

**PT6205 Principles of Church Planting
Spring 2026, RTS-Charlotte**

Professor(s): Dr. Dean Faulkner (dfaulkner@rts.edu)

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Description

Principles of Church Planting will cover the foundational, theological, missional and structural aspects of church planting so that students have a roadmap to planting a church planting church. Utilizing readings and discussion, students will learn to apply biblical principles, build evangelistic culture and implement ecclesiastical best practices to the establishment of new and Reformed churches. While discussing real time challenges in our mission field, students will explore the multi-stage process of planting a church in various contexts and even among various ethnic groups. Students will also carry out exercises and projects to learn the rhythms of planting life while working in the framework of the IQ, EQ and CQ of church planting.

Blurb – “The western world is quickly becoming post-Christian. The church is “dechurching” and younger generations are unchurched. Even small-town America is a spiritual wasteland. This can be scary for many – but with Christ, it can be lifegiving. Experts of pastoral trends suggest that current and future pastors will either need to plant a church or do church planting things in established churches. Church planting competencies will be necessary for any lasting ministry. If you want to be better equipped to build community around Christ, preach with a mission and actually reach people with the gospel (rather than merely talking about it), come and build up your pastoral courage in the Principles of Church Planting class.”

Course Learning Objectives

A. Knowledge/understanding

1. To understand biblical models of church planting, church health and church reproduction.
2. To understand reformed distinctives in planting and various church planting methods.
3. To understand the seven phases of church planting and what needs to be done in each.
4. To understand how to effectively develop disciples, leaders, structures and ministries in a new church.
5. To understand how to do effective outreach in a church plant.

B. Skills/doing

1. Will be able to write a philosophy of ministry for a church plant.
2. Will be able to conduct a simple demographic study of a target area asking who is there and what they believe.
3. Will be able to develop a personal plan for growth as a church planter.
4. Will be able to develop leaders in a church plant.

C. Being/affective

1. To desire to plant a church, if they are called and gifted.
2. To desire to plant a distinctly reformed and outward facing church.
3. To desire to make disciples and develop leaders in a church plant.
4. To desire to develop a church that plants other churches and empowers church planting around the world.

Recommendations: Students are strongly encouraged to take the Readiness Seminar sponsored by RTS-Charlotte, Central Carolina Presbytery, and Mission to North America (PCA). This is an excellent context to explore calling to ministry in general and planting in particular. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in a church plant for at least 1 year during their seminary experience.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: PT6205 Principles of Church Planting
 Professor: Dr. Dean Faulkner
 Campus: RTS-Charlotte
 Date: Spring 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	This course will give students a biblical, theological and contextual framework for planting Reformed and evangelical churches
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	This course will use Scripture in every class to guide discussion on the principles of church planting by integrating ET, BT, HT and ST considerations from the word
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	This course will utilize historic standards, especially the WCF, to highlight the call of mission while thinking theologically.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	This course will call students to grow spiritually in the knowledge of the Lord and themselves in order to give missionally with the gospel in a plant setting.
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	This course will coach and call students to educate themselves on proper processes to plant churches
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	This course will call students toward a vision of church planting that engages the lost in meaningful outreach while working through various traditions of Christians that show up in planting
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Moderate	This course will equip students to reach the lost, disciple the found and organize in a church plant so the kingdom is expanded in spiritually healthy ways

Required Texts – 900-1000 pages

1. **Theological and Missional Philosophy:** Keller, Timothy. *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel Centered Ministry in Your City*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2012 (200 of 400 pages selected)

AND Keller, Timothy. *Contextualization: Wisdom or Compromise Paper*. (11 pages)

2. **Planting Methodology:** Ott, Craig and Gene Wilson. *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academics, 2011, (250 of 418 pages selected). For International or American Church Planting Methodology.

OR Stetzer, Ed and Daniel Im. *Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches that Multiply*. Second Edition. Nashville, Tenn.: B & H Academic, 2016. 1. (250 of 375 pages) For American Methodology.

3. **Culture:** Smith, James K.A. *How (Not) to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2014. (143 pages)

OR Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989. (244 pages)

4. **Church Planter Health:** Morey, Tim. *Planting a Church without Losing Your Soul*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2020. (171 pages)

5. **Creating Movements:** Powell, Neil and John James. *Together for the City: How Collaborative Church Planting Leads to Citywide Movements*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2019. (220 all pages)

Other Recommended Texts for extra reading and curiosity

For small town planting:

Griggs, Donnie. *Small Town Jesus: Taking the gospel mission seriously in seemingly unimportant places*. Damascus, MD: EverTruth, 2016. 165pp

For process and stages of planting: Payne, J.D. *Apostolic Church Planting: Birthing New Churches from New Believers*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2015. 125pp

Hesselgrave, David. *Planting Churches Cross Culturally, North America and Beyond*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000.

Malphurs, Aubrey. *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2004, (409 pages). For US Church Planting

Malphurs, Aubrey. *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2011.

Schaller, Lyle, *Center City Churches; 44 Questions for Church Planters*.

For spiritual health in the planter and coaching:

Thomas, Scott and Tom Wood. *Gospel Coach: Shepherding Leaders to Glorify God*.

Wood, Tom. *Church Planter Field Manual*. 3 Volumes.

For multi-cultural discipleship: Fernando, Ajith. *Discipling in a Multicultural World*. Crossway, 2019.

For prayer and planting: Smed, John. *Disruptive Prayer*. Vancouver, British Columbia: Prayer Current, 2018. 189pp.

For Philosophy of Planting and Movements:

Paas, Stefan. *Church Planting in the Secular West: Learning from the European Experience*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2016.

Payne, J.D. *Discovering Church Planting, An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InverVarsity Press, 2009.

Amberson, Talmadge R. *The Birth of Churches: The Biblical Basis for Church Planting*.

Mischke, Werner. *The Global Gospel: Achieving Missional Impact in Our Multicultural World*. Scottsdale, Arizona: MissionOne, 2015. 325pp

Course Structure and Grading

- 1. Classes.** There will be 13 two-hour classes during the semester and students are strongly encouraged to participate in discussions. **10% of grade**
- 2. Reading and Reading Report.** 1000 pages total assigned. **15% of grade**
- 3. Projects.** Each student should complete all the projects outlined below. **60% (5 papers) of grade**
- 4. Weekly Quiz.** In lieu of a final exam, the class will take a 5-minute quiz on the prior week's lectures focusing on the KNOW THIS points from the instructor. **15% (cumulative) of grade**

Projects

All written assignments should be typed and completed in conformity to the SBL handbook of style.

1. Self-assessment questionnaire and Preliminary/Personal Philosophy of Mission exercise. (3-5 pages) Complete the self-assessment exercise sent by the instructor and discuss this with your mentor, pastor and wife, if applicable. Turn in the self-assessment and **meet with professor during semester to evaluate**. Take Readiness Seminar IF available this semester. (10%).

2. Demographic study. (3-5 pages) In a pre-assigned team of students (or individually as the professor sees fit), collaborate and study one of the target areas given by the professor, describing the missional dynamics for planting a church in that location. Using MissionInsite and its mosaic segments as a resource, describe what target group or groups you would try to reach, given your initial thoughts on self-assessment and personal philosophy of ministry. Answer important questions such as: Who is in this place and what do they believe? What do they value spiritually as glory or sin? As a final application, integrate your story, vision and current gifts and passions into the potential plant. Each student should write their own evaluation and study after gaining insight with other students or field leaders. Option: Individuals or Teams may a 3-minute report on the demographic study and their own interest in that location via a presentation in class. Moreover, you or your team will dialogue directly with missional leaders who oversee the potential plant location as part of the research project. Write your demographic evaluation as a research project that will actually be given to said missional leader as a resource for planting. (15%)

Live Target Locations for Spring 2026: Locations will be distributed in early classes.

3. Visit a church plant and interview a church planter. (3-5 pages) Visit a church plant and interview a church planter (instructor can help/connect) this semester. Summarize your observations about how they do mission and what interests you, even what you might change or explore further. Interview the church planter to discover how he maintains a healthy spiritual and family life. Explore his rhythms of ministry and the particular emphases he must work in planting (versus maintaining an existing church). Discuss with him the struggles of planting – what has been hard - and stories of God's grace, provision and redemption. Write up your observations and at least 5 lessons learned. (10%)

4. Plan to enter church planting and grow as a potential church planter. (3 pages) Considering the distinct institutions in your denomination, outline a ten-point action plan for becoming a church planter. If you were to pursue church planting, how would you need to grow as a pastor and planter. Complete the work sheet on a personal growth plan to help you think through growth. (5%)

5. Philosophy of church plant ministry. (10 pages and 2-3 page Power-point presentation) Write a complete philosophy of planting ministry paper using the guidelines given by the professor to describe the church you would like to plant. Use ET, ST and Cultural dynamics as the basis of the plant. Integrate ecclesiology and missiology. Plant in a contextual location – perhaps using the demographic project as a reference. Make a portion of your paper about participating in/creating a church planting movement with a vision to plant your own daughter church in time. This is a research paper, you should integrate all your reading into this paper and footnote copiously. Present as if you are presenting to an interested congregant or a potential financial supporter or church missions committee. (15%)

Post-class experiences and post-graduation follow up opportunities:

- **(for Track Students or interested) Church Planting Fellows – periodic with planting leaders**
- **Vision Trips (each fall) to various planting movements nationally or internationally**
- **Internships at Church Plants – strongly recommended concurrent to Church Planting Track**
- **Center for Church Planting Forge Seminar (January) - for exposure to church planting leaders and best practices in planting and planting leadership**
- **MNA/RTS/Central Carolina Presbytery Readiness Seminar (usually first weekend of November) put on by MNA-PCA and Central Carolina Presbytery (PCA) for pre-assessment**

Course Content by Date with Assignments Due

Class/Date	Topic	Lecturer	Reading	Assignments Due
1 2/3	Orientation and Making Most of CP Prep at RTS; IQ of CP: The Biblical Foundation for Church Planting – ET, BT Considerations	Faulkner	Ott tbd Keller tbd	Distribute Q and A for Self Assessment
2 2/10	IQ of CP: ST, HT and Confessional Considerations in Planting; Ecclesiology and Mission	Faulkner	Ott tbd Keller tbd	Sign up for Readiness Seminar
3 2/17	IQ cont'd: ST, HT Continued; Church and Pastoral Health in our Western Milieu. EQ of CP: Spiritual Life and Prayer; Common Characteristics of a Church Planter/Spectrum; Marriage, Family and Holiness	Faulkner	Ott tbd Keller tbd Morey	

4	2/24	EQ of CP- Life of a Planter; EQ and planting – challenges and joys; Emotionally healthy leadership; Cultural Intelligence. Coaching: How to Pursue a Call to (Any) Ministry, Networking, Apprenticing and Training.	Faulkner	Morey (more detail in CP Leadership Class) Ott tbd	Self-Assessment Paper Due
5	3/3	CQ of CP – <u>Preparing to Presence</u> : Development Phases, Thinking about Mission, Prayer and Mission Cultural movements; Contextualization, Exegeting the Community	Faulkner	Smith/ Newbigin review Ott tbd, Keller context paper Keller tbd	[Demographic study coaching]
6	3/10	CQ of CP – Raising People and Financial Resources; <u>Presence to Gathering</u> . Mission/vision/values strategy; People dynamics and vision; Evangelism 1- Basics of evangelism as a planter	Faulkner	Ott tbd (more detail in Evang in CP context class)	
	3/17	Off - Spring Break	Faulkner	Catch up on Reading	
7	3/24	Integrating IQ, EQ, CQ – Evangelism 2-Prepping the launch team for outreach <u>Gathering to Launch</u> : Launching Church plant through discipleship, team development, staff and worship preparation;	Faulkner	Ott tbd	Demographic Paper due
8	3/31	Integrating IQ, EQ, CQ – <u>Launch to Structuring</u> : Preaching in a plant, Establishing a congregation through community, maturity of ministries, stewardship, discipleship and conflict resolution	Faulkner	Ott tbd	

9 4/7	CQ of CP: Creating a long term evangelistic culture, Go-To evangelism, Whole-Church Evangelism Training and Practices	Faulkner	Ott tbd	Plan to Enter Church Planting and Grow paper due
10 4/14	EQ and CQ of CP: Phase 2-4: Mercy/Justice and Shepherding in a church plant	Faulkner	Keller tbd	[Sign Up for Evangelism in a CP Context in Fall 2026]
11 4/21	CQ of CP: Multicultural/International Church Planting Philosophy and practices; Honor-Shame dynamics	Faulkner	Ott tbd	
12 4/28	IQ, EQ, CQ of CP: <u>Structuring to Empowering</u> : The nature of leadership in planting; Reproducing Officers and Leaders in a Plant; Becoming a church planting church and being a part of a movement	Faulkner	Powell (more in CP Leadership class)	Visit Plant and Interview with Church Planter paper due
13 5/5	EQ of CP: <u>Empowering to Renewal</u> : Church Renewal and Spiritual Formation, Character, Strong Family, Balanced Life; review POMP projects in class	Faulkner	Powell	
14 5/12	Make up class – if necessary	Faulkner		Philosophy of Ministry in Planting Paper due
5/14	Final Papers due			6. Reading Report due and NO exam!

Bio on the Instructor

Dr. Dean Faulkner – Dr. Faulkner is the Director of the Center for Church Planting and a Lecturer at RTS-Charlotte. He is an experienced church planter and church planting leader in the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) and with Mission to North America (MNA). Dr Faulkner is an active evangelist, has planted two churches and, more recently, started a PCA church planting network called the Carolinas Collective. He is also active in developing church planting support systems and leads church planter cohorts. Dean has been the Chairman of Mission to North America Permanent Committee, an MNA Chairman of Central Carolina Presbytery, a PCA Church Planting Assessor, and a church planting coach to

pastors, churches and other kingdom organizations. Dean has two children out of the home and is married to his gifted wife, Elizabeth, who is an artist, teacher and talented women's ministry leader.

RTS Charlotte

Student Instructions for Exams with LockDown Browser

1. Install the LockDown Browser application on the computer you intend to use for exams, prior to sitting for the exam, using this link:
<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613>
 1. This link is ONLY for RTS students and covers Mac and Windows applications.
 2. Be sure that you are able to log in to your Canvas account from the LockDown Browser before the day of the exam.
 3. If you use internet filtering software (for example, Covenant Eyes) you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser. Some types of filtering software can block your computer's connection to Canvas. Also, please be sure to add an exception for our Canvas URL: <https://rts.instructure.com>
2. The exam proctor should not be a current RTS student (current = taken a class within the past year but not yet graduated) or a member of the library staff.
3. The proctor must observe the student taking the exam and ensure that there are no devices or resources available other than the computer being used for the exam.
4. Access the exam during the date window specified for that exam.
 - a. Sign in with the proctor.
 - b. Start the LockDown Browser application using a wired or known reliable Wi-Fi connection. We do not recommend using restaurant or coffee shop Wi-Fi to take exams.
 - c. Have your student ID number and proctor details available to input into the exam.
 - d. Log in to your Canvas account.
 - e. Navigate to the exam. You will not be able to access the exam with a standard web browser. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [Student Quick Start Guide \(PDF\)](#).
 - f. The time clock will begin once you open the exam.
 - g. The exam must be completed in one sitting. You may not exit and return to the exam later.
 - h. The exam will contain questions regarding an honor pledge, and certification that your proctor was present during the entire exam period.
 - i. Sign out with the proctor.
5. Proctors may be contacted to verify information regarding exam administration.
6. In the rare case of a technical issue (for example, if power goes out during exam) the proctor will document the date and time when the issue was reported. Once you open the exam using the LockDown Browser, you will not be able to access other programs on your computer.

RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology Usage

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.

Extensions Policy for Assignments:

In extenuating circumstances, a deadline extension of **up to one week** may be granted at the discretion of the professor. Requests for extensions of **more than one week** must be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Academic Dean in consultation with the professor. Extensions are granted only for significant emergencies or unforeseen circumstances, and a grade penalty may be applied. *All extension requests must be made **prior to the assignment deadline**.* No retrospective extensions will be granted.