

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MISSION AND EVANGELISM

IM-560 3 Units
Fall 2008
Mondays 1:00 to 4:00 pm

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00-12:00
Wed. 1:30-3:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a missional reading of the Old and New Testament to highlight the centrality of the theme of God's mission to the Bible's grand narrative and to develop a biblical theology of mission that emphasizes the proclamation of the whole gospel to the whole world. The course includes analysis of current issues in mission from a theological perspective.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through this course students will be able to:

- Describe the difference between using the Bible as a basis for mission and understanding the Bible in light of God's mission
- Articulate a theology of mission
- Describe guidelines for contextualizing the gospel
- Assess the influence of common concepts of hell and the atonement on mission and evaluate alternative concepts
- Articulate a holistic gospel that includes the biblical call to justice and peacemaking as modeled by Jesus and the prophets
- Describe various issues in cross-cultural mission and analyze them in light of biblical and theological perspectives

RELATED DEGREE OBJECTIVES

Within the larger curriculum goals of the Seminary this course will facilitate growth in ability to:

- Witness persuasively to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the contemporary context (1.5)
- Describe philosophical and theological foundations for cross-cultural ministry and contemporary issues in cross-cultural mission (3.4.1)
- Write personal theological philosophy of ministry position paper (3.4.3)
- Demonstrate a commitment to intercultural ministry by developing a biblical, theological and historical foundation for mission (4.1)

TEXTBOOKS

Required

Baker, Mark D., ed. *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross*. Baker Academic, 2006.*
Choung, James. *True Story: A Christianity Worth Believing In*. IVP Books, 2008.
Fleming, Dean. *Contextualization in the New Testament*. InterVarsity Press, 2005.*
McLaren, Brian. *The Last Word and The Word After That*. Jossey Bass, 2005.*
Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God*. IVP Academic, 2006.

Recommended

Lewis, C. S. *The Great Divorce*, 1946.*

*On Reserve in the library

COURSE SCHEDULE

1- Aug. 25 Introduction to the Course

Sept. 1 – Labor Day, no class

2 – Sept. 8 Missional Reading of the Bible, Part 1

Before class read: Wright, *The Mission of God*, pp. 17-392

3 – Sept. 15 Missional Reading of the Bible, Part 2

Before class read: Wright, *The Mission of God*, pp. 392-535

Due: Reflection paper on *The Mission of God*

4 – Sept. 22 Missional Reading of the Bible, Part. 3 & Contextualization, Part 1

5 – Sept. 29 Contextualization, Part 2

Before class read: Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, pp. 13-322 and write guidelines for contextualization.

Oct. 6 – Intensive Course Week, no class

Statement of Theology of Mission, best draft due Thursday Oct. 9

6 – Oct. 13 Concept of Hell and its Influence on a Theology of Mission and Evangelism

Before class read: McLaren, *The Last Word and The Word After That*, pp. xi-199 (see appendix for questions to guide your reading)

Recommended reading: Lewis, *The Great Divorce*

7 – Oct. 20 Concept of Atonement and its Influence on a Theology of Mission and Evangelism, Part 1

Before class read: Baker, *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross*, pp. 13-36, 84-95 (see appendix for questions to guide your reading)

Statement of Theology of Mission, final version due

8 – Oct. 27 Concept of Atonement and its Influence on a Theology of Mission and Evangelism, Part 2

Before class read: Baker, *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross*, pp. 37-83, 96-189 (see appendix for questions to guide your reading)

9 – Nov. 3 **Evangelism and the Gospel, Part 1**

10 – Nov. 10 **Evangelism and the Gospel, Part 2**

Before class read: Choung, *True Story*, pp. 9-222 (see appendix for questions to guide your reading)

Statement of the Gospel, best draft due

11 - Nov. 17 **Theological Reflection on Topics in Mission: Calling/Recruiting and Strategy**

12 - Nov. 24 **Theological Reflection on Topics in Mission: Partnership and Money**

Before class read: Baker, A Peruvian Case Study

Statement of the Gospel, final draft due

13 - Dec. 1 **Theological Reflection on Topics in Mission: Short Term Missions**

Research paper due

14 – Dec. 8 **Theological Reflection on Topics in Mission: Relating to Other Religions and Relationship of Word and Deed**

ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance, Reading and Class Participation - Significant class time will be given to the discussion of assigned readings. Therefore it is imperative that students read carefully and share their reflections and questions during class discussion. To get an “A” in this category you must have perfect attendance, give evidence of having done the reading, and make significant contributions to class discussion. An “A-“ will be given to those with one absence and significant participation or to those with perfect attendance and good participation. Two absences will place a student in the “B” range; participation and evidence of reading 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.

Presentation on *The Mission of God* - Students will work with another student to give a presentation on a section of Wright’s book. Other students in the class will have read the book so the purpose is not simply to repeat the content in the book, but help the class process and engage the material. The presentation will have three parts: 1. diagrams, drama, or some other visual means of presenting the general flow and main points of the section; 2. implications for mission derived from the content of the section; 3. three to five questions that will provide the basis for class discussion and help others process the importance of the section. The presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes, and should include a handout with, at least, a listing of implications for mission and the discussion questions. Grading will be based on depth of

understanding and engagement of the section content, discernment of what to include, and creativity and clarity which aid class understanding and processing of the material.

Group one, pp. 71-188, class two

Group two, pp. 189-288, class two

Group three, pp. 289-392, class two

Group four, pp. 393-530, class three

Reflection Paper on *The Mission of God* - Write a one page general response to the book reflecting on its importance for you. On a second page list key ideas you take from the book. The second page may be done in a bullet-point format. Due at the beginning of class 3.

Guidelines for Contextualization - Based on your reading of Flemming and the New Testament write guidelines of how to appropriately contextualize the gospel and other theological truths. No more than one page. Due at the beginning of class five. (Because we will discuss this in class, if it is handed in late it will only receive half credit.)

Statement of Theology of Mission - Based on class discussion and your reading of Wright and Flemming, write a two-to-three sentence statement of your theology of mission and a two page (double-spaced) commentary/explanation. A Best draft is due on October 9th. (This is *not* a rough draft, but the best work you can do.) The professor will grade it and then discuss it with you. Make improvements based on that conversation and turn in the final draft at class 7 (with a copy of the marked version of the best draft). The best draft's grade will be 1/3 and the final draft's grade will be 2/3 of the grade for this project.

Statement of the Gospel - Write a two page (double spaced) description of the gospel. This is not an actual presentation of the gospel to a non-Christian, but a theological statement of your understanding of the gospel. It should, however, be seen as something that an actual presentation could be based on. Among other themes, be sure to include salvation, justice, conversion, peace, and the cross and resurrection. A Best draft is due at the beginning of class ten. You will share it with others in the class and receive feedback from them. After making changes you may give it to the professor for further input. The final draft is due for class 12.

Research Paper - Chose a current issue in mission, such as: relating to other religions, church planting strategies, methods of evangelism, evangelism and truth in a postmodern setting, short term missions, partnership with churches and Christians in other regions, tentmaking/business as mission, money and mission, spiritual salvation as priority vs. holistic gospel, Cross-Cultural Church-Planting Spectrum, etc. Use the first half of the paper to describe the issue and to identify two or three main questions that people are asking about the issue. Then reflect on the issue through the lens of your statements of theology of mission and the gospel specifically and, generally, through a biblical theology of mission and evangelism. First offer a theological critique of the questions. Do they need to be changed? Are there other questions to be asked? Then seek to answer the revised questions from a theological perspective. Your research to

describe the issue should, in addition to books and Internet research, include reading articles from missiological journals found through an ATLA search. List the articles you read in your bibliography. Seven to eight pages (single spaced), due in class, week 13. (If you select “partnership” or “money” your paper is due week 12.) For an example of an author reflecting theologically on a current issue in mission see: Bryant L. Myers, “Humanitarian Response: Christians in Response to Uprooted People,” *Missiology*, 35 (April, 2007): 195-215.

Assignment policies:

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 be single spaced, unless otherwise noted, have one inch margins and use Times Roman 12pt font.
3. All assignments may be printed on scrap paper.

Grading Scheme

Presentation 15%; reflection paper 5%; guidelines 5%; theology of mission 18%; gospel statement 17%; research paper 30%; attendance, reading and class participation 10%.

As stated in the *Academic Handbook* 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.

MBBS academic policies MBBS academic policies (as well as other school policies) are described at <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/>. These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, accommodations for disability, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, grading templates, 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 your professor or consult the Registrar. Course evaluations are to be completed online and are due one week after the completion of the course. Official grades will not be posted until the student’s evaluation of the course is completed.

Appendix

Class Six As you read McLaren’s book please keep a running log of questions, insights, and reflections. Then when you finish please look back over your notes and see what questions you

can now answer, and which ones remain. Bring your notes to class for discussion together.

Class Seven

1. As you read write down questions you would like to ask the author of these two chapters. In relation to chapter eight:
2. What stood out to you in this parable?
3. How is this foundational narrative different than the penal satisfaction narrative?
4. How would those differences affect one's concept of God and mission?

Class Eight

1. Which presentation, or two, do you appreciate most, why? (Can be personal connection, imagine using, clarifying on issues, etc.)
2. For each chapter ask: what does this image communicate about salvation? What would be lost if you only have penal satisfaction and not this image?
3. Evaluate each chapter missiologically B how does it connect and confront?

Class Ten Come to class prepared to discuss the following:

1. As you read Choung take note of how in his gospel presentation he seeks to address the weaknesses and problems in other gospel presentations that we listed in the previous class.
2. Also take note of specific observations that catch your attention as you read—positive and negative.
3. What is your theological evaluation of his content (statement of the gospel) and method (evangelization)—as displayed through this narrative? (Please keep in mind the previous four books we have read as you reflect on this question.)
4. In what ways did you find the book helpful personally?