

Intercultural and Intergenerational Christian Worship MS 2E03

Professor: Wendy J. Porter, Ph.D.
Contact: porterw@mcmaster.ca
Location: McMaster Divinity College

Term: Winter 2011 (Term 2)
Time: Mondays, 7–9 p.m.
3 units

Course Description:

One of the challenging issues in the church today is how to develop meaningful services of worship that span the generations and cultures that are represented in our local churches. Each church may represent a varying range of ages and cultures, and what is appropriate in one church may not be relevant in another. As demographics in a community change, how we plan and lead worship services needs to adapt to the generations and cultures represented in our communities, although the basic truths of worship, and whom we worship, remain unchanging.

This class focuses on some of the challenges of intercultural and intergenerational worship, including not only the role of music in worship, but many other aspects of the corporate worshipping community, as well. In this class, we try to discern the needs (not just the preferences) of people from the full range of generations and cultures who worship together in our churches. We explore questions of what meaningful intercultural and intergenerational corporate worship might look like in our own churches, both now and in the future. This class touches on some of the needs represented by the various generations of more recent immigrant cultures, as well as the diverse cultures that worship together in any spiritually-vibrant Canadian church.

This class is designed not only for current and future pastors, church leaders, music/worship leaders, and members of worship teams, but also for the interested lay person who has a heart and burden for the Church in general to become a more God-honouring, Christ-centred, and Spirit-filled place of worship that makes room for persons of all generations and any culture that desire meaningful Christian corporate worship.

Through reading, lectures, class presentations, weekly local interviews, class discussions, and relevant assignments and projects, each student should fulfill the following course objectives:

1. to begin to develop greater awareness of the complexities of intercultural and intergenerational Christian worship;
2. to develop a greater spiritual concern about the great need for intentional and meaningful corporate Christian worship that is welcoming and meaningful not only to an intergenerational church, but to an increasingly culturally-diverse local church;
3. to begin to develop the skills required to assess current worship models and to work towards designing more effective intercultural and intergenerational corporate worship services;
4. to learn adaptive skills and techniques necessary for creatively planning and implementing intercultural and intergenerational corporate worship in our local churches that builds towards a vibrant worshipping community not only for today, but prepared for the changes of tomorrow.

The educational paradigm that we strive for at McMaster Divinity College is one that encompasses three main areas, that of **Knowing**, **Being**, and **Doing**.

In the first area, that of **Knowing**, as an educational institution we want to find various ways of effectively communicating information and fostering the development of knowledge, in part by providing an environment where students are personally involved in active individual and communal discovery of the knowledge that is most beneficial to them. In *this* class, I am hoping that we can discover as much as we can about the range of people in our own churches and what is needed in order to communicate God's desire to commune with them through corporate (but also personal) worship.

In the second area of our educational paradigm, that of **Being**, as an educational institution we desire that students internalize their learnings in deeply spiritual ways, to provide more than just intellectual learning, but to spark a deeper level of learning that permeates their hearts and begins to shape and form their entire beings through the important truths that they explore and discuss and ponder and begin to articulate in various ways. In *this* class, I am hoping that the things we learn about one another's needs in our worship environments—from the needs of our youngest to our oldest participants, as well as of those that represent widespread cultures, regardless of their age—will begin to form who we are as worshipers, and will begin to shape our responses to our congregations as we begin to see each one from God's perspective, not just our own. As we begin to see the individual members and various groups of our congregations with the spiritual insight of the Holy Spirit, reminding us always of God's overflowing love for each of us personally and for each person in our congregations—whatever the idiosyncracies that each age group and culture brings (including our own!)—I am trusting that we *and* our congregations will begin to be shaped and transformed by personal experience of that overflowing love.

The third area of our educational paradigm, that of **Doing**, is where as an educational institution we determine how to put our intellectual learning (Knowing) and our spiritual deepening (Being) into appropriate and relevant action (Doing). In *this* class, the action of doing consists of planning and leading meaningful worship ministry in our churches, whether that is just the beginning conceptual stages of planning intercultural and intergenerational worship services, the actual leadership of those services, or even the hard work of assessing what has already gone on in our churches and where we need more help and greater insight to move effectively forward.

A final area that I add to our basic educational paradigm is an area that I call **Imagining**. Here is where we begin to draw on the intangible area of the Holy Spirit's moving in our hearts and minds, to open us up to new perspectives, deeper understandings, and greater visions of where God would like to take us and how he would like to move us forward, how he would like to shape us and our congregations into communities that worship him with heart, soul, mind and strength. In *this* class, I hope to prompt us all to begin to imagine what would make the heart of God deeply satisfied when he engages with our own congregation, and when we corporately engage with him. What would my church look like if *God* were designing the ways in which we worship him?

Students Who Audit this Class: Auditing students are very welcome in my class. For the best class environment and the best potential for everyone gaining value from the class, I ask students who audit this class to prepare for each class in the same way as a for-credit student would (see especially Course Requirements #1 below), to participate

fully in all in-class activities and discussions, and to purchase and read the class textbooks. Although you do not take the class for credit, this is how you will not only gain from the class, but also contribute the most value to it. I believe that every member of the class has something important to contribute to this class, so I hope you will come prepared to participate fully. Please read the assignments below and plan to engage in all of them.

For-Credit Student Course Requirements and Assessments:

For-Credit students take this as a graduate-level course in Christian Ministry. It is assumed that students will perform as graduate students to facilitate learning and be expected to do suitable academic work outside of the classroom. Successful completion of this class *for credit* requires each of the following assignments to be attempted. Failure to make a valid attempt to complete each of these requirements may constitute grounds for failure of the course.

Course Requirements

1. 30%—Weekly Interviews and Summaries

Each week, prior to the class, students will interview a minimum of three people that represent the group that is in focus for the coming week. You may need to be creative in finding these three people, and in some cases, you may need to plan this well in advance. You will learn the most about your own congregation if you interview people from your own church, but there is also something to be learned from interviewing people from outside your church. It is intended that you interview people with experience of Christian worship in the church. Please submit a one-page summary of these interviews at the beginning of each class, but do not include personal names (just a general description).

One Exception: Please note that prior to Week 8, you are to attend a Christian place of worship where you are an obvious minority in some way. No interviews are required that week, simply a one to two-page summary of your experience. However, if your normal worship experience is from the position of being a minority, then your assignment will be to describe the challenges of this from your own regular personal experience.

Interviews should cover the following questions (note that on some weeks, these questions may have to be adapted):

1. What do you think it means to worship God?

2. Would you describe worship in your church as intercultural and/or intergenerational? Why or why not?

3. What part of your church's worship service or liturgy do you find the most meaningful? Can you describe why?

4. What part of your church's worship service or liturgy do you think God finds the most meaningful?! Can you describe why?

5. How could corporate worship be more meaningful for people of your own culture or generation?

6. How do you think corporate worship could be more meaningful for people of other cultures or generations in your church?

7. What song (or hymn) is the most spiritually meaningful to you, and why?

8. How could we pray for people from your culture or generation who live in this area? What are some of the common issues, struggles, hardships, concerns, or dreams among your peers?

NOTE: Interview Summaries are due weekly.

2. 30%—Book Responses A and B.

For **Book Response A**, read and briefly respond to the following book by briefly assessing and responding to some of the ideas presented in it. Were you challenged in your own understanding of intergenerational Christian worship, and if so, how? What did you learn that might assist you to think more creatively about intergenerational worship in your own church? **(1000 words)**

Carroll, Jackson W., and Wade Clark Roof, *Bridging Divided Worlds: Generational Cultures in Congregations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

Book Response A due: February 13, 2012.

For **Book Response B**, read and briefly respond to the following book by briefly assessing and responding to some of the ideas presented in it. Were you challenged in your own understanding of Christian worship in cultures other than your own, and if so, how? What did you learn that might assist you to think more creatively about intercultural worship in your own church? **(1000 words)**

Farhadian, Charles E., ed., *Christian Worship Worldwide: Expanding Horizons, Deepening Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007).

Book Response B due: March 19, 2012.

3. 25%—Weekly Class Presentations.

Throughout the semester, students will plan and present 10- to 15-minute worship segments to the rest of the class. These worship segments are to be designed in a way that is particularly relevant to and inclusive of the group in focus for that week. These presentations will challenge students to work in teams and to think creatively about how

to connect with the various groups that are represented in our congregations, even though not all age groups and cultures will be part of each congregation.

Class Presentations will take place weekly, in the second half of the class.

4. 15%—Intergenerational and/or Intercultural Worship Segment.

Design one 15-minute segment of a worship service that especially connects to a cultural or generational group other than your own, and that you think is under-represented in your own church, or not included at all. Draw from your experience of the in-class presentations of these kinds of worship segments and other observations, and take this to the next level. Think through and provide the details of how you envision this 15-minute worship segment taking place, including any music, spoken text, Scripture, description or inclusion of all visual and tactile aids, as well as any accompanying powerpoint slides (where appropriate). Describe any participants that you envision creatively including in presenting this worship segment. Then provide an additional accompanying paper (**1000 words**) that outlines your reasons for including each part of this segment and why or how it relates to the needs of your intended cultural or generational component of the congregation. (Note: you may choose to design this for a group that is not currently in your congregation at all, as you think about how to make space for a group that you would like to reach out to in the future.)

Worship Segment and Accompanying Paper Due: April 9, 2012.

Students are expected to know how to write papers. Content, clear thinking and depth of analysis are the most important requirements. Clarity and consistency of presentation are also important (e.g. use of a consistent style throughout, correct spelling and punctuation). Students are to follow the MacDiv Style Guide in the presentation of their work. General guidelines are that papers should be typed, spaced with suitable margins, and using appropriate footnotes. Please avoid unnecessary extra fonts and varied font sizes. Present the paper stapled in the upper left-hand corner and do not include plastic covers.

Late papers are decreased by 5% of their relevant value (each assignment considered at 100% for this purpose) for each day or portion of a day that they are late.

Papers are due on the day assigned. Do not ask for exceptions to this policy, except for documentable medical and related emergencies.

Course Textbooks

Students are required to possess the following:

Jackson W. Carroll and Wade Clark Roof, *Bridging Divided Worlds: Generational Cultures in Congregations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

Charles E. Farhadian, ed., *Christian Worship Worldwide: Expanding Horizons, Deepening Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007).

Students: You are encouraged to purchase these textbooks from the Divinity College's book service, READ On Books, Room 218, McMaster Divinity College. These will also be available for purchase on the first day of class at Compass Point Bible Church. Bernice Quek goes to great lengths to provide these books at reasonable prices as a service to the Divinity College, as well as making them available on-location on the first day for classes being held off-site. Students that enroll in a class but purchase their books elsewhere make reasonable planning a difficulty. These books are also available for advance purchase from Bernice Quek at READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1; phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca. Website: <http://www.readon.ca/>

Students are encouraged to read other materials according to their interests and needs.

Course Schedule

This is a reasonable yet tentative outline of the class days. The professor reserves the right to change the content of lectures and topics.

This Course will begin on January 9, 2011.

1. January 9

Introduction to "Intercultural and Intergenerational Christian Worship",
and discussion of class assignments and presentations, and the class format.

2. January 16

Worshippers in their 80s and 90s

Class Presentation 1

One-page interview summary due at beginning of class.

3. January 23

Worshippers in their 60s and 70s

Class Presentation 2

One-page interview summary due at beginning of class.

4. January 30

Worshippers in their 40s and 50s

Class Presentation 3

One-page interview summary due at beginning of class.

5. February 6

**Worshippers Who Are First- and Second-Generation Canadians
Class Presentation 4**

One-page interview summary due at beginning of class.

6. February 13

**Worshippers Who Are Recent Immigrants
Class Presentation 5**

One-page interview summary due at beginning of class.

Book Response A due.

February 20—READING WEEK, NO CLASS

7. February 27

**Worshippers Who Are Culturally Diverse
Class Presentation 6**

One-page interview summary due at beginning of class.

8. March 5

**What Is Worship Like as a Minority?
Class Presentation 7**

One to two-page summary of your experience of attending a Christian place of worship where you are a minority (or of your normal experience of worshipping as a minority).

9. March 12

**Worshippers in their 20s and 30s
Class Presentation 8**

One-page interview summary due at beginning of class.

10. March 19

**Worshippers in their Teens
Class Presentation 9**

One-page interview summary due at beginning of class.

Book Response B due.

11. March 26

**Worshippers who are Children
Class Presentation 10**

One-page interview summary due at beginning of class.

12. April 2

**Intercultural and Intergenerational Worship in Review
Class Presentation 11**

A Learning Community

This class is designed to be a learning community, a place where we each grow through positive interaction with one another, through constructive input and active interest in one another's growth and development, where we look honestly at Scripture, where we think deeply about ideas and preconceived notions, and where we benefit from developing and strengthening our faith, our calling and our ministries. As we all come to the community as people in process, we come with an eagerness to learn, both from God and from one another, with the result that we may—hopefully will—be challenged to become and to be reshaped into people that more fully reflect our Creator.

As a professor, I make it my responsibility to empower each class member as a learner by treating each student with respect and dignity. I am a fellow learner in the community and wish to offer information that I have learned and am learning, to share my own reflection on and experience of our class material and topics, and to help provide and facilitate questions that will be beneficial for us to reflect on together. I also desire to give thoughtful evaluation and feedback to your thinking and practice, whether this is in class or through assignments, so that I provide as much opportunity for your own growth as possible through our collaborative efforts together.

Your role in this learning community is, in part, to commit yourself to the class throughout the semester that we are together. This includes your commitment to treat all members of our class, which may also include my teaching assistant, with respect and dignity. This also includes your own preparation to be fully engaged in this class. Your presence in each class is required in order for our community to function well and consistently. Please also be respectful and mindful of the church that assists us in making this location available for our class, by treating the building, equipment and property with care and tidiness.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet and talk with you outside our class time. Please feel free to make an appointment with me if I can assist you or share in your learning experience in some way. I do have specific office hours at the Divinity College designed for student appointments, posted at the beginning of the semester, but other times are also available.

**** Statement on Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence 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 one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~

www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php.

Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings 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 and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

Please Note: 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 to and including the first day of class.