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MS 610 The Ministry of Evangelism

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MS 610 The Ministry of Evangelism

Spring Semester, 2003

School of World Mission and Evangelism

Asbury Theological Seminary

Instructor: George Hunter

I. Course Description:

Introduction to Christian Evangelism, as a ministry, with emphasis upon the essence of evangelism, from a “paradigms” perspective, with applications for the practice of “apostolic ministry.”

II. Course Objectives:

1. To root the student’s consciousness and conscience in the Abrahamic, Apostolic, and (late) Reformation mandate for outreach to all people.
2. To gain, through reading, reflection, and discussion, an informed understanding of what is essentially involved in making new Christians from the world.
3. To “liberate” the student from counter-productive “paradigms” that have restricted the Church’s witness, outreach, and mission.
4. To introduce a range of informed approaches to the ministry of evangelism.
5. To encourage reflection upon, and appropriate critique of, “typical” (or stereotypical) approaches to evangelism.

III. Reading Assignments:

Most of the classes will focus, for the first session, on books or readings, that have been assigned for that day. The books and readings are available in Asbury’s Cokesbury Bookstore.

BOOKS:

1. Rambo, Lewis. Understanding Religious Conversion
2. Hunter, George G. III, The Celtic Way of Evangelism
3. McLaren, Brian. More Ready Than You Realize
4. Crandall, Ron. The Contagious Witness

READINGS (available in ATS bookstore after about February 17):

1. Neill, Stephen. “Conversion”
2. Green, Michael. “Methods and Strategy in the Evangelism of the Early Church”
3. DeWolf, L. Harold. “The New Birth”
4. Green, Bryan. “Counseling the Seeker.”
5. Winter, Ralph. “The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism.” IV. Requirements and Written Assignments

Some of the class sessions will expect a (brief) written assignment and a (brief) oral presentation from each student. (Each assignment for each class session is rather specific; the student, however, should not interpret an assignment too narrowly.)

There will be final exam; it’s appraisal will count about half of a students grade. The class, as a group, may choose either a seated written exam or a take-home exam.

The writing assignment, which will contribute the other half of a grade, will come in two flavors. A) A student may do a conventional research paper, drawing from library and/or field resources, OR B) A student may do a critical review of an (unassigned) book on Evangelism (25% of grade) AND a critical review of some evangelistic ministry in practice (25% of grade).

Schedule of Class Sessions

(Subject to Modification)

February 13: Introduction to the Ministry of Evangelism

1. Syllabus, assignments, etc.
2. Toward Defining "Evangelism"
3. The Relevance of Evangelism
4. Presentation: "Helping People Become Christians"

February 20: "Paradigm Pioneering" for Changing Organizations

February 27: Christian Conversion in Perspective: part one

Come to class having read Rambo, Understanding Religious Conversion, 1-4, and Neill, "Conversion." Be prepared to present a brief (1 to 2 pages) paper reflecting on several of the central ideas and/or specific ideas that should inform the ministry of Evangelism.

1. Class papers on Rambo and Neill.
2. Presentation: "What Kind of Christians Do We Join God in Making?"

March 6: Christian Conversion in Perspective: part two

Come to class having read Rambo, 4-7, and Green, "Methods and Strategy in the Evangelism of the Early Church." Be prepared to present a brief (1 to 2 pages) paper reflecting on several of the central ideas and/or specific ideas that should inform the ministry of Evangelism.

1. Class papers on Rambo and M. Green
2. Presentation: "The Secular Post-Modern Context for Evangelism Today"

March 13: Christian Conversion in Perspective: part three

Come to class having read Rambo, 8-10 and conclusion, and DeWolf, "The New Birth." Be prepared to present a brief (1 to 2 pages) paper reflecting on several of the central ideas and/or specific ideas that should inform the ministry of Evangelism.

1. Class papers on Rambo and DeWolf.
2. Presentation: "The Emerging Apostolic Congregation."

March 20: The "Celtic" Approach to Evangelization

Come to class having read Hunter, The Celtic Way of Evangelism, and Winter, "The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism." Be prepared to present a brief (1 to 2 pages) paper reflecting on several of the central ideas and/or specific ideas from Hunter and Winter that should inform the ministry of Evangelism.

1. Class papers on Hunter's book.
2. Presentation: "The Celtic Way of Evangelism"
3. Presentation: "How Christian Faith Spreads the Celtic Way."

March 27: The Role of Conversations in the Ministry of Evangelism: part one. (Doctoral students from ME 880 our guests today)

Come to class having read McLaren's More Ready Than You Realize. Bring, for the instructor, a brief (1 to 2 pages) paper reflecting on several of McLaren's central ideas and/or specific ideas.

April 3: The Role of Conversations in the Ministry of Evangelism: part two

Come to class having read B. Green, "Counseling the Seeker," and having reflected upon Brian McLaren's book and visit. Be prepared to present a brief (1 to 2 pages) paper reflecting on several of the central ideas and/or specific ideas that should inform the ministry of Evangelism.

1. Class papers on McLaren and B. Green.
2. Presentation: "Insights from Research in Conversation and Relational Communication"

April 10: Reading Week; no class.

April 17: Gregg Leffell, guest presenter, on "Implications for Evangelism and Mission in the Study of Movements."

April 24: "Paradigm Shifts for Effective Ministry and Evangelism": part one

May 1: Ron Crandall, guest presenter:

Come to class having read Crandall, The Contagious Witness. Be prepared to present a brief (1 to 2 pages) paper reflecting on several of the central ideas and/or specific ideas that should inform the ministry of Evangelism.

May 8: "Paradigm Shifts for Effective Ministry and Evangelism": part two

May 15: No class; instructor out of town.

May 22: Exam Week