

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary
DISCIPLESHIP & ETHICS

TS-630 (2 or 3 Units)
Fall 2008
Wednesday 8:30-11:30 a.m.

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00-12:00
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 alienating 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 learn and apply a method for using scripture in making ethical decisions

RELATED DEGREE OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe an alternative cultural lifestyle that rejects godless values (2.2.4)
- Describe discipleship as following Jesus with other faithful followers (2.2.5)
- Describe the biblical community as the home of countercultural discipleship and missional church (2.2.7)
- Analyze, synthesize, and engage contemporary church and world issues from a biblical theological perspective (2.4)

COURSE TEXTS

Baker, Mark D. *Religious No More: Building Communities of Grace and Freedom*. Wipf & Stock, 2005 or IVP, 1999.

Hallie, 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 3rd unit).

L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wind in the Door* (various editions available).

Yancey, Philip. *Designer Sex*. IVP, 2003.

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.

Required texts are 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 the second week of the class, and 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 Haillie book before the semester begins. See the appendix for questions to reflect on as you read.

- 1 - **August 27 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 3 Communities that "Name," Resist the Powers, & Form an Alternative Culture**
Before class read and reflect on questions in the appendix:
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 10 Freedom From Religion: What is a Religious Ethic and What Does it Produce? & Resisting Individualism: An Alternative Culture of People in Covenant Community**
Before class read: Baker, 13-126, 147-153 (see appendix)
Baker (CP), "Religion Our Natural Tendency"
Write essay on Galatians, *Religious No More*, and a holistic gospel
After the class: Write a response letter

- 4 - **September 17 Resisting Religion: Developing a Centered-Set Ethic that Frees Community Members to Live Out Who They Have Been "Named" to Be.**
Before class read, reflect on questions in the appendix, and confirm reading:
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 at beginning of the next class)

- 5 - **September 24 An Alternative Culture: Resisting Technique's Alienating and Enslaving ways**
Before class read & confirm reading (see appendix):

Gill, David (CP), "Modern Technology: Servant or Master," 4-7, 22-24.
Dawn, Marva (CP), "Why Does the Technological Society Overwhelm Us?" 41-60.
Rheingold, Howard, "Look Who's Talking," available at:
<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/7.01/amish.html>

6 - **October 1 An Alternative Culture: Resisting Mammon**

Before class read, reflect on questions in the appendix, and confirm reading:

Ellul (CP), "Money" & "Children and Money," 73-88, 109-125.

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, (CP) "What I Learned From Sharing Bananas and Beans," 7-9

October 8 *No class*

7 - **October 15 An Alternative Culture: Resisting Consumerism**

Before class read and confirm reading (see appendix):

Clapp, Rodney, (CP) "Why the Devil Takes Visa,"

Miller, Lynn, (CP) "What Your Retirement Planner Doesn't Tell You,"

8 - **October 22 An Alternative Culture: Resisting the Destruction of Creation & Busyness**

Before class read, reflect on questions in the appendix, and confirm reading:

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

Bookless, Dave (CP) "To Strive to Safeguard the Integrity of Creation..." 94-104

9 - **October 29 An Alternative Culture: Resisting TV's Alienating Power & Chastity and Marital Fidelity**

Before class read and write essay on TV (see directions on page 6); reflect on questions in the appendix, and confirm reading:

Grossman, David "Trained to Kill" (*Christianity Today* 8/10/98):

http://www.killology.com/article_trainedtokill.htm

Fast, Kristin (CP), "Seeking Good News," 7-10

Lasch-Quinn, Elisabeth (CP), "A Stranger's Dream," 1-20

Cook, Sara (CP), "Talking TV," 11-17

Baker, Mark (CP), "What a Seminary Professor Thinks About TV," 12-13

Yancey, Philip, *Designer Sex*, 1-30

Kennedy, John W., "Help for the Sexually Desperate" (*Christianity Today* 3/2008)

- 10 - **November 5 An Alternative Culture: Concluding Thoughts & Class Activity: A Program Plan for Helping a Christian Community Begin to Form an Alternative Culture in Relation to a Specific Issue**
Book Review due.

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 12 The Descriptive and Synthetic Tasks**
Before class read and write responses to the questions in the appendix: Hays, 1-205
- 12 - **November 19 Five Representative Hermeneutical Strategies**
Before class read and write responses to the questions in the appendix:
Hays, 207-312
Baker, “Symbolic World” and “Timeless Truth” (CP)
- 13 - **November 26 Hays’s Method Observed and Evaluated**
Before class read and 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 3 Hays’s Method Observed and Evaluated, Part II & Peacemaking and Resisting a Culture of Violence**
Before class read, reflect on the questions in the appendix and confirm reading:
Hays, Chapter 14 pp. 317-346
Baker, “My Conversion to Christian Pacifism: Reading Jacques Ellul in War Ravaged Central America” 1-10, available at: <https://www.mbseminary.edu/baker/articles>
Gushee (CP), “Our Teachable Moment” 90
McLaren (CP), Chapters 20-22 from *Everything Must Change*, 161-185
After the class: Write a response letter (see appendix), due Monday, December 8
Ethical decision making project due December 10

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 Monday after the class by 8:30 am. 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 classes 11 and 12. 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 should be from one to two single-spaced pages.

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.*

Reading: A number of the class sessions have relatively small amounts of reading, and the course as a whole (including the book review) has less than is generally required for a 3 unit course. I had therefore assumed that students would do the reading, but was disappointed to observe that was not always the case. Since the reading is central to the class sessions and students detract from not only their, but also others’ experience if they do not do the reading I either have a written assignment on each week’s reading or ask students to confirm they have done the reading. For eight class sessions the syllabus directs you to confirm your reading either by e-mail or through handing in a note in class. Students who do the reading for all eight of these classes will receive an “A” (4.0) in this category. Each week missed will lead to a 1/8th deduction in your “reading grade” (1 week missed = 3.50; 2 weeks missed = 3.00, etc.)

Essay on Justification: Write a three part essay on justification and Galatians 2:16. **Part I** Describe both the common contemporary Protestant interpretation of justification and the alternative interpretation of justification described in *Religious No More*. Include in your description a discussion of how an understanding of justice based on the western juridical system shapes one concept and how an understanding of justice based on a Hebraic concept of justice shapes the other. (For ease of communication you may refer to the two different understandings of justification as: “western juridical” and “Hebraic relational.”) **Part II** Compare and contrast how the two concepts of justification will influence a person’s: concept of salvation, image of God, and concept of the church; and how each concept of justification will connect with and relate to, or not, discipleship and ethical action. **Part III** Which view of justification do you think Paul intended when he wrote Galatians 2:16? Why? Be sure to think of the letter to the Galatians as a whole as you give your answer. Two pages, single spaced. Due at the beginning of class three. If it is late it will be marked down 50% because we will discuss it in class.

The essay is intended to be based on your reading of *Religious No More* and Galatians. You may, but are not required to, use some of the following resources as well:

The dictionary article by Richard Hays on Ajustification@ in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Vol. 3, pages 1129-1333).

Richard B. Hays, AJesus Faith and Ours: A Rereading of Galatians 3" in *Conflict and Context*, eds. Mark Lau Branson and C. René Padilla, pages 257-280, BS476 .C594.

James D. G. Dunn and Alan M. Suggate, *The Justice of God: A Fresh Look at the Old Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, Chapter Three, BT764.2 D86 1994.

The following article does not go into as much depth as the previous ones, but you may find it interesting because it includes comments on Romans by the members of *Amor Fe y Vida* church which you read about in *Religious No More*.

Mark D. Baker and J. Ross AWagner Reading Romans in Hurricane-Ravaged Honduras: A Model of Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Conversation,@Missiology 32 (July 2004) 367-383. Available at: <https://www.mbseminary.edu/baker/articles>

Ethical Exhortation: Students will practice communicating in a way that promotes a centered church and undermines the religious approach of a bounded church 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 from a centered church perspective rather than from a bounded church perspective. Use 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 at the beginning of class 5.

Essay on TV: Write an essay on Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn’s chapter that includes the following elements: how, according to her, has the modern/post-modern self changed from the previous conception of self? What is her thesis, and concern, about how TV has contributed to this

change? What are ways she substantiates that thesis? How does her discussion of individualism relate to and add to our previous reading and discussion of individualism? How do the other readings on TV for this week support or contrast her thesis? What are new insights you gained from reading her chapter? What is your evaluation of and response to her argument? (1.5 to 2 pages, single-spaced; due at the beginning of class 9; if handed in late it will only receive half credit.)

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.

Bring a copy to class ten to hand in, and e-mail a copy by attached file to the professor to share with the rest of the class on the course's website.

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 Dec 10.

Attendance and Class participation: 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.

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.

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 10%; Galatians essay 15%; Exhortation 15%; TV Essay 10%; Book review 10%; Written reflections on reading 5%; Reading 10%, Application of Hays’s method 15%.

Grading Scheme For Two Units: Attendance and class participation 10%; Class response letters 15%; Galatians essay 15%; Exhortation 20%; TV Essay 12.5%; Book review 15%; Reading 12.5%.

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 unless noted)

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.

For Class Four

Reflect on these questions as you read:

1. What can we learn from Paul that will help us state ethical imperatives in a centered-set, 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 as you think about a more centered-set approach?

What other ideas or questions does the chapter bring to mind?

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

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

After you have completed the reading for class four send a note to

bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu confirming that you have done all the reading, or hand in a note at the beginning of class.

For Class Five:

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

For Class Six

Reflect on these questions as you read:

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

After you have completed the reading for class six send a note to bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu confirming that you have done all the reading, or hand in a note at the beginning of class.

For Class Seven

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

For Class Eight Reflect on the following questions and be ready to share your answers in class:

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 creation theme that remain unanswered?
2. Which of the readings on caring for creation did you find the most engaging? Why?

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

For Class Nine Reflect on the following questions and be ready to share your answers in class:

1. What are connections you see between Yancey's essay and other themes we have studied this semester?
2. How do individual's experiences in the Kennedy article illustrate points from Yancey's essay?
3. How do Yancey and Kennedy point to ways the church can respond in a centered group way?

After you have read the articles assigned for this week send a note to bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu confirming that you have done all the reading, or hand in a note at the beginning of class.

For Class Eleven (see "Written Reflections on Reading" directions on page 5)

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). Select a specific text from the NT and explain how the text would be read through a corporate lens and through 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 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 done the reading send a note to bakerassignments@mbseminary.edu confirming that you have done all the reading, or hand in a

note at the beginning of class.

As you read: You will be reading two Christian pacifists (Hays and Baker), someone who is respectful of and sympathetic to the Christian pacifist position, but does not fully embrace it (McLaren), and someone from the Just-war position. Please note similarities and differences as you read. Reflect on the following as you read (you do not need to write):

On Hays:

1. How does Hays refute or counter the points listed on page 320?
2. 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?
3. How does looking through the three focal lenses change the way you read the central texts?

On Baker: Please bring your questions and comments on this article to class.

1. If I had been more deeply schooled in the just-war theory how might my story have been different?
2. What is the key thing that Ellul did for me?

On Gushee:

1. How might people in your church respond to Gushee, why? What is your response?

On McLaren:

1. What are connections you see with other themes we have studied this semester?
2. What is the “myth of redemptive violence”? What are examples of it that you have observed? Does rejecting the myth of redemptive violence necessarily make you a Christian pacifist?
3. How might McLaren critique my article?
4. What are some ways you and your Christian community might begin to put into practice what McLaren is calling for?
5. What most impressed you in these chapters?

After class: Write a letter to a friend, as you did after the first three classes, that interacts with the reading and the class session, and states your position in relation to the central questions of this class.

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
 Hipps, Shane. *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church*
 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
 Kavanaugh, John F. *Following Christ in a Consumer Society*. BT738 K37
 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 (Please read the 1997 or 2005 edition of this book.)
 Sorensen, Barbara & David. *'Tis a Gift to be Simple: Embracing the Freedom of Living with Less*.
 BV4501.2.D432
 Wallace, Catherine. *Why We Struggle to Earn a Living and Have a Life*. BX2353.W35
 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 Central Valley in California and 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* (3rd 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
 Ravitch, Diane and Joseph P. Viteritti. *Kid Stuff: Marketing sex and violence to American children*.
 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

Dawn, Marva. *Sexual Character: Beyond Technique to Intimacy*. BT708.D385
 Winner, Lauren. *Real Sex: The Naked Truth About Chastity*. BV4647.C5 W56

BUSYNESS

Banks, Robert. *The Tyranny of Time: When 24 Hours is Not Enough*. HF5549.5.T5.B36

Bass, Dorothy. *Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time*.

Covey, Stephen. *First Things First* BJ1581.2. C66

Granger, Steve. *Time Warped: First Century Stewardship for 21st Century Living* ARCH BV4598.5.G36

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

Swenson, Richard. *The Overload Syndrome: Learning to Live Within Your Limits*