

Course Number: TR820

**Course Title: Reimagining the Church: Ecclesiology, Mission, and Ministry
for our Contemporary Times**

Spring 2011

Professor: Eleazar S. Fernandez

Contact Information:

Phone: 651-255-6131

Email: efernandez@unitedseminary.edu

Course Description:

This is a course that introduces students to the classical as well as the various contemporary models of the church or ecclesiologies. Then these ecclesiologies will be critiqued in light of the tradition and contemporary challenges that the church is facing. Furthermore, students will engage in reconstructing or re-imagining an ecclesiology that is not only faithful to the Christian heritage but also responsive to the current context, both globally and locally.

No prerequisites

Objectives:

At the end of the course the students

1. Will acquire an interpretive lens for a critical reading of our current global/local context and for making sense of the shifting ideas and various interpretations of our current realities.
2. Will acquire reading strategies that would be helpful in diagnosing the context of the church and its many challenges.
3. Will be able to identify broadly ecclesiological trends or movements and the ability to critique them.
4. Will be able to identify some ecclesiological and missiological models.
5. Will be able to identify some ideas that can be developed as tools for evaluating congregational identity and vitality.
6. Will start to develop creative tools or methods for re-imagining the church.
7. Will be able to articulate an ecclesiology that is both faithful to their heritage and creatively responsive to the challenges of our current context.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance during class sessions (three classroom sessions) and participation in online discussions
2. Lead an online discussion forum
3. Careful reading of assigned texts
4. Do online weekly assignments
4. Regular credit students: fifteen-page paper double-spaced

Readings and Resources:

1. John Cobb, Jr., *Reclaiming the Church: Where the Mainline Church Went Wrong and What to Do about It* (Louisville, Kentucky: 1997).
2. C. Kirk Hadaway, *Behold I Do a New Thing: Transforming Communities of Faith* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2001).
3. Keith A. Russell, *In Search of the Church: New Testament Images for Tomorrow's Congregations* (The Alban Institute, 1994).
4. Diana Butler Bass, *The Practicing Congregation: Imagining a New Old Church* (Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2004), xi-33.
5. Stanley Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 1-56; 161-174.
6. Robert Schreiter, Robert Schreiter, "Globalization, Postmodernity, and the New Catholicity," in Else Marie Wiberg Petersen, et al., *For All People: Global Theologies in Contexts* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 13-31.
7. Dieter Hessel, "The Church Ecologically Reformed," in Dieter Hessel and Larry Rasmussen, eds., *Earth Habitat: Eco-justice and the Church's Response* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 185-206.
8. Jay Lintner, "Building a Peacemaking Church," in Hugh Sanborn, ed., *The Prophetic Call: Celebrating Community, Earth, Justice, and Peace* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2004), 165-178.
9. Robert Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 1-27.
10. Mariane Sawicki, "Salt and Leaven: Resistances to Empire in the Street-Smart Paleochurch," in Michael Budde and Robert Brimlow, eds., *The Church as Counterculture* (New York, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 59-87.
11. Charles E. Van Engen, "The Glocal Church: Locality and Catholicity in a Globalizing World," in Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, eds., *Globalizing Theology: Belief and*

- Practice in an Era of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academics, 2006), 157-179.
12. Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 99-123.
 13. Lisa R. Withrow, *Claiming New Life: Process-Church for the Future* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2008), 131-173.
 14. Eleazar S. Fernandez, "The Church as a Household of Life Abundant: Reimagining the Church in the Context of Global Economics," in Darby Kathleen Ray, ed., *Theology that Matters: Ecology, Economy, and God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 172-188.
 15. Eleazar S. Fernandez, "Diaspora, Babel, Pentecost, and the Strangers in Our Midst: Birthing a Church of Radical Hospitality," in Tat-siong Benny Liew, ed., *Postcolonial Interventions: Essays in Honor of R. S. Sugirtharajah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 147-161.
 16. Eleazar S. Fernandez, "Global Currents, Migration Flows, New Encounters, and Contemporary Challenges." Presented on the occasion of the 200 years anniversary of Edward Ludwig Nollau, Reichenbach, Germany, July 2, 2010.
 17. Eleazar S. Fernandez, "Global South Christianity Goes North: The Challenge of World Christianity." Presented at the Spring Convocation, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities.
 18. Does Christianity Have a Monopoly on Salvation? *The Progressive Catholic Voice*, June 2008. http://www.progressivecatholicvoice.org/enewsletters/index_June08.html#Monopoly
 19. Eleazar S. Fernandez, "Burning Heart, Generous Spirit: Identity, Mission, and Stewardship." Presented at the UCC-Minnesota Conference OCWM Event, October 15, 2005, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, New Brighton, Minnesota.
 20. Eleazar S. Fernandez, "A Theology and Politics of Forgiveness: Prophetic Memory, Intersubjective Empathy, and Creative Social Imagination."
 21. Eleazar S. Fernandez, "Peace in the Era of Predatory Globalization and Global Terror: The Church as a Human Community of Peacebuilders."
 22. Leonard Sweet, ed., *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2003), 13-41.

23. Douglas S. Massey, ed., *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008), 25-50; 75-98.

Session 1: Classroom Setting (February 11)
Week of February 7

Introduction of Students, Walk-through the Syllabus, Introduction to the Course, and Instructions to the Online Course

Introductory Lecture:

The Changing Church in its Changing Context: Challenges and Possibilities

Required Readings:

1. Butler-Bass, *The Practicing Congregation: Imaging a New Old Church*, 7-33.
2. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local*, 1-27.
3. Fernandez, "Linking the Global and the Local: Dimensions and Consequences of Globalization."

Background Readings:

1. Sweet, ed., *The Church in the Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives*, 13-41.

Session 2: The Changing Church in its Changing Context: The Postmodern Condition
Week of February 14th

Required Readings:

1. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 1-56; 161-174.

Session 3: Diagnosing the Church's Contemporary Condition: Re-orienting the Church
Week of February 21st

Required Readings:

1. Cobb, *Reclaiming the Church: Where the Mainline Church Went Wrong and What to Do about It*, 1-31.

2. Hadaway, *Behold I Do a New Thing: Transforming Communities of Faith*, 1-20.

Session 4: Re-Orienting the Church: Exploring Ecclesial Models
Week of February 28th

Required Readings:

1. Cobb, *Reclaiming the Church: Where the Mainline Church Went Wrong and What to Do about It*, 32-110.

Session 5: The Church and Catholicity in a Glocalised World
Week of March 7th

Required Readings:

1. Van Engen, "The Glocal Church: Locality and Catholicity in a Globalizing World," in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, 157-179.
2. Robert J. Schreiter, "Globalization, Postmodernity, and the New Catholicity," in *For All People: Global Theologies in Context*, 13-31.

Session 6: The Church as an Enfleshed Spirit: Burning Center and Porous Borders
Spirituality and Social Justice in a Globalizing World
Week of March 14th

Required Readings:

1. Sawicki, "Salt and Leaven: Resistances to Empire in the Street-Smart Paleochurch," *The Church as Counterculture*, 59-87.
2. Fernandez, "Burning Heart, Generous Spirit: Identity, Mission, and Stewardship."
3. Russell, *In Search of the Church: New Testament Images for Tomorrow's Congregations*, 11-22.

Session 7: The Church and Empire: Economy

Week of March 28th

Classroom meeting: April 1st

Required Readings:

1. Russell, *In Search of the Church: New Testament Images for Tomorrow's Congregations*, 23-37.
2. Eleazar S. Fernandez, "The Church as a Household of Life Abundant: Reimagining the Church in the Context of Global Economics," in *Theology that Matters: Ecology, Economy, and God*, 172-188.

Recommended Reading:

1. Russell, *In Search of the Church: New Testament Images for Tomorrow's Congregations*, 79-94.

Session 8: The Church, Global Terror, Security, and Peace

Week of April 4th

Required Readings:

1. Russell, *In Search of the Church: New Testament Images for Tomorrow's Congregations*, 52-64.
2. Jay Lintner, "Building a Peacemaking Church," in Hugh Sanborn, ed., *The Prophetic Call: Celebrating Community, Earth, Justice, and Peace*, 165-178.

Recommended Reading:

1. Fernandez, "A Theology and Politics of Forgiveness: Prophetic Memory, Intersubjective Empathy, and Creative Social Imagination."
2. Fernandez, "Peace in the Era of Predatory Globalization and Global Terror: The Church as a Human Community of Peacebuilders."

Session 9: The Church and Ecology
Week of April 11th

Required Readings:

1. McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril*, 99-123.
2. Hessel, "The Church Ecologically Reformed," in *Earth Habitat: Eco-justice and the Church's Response*," 185-206.

Recommended Websites:

1. UCC General Synod Resolution –Earthwise Congregation
2. <http://www.earthministry.org/resources>

Session 10: The Church and Migration
Week of April 18th

Required Readings:

1. Massey, ed., *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration*, 25-50; 75-98.
2. Fernandez, "Global Currents, Migration Flows, New Encounters, and Contemporary Challenges."
3. Fernandez, "Diaspora, Babel, Pentecost, and the Strangers in Our Midst: Birthing a Church of Radical Hospitality."

Recommended Reading:

1. Russell, *In Search of the Church: New Testament Images for Tomorrow's Congregations*, 65-78.

Session 11: The Church and Religious Diversity
Week of April 25th

Required Readings:

1. Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility*, 102-124.
2. Fernandez, "Global South Christianity Goes North: The Challenge of World Christianity."
3. Fernandez, "Does Christianity Have a Monopoly of Salvation."
Website link:
http://www.progressivecatholicvoice.org/enewsletters/index_June08.html#Monopoly

Recommended Readings:

1. Interfaith Relations and the Church: Study Guides on Key Issues
Website link: <http://www.nccusa.org/interfaith/studyguides.html>
2. Harvard Pluralism Project
Website link: <http://www.pluralism.org/>

Session 12: Glocal Church of the Future: Walking the Vision
Week of May 2nd

Required Readings:

1. Hadaway, *Behold I do a New Thing: Transforming Communities of Faith*, 66-128.
2. Withrow, *Claiming New Life: Process-Church for the Future*, 131-173.

Session 13: Conclusion: Sharing of Projects and Evaluation
Week of May 9th
Classroom meeting: May 13th

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