

PATH 539
CHURCH GROWTH AND THE EQUIPPING LEADER
Fall 2026

Lake Union

Jorge Mata

This course is an examination of the biblical principles of church growth, an emphasis on the role of the pastor as an equipper as a key component for church growth.

CLASS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Class location	Lake Union
Class meeting dates:	Oct 11-15, 2026.
Class meeting times:	Sunday October 11, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday 12 -Thursday 15, 8:00 p.m. -12:00 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Course Website:	LearningHub
Instructor Tel.:	(517) 331-8332
Instructor Email:	mata@andrews.edu
Office hours:	8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Prerequisites:

1. Reading report—500 pages (30 hours minimum) from 3 of the books listed below. Submit a three-page evaluation of the material read indicating the number of hours and pages read from the required reading. The reading report must include a presentation page with: Title of the book, name of the student and a declaration of academic honesty. Page 1 should be a summary of the book. Page 2 should evaluate the key ideas of the book. Page 3 should suggest ways this book can shape and influence your ministry in church growth. Page 4 Personal contribution. The report should be submitted electronically on the LearningHub and to the professor's email in a MSWord document by the *first day of class*.

2. *Late submission penalties.* Pre-intensive assignments are due the first day of class (**October 11, 2027**). Late submissions of these assignments are penalized with a 5-point deduction, each.

During the intensive:

Class attendance. Students will need to spend 45 fifty-minute periods during the intensive with the professor. Participants who miss four class periods without written consent from the seminary Dean (Dr. Jiri Moskala), will have to repeat the course.

Collective learning. During the intensive, students will have time to work with peers in small groups to prepare 20-minute Power Point presentations on topics related to the class.

Post-Intensive Requirements

1. **Final project.** 50 hours of study, with the following options: **1)** Write a fifteen-page paper on a text or a topic agreed upon in class; **2)** A different project in consultation with the instructor. The projects or reports are due 60 days after the first day of class— **December 15, 2026**.
2. The project will be graded based on Project Rubric at the end of this document and should have the following parts: **1) title page; 2) table of contents; and 3) appropriate content subheadings.** The final project paper must be submitted electronically in a MSWord document following the *Andrews University Standards for Written Work*.
3. This final assignment is due on **December 15, 2026, EST** before midnight.
4. Late submission of this assignment is penalized with a 10-point deduction.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Reading:

Burrill, Russell. (2004). *Waking the Dead: Returning Plateaued and Declining Churches to Vibrancy*. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald.

Kidder, S. Joseph. (2011). *The Big Four: Secrets to a Thriving Church Family*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald.

Leys, Lucas, (2017). *Liderazgo Generacional*. Dallas, TX: e625.

Stetzer, Ed and Im, Daniel, (2016). *Planting Missional Churches*, Nashville, TN: B&H Academic.

Recommended Reading:

- Getz, Gene; Wall, Joe (2000). *Effective Church Growth Strategies*. Nashville, TN: Word Publishing.
- Johnson, Thomas P. (2011). *Mobilizing a Great Commission Church for Harvest*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishing.
- Macchia, Stephen (2000). *Becoming a Healthy Church: 10 Characteristics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Rainer, Thom (2001). *Surprising Insights from the Unchurch and Proven Ways to Reach Them*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Stetzer, Ed and Thom S. Rainer. (2010). *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations*. Nashville: B & H.
- Thom S. Rainer, (1993). *The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology and Practice*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group.
- Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, (2011). *Simple Church, Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group.

REVISION STATEMENT

The instructor reserves the right to revise the syllabus for the benefit of the learning process with appropriate notification to the students.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course topics and assignments have been selected to contribute to learning and evaluating these Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) as follows:

Program Learning Outcomes (PO):

1. Deliver effective biblically based sermons.
2. Demonstrate proper biblical interpretation skills.
3. Understand the historical-theological development of the Seventh-day Adventist church.
4. Capable of training church members for evangelism.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of how to empower church members for leadership.
6. Capable of reaching specific social groups.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) The student:

1. Understand church growth needs, principles, and practices
2. Consider biblical discipleship as a methodology for church growth
3. Assimilate an equipping philosophy of pastoral ministry
4. Analyze the importance of retention of members for church growth
5. Recognize social and cultural factors in growing churches

6. Learn to value the importance of spiritual disciplines in the process of church growth
7. Consider social media as an effective tool for church growth.

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	CLOs Addressed
Sunday, Oct 11	Verify electronic class registration. Syllabus review. Devotional and group presentation schedule. Subjects for study groups. Introduction to church growth.	Reading report. 500 pages (30 hours minimum) from 3 of the books listed as required. Submit a three-page evaluation of the material read indicating the number of hours and pages read from the required reading. The reading report must include a presentation page with: Title of the book, name of the student and a declaration of academic integrity. Page 1 should be a summary of the book. Page 2 should evaluate the key ideas of the book. Page 3 should suggest ways this book can shape and influence your ministry in church growth. Page 4 Personal contribution. The report should be submitted electronically on the LearningHub and to the professor's email in a MSWord document by the first day of class. Assignments for group study. Personal contribution.	
Monday, Oct 12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The foundations of church planting. 2. Models of church planting. 	Small group discussion and collaborative learning sessions. Personal contribution.	
Tuesday, Oct 13	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systems for church planting. 2. Growth in the new church. 	Small group discussion and collaborative learning sessions. Personal contribution.	
Wednesday, Oct 14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministry areas for church planting. 2. Worship. 	Small group discussion and collaborative learning sessions. Personal contribution.	

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	CLOs Addressed
Thursday, Oct 15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multiplication and movements. 2. Breaking the mold: Church – multiplication Movements. 	<p>Groups presentations. Personal contribution.</p>	
Sunday, December 15, 2026, EST		<p>Final project is due today: December 15, 2026, EST. The project must be posted on LearningHub and email an electronic MSW document before midnight to: rogergovender@adventist.org.au Students who have not completed all intensive requirements by, will receive an “F” and will need to repeat the class.</p>	

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is required at all classes and other academic appointments. When the total number of absences exceeds 10% of the total course appointments, the teacher may assign a failing grade. Merely being absent from campus does not exempt the student from this policy. Absences recorded because of late registration, suspension, and early/late vacation leaves are not excused. The class work missed may be made up only if the teacher allows. Three tardies are equal to one absence.

TIME EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COURSE

US Credit-Hour Regulations

For every semester credit, the Andrews University credit hour definition requires that:

- **Courses for professional masters’ degrees (e.g.MDiv)** include 15 instructor contact hours and 30 hours of independent learning activities.
- **Courses for academic masters’ (e.g.MA [Religion]) and all doctoral degrees** include 15 instructor contact hours, and 45 hours of independent learning activities.

The calculation of hours is based on the study skills of the average well-prepared graduate student. Students weak in these skills: 1) may require more time and should consider taking fewer classes each semester; and 2) can find skill development assistance through the Seminary Study and Research Skills Colloquia, the AU Writing Center, and AU Student Success office.

In order to achieve the outcomes of this course, learning time will be distributed as follows:

		Professional Masters' Programs	
			3 Credits
Instructor Contact Hours	Face to Face Instructional Time		45 hrs
Independent Learning Activities	Name of Assignment #1		30 hrs
	Pre-Intensive Reading		
	Name of Assignment #2 20-page project/paper		60 hrs
Total Hours:			135 hrs

Note. To make grading fair for everyone, grades will be assigned based on the above requirements alone. No individual arrangements will be made for those requesting last minute grade adjustment or extra credit.

Submission of Assignments

Assignments are to be turned in on Learning Hub before the dates indicated in the Course Overview--Above.

Late Submissions

Because student assignments are an essential part of class activities, assignments turned in after the time they are due will be worth a maximum of 50 of possible points%--for this course, see penalties posted on the *Course Overview Table*. Any requests for extra time on an assignment must be made in advance with the professor. Such requests should be a rarity and should be accompanied by a valid reason why the work could not be done by the date due.

MEET YOUR PRESENTER

Jorge Mata (DMin) is a Senior Pastor for the Michigan Conference of SDA church since 2007. He has served the Church for the last 28 years as a church pastor and teacher in four different countries, Honduras, Panama, Costa Rica, and USA. He has a passion for teaching, training, and equipping lay members. He is married to wife, Cindy and has 1 adult son, Christopher. He enjoys evangelism, agriculture, sports, music, and travel.



OTHER COURSE-RELATED POLICIES

Academic Integrity

The Seminary expects its students to exhibit rigorous moral integrity appropriate to ministry leaders representing Jesus Christ. Complete honesty in academic matters is a vital component of such integrity. Any breach of academic integrity in this class is subject to discipline. Consequences may include receipt of a reduced or failing grade, suspension or dismissal from the course, suspension or dismissal from the program, expulsion from the university, or degree cancellation. Disciplinary action may be retroactive if academic dishonesty becomes apparent after the student leaves the course, program, or university. A record of academic integrity violations is maintained by the University Student Academic Integrity Council. Repeated and/or flagrant offenses will be referred to an Academic Integrity Panel for recommendations on further penalties.

Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Plagiarism in which one fails to give credit every time use is made of another person's ideas or exact words, whether in a formal paper or in submitted notes or assignments. Credit is to be given by use of:
 - Correctly designed and inserted footnotes each time one makes use of another individual's research and/or ideas; and
 - Quotation marks placed around any exact phrases or sentences (3 or more words) taken from the text or speech of another individual.
- Presenting another's work as one's own (e.g., placement exams, homework assignments);
- Using materials during a quiz or examination other than those explicitly allowed by the teacher or program.
- Stealing, accepting, or studying from stolen quizzes or examination materials.
- Copying from another student during a regular or take-home test or quiz.

- Assisting another in acts of academic dishonesty.
- Submitting the same work or major portions thereof, without permission from the instructors, to satisfy the requirements of more than one course.

For additional details see: https://www.andrews.edu/academics/academic_integrity.html

Academic Accommodations

If you qualify for accommodation under the American Disabilities Act, please see contact Student Success in Nethery Hall 100 (disabilities@andrews.edu or 269-471-6096) as soon as possible so that accommodations can be arranged.

Use of Electronics

No recording or streaming is permitted in seminary courses.

Courtesy, respect, and professionalism dictate that laptops and cell phones are to be used only for class-related activities during class time.

Communications and Updates

Email is the official form of communication at Andrews University. Students are responsible for checking their Andrews University e-mail, Moodle, and iVue alerts regularly.

LearningHub Access

Andrews University Learning Hub hosts this course online. Your Learning Hub username and password are the same as your Andrews username and password. Use the following contact information if you need technical assistance at any time during the course, or to report a problem with Learning Hub.

Username and password assistance	helpdesk@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6016
Technical assistance with Learning Hub	dlit@andrews.edu	(269) 471-3960
Technical assistance with your Andrews account	http://andrews.edu/hdchat/chat.php	

Emergency Protocol

Andrews University takes the safety of its student seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.

Please Note: The instructor reserves the right to revise the syllabus, with the consensus of the class, at any time during the semester for the benefit of the learning process. The up-to-date Course Description for this course may be found at www.learninghub.andrews.edu.

APPENDIX 1: INTERPRETING LETTER GRADES

Letter Grades and Percentages

95-100%	A	80-84%	B	65-69%	C
90-94%	A-	75-79%	B-	60-64%	C-
85-89%	B+	70-74%	C+	55-59%	D
				58-Below	F

THE B GRADE

The B grade is a sign that you have competently fulfilled all the requirements stipulated for an assessment or competency evaluation. It is a very good grade and demonstrates a high level of the knowledge, insight, critical competence, and professional presentation standards essential for an individual wishing to pursue a career as a professional leader in ministry.

THE A GRADE

An A grade is given only when a student not only fulfills the criteria for a B grade, but in doing so demonstrates an advanced academic aptitude for content knowledge, critique, synthesis, and independent insight, while exhibiting highly developed communication skills and professional publication standards that would allow them to pursue a highly competitive academic career.

THE C GRADE

The C grade differs only from a B grade in that the traits outlined in the B grade above are not consistently applied. However, with diligence and by applying feedback from your lecturer, the academic process can provide opportunity for a student to improve their consistency, and hence, their grade.

THE D GRADE

The D grade points to a limited level of knowledge, insight, and critique, as well as to inadequate quality of written work. This may be because of a lack of time management on the part of the student, difficulty grasping the concepts being taught, use of English as a second language, or a personal issue that is affecting one's concentration and motivation levels. Again, with diligence, applying feedback from your lecturer, and seeking services offered by the University like the writing lab or the counseling center, the academic process can provide an opportunity for a student to significantly improve their performance.

THE F GRADE

A failing grade is given when very limited or no demonstrable competency has been observed or when the final assignment is not submitted within the dates indicated in the Course Overview Table.

ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC

Rubric for Assessing Project Plans

Criteria	(5) Exceptional	(4) Proficient	(3) Satisfactory	(2) Emerging	(1) Unsatisfactory	Score
Title Page	Includes: 1) institution's name, 2) title, 3) name of the course, 4) course period, 5) name of the student, 6) date submitted, 7) follows AU Standards for Written Work (AUSWW). Has no errors.	Misses 1 of the 7 components.	Misses 2 of the 7 components.	Misses 3 components.	Misses more than 3 components.	
Introduction	The introduction is engaging, states the main topic and purpose of the paper, and previews the structure of the paper.	Introduction states the main topic and purpose of the paper and previews its structure.	States the main topic and purpose of the paper, but does not adequately preview its structure.	The introduction states the main topic but lacks a purpose and a preview of its structure.	There is no clear introduction or main topic, and the structure of the paper is missing.	
Project Description	Project is described in detail. Protocols to be followed are presented. Specific aspects of the organization, implementation, and evaluation are offered. Meets paper length requirements.	Project is well described. Some details regarding protocols, organization, implementation, and evaluation of the project are missing. Meets length.	Project is satisfactorily described and meets paper length.	Project is poorly described and does not meet number of pages.	The report misses entire sections of the project description. Does not meet paper length.	
Organization	Report provides a table of contents, and is organized using different subhead levels, following AUSWW. Subheadings are exceptionally well-worded and reflect upon the main subject. Exceeds all organizational specifications stated in the syllabus.	Table of contents and subheading levels follow AUSWW Standards. Subtitles reflects upon the subject, but wording can be improved.	Paper provides a table of contents and is organized using different subheading level. However, does not follow AU standards of written work.	Paper provides first level headings, but headings do not clearly reflect upon the subject. No table of contents. Does not follow all specifications stated in the syllabus and AUSWW.	Does not provide a table of contents and is not divided under headings and subheadings. Does not follow organizational specifications stated in the syllabus and AUSWW.	
Format/Style	All texts and references follow specifications from AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are outstanding. Models' language and style. No errors in punctuation, spelling, and sentence formation.	Consistently follows AUSWW with minor flaws. Syntax and semantics are very good. No major errors in style.	Consistently follows all AUSWW format. Syntax and semantics are good. Few errors in style.	Inconsistently follows some AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are poor.	Does not follow AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are deficient.	
Conclusion	Conclusion is engaging and provides an outstanding overview of the project and personal reflections on projected implementation. Exceeds expectations.	Conclusion restates the purpose, gives a good summary, and provides personal opinions about the outcome.	Conclusion restates the purpose and satisfactorily summarizes results. Lacks personal reflection on projected implementation.	Conclusion attempts to summarize the thrust of the project but is ambiguous. Lacks personal reflection.	Conclusion fails to summarize and to express personal reflection on the project.	

