

MISSION AND EVANGELISM: FOUNDATIONS AND STRATEGIES (MS 3B03)

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Course Times: Winter semester 2011; Monday 3:30 – 5:20 pm.

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to the principles and practice of intra-cultural and cross-cultural mission. Students will be encouraged to formulate creative approaches to mission and evangelism in their own social contexts as well as begin thinking about mission in other cultural contexts. Particular attention will be given to evangelistic methodologies, congregationally based mission and issues of contemporary social concern.

Course Objectives:

Knowing:

1. To help students understand foundational scriptural and theological principles and/or categories for the mission of the Church in contemporary Canadian culture, and in light of the concerns of postmodernism.
2. To understand key features of contemporary Canadian culture as they relate to issues of spiritual need, and the proclamation of the Christian message.
3. To become conversant with a range of relevant approaches to mission and evangelism in the context of the contemporary church.

Being:

1. To encourage reflection and integration in terms of personal, congregational, and political aspects of Christian identity.
2. To help students develop confidence in their own ability to proclaim the Christian gospel and lead a congregation in evangelistic enterprise.

Doing:

1. To give students the opportunity to develop their own philosophy of mission and evangelism for local church ministry and consider strategies for implementation.
2. To equip students with relevant strategies for personal and congregational mission.

A core value of our class is that it is a “learning community,” designed to be a place where each member of the community can grow through positive affirmation and constructive input. We should all come to the community as people in process, open to be deconstructed and formed through our mutual learning experience.

As professor it is my responsibility to empower each class member as a learner by treating each student with respect and dignity. I come to position myself as a fellow learner in the community and to offer information, reflection, experience and questions for us to reflect on together. Further, it is my responsibility to give good evaluation and feedback to your thinking, both as you offer it to the class and through written work so that your growth through this class can be maximized as a result of our collaboration.

As a responsible member of our learning community you will be expected to commit yourself to the class throughout the semester that we are together. This means that in our class interactions you will endeavor to treat all members of our class with respect and dignity. Your attendance is required as your presence is necessary for our community (that is our class) to function at an optimal level. Assignments should be handed in on time and in good order. All late assignments will be docked at the rate of 1 mark for each day (including weekends) late. Assignments should be submitted in hard copy on standardized paper.

I am not only available but also welcome and enjoy connections with each of you outside class time. I would love to meet with each of you at some point if at all possible. Please feel free to make an appointment with me for a time that works for both of us.

Required Texts:

- *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church*, Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2003).
- *Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness*, Bryan Stone (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007).

Textbooks are available from READ On Bookstore, Room 218 at MacDiv. Books may also be ordered from other sources such as READ On Bookstore, 100—304 The East Mall, Etobicoke, ON M9B 6E2; phone—416-622-2934; fax: 416-622-2308; Email: books@readon.ca

Supplementary Reading:

The instructor will distribute a Bibliography of relevant material on the first day of class.

Course Schedule:**Section One: Biblical Foundations for the Church’s Mission**

- i. The Challenges of Mission
- ii. A biblical foundation for a theology of mission
- iii. The biblical Imperative for Mission (*The Missio Dei-God’s Mission*)

Section Two: Incarnation and Culture

- iv. The church as incarnation
- v. The church in Canadian culture

Section Three: Strategies and Approaches for Mission and Evangelism

- vi. The church as “Missional”
- vii. Equipping the Missional church
- viii. Issues in Proclamation

Course Requirements

i. Interview Project

-Identify two (or more) people who do *NOT* presently attend a Christian church. Explain that you would like to ask them some questions for a course assignment, but make sure that they understand *this is simply to gather their opinion, it is not an evangelistic endeavor*. Using the attached “Letter of Explanation/Informed Consent,” provide prospective interviewees with a copy of the following interview questions, explain the process and purpose of the research, respond to and additional questions or concerns about the assignment or the course in general, and ask that they read and sign the affirmation of consent. Once they have agreed to be interviewed, ask the following:

- What do the words “evangelism” and “evangelist” mean to you?
- Most people these days don’t attend church. Why do you think this is?
- How do you think the church could be more relevant to society today?
- What do you understand to be the essence of the Christian message/religion?
- I would like to explain to you what I understand to be the essence of the Christian message. Then I would like you to tell me what you have understood me to say, what seems attractive (if anything) about it, and what (if anything) seems offensive or incomprehensible?

Report and comment on their answers, reflecting on these conversations in the light of the course material so far, and assigned text books. Offer your own reflections on their responses to the questions as it pertains to the place of the church and the gospel message in Canadian culture today. Evaluate how the opinions your interviewee’s offered connect with trends in our culture and where the message of Christianity may be able to connect with them (your interview subjects).

NOTE: The use of human subjects for a research project entails specific ethical responsibilities for the researcher. In particular, you must scrupulously

- Maintain neutrality
- Avoid influencing the responses
- Guarantee the anonymity of the respondents, and

- Ensure confidentiality with regard to the data.

Students must abide by the terms set out in the “Letter of Explanation/Informed Consent.”

This paper will form the basis for a class discussion on Feb. 7th.

This project should be 8-10 pages (double spaced) in length and is due Feb 7, 2011. It is worth 30% of the final course grade.

ii. Small Group presentation

- Students will work together in groups of three (four at the most) to prepare a class presentation on one of the topics listed below. The presentation should clearly demonstrate research and reflection on the topic and include some kind of visual presentation, class discussion, and a handout that includes an outline of the presentation, some summary comments, and annotated bibliography of at least 10 sources that are relevant to the topic (annotations should not exceed three sentences). The presentation should not exceed 30 minutes in length. Each presentation will best be evaluated on its content, comprehension of the topic, quality of reflection, creativity of the presentation, and the quality of the written material.

Possible topics include:

- What hinders people from becoming Christians in Canada today?
- Postmodernism: Challenges and Opportunities
- What is the Gospel?
- The role of the local church in evangelism
- The Canadian church and international missions: What is our role?
- The role of prayer in evangelism
- The role of the Holy Spirit in evangelism
- Evangelism and social justice
- Contextualization: What does it look like in Canada today?

Topics and Due dates for the assignment will be determined on the second day of class although all presentations will occur during the second half of the semester. It will constitute 30% of the final course grade.

iii. Research and Reflection Paper: How can we do mission and evangelism in the 21st Century?

- This paper should offer an introductory biblical foundation for mission and evangelism and an analysis of contemporary approaches to mission and evangelism in church ministry. The paper should critically engage with those approaches that challenge your own understanding of a

theology of the church, post-modern culture and mission. Finally the paper should offer ideas on how the church can and should do mission in the contemporary world by relating it to a specific context (i.e. your home church, field placement site, university campus, etc.). The paper should demonstrate comprehension of course materials, required texts and pertinent research on the issue of evangelism and mission.

This paper should be 10-12 pages (double spaced) in length and is due April 4, 2011. It will constitute 40% of the final course grade.

All papers should be submitted according to the MacDiv Style Guide, which can be found on the web at: <http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuideApr1508.pdf>

Additional notes:

Academic Dishonesty – Academic dishonesty is a serious offence in the academic world that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on the transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the McMaster Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty located at www.macdiv.ca/regs/honesty.php.

Inclusive Language ~ McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV is a good example of the use of inclusive language. It is expected that all students will use inclusive language in all MDC assignments.

Sexual Harassment ~ Sexual harassment is a violation of the integrity of persons in the form of unsolicited, unwelcome, verbal or physical behavior, which discriminates on the basis of gender about a person's body, attire, gender, marital status or economic status. Among faculty, staff, and students, sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

Disclaimer ~ This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up until the first day of class.