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THE WORLDWIDE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT: HISTORY, DYNAMICS, AND CURRENT ISSUES

**SAH-PT 5/720
Fall Semester 2016**

PURPOSE

Just over a century ago, the unquestioned center of world Christianity was the North Atlantic nations of Europe and North America. By the end of the century, however, the Church had significantly declined in the North Atlantic, and historic Christendom was all but gone. At the same time, surprisingly and in sharp contrast, the Christian movement had grown dramatically in the global South, most notably in the former 'mission fields' of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This course presents an alternative to traditional Euro-centric histories of the Church by surveying the historic dynamics of the Christian movement, the burgeoning growth of the past century, and issues that impinge on post-Christendom Western churches in light of recognizing the Christian movement as a highly diverse, multi-cultural, worldwide phenomenon.

PREREQUISITES

None

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES

Upon successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- Identify key characteristics of the contemporary world Christian movement
- Explain central missiological issues that illuminate the dynamics of Christian expansion
- Contrast earlier Christendom-based missionary efforts with the contemporary world Christian movement
- Discuss key issues of contemporary relevance that are especially relevant in a selected region where the Christian movement is growing rapidly
- Evaluate opportunities and obstacles that pertain to cross-cultural partnership between post-Christendom churches in the West and churches of the global South.

FORM AND CONTENT

This is a weekly, 3.0 credit course that meets once a week for eleven weeks on Wednesday evenings from 6:00-9:00 p.m. For *on-campus students*, work in the course consists of classes including lectures, discussions, assigned readings, précis of required texts, a journal, and a research term paper. *Distance students* will do the same work but participate by Adobe Connect.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Students should purchase these through Amazon, the Regent College bookstore, or other sources, or may read them on reserve in the library as available.

Jenkins, Philip. (2002). *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. Oxford. University Press. (220 pages)

Jenkins, Philip. (2006). *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South*. Oxford. University Press. (193 pages)

Noll, Mark. (2009). *The New Shape of World Christianity*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic. (200 pages)

Sanneh, Lamin O. (2003). *Whose religion is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West*. Grand Rapids. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. (130 pages)

Sanneh, Lamin O. (2007). *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity*. Oxford. University Press. (287 pages)

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Attendance** For a weekly course, VST requires at least 80% attendance. For an intensive course such as this one, VST requires 100% attendance. For on-campus students, this means attending all five classes. For distance students, this means participating synchronously in all five classes via Adobe Connect.
2. **Reading and assignments** Students are expected to read all required assignments before class and to complete all assignments as outlined in the syllabus within the specified dates of the course and term.
3. **Academic honesty** Students are expected to adhere to VST's requirements for academic honesty as published in the Student Handbook.
4. **Inclusive language** In speaking and writing, inclusive language is expected when making reference to humans and a variety of metaphors are anticipated when making reference to God.
5. **Assignment and Course Evaluation**
Course evaluations at VST combine a letter grade system (A+ to B-; course failure is "Not Approved") including narrative comments based on the competencies of the course. No number grades or weights of assignments are calculated, nor are final grades given numerical equivalents.

Individual assignments within a course are given narrative evaluations, that is, APP (Approved) or INC (Incomplete) with narrative comments, based on the competencies and

expectations set for that assignment. One re-write is allowed on any assignment that is INC. The re-written assignment is due two weeks after the work is returned. The final evaluation for an assignment can be APP or NAPP after a re-write. For a passing grade in the course, all assignments must be Approved.

6. Late assignments

Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.

7. Social Media

Ordinarily, the use of electronic devices in the context of classrooms or meetings will be limited to support the learning, formation, or agenda at hand. Behaviors that distract the user or others from these purposes are socially discourteous and will be noted negatively in evaluating class participation.

8. Special Needs

VST is committed to creating safe space and an inclusive learning environment. If you have a diagnosed or suspected learning disability, chronic condition, mental health concern, or physical requirement which may impact your participation in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs with the instructor and the Dean within the first week of classes.

CALENDAR

Wednesday evenings, 6:00-9:00 p.m., for eleven weeks beginning September 14, 2016

Week-by-week outline of lectures, required readings, due dates, etc. — TBD

EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

- 1. Class participation:** Students are expected to participate in class discussions, and do adequate preparation for in-class discussion exercises. Evaluative criteria: comments and questions show adequate preparation, an understanding of the assigned readings and exercises, and a readiness to apply readings to interpretive questions and insights.
- 2. Précis:** Students will write a one-page (250-300 word) précis of three of the five required texts for the class, summarizing the main points and ideas of each book.
- 3. Term paper:** this paper will help students demonstrate their grasp of the subject matter and gain analytic skills. The paper will focus on a particular theme or issue chosen by the student and approved by the professor, and must be 15-20 pages in length double-spaced (approx. 3,000-3,750 words). The bibliography for the paper must reference (by footnote or endnote) 10-20 relevant research sources beyond course texts.

4. **Journal:** a brief set of written reflections that capture your insights, impressions, questions and thoughts in the days following each class. Due as specified in calendar. Evaluative criteria: completeness, ability to accurately represent central themes, relevant questions, and depth of reflection and insight.
5. **Th.M. students.** All of the requirements indicated above, plus approx. 1,000 pages additional reading from the following bibliography, or other relevant sources. The term paper must be 30-35 pages in length, include an annotated bibliography, with citations (footnotes or endnotes) that indicate depth of research appropriate for Advanced Degree work.
6. **Certificate students** are required to do all the reading, participate in class discussions, keep the journal, and write a term paper of 9-12 pages showing thoughtful engagement with the reading for the class, and providing a personal reflection on the material covered.
7. **Audit students** are encouraged to do the required reading in order to participate knowledgeably in class discussions.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Martin, David (2002). *Pentecostalism: Their World Their Parish*. Oxford: Blackwell.
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- Stark, Rodney (1997). *The Rise of Christianity*. San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers Inc.

Sundkler, Bengt and Christopher Steed (2000). *A History of the Church in Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

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