

TRINITY EVANGELICAL DIVINITY SCHOOL

ME 6760 – Theology of Mission

Spring semester 2008

Trinity Extension: Columbus, Ohio

3 semester hours

Professor

Dr. Craig Ott

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Dear Students, I am looking forward to this course with you! We will embark on a discovery of God as a missionary God who calls us as his people to participate in his work in the world today. It is exciting to see how many churches today are increasingly directly involved mission. Yet mission strategy and practice is debated, criticized and subject to passing trends. Never before has the church needed sound biblical foundations for the task of mission. Welcome! Craig Ott

Course Description

The many Old and New Testament texts that provide theological foundations for the global mission of the church are examined. Basic issues that confront the missionary will be investigated, as well as the more complex and contemporary issues. The course provides the student with various perspectives and strategies for dealing with the Trinity, the Great Commission, the call and motivation for ministry, and the problems of dialogue, syncretism, universalism, and ecumenism (from the catalogue).

Course Goals

As a result of this course students should:

- 1) be able to articulate the biblical basis for mission, understanding mission as central to the biblical narrative (OT and NT) in the unfolding of salvation history and grounded in the nature and acts of the triune God.
- 2) acquire a deeper appreciation for the privilege of participation in God's mission and the centrality of this mission to the purpose of the church.
- 3) gain a clearer understanding of current issues in the theology of mission.
- 4) develop skills in theological discourse and critical evaluation.
- 5) be able to draw practical implications from theology of mission for mission practice today.
- 6) be able to theologically assess various contemporary movements and trends in mission.

Course Format

This course will meet on four intensive weekends. Instruction will be a combination of lecture and discussion. It is essential that students come to class prepared ready to discuss readings and having written assignments completed. Please note that the textbook by Bauckham is to be read by the first day of class.

This course meets on the following weekends:

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January 18-19

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February 15-16

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March 14-15

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April 11-12

Class hours are Friday from 7:00 to 10:00 pm and Saturday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Literature:

Required Textbooks

1. Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.
2. John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!* rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.
3. Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003
4. David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005.

Recommended Text

Newbigin, Leslie. *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

Assignments

1. Required Reading

All the required textbooks listed above except Piper are to be read in entirety. Only chapters 1-5 are to be read in Piper. On the first evening of each month when class meets a reading report is to be turned in indicating that all assigned readings for that month have been completed. This will comprise 12% of the course grade (3% for each month).

Note that Bauckham must be completed for the first class meeting on January 18.

2. Class Participation

Students are expected to attend all class sessions arriving on time. They should come prepared ready to discuss the assigned readings and having completed any other assignments for that week. Assignments due each month are noted in the course schedule below. The participation grade will be based upon:

- Punctual arrival and full attendance at class sessions.

- Participation in class discussion and attentiveness in class

- Preparedness to discuss readings and assignments

3. Paper on a Luke 4:16-21

Luke 4:16-21 is one of the most oft quoted passages relating to theology of mission, but its interpretation is controversial. Write a five page (double spaced) paper that (1) summarizes the most common interpretations of the passage relating the theology of mission, (2) explain and defend

what you believe to be its appropriate interpretation, and (3) describe the implications of your interpretation for mission practice today. Consult exegetical commentaries, the textbooks, at least two journal articles (available online through ATLA), and if possible other theologies of mission (see literature list below). Due date February 15.

4. Paper Comparing Escobar and Piper

Write a five page (double spaced) paper comparing Piper's and Escobar's theology of mission focusing particularly on their understanding of the practical task(s) of mission. Due date is March 14. The paper should be structured as follows:

- Concisely summarize what each author believes to be the central biblical task of mission. Give their central arguments and note how the authors agree or differ.

- Give your assessment of which position (or what other position) you believe most accurately reflects a biblical understanding of mission and why.

5. Position Paper on a Chapter from Hesselgrave

Choose one of the following chapters from Hesselgrave, and write a four page (double spaced) paper describing and defending your position on the given debate in that chapter. Make use of relevant passages in the other textbooks and at least one journal article (online full text journals available through ATLA).

- Chapter 3 Christian encounter with non-Christian religions

- Chapter 6 Power Encounter and Truth Encounter

- Chapter 7 Amateurization and Professionalization

This paper is due on April 11.

Course Schedule

Date Topics Readings / Assignments

January 18-19

Introduction

I. Biblical Theology of Mission

Read: Bauckham

February 15-16

II. Justification of Mission

III. The Purpose of Mission

Read: Hesselgrave, chapters 1, 2, 5, 9

Piper, chapter 1-4

Escobar, chapter 1-5

Assignment: Paper on Luke 4:16-21

March 14-15

IV. The Task of Mission

V. Church and Mission

Read: Hesselgrave, chapter 4,10

Piper, chapter 5

Escobar, chapter 6-10

Assignment: Paper comparing Escobar and Piper.

April 11-12

VI. The Missionary Vocation

VII. Mission Motivation

VIII. Contextualization

IX. Christian Encounter with other

Religions

X. Special Issues

Read: Hesselgrave, chapter 3, 6, 7, 8

Reading report due

Grading

Assignment Due Dates

Weight for grading

Paper on Luke 4:16-21 February 15 26%

Paper comparing Piper and Escobar March 14 26%

Paper on a topic from Hesselgrave April 11 26%

Reading report (3% per month) Jan 18, Feb 15, Mar 14, Apr 11 12%

Class participation and attendance 10%

Total 100%

Students may feel free to contact the professor with any questions regarding the course and assignments. He welcomes dialogue on issues or other matters related to the course. Contact information is noted at the top of this syllabus.

Additional Literature

Bevans, Stephen B. and Roger Schoeder. *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004.

An outstanding work taking a historical approach from a Roman Catholic perspective. Updates Bosch and gives attention to non-Western theology, women in mission, and Pentecostalism.

Blauw, Johannes. *The Missionary Nature of the Church: a Survey of Biblical Theology of Mission*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962.

A classic, powerful, biblical argument for the missionary nature of the church.

Bosch, David. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991.

A landmark work setting a new standard of breadth, depth and scholarship.

Köstenberger, Andreas J. and Peter O'Brien. *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*. Downers Grove: Apollos/InterVarsity Press, 2001.

The best up-to-date biblical theology of mission taking a narrative approach. Strongly evangelical; sees mission mainly as proclamation.

Larkin, William J. and Joel F. Williams, ed.. *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999.

A collection of evangelical contributions from Columbia Biblical Seminary.

Oborji, Francis Anekwe. *Concepts of Mission: The Evolution of Contemporary Missiology*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2006.

An excellent, concise overview (with Roman Catholic emphasis) of the various historical and contemporary views of the purpose of mission.

Peters, George W. *A Biblical Theology of Missions*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1972.

An older standard statement of traditional evangelical mission theology.

Schnabel, Eckhard J. *Early Christian Mission*. 2 vols. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.

An encyclopaedic and essential reference work for biblical, historical, geographical and theological subjects related to mission in the first century.

Stott, John. *Christian Mission in the Modern World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1975.

Stott argues for a more holistic evangelical understanding of mission. Much of this thought was behind the Lausanne Covenant.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.

A comprehensive biblical theology with primary focus on the Old Testament, broadly defining mission.