Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary
Course of Study

423 Our Mission from God: Transforming Agents

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Course Description:

This course will explore the meaning of Christian mission from a biblical, historical and theological perspective in order to understand what it means for contemporary Christian congregations to be engaged in Christian mission that is relevant and responsible. It will examine the historical challenges of mission and critically reflect on current mission trends, to determine if those trends reflect Gospel values. It will look at mission as humanity's partnership with God in loving the world, and encourage those who engage in mission to examine their practices in conversation with John Wesley’s first general rule that we do no harm. Because Christian Mission was birthed in and remains deeply seated in the church, this course will examine the meaning and practice of Christian mission in the Wesleyan tradition and the United Methodist Church. Because mission is inseparable from the nature of the Church, this course will explore the meaning and practice of Christian mission in the Wesleyan tradition and The United Methodist Church with the goal of helping pastors gain theological understanding and practical ministry skills for becoming God’s agents of transformation.

Objectives

- Developing a biblical and theological framework for Christian mission;
- Understanding the Wesleyan perspective and approach to Christian mission;
- Examining unjust social systems and the growing influence of globalization and their impact on the mission of the Church;
- Analyzing the context of the ministry of local congregations for the developing of strategies and leadership for the mission of the Church.

Required Reading:
Acts (please read in the NRSV or the NIV)


Wesley Sermons
www.umcmission.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/Sermon-139-On-Love

Schedule

Class and online discussions are heavily dependent upon the readings, therefore it is absolutely essential that readings be completed in a timely manner.

Upon receipt of this syllabus you should read:
Acts 1-8
Mission the Essential Guide
The Poisonwood Bible

Session One:
Topics: Biblical and theological perspectives on mission; History of Christian mission;

Reading Assignments:

Acts 1-8

Session Two
Topics: Critical analysis of systems and trends affecting Christian mission; Contemporary understandings and approaches to Christian mission; Wesleyan theology of mission.

Reading Assignments:
Acts 9-20
Jennings, Good News to the Poor, chapters 1-5 & 7

**Session Three**
Christian mission in the local community and the local congregation; role of the pastor in mission; revisions of mission strategies.

Reading Assignments:
Acts 21-28
Volf, A Public Faith (entire book)

Writing Assignments: Mission Sermon; Mission Strategy

**Description of writing assignments**

**Mission Audit**
Itemize all the mission projects your local congregation supports. Include local community projects as well as ‘overseas’ mission projects, organizations and missionaries. Types of support include financial contributions, collection of items, and volunteers.

Be sure to include the specific name of the project, and the sponsoring organization or agency, For example, do not say ‘food pantry’; instead, say ‘Ebenezer food pantry.’ In the case of missionaries, include their name, place of service, type of work and sponsoring organization. Your audit can be done in the form of an outline or a chart.

**Mission Essay**
This essay will compare and contrast what you have read:
Summarize 1 of the topics covered in chapters 4 or 6 from Part II of the Robert book (Politics or Conversion).
Based on your reading of Wesley’s sermons, Jennings and Mission the Essential Guide describe a Wesleyan perspective on the topic. Be sure to reference your reading materials in your essay. What would Volf’s perspective be on the topic? Compare and contrast Volf with Wesley on the topic. Length: 6-10 pages

**Mission strategy** Prepare a detailed outline of how you will lead your congregation to engage in the mission of ‘making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.’ Types of ‘projects’ can include:
Designing a mission-education program
Developing a mission Sunday event
Starting a new mission project in your community
Launching a pledge campaign for missions
Expanding an existing ministry to your community
The project must reflect a Wesleyan approach to mission. Your project outline must include:

- A short description of the project (1 paragraph) State the goal(s) of the project The target audience or population to be served
- List potential partners in the community and/or volunteers in the church
- List potential resources and assets A budget of income and expenses
- Describe the lines of accountability and authority that will oversee the project Timeline or schedule of events
- Develop a evaluation tool for your project.
- If there is a worship component, include any liturgy or music that will be used

Attach to the outline a 1 page description of the theological rationale that expresses the Wesleyan foundation for the project. How does the project embody a Wesleyan approach to mission? Length: 3-8 pages

Mission sermon
Write a sermon expressing your theology of mission.
It cannot be a previously preached sermon, but it should be written with your congregation in mind. The sermon must:

- Be based on a passage from Acts
- Reflect a distinctive Wesleyan perspective

The sermon is a summary of your beliefs that are grounded in the critical reflection and United Methodist perspective that you have learned through the class.
Length: no less than 5 pages