

TR 820-Reimagining the Church: Ecclesiology, Mission, and Ministry for our Contemporary Times

Term: Spring 2005

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Course Description

A course that introduces the students to the classical as well as to 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, the 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.

Course Requirements:

1. To attend all classes and read all required course materials in order to discuss them in class
2. Careful reading and reflection of assigned texts
3. Active participation in class interaction and group discussions
4. Leadership in readings discussions
5. To complete the required writing assignments as described in the syllabus by the time indicated

Submit fifteen-page paper (double space) on a chosen topic or theme concerning ecclesiology, mission, and ministry

Texts:

1. Keith A. Russell, In Search of the Church: New Testament Images for Tomorrow's Congregations (Bethesda, Maryland: The Alban Institute, 1994).
2. Jerry Gill, Borderland Theology (Washington, D.C.: EPICA, 2003).
3. Jim Kitchens, The Postmodern Parish: New Ministries for a New Era (Bethesda, Maryland: The Alban Institute, 2003).
4. Donald Messer, A Conspiracy of Goodness: Contemporary Images of Christian Mission (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1992).
5. Natalie Watson, Introducing Feminist Ecclesiology (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2002).

6. Michael Budde and Robert Brimlow, eds., The Church as Counterculture (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000).
7. Mary Ann Cejka and Thomas Bamat, eds., Artisans of Peace: Grassroots Peacemaking Among Christian Communities (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003).
8. Douglas John Hall, "Metamorphosis: From Christendom to Diaspora," in Confident Witness-- Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America, ed. Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 67-79.
9. Darrell Guder, ed., Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America (Grand Rapids/Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Company, 1998), 77-109; 142-182.
10. Robert Schreiter, The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 1-27.
11. Pamela Brubaker, Globalization at What Price? Economic Change and Daily Life (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 15-62.
12. M. Douglas Meeks, God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 1-45.
13. Paul Knitter, Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 102-124; 136-164.
14. Lois Barrett, et al, Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004).

Schedule of Classes

February 10. .Introduction, Walkthrough the syllabus, and Introductory lecture

Focus: Defining ecclesiology, mission, and ministry and articulate their relationship; a critical account of the plight of the church in our times

Readings:

Messer, Conspiracy of Goodness: Contemporary Images of Christian Mission, 15-44.

Hall, "Metamorphosis: From Christendom to Diaspora," in Confident Witness-- Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America, 67-79.

February 17..The Challenge of the Context: Postmodernity, Globalization, and the Interlocking Forms of Oppression

Focus: Postmodern Challenges

Readings:

Kitchens, The Postmodern Parish: New Ministries for a New Era (whole book).

February 24..The Challenge of the Context: (Continued)

Focus: Globalization as a Context

Readings:

Schreiter, The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local, 1-27.

Brubaker, Globalization at What Price?: Economic Change and Daily Life, 15-62.

March 3....Re-Orienting the Church: Articulating the Mission of the Church

Focus: The church in relation to the reign of God

Readings:

Guder, Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, 77-109.

Russell, In Search of the Church: New Testament Images for Tomorrow's Congregations, 38-51.

March 10..The Church as a Household of Life Abundant: Perspective from Ecological Economics

Messer, Conspiracy of Goodness: Contemporary Images of Christian Mission, 79-90.

Meeks, God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy, 1- 45.

March 14-18....Reading Week

March 24.....The Church as Counter-Cultural Community

Readings:

Budde and Brimlow, The Church as Counterculture, 1-170; 195-225.

Russell, In Search of the Church: New Testament Images for Tomorrow's Congregations, 11-21; 79-94.

March 24-29 (Easter Break starts on the evening of the 24th)

March 31.....The Church as a Community of Peace-Makers

Readings:

Cejka and Bamat, Artisans of Peace: Grassroot Peacemaking Among Christian Communities (whole book).

April 7.....The Church as a Community of Hospitality: The Challenge of the Strangers in Our Midst

Readings:

Gill, Borderland Theology (whole book)

Budde and Brimlow, The Church as Counterculture, 171-193.

April 14.....The Church as a Community of Wall-Busters and Bridgebuilders: Responding to the Challenge of the Interlocking Forms of Oppression

Focus: On overcoming gender barrier

Readings: Watson, Introducing Feminist Ecclesiology (whole book)

Russell, In Search of the Church: New Testament Images for Tomorrow's Congregations, 23-37.

April 21... Church as Community of Dialogians

Knitter, Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility, 102-124;136-164.

April 27 - 29...Spring Convocation

May 5... Church as Community of the Spirit

Readings:

Guder, Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, 142-182.

May 12....Concrete Embodiments of Missional Faithfulness

Barrett, et al., Treasures in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness (whole book)

Sharing of research on local churches' embodiment of missional faithfulness

May 19.....Presentation of Final Paper and Course Evaluation
