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MISSIONAL THEOLOGY IN A POST-CHRISTENDOM WORLD **SAH-TH 6/723**

PURPOSE

This course introduces the historical-cultural context and key voices that shaped a missional theology movement in the late-twentieth century, and the implications of this distinctive perspective for contemporary church leadership in North America.

PREREQUISITES

TH500 – Constructive Theology

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES

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

- Define the essential idea and distinctive emphases of missional theology
- Describe core ideas and concepts entailed in the idea of a missional church
- Contrast a missional approach to congregational leadership with other approaches
- Identify and critically assess characteristics of post-Christendom North American culture
- Discuss several different approaches to missional engagement with the wider community
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to community engagement as these as relate to forming missional congregations

FORMAT AND CONTENT

This is a weekly, 3.0 credit course that meets once a week for eleven weeks on Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. For *on-campus students*, work in the course consists of classes including lectures, discussions, assigned readings, précis of required texts, and a research term paper.

Distance students will do the same work but participate by Adobe Connect.

TEXTS

Students should purchase books through Amazon or another source. Articles marked with an asterisk will be available on Moodle for registered students.*

Required Reading

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics* (selected readings). Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960.

*Barth, Karl. "The Christian Community and the Civil Community". *Against the Stream: Shorter Post-War Writings, 1946-52*. R.G. Smith, ed. London: SMC Press Ltd: 13-50.

Guder, D. L. (2015). *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Hastings, R. (2012). *Missional God, Missional Church*. Downers Grove, IL, IVP Academic.

Van Gelder, C. and D. J. Zscheile (2011). *The Missional Church in Perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic.

Woodward, J. R. (2012). *Creating a Missional Culture*. Downers Grove, IL, Inter-Varsity Press.

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Attendance:** For a weekly course, VST requires at least 80% attendance. For on-campus students, this means attending at least 9 of 11 classes. For distance students, this means participating synchronously via Adobe Connect. Asynchronous distance students should contact the professor to discuss expectations for participation.
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.

COURSE CALENDAR (TBD)

EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

- 1. Class participation:** Students are expected to be familiar with the texts assigned for advance reading (see calendar), and to participate in class discussions. Evaluative criteria: comments and questions showing adequate preparation, an understanding of the assigned readings, 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 required texts for the class, summarizing the main points and ideas of each book.
- 3. Paper:** This paper is due at the end of the term, and should demonstrate the student's grasp of the subject matter of the course. Evaluative criteria: concise and clear writing, and completeness and accuracy in carrying out the assigned project. In general, the paper will focus on a particular theme from the course chosen by the student and approved by the professor. The paper should be 12-15 pages (3,000-3,750 words). Further detailed instructions for the paper will be given in class.

4. **Th.M.** students will be expected to expanded reading and write a longer research paper. Please check with the instructor about selecting your topic and bibliography.
5. **Certificate students** are required to do all the reading, participate in class discussions, and submit a brief paper (5-10 pages) according to the outline specified above.
6. **Audit students.** Auditors who want to participate in class discussions are expected to read the required texts in order to participate knowledgeably.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Additional readings relevant to the subject of this course

- Barrett, L. Y., W. C. Hobbs, et al, Eds. (2004). *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*. The Gospel and Our Culture Series. Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Bass, Dorothy, Ed. (2010). *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass (Second Edition).
- Bosch, D. J. (1991, 2011). *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books.
- Guder, D. L., Ed. (1998). *Missional church: a vision for the sending of the church in North America*. Gospel and culture. Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Guder, D. L. (2000). *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*. Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Heifetz, Ronald A. (1998). *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Herrington, Jim, M. Bonem and J. Furr. (2000) *Leading Congregational Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Helland, R. and L. Hjalmarson (2011). *Missional Spirituality: Embodying God's Love from the Inside Out*. Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press.
- Hirsch, Alan. (2007) *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*. Brazos Press.
- Hunsberger, G. R. (2015). *The Story That Chooses Us: A Tapestry of Missional Vision*. Grand Rapids, MI, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Jacobsen, D. A. (2001). *Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing*. Minneapolis. Augsburg Fortress Press.
- Linthicum, Robert. (2005) *Building a People of Power: Equipping Churches to Transform Their Communities*. Waynesboro, Georgia: Authentic Media, in partnership with World Vision.

- Martin, D. (2005). *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory*. Ashgate Publishing Company.
- McNeal, R. (2003). *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- McNeal, R. (2011). *Missional Communities: The Rise of the Post-Congregational Church*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Newbiggin, L. (1986). *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*. Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Newbiggin, L. (1989). *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Newbiggin, L. (2003). *Signs amid the Rubble: The Purposes of God in Human History*. Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Perkins, John. (1996). *Restoring At-Risk-Communities*. Baker Books.
- Roxburgh, A. J. (2011). *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood*. Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books.
- Roxburgh, A. J. and F. Romanuk (2006). *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Schein, Edgar H. (1992). *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (Second Edition). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schmemman, Alexander. (1979). *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy and the West*, St. Vladimirs Seminary Press.
- Sider, Ron, P. Olson, H. Unruh. (2002) *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works*. Baker Books.
- Sparks, P., T. Soerens and D. J. Friesen (2014). *The New Parish*. Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press.
- Stetzer, E. (2006). *Planting Missional Churches*. Nashville, TN, B&H Publishing Group.
- Tanner, K. (1997). *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress Press.
- Taylor, C. (2007). *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Tickle, Phyllis. (2008, 2012). *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*. Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books.
- Van Gelder, C. (2007). *The Ministry of the Missional Church*. Grand Rapids, Baker Books.