

## COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL

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### 423: Our Mission From God: Transforming Agent

This course stresses the church's work and witness to neighbors near and far through reflection upon Christian mission. Skills in assessment of community and global needs and of mission strategy are addressed in order that pastors may better interpret, motivate and enable Congregations to fulfill their mission.

#### **Course Objectives:**

- Development of a theology of mission that is rooted in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.
- Consideration of a theology of mission that reflects the Wesleyan union of personal piety and social action.
- Exploration of the relationship between the church and cultures in the expression of mission.
- Examination of the impact of secularization on the church in mission.
- Interpretation of the debates on world evangelization with reference to current dialogues with other world religions.
- Study of justice ministries in the worldwide mission of the church, with attention given to such liberation themes as racism, sexism, and classism.
- Focus upon ways and means to enable congregation, especially small churches, to enter into programs of missionary outreach.
- Study of and exposure to actual church and community programs, such as community development, cross-cultural ministries, and community hunger programs.

#### **A. Books**

Jennings, Jr. Theodore W. Good News to the Poor. Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1990. ISBN: 0-687-15528-2.

Eck, Diana. Encountering God. Beacon Press: Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0807073032.

Cardoza-Orlandi, Carlos F. Mission the Essential Guide. Abingdon Press: Nashville, 2002. ISBN: 0-687-05472-9.

Read Acts 1-8 (NIV OR NRSV)

Theodore W. Jennings, Jr. Good News to the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics, Abingdon 1990

Cobb, John Progressive Christians Speak: A Different Voice on Faith and Politics, Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville 2003

Miroslav Volf, A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good: Brazos Press, 2001

Kingsolver, Barbara. The Poisonwood Bible: A Novel Harper Perennial Modern Classics Press 1998

Storey, Peter John. With God in the Crucible: Preaching Costly Discipleship. Abingdon Press: Nashville, 2002. ISBN: 0-687-05253-X.

## **B. Written and Moodle Assignments**

All the assignments will be divided into two categories: Written assignments and Moodle assignments. All assignments are due prior to the arrival for the residential session. The written assignments are due on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The Moodle assignments should be submitted as you complete the Moodle assignments. Please note that all Moodle assignments need to be completed no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>. Please take careful attention to the categories of each assignment as listed below.

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church states, “Wesley believed that the living core of the Christian faith stands revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason.”

As we survey the role of the Church in God’s mission, we look from each of these four points, starting with Scripture, which Wesley said was primary, revealing the Word of God “so far as it is necessary for our salvation.”

### **1. Scripture**

In preparation for this question read through the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. Then read the conclusion of Carlos F. Cardoza-Orlandi’s Mission the Essential Guide. Pay close attention to the author’s testimony of faith on pages 109-112. Once you have a sense of where the author is leading read the remainder of the book. Reading the book will be essential in addressing the following questions:

a. Define or describe what the author means when he uses the following terms: mission, missions, missiology, Christendom, “Missio Dei”, missional hermeneutic, cross-cultural mission. (no more than 1 page all together). **Moodle Assignment**

b. Based on what you have read, design a mission trip, mission outing, interfaith service, cross cultural meeting, etc. Human Relations Sunday, Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday may be appropriate times to plan cross cultural worship services. Be Creative! Apply what you’ve read in this book to your planning. After the event evaluate what you

learned about the mission of God and the mission of your church. Finally, write a testimony using the author's statement as your guide. Hand in your event plan, evaluation and testimony (no more than 3 pages). **Written Assignment**

## **2. Tradition**

Read *The Good News to the Poor* by Theodore W. Jennings Jr. Answer the following questions as you read

- a. Define what Jennings means by “evangelical economics”. Be sure to note the Biblical justification he gives to this concept. (1 page) **Moodle Assignment**
- b. Compose an essay explaining why Jennings believed that Methodism failed to embrace “evangelical economics”. Do you agree or disagree with Jennings? Give supportive reasons for your opinions. (1 page) **Moodle Assignment**
- c. There are some United Methodists who believe that the United Methodist Church is “melting” (e.g. Lyle Schaller). Jennings argues that the UMC is and has been self destructing because of its accommodation to middle class materialism and capital acquisition, leaving nothing for the poor. Which of these two arguments do you find most compelling? Give at least three good reasons to support your view. (2 page). **Written Assignment**

## **3. Reason**

Read *Encountering God* and answer the following questions:

- a. Discuss three topics posed by Eck in chapters 3-5 in the book, *Encountering God*. Compare the traditional Christian teachings on that topic with that of another major religious tradition. (2 pages) **Written Assignment**
- b. In what way(s) does the Eck book confirm, challenge or enlarge your view of God? (1 page) **Moodle Assignment**
- c. Define exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. What are the implications of each view on the mission of the church? (1 page) **Moodle Assignment**

## **4. Experience**

Read *With God in the Crucible: Preaching Costly Discipleship* by Peter John Storey. This is a book of sermons introduced in each case by a description of the context. This description describes Peter Storey's identification with the oppressed in South Africa. If you are unfamiliar with the struggle against apartheid you may well want to do some independent reading or rent a copy of the movie, *Soweto*. As you are reading these sermons look for theological themes that emerge as the pastor here seems to hold the newspaper in one hand and the Bible in the other.

- a. Name 10 new things you learned about the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. In what way does reading this book expand your understanding of the mission of the church? (2 pages). **Written Assignment**
- b. When the church is forced to forge a faithful response in the context of a “crucifying experience”, what value do you see in the role of preaching? (1 page). **Moodle Assignment**

- c. William H. Willimon notes in his Epilogue that he read Peter Storey's sermons immediately following Sept. 11th. He concludes: "So, here in September, in the American church's turn to walk through the fiery furnace and our time to hear sermons in a time of struggle, I give thanks for the words and witness of Peter Storey. It takes a deep theological acumen to know that one is with God in the crucible, it takes great grace to know God's word amid the struggle, and even greater grace for the guts to speak it." (page 175)

As a pastor living in this crucible, what ideas from Storey's sermons surface for you? What points might be worth sharing with your congregation. (List at least 5 or 6 points.) How might your congregation receive these ideas? (2 pages) **Written Assignment**

### **C. Instructions: how to format your written homework**

1. Read the pages, take notes and answer the questions completely in your own words, using complete sentences. Do not quote extensively from the texts you read. Reflect on the information, and then put them in your own words.
2. Follow approximate length given for each item of written work.
3. Print your written work on 8½ X 11 white paper, one side only, double-spaced, with a one-inch margins all around. On computer use a 12-point Times New Roman One page equals approximately 250 words.
4. On each page of your work, include a header with your name, the class number, and the page number. Begin each numbered item on a new sheet of paper, writing that number at the beginning of your answer. Do not type the questions before your answers.
5. If you quote from a printed text, you must use quotation marks and note the source (including pages) in parentheses at the end of each usage. Quotations should never be more than a sentence or two long. Ideas and information should be stated in your own words, not in the words of the authors you have read. For assigned texts, you may abbreviate the titles by using the first letter of each word in the title. For example, if the source is Harper's Bible Dictionary, then use (HBD, p. 34-35). If you refer to books that are not listed on the class reading list, then you must give full bibliographic information. The Proper Citations page will give you more information about how to present bibliographic information in your work.
6. Staple all pages for each of course of each module together in a sequential manner, using one staple in the upper left-hand corner. Do not staple together papers for more than one
7. course. Do not bind your homework or turn in 3-ring binders or plastic/paper report covers.
8. Add a title page to each course of each module that includes a) the name of the course, b) your name, and c) the date of the first day of class.
9. The due date for written work is listed on the homework main page. Late work is only accepted with prior approval of the Director of the Course of Study School.
10. Make a copy of your material and bring it with you for your own use during the school.

NOTE: Using other people's materials without documentation, whether from a book, journal, teacher, another student, sermon service, or lectionary aid, is unacceptable behavior. Such activity, otherwise known as plagiarism usually means failure for the course with notification sent to the Conference Course of Study Registrar and the Division of Ordained Ministry. Professors will report all instances of plagiarism to the Director of the Course of Study. The Director will arrange for a meeting with the professor and the student, and the student will be given opportunity to explain the situation. The Director in consultation with the professor will

make a decision about what action is appropriate for a first instance of plagiarism. Such action could include, rewriting the material, or failure of the course. A brief summary of the meeting will be prepared by the Director and placed in the student's file in the Course of Study Office and kept there until the student completes the Course of Study Curriculum. If a second instance of plagiarism is documented, the student will fail the course and the Director will determine what other consequences may apply.

#### **D. Grading System**

A=exceeds expectation for Course of Study), B= expected quality for COS,  
C=passing work but not of expected quality, D=unacceptable quality (no credit), F = fail.

#### **Getting Started**

The first thing you should do is take time to very carefully read through the syllabus. Make notes of any questions or clarifications you might have and contact me immediately.

Be sure that you have all of the required reading before you. The readings are a significant part of this course and missing one of or two of them will jeopardize your learning. Develop and post a plan to complete your readings. As you finish each reading assignment, please send me an email