

Vancouver School of Theology
SAH-TH6/723
Missional Theology in a Post-Christendom World:
Studies in the Missional Church Conversation
Thursdays, 9am – 12pm

*“When we describe theology as missional,
then we do imply that the work of theology is not an end in itself
but is related to God’s mission in the world.”*

- Darrell Guder

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Course Description:

This course is designed for students interested in the development of the missional theology conversation in North America, attending to both significant themes and the key theologians who shaped the discourse over the last several decades. The missional church movement involves a reimagining of ecclesiology in light of a robust missiology, rooted in divine agency at work in the world. Together, we will study and explore questions like “What does it mean to be a missional church in an increasingly post-Christian, secular and religiously plural Canada, and what theology undergirds this movement?”

Purpose:

To explore the essential aspects of missional theology in the early twenty-first century, by examining and evaluating the key themes and thinkers in this developing area of mission studies. What might the contributions of this missional theology discourse reveal about our understanding of the triune God, soteriology, ecclesiology, and missiology for the church in the West today?

Competency Objectives:

- *Identify and describe* the core theological themes of the missional church movement in North America.
- *Engage and analyze* the key missional theologians associated with the missional church movement in North America.

- *Learn to articulate* the tenets of missional theology in connection with one's own vocational discernment and academic learning.
- *Ability to describe* the potential contribution of missional theology to the changing role of the church in a post-Christendom North American context, and what that means for Christian witness today.

Assigned Texts:

Franke, John. *Missional Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020.

Guder, Darrell. *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.

Lockhart, Ross, ed. *Christian Witness in Cascadian Soil: Coworkers with God in the land of hiking, hipsters, and hand-crafted lattes*. Eugene: Cascade, 2021.

Paas, Stefan. *Pilgrims and Priests: Christian Mission in a Post-Christian Society*. London: SCM, 2019.

Format:

This class meets weekly for three hours throughout the term. The primary format will be lecture and discussion based on the reading of the assigned texts.

Foundations in Missional Theology

January 19 – An introduction to the Missional Theology discourse

Please read Guder, (Chapters 1 & 2), 1-43.

Please read Paas, (Chapter 1), 1-21.

Please read Gregg Okalson, "The *Missio Dei* – a Thick, Public Story" in *A Public Missiology: How local churches witness to a complex world*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020), 65-93. (available on Populi).

January 26 – Missional God

Please read Franke, (Chapter 1), 1-30.

Please read Lesslie Newbigin, "The Mission of the Triune God," in *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, (Grand Rapids: 1995), 19-65. (available on Populi).

Please read Ross Hastings, "Greatest Co-Mission: The Missional Trinity" in *Missional God, Missional Church*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 2012), 80-118. (available on Populi).

February 2 – Missional Church

Please read Franke, (Chapter 2), 31-60.

Please read Guder, (Chapters 4-7), 63-120.

Please read Ross Lockhart, "Ecclesiology" in *Faithful Innovation: Beginning a Conversation for a Post-Covid Church*, (Los Angeles: Cyclical, 2020), 1-15. (available on Populi).

February 9 – Missional Theology

Please read Franke, (Chapter 3), 61-96.

Please read Guder, (Chapters 3 & 11), 44-62, 178-203.

Please read Michael Barram, *Missional Economics: Biblical Justice and Christian Formation*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 19-38, 238-245. (available on Populi).

Themes in Missional Theology

February 16 – Election – Saved to be Sent

Please read Susanne Crawford O'Brien, "Border Crossings: Indigenous Spirituality and Culture in Cascadia," in *Religion at the Edge: Nature, Spirituality and Secularity in the Pacific Northwest*, Paul Bramadat, Patricia O'Connell Killen and Sarah Wilkins-LaFlamme, ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2022), 60-81. (available on Populi).

Please read Lockhart, (Preface, Introduction and Chapters 1 to 3), xiii-40.

Please read Lesslie Newbigin, "The Logic of Election," in *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 80-88. (available on Populi).

February 23 – Witness – To the Ends of the Earth

Please read Paas, (Chapter 4), 124-164.

Please read *Missional Church*, 110-141. (available on Populi).

Please read Nancy Bedford, "Do Not Fear: Go – The Commission of Theological Feminism in the Mission of the Church," in *Mission After Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission*, Ogbu Kalu, Peter Vathanayagamony, Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, ed. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2010), 100-114. (available on Populi).

February 23 – Incarnation – Loving thy Neighbour

Please read Paas, (Chapters 2 & 3), 22 to 123.

Please read Peter Bush, "Polycentric World Christianity Comes to Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Responses of Euro-Canadian Congregations" in *World Christianity, Urbanization, and Identity*, Moses Biney, Kenneth Ngwa, and Raimundo Barreto, ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2021), 161-177. (available on Populi).

Please read Lockhart, (Chapters 4 to 7), 41-88.

Reading Week – February 27 to March 3

March 9 – Sending - Walking Worthily

Please read Guder, (Chapters 8 & 9), 120-164.

Please read Lockhart, (Chapters 8 to 11), 89-144.

Please read *Missional Church*, 1-17. (available on Populi).

Please read Ray Aldred, "Missions to Native Peoples: Moving from Charity to Justice," *Direction*, 3, no. 2 (Fall 2014): 192-201. (available on Populi).

March 16 – Identity - Strangers and Aliens

Please read Guder, (Chapter 10), 165-177.

Please read Paas, (Chapters 5 to 7), 165 – 231.

Please read Kelly Bean, "Urban Abbey: The power of small, sustainable, nimble micro-communities of Jesus" in *The Gospel After Christendom*, Ryan Bolger, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 303-312. (available on Populi).

Please read Christina Rice & Micahel Frost, "Being Changed as We Bring Change" in *To Alter Your World* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2017), 175-190. (available on Populi).

March 23 – Revelation – Healing of the Nations (Ecology & Eschatology)

Please read Lockhart, (Chapters 12-14) 145-180.

Please read Lois Barrett, *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 126-138. (available on Populi).

Please read Leah Kostamo, "Creation Care as Christian Mission" in *Green Shoots Out of Dry Ground: Growing a New Future for the Church in Canada*, John Bowen, ed. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 167-180. (available on Populi).

Please read David Bosch, "Mission as Action in Hope" in *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), 510-522. (available on Populi).

Studies in Missional Theology

March 30 – Case study: Cascadia as a missional/ecclesiastical petri-dish

Please read Christopher James, *Church Planting in Post-Christian Soil*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 138-183. (available on Populi).

Please read Jason Byassee and Ross Lockhart, *Better Than Brunch: Missional Churches in Cascadia*, xiii-11, 110-112. (available on Populi).

Please read Ross Lockhart, "Vancouver" in *The Soul of the City: Mapping the Spiritual*

Geography of Eleven Canadian Cities, Leonard Hjalmarson, ed., (Portland: Urban Loft, 2018), 45-64. (available on Populi).

April 8 – Missional theology in your future ministry context

Please read Franke, (Chapters 4 & 5), 97-166.

Assignments:

Please note:

Audit students will complete:

- All reading as assigned by the professor
- Class participation

No letter grades will be given for the completion of courses by audit.

Certificate students will complete:

- All reading as assigned by the professor
- Class participation and group work
- A 3-credit course requires 9-12 pages; therefore, Certificate students will complete the book review and make an in-class presentation *but NOT* complete the final paper.

Written assignments should demonstrate the ability to thoughtfully engage the material and reading for the class while offering a personal reflection on the reading and material covered. Certificate courses will be evaluated on an Approved (APP) /Not Approved (NAPP) system. No letter grades will be given for the completion of certificate courses.

***Asynchronous Students** in *Certificate, Basic and Advanced degree* program students will also be required to submit to Professor Lockhart a 500-word summary after watching the recording providing their top three insights from the class. Please email summary to lockhart@standrews.edu before the next week's class.

Basic and Advanced Degree students will complete:

- All of the assignments below numbered 1 through 5.

1. Class Participation and Expectations

Consistent and timely attendance is required according to VST guidelines. This includes the completion of the assigned reading for each class with each student ready to engage in discussion. If a student is unable to attend a class, the professor is to be informed by

email (rlockhart@standrews.edu). Smart Phones can be disruptive to the learning experience of other students. Please set all phones to silent or turn them off during class. Exceptions can always be made for medical or family issues that require being in constant contact. Laptops may be used during class but for note taking only. Surfing the internet is not permitted while class is in session unless it is part of a small group activity. Sending texts and emails will be limited to break time.

2. Book Review

Basic Degree students will submit a 1,500-word review of a missional theology text on the “Selected Bibliography” list at the end of this syllabus, in consultation with the Professor. Advanced Degree students will complete *two book reviews*, 1,500 words each both due on February 23, 2023. (Word document – double spaced, emailed to rlockhart@standrews.edu. Please consider the following:

What is the main argument that the author is trying to make and why do you think this is important to the author (as well as the wider church and academy)?

How does the author go about building this argument or thesis, and to what extent are you persuaded by the author’s writing?

How does this publication on missional theology fit into the larger, ongoing missional church discussion and what significant contribution might it make?

To whom would you recommend this book in both church and academy?

DUE DATE: February 23, 2023, at the beginning of class by emailing rlockhart@standrews.edu.

3. In class presentation

On the last day of class, April 8, students will make a brief ten-minute presentation on their key learnings or insights regarding missional theology from the course. Each student will do so by answering the following questions:

My understanding of missional theology entering this class was . . .

A key insight from exploring missional theology this term was . . .

I continue to wrestle with . . . regarding the tenets of missional theology . . .

I imagine that in my future studies/practice of ministry the most important impact of missional theology will be . . .

At the end of this class my revised understanding of missional theology is . . .

DUE DATE: April 8, beginning of class by email (rlockhart@standrews.edu)

4. Research Paper

Basic Degree students will submit a 3000-word academic research paper (double spaced, 12-point font, word count does not include footnotes) in a Word document emailed to rlockhart@standrews.edu that will focus on a significant missional theologian of the twentieth or twenty-first century. Advanced Degree students will complete a 5,000-word paper for this assignment. Selection of the missional theologian will be made in consultation with Professor Lockhart. Examples include David Bosch, Lesslie Newbigin, Lamin Sanneh, Darrell Guder, Lois Barrett, David Fitch, Cathy Ross, Ray Bakke, Claire Watkins, Soong-Cha Rah, Helen Cameron, Michael Frost, or Allan Roxburgh. Students will provide a brief analysis of the missional theologian's context, their significant writings, major contributions to the missional theology discourse, important interlocutors, connection between theory and praxis in their writing, ongoing impact of the missional theologian's work on church and academy and any relevant critique of their theological positions. Remember, this is an academic research paper, and it is important to demonstrate your integration of the course lectures, readings, and discussions in your final paper.

DUE DATE: Friday, April 21, 2023, by email to rlockhart@standrews.edu

Deadlines:

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 for each course. 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.

Selected Bibliography

Ammerman, Nancy. *Congregation & Community*. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 1997.

Bakke, Ray. *A Theology as Big as the City*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1997.

Barrett, Lois, ed. *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

Beach, Lee. *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope After Christendom*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2015.

Benesh, Sean, ed. *Vespas, Cafes, Single speed Bikes, and Urban Hipsters: Gentrification, Urban Mission, and Church Planting*. Portland: Urban Loft, 2014.

Biney, Mosey O., Kenneth N. Ngwa, and Raimundo C. Barreto, ed. *World Christianity*,

- Urbanization, and Identity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2021.
- Block, Tina. *The Secular Northwest: Religion and Irreligion in Everyday Postwar Life*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017.
- Bolger, Ryan, ed. *The Gospel after Christendom*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
- Bosch, David. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 20th Anniversary edition. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2011.
- Bowen, John, ed. *Green Shoots in Dry Ground: Growing a New Future for the Church in Canada*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013.
- Bramadat, Paul, Patricia O'Connell Killen and Sarah Wilkins-LaFlamme, ed. *Religion at the Edge: Nature, Spirituality and Secularity in the Pacific Northwest*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2022.
- Byassee, Jason and Ross Lockhart. *Better Than Brunch: Missional Churches in Cascadia*. Eugene: Cascade, 2020.
- Cameron, Helen, Philip Richter, Douglas Davies and Frances Ward, ed. *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook*. London: SCM, 2005.
- Cameron, Helen, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney, and Clare Watkins. *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology*. London: SCM, 2010.
- Clarke, Brian & Stuart Macdonald. *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945*. Montreal/Kingston: McGill/Queens University Press, 2017.
- Dean, Kendra Creasy, Amanda Drury, Blair Bertrand and Andy Root, ed. *Consensus and Conflict: Practical Theology for Congregations in the Work of Richard R. Osmer*. Eugene: Pickwick, 2019.
- Dickau, Tim. *Forming Christian Communities in a Secular Age: Recovering Humility and Hope*. Toronto: Tyndale Academic, 2021.
- Dzubinski, Leanne and Anneke Stasson. *Women in the Mission of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021.
- Everts, Don. *The Hopeful Neighbourhood: What happens when Christians pursue the common good*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2020
- Fitch, David. *Faithful Presence: Seven Disciplines that Shape the Church for Mission*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2016.
- Flett, John & David Congdon, ed. *Converting Witness: The Future of Christian Mission in the New Millennium*. Lanham: Lexington/Fortress, 2019.
- Goheen, Michael. *Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History, and Issues*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2014.
- Graham, Elaine. *Apologetics without Apology: Speaking of God in a World Troubled by Religion*. Eugene: Cascade, 2017.
- Guder, Darrell. *Be My Witnesses*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Guder, Darrell. *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Guder, Darrell. *The Incarnation and the Church's Witness*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1999.
- Hagley, Scott. *Eat What Is Set Before You: A Missiology of the Congregation in Context*. Portland: Urban Loft, 2019.
- Hastings, Ross. *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-Evangelizing the West*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2012.

- Hjalmarson, Leonard, ed. *The Soul of the City: Mapping the Spiritual Geography of Eleven Canadian Cities*. Portland: Urban Loft, 2018.
- James, Christopher B. *Church Planting in Post-Christian Soil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Keifert, Patrick, ed. *Testing the Spirits: how theology informs the study of congregations*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Killen, Patricia O'Connell & Mark Silk, ed. *Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Northwest: The None Zone*. Walnut Creek: Altamira, 2004.
- Leong, David. *Street Signs: Toward a Missional Theology of Urban Cultural Engagement*, Eugene: Pickwick, 2012.
- Lockhart, Ross. *Beyond Snakes and Shamrocks: St. Patrick's Missional Leadership Lessons for Today*. Eugene: Cascade, 2018.
- Lockhart, Ross. *Lessons from Laodicea: Missional Leadership in a Culture of Affluence*, Eugene: Cascade, 2016.
- Makins, Kevin. *Why Would Anyone Go to Church?* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020.
- Marks, Lynn. *Infidels and the Damn Churches: Religion and Irreligion in Settler British Columbia*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017.
- Marti, Gerardo and Gladys Ganiel. *The Deconstructed Church: Understanding Emerging Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *Unfinished Agenda: An Updated Autobiography*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1993.
- Nikolajsen, Jeppe Bach. *The Distinctive Identity of the Church: A Constructive Study of the Post-Christendom Theologies of Lesslie Newbigin and John Howard Yoder*. Eugene: Pickwick, 2015.
- Okesson, Gregg. *A Public Missiology: How Local Churches Witness to a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020.
- Paas, Stefan. *Church Planting in the Secular West: Learning from the European Experience*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.
- Rah, Soong-Chan. *Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church, Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times*. Chicago: Moody, 2010.
- Rah, Soong-Chan. *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009.
- Roxburgh, Alan. *Introducing the Missional Church: What it is, why it matters, how to become one*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.
- Roxburgh, Alan. *Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World: The New Shape of the Church in our Time*. New York: Morehouse, 2015.
- Roxburgh, Alan. *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.
- Roxburgh, Alan and Fred Romanuk. *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2020.
- Roxburgh, Alan. *Missional Mapmaking: Skills for Leading in a Time of Transition*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.

- Roxburgh, Alan. *Practices for the Refounding of God's People*. New York: Church Publishing, 2018.
- Roxburgh, Alan. *Reaching a New Generation: Strategies for Tomorrow's Church*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1993.
- Roxburgh, Alan. *Structured for Mission: Renewing the Culture of the Church*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2015.
- Root, Andrew. *Churches and the Crisis of Decline: A hopeful, practical ecclesiology for a Secular Age*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022.
- Runyon, Dave and Jay Pathak. *The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
- Santos, Narry and Mark Naylor, ed. *Mission and Evangelism in a Secularizing World: Academy, Agency, and Assembly Perspectives from Canada*. Eugene: Pickwick, 2019.
- Sheldrake, Philip. *The Spiritual City: Theology, Spirituality and the Urban*. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.
- Smith, Gordon. *Wisdom from Babylon: Leadership for the Church in a Secular Age*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2020.
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- Strhan, Anna. *Aliens and Strangers: The Struggle for Coherence in the Everyday Lives of Evangelicals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Thiessen, Joel. *The Meaning of Sunday: The Practice of Belief in a Secular Age*. Montreal/Kingston: McGill/Queen's University Press, 2015.
- Toly, Noah J. *Cities of Tomorrow and the City to Come: A Theology of Urban Life*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.
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- Ward, Pete, ed. *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
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