a small-church setting
4. The ability to present a biblical understanding of the value of the small church

## COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Monday March 1, 2021

9:00 - 12:00     Introductions  
                          The value of the small church

1:00 - 5:00     Developing a small church ecclesiology  
                          The church in Acts

Tuesday March 2, 2021

9:00 - 12:00     The uniqueness of the small church  
                          The centrality of relationships  
                          The importance of church culture

1:00 - 5:00     Contrasts between the large church & the small church  
                          Contrasts between the urban and the rural/small town church  
                          Contrasts between different types of small churches  
                          (church plant, house church, declining church, historically small church)

Wednesday March 3, 2021

9:00 - 12:00 Leadership in the small church  
The role of the pastor  
Building a leadership team

1:00 - 5:00 The mandate for the church  
The great commission  
The centrality of disciple making

Thursday March 4, 2021

9:00 - 12:00 The impact of the small church  
Impact on church members  
Impact on community  
Impact of future leaders  
Impact on the church in Canada  
Impact on the world

1:00 - 5:00 The unique character of your church  
Your history  
Your setting  
Your theology  
Your denominational affiliation

Friday March 5, 2021

9:00 - 12:00 Developing a vision for your church

1:00 - 5:00 Summing up

## ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

### *Pre-Course Assignments:*

**Book Review.** Read all of the required textbooks (Vaters, Reimer & Wilkinson, Cloud & Johnston) and choose one on which to write a three-page evaluation. This should include your overall impression of the book, its strengths and weaknesses, and one idea that impacted you. Please include the bibliographic material at the start of your paper and then simply a page number if you make reference to the book.

**Due: March 1, 2021 before 9:00 am**

### *Mid-Course Assignments:*

**Small church case studies.** Each day there will be a discussion around an actual issue that small churches have faced. Each student will be expected to prepare to take part in the discussion and to hand in at least one page of notes showing their preparation. These notes do not have to be in a

formal format. They could be quotes, ideas, questions, comments, or anything else that shows that the student is prepared. The notes will be handed in at the end of each day's class.

**Due: At the end of each day's class**

***Post-Course Assignments:***

***Research Paper.*** Write a research paper evaluating the church that you currently attend. This evaluation should include a short history of the church, an outline of its leadership structure, its current strengths and weaknesses, current problems that it faces, and lessons learned from your readings or the course material that apply to your church. The paper should be between 12-15 pages in length. The student should reference a minimum of eight sources in the paper.

**Due: April 30, 2021**

***Interviews.*** Talk with three leaders from different small churches about their experience as a small-church leader. Design your own interview questions from what you have learned from the course. Write a two-page summary of each interview including points on which they agreed or disagreed with what you have learned.

**Due: April 30, 2021**

Course Grading

Book review paper	20%
Small-church case studies	25%
Research paper	35%
Interviews paper	20%

**SEMINARY CALENDAR**

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

***Attendance Policy***

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

***Modular Courses***

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one (1) full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

***Online Courses***

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. If additional time is missed, the

student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

#### *Semester-Based Courses*

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

#### **Course Schedules**

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

#### **Assignment Submission**

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

#### **Return of Graded Assignments**

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

#### **Academic Honesty**

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

#### **Academic Accommodations**

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of the Academic Resource Centre in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email ([academicresourcecentre@briercrest.ca](mailto:academicresourcecentre@briercrest.ca)). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Brown, Stewart. *The Real Welcoming Church: Imitating God, Thinking Like Jesus*. Winnipeg:

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