

**Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary**  
**DISCIPLESHIP & ETHICS**

TS-630 (2 or 3 Units)  
Fall 2005 (Aug. 31 to Dec. 7)  
Wednesday 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Professor: Mark D. Baker, Ph.D.  
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Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00-11:00  
Wed. 1:30-3:30

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A study of the theological basis and practical application of Christian ethics that will enable a church community to become an alternative culture that resists forces of alienation and death in our society. Time will also be devoted to learning a method for using scripture in making ethical decisions.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Through this course students will be able:

- to distinguish the difference between an ethic of Christian discipleship and an ethic of religious morality;
- to practice giving ethical exhortation in a Christian way;
- to articulate the necessity and the promise of Christians practicing a community-based ethic of resistance to the powers experienced in society today;
- to identify seven alienating forces in our society; describe how they alienate; and begin to think about how a Christian community might resist these forces;
- to develop a plan for how, in relation to one issue, a Christian community might more truly become a community of resistance that helps its members thrive.
- to learn and apply a method for using scripture in making ethical decisions

**Degree and Program Objectives**

1. To promote an awareness of the Church's relationship to the cultural, social, and political arenas and to provide guidelines for an effective personal and corporate witness in a secular state and society.
2. To foster prophetic discernment of the times in the context of the Church's mission and service.

**COURSE TEXTS**

Baker, Mark D. *Religious No More: Building Communities of Grace and Freedom*. IVP, 1999.\*

Ellul, Jacques. *Perspectives on Our Age*. Revised Edition, House of Anansi, 2004.\*

Haillie, Philip. *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*. HarperCollins, 1994.\*

Hays, Richard. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*, Harper, 1996 (required for 3<sup>rd</sup> unit).\*

L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wind in the Door*. Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1973.\*

Course Pack (CP) - a collection of photocopied articles and chapters will be distributed the first class session. You will be billed for the cost of copies and copyright fees.

\*On reserve in the library.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Part I: Following Jesus in Resisting Powers of Alienation and Forming an Alternative Culture**

**Note on Readings:** Two narratives are foundational to this part of the course and set the tone for the course as a whole. We will discuss them at length the second week of the class, but we will refer to them throughout the course. Although they are easier reading than a text book, the second week's required reading is still quite substantial. You may want to read either the L'Engle or Hallie book before the semester begins. See the appendix for questions to reflect on as you read.

- 1 - **August 31 Following Jesus: From Alienation to Restored Relationships**  
After the class: Write a response letter  
Read after class: Baker (CP [CP= Course Pack]), "Power/Principalities," 1285  
Ellul (CP), "Freedom in Relation to the Powers," 151-160  
Stringfellow (CP), "Christ and the Powers of Death," 192-203
- 2 - **September 7 Communities that "Name," Resist the Powers, & Form an Alternative Culture**  
Read before class: L'Engle, 3-211 (see appendix)  
Hallie, xiii-xxi, 1-115, 166-200, 234-266 (see appendix)  
After the class: Write a response letter
- 3 - **September 14 Freedom From Religion: What is a Religious Ethic and What Does it Produce? & Resisting Individualism: An Alternative Culture of People in Covenant Community**  
Read before class: Baker, 13-126, 147-153 (see appendix)  
Baker (CP), "Religion Our Natural Tendency"  
After the class: Write a response letter
- 4 - **September 21 Resisting Religion: Developing an Antireligious Ethic that Frees Community Members to Live Out Who They Have Been "Named" to Be.**  
Read before class: (see appendix) Baker, 127-146, 153-59  
Blue, Debbie (CP), "A Bomb to the Human Competition Extravaganza, 80-86.  
After class: Read example sermons by Ellul, Hill, Williams, and Hill (CP) and write an Ethical Exhortation (Due Monday 9/26 by 8:30 a.m.)
- 5 - **September 28 An Alternative Culture: Resisting Technique's Alienating and Enslaving ways**  
Read before class & write responses to the questions in the appendix:  
Ellul, *vii-xvii*, & 1-90 (Previous edition 1-111)  
Rheingold, Howard "Look Who's Talking," available at:  
<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/7.01/amish.html>
- 6 - **October 5 An Alternative Culture: Resisting Mammon**

Read before class & write responses to the questions in the appendix:  
Ellul (CP), “Money” & “Children and Money,” 73-136 (may skim 125-136)  
Hays, 464-468  
Hochstedler, (CP) “Speaking the Unspeakable,” 7-9  
Powell, Susan, “The Master’s Joy,” at:  
<http://www.urbana.org/articles.cfm?RecordId=439>  
Shelly, Linda, “What I Learned From Sharing Bananas and Beans,” 7-9

October 12 *No class*—Module Week

7 - **October 19 An Alternative Culture: Resisting Consumerism**

Read before class & confirm reading (see appendix):  
Clapp, Rodney, (CP) “Why the Devil Takes Visa,”  
Miller, Lynn, “What Your Retirement Planner Doesn’t Tell You,” available at:  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/003/3.52.html>  
Postman (CP), “The Parable of the Ring Around the Collar,” 66-71

8 - **October 26 An Alternative Culture: Resisting the Destruction of Creation & Chastity and Marital Fidelity**

Read before class & write responses to the questions in the appendix:  
Martens, Elmer (CP) “Yahweh’s Compassion and Ecotheology,” 234-248  
Friesen, Chris (CP) “The Nature of Scripture”, 22-25  
Marshall, I. Howard (CP) “Commitment to Creation,” 94-98  
Wiebe, Philip (CP) “An Almost-environmentalist,” 20  
Ebersole, Joe (CP) Speech given to the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference, 1-3  
McClellan, Michelle, “A sampling of the West’s collaborative efforts” available at  
[http://www.hcn.org/1996/may13/dir/Feature\\_A\\_sampling.html](http://www.hcn.org/1996/may13/dir/Feature_A_sampling.html)  
Jones, Gregory (CP), “Fidelity Makes You Happy”

9 - **November 2 An Alternative Culture: Resisting TV’s Alienating Power & Busyness**

Read before class & confirm reading (see appendix):  
Clapp (CP), “The Culture of the Gaper’s Block,” 2-3  
Postman, Neil (CP), “Future Schlock,” 163-174  
Grossman, David “Trained to Kill” (*Christianity Today* 8/10/98):  
[http://www.killology.com/art\\_trained\\_virus.htm](http://www.killology.com/art_trained_virus.htm)  
“Confessions of an Anonymous MB” (CP), 4-6  
Fast, Kristin (CP), “Seeking Good News,” 7-10  
Cook, Sara (CP), “Talking TV,” 11-17  
Baker, Mark (CP), “What a Seminary Professor Thinks About TV,” 12-13

10 - **November 9 Class Activity: A Program Plan for Helping a Christian Community Begin to Form an Alternative Culture in Relation to a Specific Issue**

Book Reviews due at the beginning of the class session.

*Students taking the course for two units are not required to attend class or do the assignments for Part II of the course*

## **PART II: A Method for a Christian Community to use Scripture in Making Ethical Decisions**

- 11 - November 16 **The Descriptive and Synthetic Tasks**  
Read before class & write responses to the questions in the appendix: Hays, 1-205
  
- 12 - November 23 **Five Representative Hermeneutical Strategies**  
Read before class & write responses to the questions in the appendix:  
Hays, 207-312  
Baker, “Symbolic World” and “Timeless Truth” (CP)
  
- 13 - November 30 **Hays’s Method Observed and Evaluated**  
Read before class & confirm reading (see appendix):  
Hays, read the introduction (313-15), Chapter 15 (347-378), either chapter 16 or 18, and the conclusion (462-470)
  
- 14 - December 7 **Hays’s Method Observed and Evaluated, Part II & Peacemaking and Resisting a Culture of Violence**  
Read before class & reflect on the questions in the appendix:  
Hill, “The Last, Best Hope?” (CP)  
Hays, Chapter 14 pp. 317-346  
After the class: Write a response letter (see appendix) Due Friday

Ethical decision making project due Tuesday December 13

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

**Class Response letters:** After each of the first three, and the 14th class sessions students will be asked to write a one page, single-spaced, response to the class and reading. You will write this letter to a friend (partner in ministry, family member, church member, etc.); give one copy to your friend and give a copy to the professor. You are to write about one to three things you found most engaging; describe the concept or ideas, and explain their importance to your friend through relating the material to your life. The aim of the assignment is **not** for the students to summarize the entire class session. Rather, these letters will help students sort through content and identify and reflect upon that which is of central importance to them. The exercise reinforces the truth that course material is of more than just academic significance and allows students to practice the art of organizing and articulating their thoughts in a way that people with less expertise in the field can understand. You will be graded on clarity of thought and communication, and level of personal engagement and integration of the material with your life.

Grading standards: B for clearly communicating content, but with little or no personal engagement; B+ for adequately meeting the above criteria; B- or lower for failing to meet the stated criteria; A- or A for an above average level of personal engagement and insight into class or reading content and a high quality of writing.

The “letters” are due on the Friday after the class by 5:00 pm. You may put the letters in my box or e-mail them to: bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu.

**Written Reflections on Reading:** Written responses to reading are required for five of the class sessions (beginning with class number five). These reflections are both to enhance students’ engagement with the reading and to prepare for class discussions which will often center on the reflection questions found in appendix A. The answers need not be lengthy and in general should be from one to two single-spaced pages, depending on the number of questions.

Grading standards: B for satisfactorily completing the assignment; B- or lower for not doing all the reading or not adequately answering a question; B+ for answers that reflect careful reading and thoughtful interaction with the questions; A- or A for outstanding depth of insight or analysis. Note, while longer answers, unless they are simply summary, increase the probability of getting a B+ rather than a B, length alone will not produce an A since more words written does not necessarily mean more insight.

*Because of the importance of these assignments to the class discussion, and because the answers will be discussed in class, any assignments handed in late (after the class session) will only receive half credit.*

**Ethical Exhortation:** Students will practice communicating in a way that promotes an ethic of freedom and undermines a religious lifestyle by writing a short ethical exhortation (three pages double-spaced). Select one of the following: helping the poor, giving/tithing, being honest/not telling lies, practicing hospitality, loving enemies, or working for racial reconciliation. Exhort people to action using guidelines we discuss in class number 4 to communicate an imperative in a non-religious way as an invitation to thrive. You will be graded on how well you are able to do what is described in the previous sentence, the strength of the challenge offered, and the general quality and clarity of writing. For helpful models see sermons in the Course Pack by, Hill, Ellul, Williams, and Hill. Due Monday 9/26 by 8:30 a.m. I prefer to receive assignments in my box, but you can e-mail them to: bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu

**Book Review:** As we ask what it means to be disciples of Jesus today and form Christian communities which offer an alternative culture we will explore seven areas of ethical concern. In order to allow you to study one of these areas in more depth, and to allow the rest of the class to learn from your exploration, each student will select and read a book from the list in Appendix B. After reading the book write a one page, single-spaced, review that includes the following: (1.) a one-to-two sentence statement of the thesis of the book; (2.) a brief evaluation of the book and response to the thesis (part of this evaluation should include an evaluation of the ethical approach of the book--does it present an ethic of freedom and possibility or an ethic of

obligation, how?); (3.) a list of helpful insights from the book; (4.) how has the book changed your thinking and/or what are steps of action you and your church community might take based on what you learned from this book. You will be given a model review to use as a guide.

Grading standards: B for including each of the four elements; B- or less for not including all of the above elements, not clearly distinguishing them or writing that hinders clear understanding; B+ surpasses a B by clearly communicating a greater quantity and quality of information through heightened discernment of what to include and a quality and conciseness of writing; A- or A for, adding to the above, an evidence of passionate and thoughtful engagement with the book that is displayed through analysis or application.

The book reviews are due at the beginning of class ten. Please make enough copies of your review so that you can give one to every member of the class.

**Ethical Decision Making: Applying Hays's Method:** Students will select an ethical question on which Christians have differing opinions, and use Hays's method to explore the issue and argue for a particular response. You may not choose one of the five issues Hays explores in his book *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. A broad range of topics, however, are acceptable, for instance: Sabbath practices, drinking alcoholic beverages, euthanasia, refusing to pay taxes as a protest against a government policy, women in ministry, involvement in politics, any number of medical or business ethics questions, providing assistance to people who are working in the country without legal permission (or placing yourself in Asian, Mexican, or Central American context--is it appropriate to go the US or Canada and work without legal permission?).

Each student will prepare a three page outline that summarizes the main points of their work. **Please follow the model and instructions in your Course Pack.** Due December 13.

**Attendance and Reading** is included as part of the class participation grade. To get an "A" in this category you must have perfect attendance and make significant contributions to class discussion. An "A-" will be given to those with perfect attendance and good participation or to those with one absence and significant participation. Two absences will place a student in the "B" range; participation will determine whether it is a high or low "B." Three absences could move the student in to the "C" range. Four or more absences place the student at risk of receiving an "F" in class participation, but also at risk of having their course grade lowered a full letter grade or of automatically failing the class. Students may talk to the professor about ways to partially make up for absences. Note that "significant participation" refers to quality of participation not just quantity. Completing assigned reading (classes 7, 8, 13 & 14) will be included in this grade and will be factored into decisions about borderline grades.

#### **Academic Policies:**

MBBS academic policies are described at [www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies](http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies) . These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and will be held responsible for adhering

to them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to you or to a situation that you face in your studies, please speak to the professor or consult the Registrar or Academic Dean.

**Assignment policies for this course:**

1. Students are expected to submit assignments on time; if they are late they will be graded down one grade level (a B+ becomes a B).
2. All written work should have one inch margins and Times Roman 12pt font.
3. All assignments may be printed on scrap paper.
4. Confidentiality: If you wish to have your assignment results be more confidential you may submit the assignments in an envelope.

**Grading Scheme For Three Units**

Attendance and class participation, 10%; Class response letters 20%; Exhortation 15%; Book review 15%; Written reflections on reading 20%; Application of Hays's method 20%.

**Grading Scheme For Two Units**

Attendance and class participation, 10%; Class response letters 20%; Exhortation 25%; Book review 25%; Written reflections on reading 20%

As stated in the MBBS academic policies/grading a "B" is the baseline grade. A "B" means the student is doing satisfactory work. The "B+" or higher grade indicates that the student has exceeded the baseline performance standard. The "C" grade indicates that the student has not achieved the baseline level. I will write a letter grade on your assignments. In my grade book each letter grade will be given a numerical equivalent (B+ = 3.33; A- = 3.67). At the end of the semester your numerical average will determine your final letter grade based on the following scale:

- 4.00 to 3.83 = A
- 3.82 to 3.5 = A-
- 3.49 to 3.17 = B+
- 3.16 to 2.83 = B etc.

## APPENDIX A

**Questions for you to reflect upon as you read** (written responses to these questions are not required until class number five)

### For Class 2

#### **Reading *A Wind in the Door***

Much of the Bible is written in narrative form, and Jesus often used stories (parables) in his teaching. This is not accidental, narratives can communicate things that text books cannot, and we can remember stories much easier than we remember the argument of an academic essay. In this novel for young people Madeleine L'Engle offers us powerful images of forces of alienation and destruction as well as inspiring and challenging images of ways to resist those forces. I invite you to immerse yourself in this story and reflect upon how it can inform the way we think about why and how a Christian community should seek to resist forces of evil and alienation in our society. As you read take note of and pay special attention to the theme of "naming" (and its various sub themes like "X-ing," "Un-naming," "not knowing who you are," etc.).

- What does L'Engle mean by "naming"? What does a namer do?
- What is the relation between what L'Engle portrays as naming and the pastoral importance and potential of Christian ethics?
- What is the relation between naming and Christian community? What is the role of community in this book?
- How did Jesus name people?
- What are Echthroi in the book? (What does the word mean in Greek?) What do they represent? According to L'Engle how should a namer respond to them?

#### **Reading *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed*** (pages: xiii-xxi, 1-115, 166-200, 234-266).

1. How does this book demonstrate the value and importance of a community of resistance in contrast to isolated individuals attempting to resist forces of death and alienation?
2. Individuals, however, including Pastor Trocmé, played very important roles. Observe how the leaders helped train and facilitate the development of a community of resistance. What can you learn from their experience and actions that would be helpful and applicable to churches today?
3. The Protestant Reformed Church is not historically a "peace church," but non-violence is a central theme in the book. Take note of how the leaders become committed to non-violence. What can Anabaptists in our setting today learn from these non-Anabaptist pacifists? What can non-Anabaptists in our setting learn from these non-Anabaptist pacifists?
4. In a general way we can say this community was resisting Nazism. As you read the book list more specifically what they are resisting.
5. How does being a community of resistance make them a community of freedom? That is, how can you imagine they were freer than a community down the road that did not resist as they did?
6. In the preface (xxi) the author states that "belief in God was at the living center of the rescue efforts of the village." How do you observe that to be true?
7. Many other Christians in France and Europe did not resist as they did? What was different here? What can we learn from that?
8. Who do you identify with most?

### **For Class Three**

1. In this class session you will have the opportunity to ask questions about the book. As you read please note questions you would like to ask the author, and bring those questions to class.

2. *Religious No More* is based on my dissertation. One of the two central questions behind my research was: “Why in a setting of such great need and injustice are evangelical church indifferent to or hostile to a holistic gospel?” As you read I would like you to reflect on two questions: First, if a more holistic gospel was my goal why did I choose to center the work on Galatians? Second, what elements of my interpretation of Galatians might contribute to a church becoming more active in working for justice and responding to physical needs in the church and community?

### **For Class Four**

1. What can we learn from Paul that will help us state ethical imperatives in a non-religious way? Moving from the above specific discussion of how to talk about ethical imperatives in a non-religious way, chapter ten of *Religious No More* discusses in a more general way how to respond to religion.

2. What insights do you find most helpful and what other ideas or questions does the chapter bring to mind?

3. Observe how people talk about ethics, Christian ethics, in sermons, Sunday School classes, Christian periodicals, and in conversations.

4. What are the characteristics of Amor Fe y Vida Church’s current approach to ethics? What is your response to their approach?

5. In what ways does the e-mail conversation on rules help clarify what a non-religious ethic might look like? What questions do the e-mails raise? What are ideas from the e-mails that will help you talk about ethical actions differently?

6. How does Debbie Blue’s sermon relate to last week’s reading on “justification” in Galatians, and this week’s readings?

*Beginning with class session five you will write responses to the Appendix questions*

**For Class Five:** *Perspectives on Our Age*, by Jacques Ellul & “Look Who’s Talking” by Howard Rheingold, (note: page numbers are from the new edition of Ellul’s book. See an old syllabus if you are using a previous edition. The translation of the new edition is improved and preferable.)

**Ellul:** In his discussion of *technique* Ellul is not speaking primarily of the invasion of our lives by machines of all sorts. (Although that invasion is not irrelevant to his point.) Rather, he is speaking about the domination of our lives and the life of our society by something we might call the *principle of the machine*. The problem is not individual technologies, but enslavement to something that has an overwhelming, and he says alienating, impact on our lives.

Ellul **defines technique** as, “The totality of methods, rationally arrived at, and having absolute efficiency (for a given stage of development) in every field of human activity.” (Ellul, *The Technological Society*, xxv.)

“Technique . . . [refers to] efficient methods applicable in all areas (monetary, economic, athletic, etc.)” (Ellul, *POA*, 27) In other words: the most efficient way of doing what can be done.

Because we have all grown up in an era when technique has dominated society we may tend to equate “efficient” with “best” when in reality efficient is one of a variety of characteristics we could use to evaluate what method or approach is best. To do something in the most efficient way means to do it in a way that uses the least amount of time, money, energy, space, etc. Efficiency is measured by numbers and can be calculated.

1. Try to think of examples from your life where the most efficient approach and the best approach are not necessarily the same.

Read pages 6-8 very carefully. Ellul uses a dialectical approach which differs from the linear logic of most thinkers we encounter. These pages will help you understand his dialectical approach and therefore better understand and profit from his writing. For a more in-depth essay on his dialectical approach see:

Ellul, J., “Dialectic” <http://www.jesusradicals.com/library/ellul/what/dialectic.html>

In your reading whenever you think that Ellul is simply attacking all technology jump ahead and read page 88. It also may help to remember his dialectical approach. Be sure to read pages 78-90 of the book very carefully.

2. What were one or two things that stood out or impressed you in the autobiographical section?

3. Ellul is a very critical thinker. (For example: “Once a movement becomes an institution, it is lost” [p. 20]). Many have said he is pessimistic, and perceive him as being so negative that he would have no hope or reason to act. Yet he claims to have hope and throughout his life he was an activist and was involved in a variety of activities, movements, and even institutions. How does his relationship with Jesus Christ help him be able to be so critical, more critical than many others, and also allow him to have hope and work for change in the face of the dire situation he describes.

4. What are ways that you see Ellul describing technique as one of the principalities and powers?

5. How is Ellul’s dialectical approach evident in this book?

6. What are the responses to technique that Ellul calls Christians to make?

**Amish Article:** 7. According to the article about the Amish what is their concern? That is, what is driving their decisions about what they adopt from modern society and what they do not?

8. What can we learn from the Amish about being communities of resistance? (You may include positive and negative lessons.)

### **For Class Six**

1. List ways that money/mammon alienates. That is, how, in your experience, have you seen it distort relationships and separate us from ourselves, others, and God?

2. What are the three or four main points that Ellul makes about money?

3. Ellul takes a position as strongly critical of money as anything I have read. Yet he does so

within a paradigm of an ethic of freedom. What are things that Ellul does in his discussion of money that guard against people developing a religious ethic from his analysis?

4. How do you respond to Ellul's discussion of savings on pages 104-106? In what ways do you find it helpful? In what ways do you agree and disagree? (Please be careful to focus the discussion on the specific type of savings Ellul critiques. He is not saying it is wrong to save up money to fix your roof or go to school. Rather he is addressing undesignated savings.)

5. What are four or five helpful points you have picked up from the other readings (articles) that describe various (and at times contrasting) ways of dealing with money?

### **For Class Seven**

After you have read the articles send a note to [bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu](mailto:bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu) confirming that you have done all the reading, or hand in a note at the beginning of class.

### **For Class Eight**

1. What are two or three of the biblical or theological points that you found most helpful? Why? Are there biblical questions you have on this theme that remain unanswered?

2. Which of the readings did you find the most engaging? Why?

3. How does the article on fidelity address that issue in ways similar to and different from how it is presented in your church?

### **For Class Nine**

After you have read the articles send a note to [bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu](mailto:bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu) confirming that you have done all the reading, or hand in a note at the beginning of class.

### **For Class Eleven**

Part one of Hays's book is, in essence, a text on NT Theology with special concern given to ethical approaches and issues. As you read reflect on the following question (you do not need to write your response to this question): Why does Hays give more than a third of the book to this instead of just jumping right in to discussing the issues?

(Write your responses to questions 1 through 3).

1. State an insight you have gained about the theology of two of the N. T. authors from reading pages 16-186 (you will list two insights--one from each of the two different authors). Explain how these insights will aid you in the process of ethical decision making.

In regards to "Part Two: The Synthetic Task," Hays counters the idea that there is one guiding principal that anchors NT ethics because that leaves too much out. He also states that the synthetic is more than trying to reconcile apparent contradictions, and that the way to deal with tensions is to locate them in something bigger. The "something bigger" that he offers is focal images which are: Community, Cross, New Creation.

2. He states that a focal image provides "an interpretative framework that links and illumines the individual writings"(p.5). What is the difference between a focal image and a concept, principle or doctrine? (see especially pp. 194, 199-200).

3. Hays states that if we do not read the New Testament through the lens of community, or if we use the individual as a focal image, we will distort NT ethical teaching (pp. 196-97; see also

endnote #11 on p. 204). Select a specific text from the NT and explain how the text would be read differently through a corporate or individual lens.

For your reflection (you do not need to write): What might you add to or subtract from his description of one of these images? And/or would you use a different image than he has selected?

### **For Class Twelve**

After you read page 209, read “Symbolic World” in the Course Pack

1. What have you learned and reflected on through reading the section summarizing and evaluating five theologians?
2. Hays states that “the effort to distinguish timeless truth in the New Testament from culturally conditioned elements is wrongheaded and impossible” (299). Read “Timeless Truth” in the Course Pack and then answer the following questions: What are ways that you have observed the Bible used in ethical discussions that display what Hays is critiquing? (Include at least one example of a text being used as a timeless truth, and one example of a text being ignored because of being “culturally rooted.”) Why does Hays state this is a wrongheaded approach? Do you agree, why or why not?
3. In your own words explain what Hays means by “formulating imaginative analogies” (p. 298).

### **For Class Thirteen**

After you have done the assigned reading for this week send a note to [bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu](mailto:bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu) confirming that you have done all the reading, or hand in a note at the beginning of class.

As you read reflect on the following (you do not need to hand in written responses):

There is much in these pages that we can reflect on in relation to the issues Hays explores. Our primary aim, however, is to observe and reflect on his method so that you will be able to apply it in your “Ethical Decision Making Project” and so that we will be able to use his method in the future.

1. As you read look for examples of how Hays follows the guidelines on page 310.
2. What aspects of Hays’s method guard against using specific verses as proof texts.
3. In what ways does Hays’s method lead you to see scripture relating to these issues differently and to think about the issues differently?
4. As you observe Hays apply his method what are ways that you find you are more convinced it is a good method and ways that you are less convinced?
5. If you disagree with where Hays ends up on an issue what are exegetical or hermeneutical moves of his that you would do differently that would justify your taking a different position?

### **For Class Fourteen**

*Before class:* After you have read the sermon and the chapter send a note to [bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu](mailto:bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu) confirming that you have done all the reading, or hand in a note at the beginning of class.

*As you read:* Reflect on the following as you read (you do not need to write):

1. How does Hays refute or counter the points listed on page 320?

2. What is the central exegetical difference between Hill and Hays? That is, what is Hill's basis for saying Luke 6:27-36 does not require Christians to be pacifists? How would Hays respond?
3. In the synthesis section what did you find helpful with the way Hays deals with the texts "that seem to stand in tension with the central witness of the New Testament concerning violence"? In what ways do you agree or disagree with Hays's reading of these texts?
4. How does looking through the three focal lenses change the way you read the central texts?

*After class:* Write a letter, that interacts with the reading and the class session, and states your position in relation to the central questions of this class: What norms concerning the use of violence might be derived from the New Testament and how should the church live them out today? The letter is due by Friday 5:00pm.

### **APPENDIX B: Potential Titles for the Book Review Assignment**

Most of the books listed below are available at the library, or have been ordered by the library. Some are more theoretical others more applied. Most approach these issues in a way that is generally consonant with the approach of this course. There is, however, some diversity of perspective. Not all of the authors are Christians. I encourage you to look at a number of books before deciding which book you will read.

#### **TECHNIQUE/TECHNOLOGY**

- Ataide, Randy, "If We Serve a God of Productivity is There Room for Jesus? An Analysis and Application of Jacques Ellul's Thesis of Technique in the Agri-business World" (MBBS MA Thesis, 2003)
- Borgmann, Albert. *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life*. T 14.B63
- Borgmann, Albert. *Power Failure: Christianity in the Culture of Technology*. BL240.3. B67
- Conway, Ruth. *Choices at the Heart of Technology: A Christian Perspective*. BR 115.T42 C66
- Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological Society*. T14 E553
- Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological System*. HM221. E4313
- Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological Bluff*. T14.E545
- Hopper, David H. *Technology, Theology, and the Idea of Progress*. BR 115.T42 H66
- Postman, Neil. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. T 14.5.P667
- Postman, Neil. *Conscientious Objections: Stirring Up Trouble About Language, Technology, and Education*. P40.8 .P667
- Ritzer, George. *The McDonaldization of Society*. HM 131. R58
- Schultze, Quentin J. *Habits of the High-Tech Heart: Living Virtuously in the Information Age*.

#### **MONEY/MAMMON**

- Alexander, John. *Your Money or Your Life: A new Look at Jesus' View of Wealth and Power*.
- Gonzalez, Justo. *Faith and Wealth: A History of the Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance and Use of Money*. BR195.W4 G65
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Sharing Possessions: Mandate & Symbol of Faith*. BS2589 J64
- Vincent, Mark. *A Christian View of Money: Celebrating God's Generosity*. ARCH BV772.V56
- Wheeler, Sondra Ely. *Wealth as Peril and Obligation: The New Testament on Possessions*. BS 2545.W37

## **CONSUMERISM/MATERIALISM/POSSESSIONS**

- Dominquez, Joe & Vicki Robin. *Your Money or Your Life: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Achieving Financial Independence*. HG179.D624
- Eller, Vernard. *The Simple Life: The Christian Stance Toward Possessions*. BJ496. E36
- George, Denise. *The Christian as Consumer*. BV 4647.S48 G46
- Longacre, Doris. *Living More With Less*. ARCH TX147. L58
- Schor, Juliet. B. *The Overspent American: Why We Want What We Don't Need*. HF5415.33.UD6.S36
- Sider, Ronald. *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity*.  
BR115.H86S53
- Sorensen, Barbara & David. *'Tis a Gift to be Simple: Embracing the Freedom of Living with Less*.  
BV4501.2.D432
- Wilmer, Wesley. *God & Your Stuff: The Vital Link Between Your Possessions & Your Soul*

## **CARING FOR CREATION**

- Berry, Wendell. *The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture*. HD1761.B47
- Berry, Wendell. *The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays Cultural and Agricultural*. S441.B4725
- Beisner, E. Calvin. *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate*.  
BT 695.5.B44
- Bouma-Prediger, Steven. *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*.  
BT695.5.B69
- Daly, Herman. *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*. HD75.6 D35
- During, Alan. *How Much is Enough?: The Consumer Society and the Future of the Earth*. GF75.D88
- Flynn, Eileen. *Cradled in Human Hands: A Textbook on Environmental Responsibility*. GF80.F57
- Jackson, Wes & Wendell Berry. *Meeting the Expectations of the Land: Essays in Sustainable Agriculture and Stewardship*. S441.M38
- Lehman, Donna. *What on Earth Can You Do?: Making Your Church a Creation Awareness Center*. BT  
695.5.L44
- Thompson, Paul B. *The Spirit of the Soil: Agriculture and Environmental Ethics*. S589.75.T48
- Westra, Laura & Patricia Werhane. *The Business of Consumption: Environmental Ethics and the Global Economy*. GE 42.B88
- Wright, Nancy & Donald Kill. *Ecological Healing: A Christian Vision*.

## **Books relating specifically to the California Central Valley, issues of land use, farm size, and water.**

- Goldschmidt, Walter. *As You Sow: Three Studies in the Social Consequences of Agribusiness*.  
HD1775.C2 G6
- Preston, William. *Vanishing Landscapes: Land and Life in the Tulare Lake Basin*. Folio F868.S173 P73
- Taylor, Paul. *Essays on Land, Water and the Law in California*.

## **TELEVISION**

- Note: A number of the following books are by psychologists,--some are quite critical and some discuss positive benefits of TV.
- APA Task Force on Television and Society. *Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society*. HQ520.B65
- Davis, Walter. *Watching What We Watch: Prime-Time Television Through the Lens of Faith*.  
PN1992.6.W37
- Gitlin, Todd. *Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms our Lives* P90.  
G4778

- Godawa, Brian. *Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films with Wisdom and Discernment*. PN1995.5.G65
- Greenfield, Patricia. *Mind and Media: The Effects of Television, Video Games, and Computers*.  
HQ784.M3 G73
- Liebert, Robert M. & Joyce Sprafkin. *The Early Window: Effects of Television on Children and Youth* (3<sup>rd</sup>  
edition). HQ784.T4 L48
- Marc, David. *Bonfire of the Humanities: Television, Subliteracy, & Long-Term Memory Loss*.  
PN1992.6.M366
- McKibben, Bill. *The Age of Missing Information: Invigorating*. PN1992.6.M38
- Palmer, Edward. *Television and America's Children: A Crisis of Neglect*. PN1992.8.C46 P36 Postman,  
Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. P94.P63
- Schultze, Quentin. *Redeeming Television: How TV Changes Christians--How Christians Can Change TV*.  
PN1992.6.S285
- Sommerville, C. James. *How the News Makes Us Dumb: The Death of Wisdom in a Information. Society*.  
PN4888.O25.S66
- Taylor, Ella. *Prime Time Families: Television in Postwar America*. PN1992.8.F33 T39
- Winter, Richard. *Still Bored in a Culture of Entertainment: Rediscovering Passion & Wonder*. BV4599.5  
B67 W56

#### **MARITAL FIDELITY/CHASTITY**

- Clapp, Rodney. *Families at the Crossroads: Beyond Traditional and Modern Options*. HQ536.C53.
- Dawn, Marva. *Sexual Character: Beyond Technique to Intimacy*. BT708.D385

#### **BUSYNESS**

- Banks, Robert. *The Tyranny of Time: When 24 Hours is Not Enough*. HF5549.5.T5.B36
- Covey, Stephen. *First Things First* BJ1581.2. C66
- Granger, Steve. *Time Warped: First Century Stewardship for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Living*
- Hummel, Charles. *Freedom From Tyranny of the Urgent*. BV4598.5.H86
- Swenson, Richard. *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded  
Lives*. BV4501.2.S94