



**CL7521**  
**THE MISSIONAL CHURCH**  
**April – September 2009**

## **SYLLABUS**

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### **INSTRUCTOR**

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### **SEMINAR DESCRIPTION**

This seminar assists students in developing an understanding of Church and congregations in relation to the mission of the triune God in and to all of creation. Resources from the fields of both ecclesiology and missiology are brought to bear on helping students formulate a working theology of the missional church within their congregation and context. The diverse literature in the fields of church renewal, church growth, and church effectiveness are critically evaluated from this developing understanding of the missional church.

### **APPROACH**

Participants will access and use resources that assist them in reflecting on the missionary nature of the church and the development of a missional ecclesiology. This work will serve as a foundation in helping each participant reflect on the present formal and informal ecclesiology that is at work in their ministry context, and to explore ways of developing a missional church identity for the congregation they are presently serving. A faculty member from the Leadership Division will facilitate the seminar. The purpose of the project component is to help each person integrate the readings, research, and seminar discussion in a way that strengthens their professional development and serves their current ministry through developing a missional ecclesiology for that context.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Each seminar participant will . . .

1. Gain theological perspective on the issues of the Trinitarian foundations for ecclesiology, the missional church, and the development of a missiological ecclesiology.
2. Gain an understanding of the subjects of ecclesiology and missiology from both historical and contemporary perspectives.
3. Engage in evaluative reflection regarding the current formal and informal ecclesiology that appears to be operating within the congregation s/he is presently serving.
4. Engage in disciplined conversation with fellow participants around the subject matter of the seminar.
5. Engage in a constructive critique of current literature on church growth and church effectiveness from the perspective of a missiological ecclesiology.
6. Complete a seminar project that develops a missional ecclesiology for his/her current ministry.

## **COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS**

### ***Seminar Structure***

The seminar is divided into three phases.

Phase I – Preparation April-July, 2009

Phase II – Seminar July 13-17, 2009

Phase III – Project Completion August-September 30, 2009

### ***Use of Technology***

To facilitate communication, each participant will be expected to have a Luther Seminary email address. This address will allow each person to access the software that is being used for course management, which is known as MyLutherNet. In addition, this course requires participants to use electronic databases and to conduct on-line research. It is expected that participants will be proficient in using Word and communicating electronically.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Module Assignments**

Each participant is expected to complete four modules for this seminar. These modules involve a wide range of reading requirements. The total number of pages that participants are expected to read for the seminar is approximately 2500.

### **Module 1: Reflections on Ecclesiology**

The purpose of this module is to introduce seminar participants to some contemporary thinking about ecclesiology and missiology, and for this information to be used as a lens for reflecting on both the formal and informal ecclesiologies that are operating in the congregation of each participant. Readings are provided to help the participant develop a lens for thinking about ecclesiology, both historically and from a missional perspective. In reading these materials you should ask yourself the question, "What contextual and/or historical factors appear to be at work in shaping this author's understanding of an ecclesiology for the church?" and "What biblical and theological assertions are being assumed or proposed as the basis for shaping this author's understanding of an ecclesiology for the church?"

### **Required Reading**

#### **Recent Writings on Ecclesiology**

Leslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, (Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995 rev. ed.)

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical, and Global Perspectives*, (InterVarsity Press, 2002)

Letty Russell, *The Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church*, (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993)

### **Assignment**

Write a 8-10 page reflection paper (typed, double-space) in answering the following questions:

1. What are the primary insights from these readings which you feel *should* inform the development of an ecclesiology for a congregation from a missional perspective – a missiological ecclesiology?
2. Reflecting on your present congregation:
  - a. What is the '*formal*' ecclesiology that my congregation is operating with at this time (see constitution, formal polity, congregation by-laws and any adopted mission/vision statements)? Give some examples of how well this understanding is and/or is not functioning.
  - b. What is the '*informal*' ecclesiology that my congregation appears to be operating with at this time, and how does this differ from the formal one

(as observable in the actual practices or discernable regarding attitudes and beliefs regarding the church)? Give some examples of how this manifests itself, and how it either reinforces or contradicts the formal ecclesiology.

3. In light of what you identify in number 2, develop some assertions and strategies regarding how you might bring your congregation into a fuller and deeper understanding of the church in terms of what you listed in point 1 above about a missiological ecclesiology.

Post your paper in the assigned location within MyLutherNet. After reading your colleagues' papers, please post (as a thread, if possible) what you see as similarities and differences in your cohort's work.

**Posting Date for Reflection Paper:**     **May 15, 2009**  
**Review of Cohort's Work**                 **June 1, 2009**

## **Module 2: Reading and On-Line Discussion/Interaction**

Each participant will be expected to complete the assigned readings for each week. **By the end of each assigned week**, one person will be designated to take the lead in posting an 600-800 word critical reflection on the assigned readings.(primary post) **During the following week**, the other members of each discussion group will be responsible to post a 200-250 word interactive response to the lead posting. (response post) Note all posts may be done as threads to the site, and need not be attachments.

**Primary Posting** (600-800 words) – the initial critical reflection should focus on: (a) engaging in a biblical and theological critique of the writings for the week, (b) offering some perspective on how these readings inform our understanding of a missional church and a missiological ecclesiology; and (c) relating these readings to the practice of ministry in your congregation – what is being done, what is not being done, what might be done.

**Responses to Primary Posting** (200-250 words) – these responses should focus on: (a) interacting with the biblical and theological critique and the suggested understanding of the missional church provided by your colleague by offering additional ideas or to nuance those already presented; and (b) offering additional ideas on how these readings relate to the practice of ministry in your congregation.

### **Further Procedures for Posts**

1. The instructor will set up and manage the discussion site, and will list the dates when postings are due for each discussion, as well as the primary post-writer.
2. Each person will make one (1) primary posting (some weeks may have more than one primary post, depending upon the group size), and seven (7) response postings during the eight (8) weeks assigned to this reading.

**List of books for required reading:**

- Richard H. Bliese and Craig Van Gelder, *The Evangelizing Church: A Lutheran Contribution*, Augsburg Fortress, 2005.  
David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Orbis Books, 1991.  
Darrell L. Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000.  
Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity for the Rest of Us*, HarperCollins, 2006.  
Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*, Baker Books, 2000.  
Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998.

**Reading and Discussion Schedule**

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|---------|---|--|
| May 22  | Readings:<br>Bosch, xiii-55<br>Bass, 1-25<br>Bliese/Van Gelder, ix-10<br>Van Gelder, 7-26<br>Guder, vii-27    | Primary Post: Kerry A.<br>Corey J.       |
| May 29  | Readings:<br>Bosch, 56-180<br>Bass, 26-70<br>Bliese/Van Gelder, 11-31<br>Van Gelder, 27-44<br>Guder, 28-72    | Primary Post: Ronald B.<br>Charles R.    |
| June 5  | Readings:<br>Bosch, 181-213<br>Bass, 71-102<br>Bliese/Van Gelder, 32-50<br>Van Gelder, 45-72<br>Guder, 73-119 | Primary Post: Glorestine C.<br>Philip R. |
| June 12 | Readings:<br>Bosch, 214-261<br>Bass, 103-142<br>Bliese/Van Gelder, 51-70<br>Guder, 120-144<br>Volf, ix-28     | Primary Post: Jacob F.<br>Carol R.       |

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|---------|--|-------------------------|
| June 19 | Readings:<br>Bosch, 262-348<br>Bass, 143-183<br>Bliese/Van Gelder, 71-91<br>Volf, 29-72<br>Guder, 145-208          | Primary Post: Peggy H-M |
| June 26 | Readings:<br>Bosch, 349-446<br>Bass, 185-214<br>Bliese/Van Gelder, 92-112<br>Volf, 73-126                          | Primary Post: James H.  |
| July 3  | Readings:<br>Bosch, 447-520<br>Bass, 215-238<br>Bliese/Van Gelder, 113 -137<br>Van Gelder, 73-126<br>Volf, 127-190 | Primary Post: Jacob H.  |
| July 10 | Readings:<br>Bass, 239-284<br>Bliese/Van Gelder, 138-153<br>Van Gelder, 127-184<br>Volf, 191-282                   | Primary Post: Blair P.  |

### **Module 3**

#### **Engaging in Critical Reflection on Ecclesiology in Relation to the Church Growth and Church Effectiveness Literature**

This module is designed to assist each participant to use what they have learned through the seminar, up to this point, in engaging in some critical reflection on the ecclesiology that appears to be formally and/or informally at work in the current church growth and church effectiveness movement(s). Each participant will select and read a book from this literature (see suggested list below, although other choice options will be considered on request), and will write a four-page critical reflection paper, answering the following questions:

1. What is the formal and/or informal ecclesiology that appears to be at work in this book's presentation?
2. How would you critique the adequacy of this ecclesiology from the perspective of the missional church and a missiological ecclesiology?
3. What constructive suggestions would you make to the author if you were asked how the argument and presentation of the book might be strengthened?
4. Discussion time during our week in seminar will help to prepare the paper.

**Possible Books to Consider** (another may be substituted by permission of the instructor): It is recommended that each person select a different book, which will then allow for a wide critique of this literature to be shared in this review.

- Leith Anderson, *A Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Bethany, 1992.  
George Barna, *User Friendly Churches*, Regal, 1991.  
\_\_\_\_\_, *The Second Coming Of The Church*, Word Publishing, 1998.  
Randy Frazee & Dallas Willard, *The Connecting Church*, Zondervan, 2001.  
Carl F. George, *The Coming Church Revolution*, Revell, 1994.  
George G. Hunter III, *Church for the Unchurched*, Abingdon, 1996.  
Walt Kallestad, *Turn Your Church Inside Out*, Augsburg Fortress, 2001.  
Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side*, Zondervan, 1998.  
Mark Mittelberg, *Building a Contagious Church*, Zondervan, 2000.  
Bishop Claude Payne & Hamilton Beazley, *Reclaiming the Great Commission : A Practical Model for Transforming Denominations and Congregations*, Jossey-Bass, 2000.  
Lyle E. Schaller, *The Seven-Day-a-Week Church*, Abingdon, 1992.  
Leonard Sweet, *Aqua Church*, Group, 1999.  
C. Peter Wagner, *Churchquake: How the New Apostolic Reformation Is Shaking Up the Church As We Know It*, Gospel Light, 1999.  
Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, Zondervan, 1995.

**Paper to be posted in assigned forum by: July 16, 2009. (Please note these papers/presentations will be shared with the class during the seminar week, and the paper is to be posted during the seminar week, preferably after discussion.)**

## **Module 4**

### **Seminar Project**

Each participant will complete a project during August-September that relates the content of the seminar to their current ministry context. The approach that each person is to pursue includes the following steps:

Develop, construct, and write a project (@25 pages) of what a local, contextual missional ecclesiology would look like in your present ministry location. This project should include at least the following areas:

- a. Description of current ecclesiology at work in this ministry context (refer to paper for module one), and the implications of this on the identity and ministry of the congregation/organization
  - i. Formal ecclesiology
  - ii. Informal ecclesiology
- b. Discussion of both the general theology, and the local contextual theology that seems to be supporting this present ecclesiology
- c. Develop a general framework of a missional ecclesiology that is related to/inter-related with your theological tradition

- d. Develop the primary metaphor and theological considerations in shaping a local contextual missional ecclesiology – what would such a contextual missional ecclesiology look like?
- e. Identify a draft process and time table for sharing your work with the church - who, when, how

***Following the Seminar***

1. Engage your DMin conversation group in communal discernment in defining and developing the project.
2. OPTIONAL – create a power point presentation that captures the primary movements of the paper, which can be used for generating discussion and reflection with the larger congregation/ministry

**Project to be posted by: September 30, 2009**

***Seminar Meeting***

Participants will meet together for the week of July 13-17, 2009 in a group seminar. The instructor will facilitate the seminar. There will be extensive time spent in discussion and reflection on the readings completed and research done during the preparation phase of the seminar.

***Several Items To Note***

**Purchasing Books** – It is recommended that seminar participants go “on-line” to one of the bookstores available (i.e. Amazon, Barnes and Nobles, etc.) and purchase their copies of the volumes that are required or selected for reading. All items listed are available in this format.

**Use of Technology** – This seminar assumes participant familiarity with the basics of using the computer for on-line research, and being able to access the web from your terminal. There is technical assistance available, if needed, to work through any problems you might have. We will be using a web-based program known as MyLutherNet for the purposes of communication and discussion.