# Theology between God and the Excluded: Challenges to the Church in the Twenty-First Century

A Doctor of Ministry Course Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University January 2013

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### **Course Description:**

A comparison of major modes of contemporary theology in light of the church's location between God and the increasing numbers of persons excluded from the resources of life. The course will work towards the development of new constructive and inclusive theological paradigms for ministry.

## **Schedule of Sessions and Readings:**

## Theology turning to the self

January 8

# Where we are: Theology, exclusion, and the lure of money Reading:

Joerg Rieger, God and the Excluded: Visions and Blindspots in Contemporary Theology, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001, introduction.

Joerg Rieger, "Watch the Money" in: Joerg Rieger, ed., *Liberating the Future: God, Mammon, and Theology*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

January 9

# Widening the circle of theology and the church: Liberal theology Reading:

Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, transl. John Oman (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), speeches 2 and 5 (on electronic reserve).

Rieger, God and the Excluded, chapter 1.

January 10

#### Modernity and empire

#### Reading:

Joerg Rieger, *Christ and Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2007, chapter 5 (on electronic reserve).

## Theology turning to the divine and to the texts of the church

January 11

#### Postmodernity and global capitalism

#### Reading:

Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 3-66, 121-124, 173-188, 327-359 (on electronic reserve).

Joerg Rieger, *No Rising Tide: Theology, Economics, and the Future*, Fortress Press, 2009, chapter 1 (on electronic reserve).

January 14

#### Where is God? Beyond liberal theology

#### Reading:

Rieger, God and the Excluded, chapter 2

Karl Barth, "The Christian's Place in Society," in *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, transl. Douglas Horton (New York Harper and Row, 1957) (on electronic reserve). Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959, 5-71.

January 15

# What about Bible and tradition? Postliberal theology Reading:

Rieger, God and the Excluded, chapter 3

George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984, 7-135.

## Theology turning to the other

January 16

What is still missing?

#### Reading:

Rieger, God and the Excluded, chapter 4.

Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, "On Becoming a Traitor: The Academic Liberation Theologian and the Future," in: Joerg Rieger, ed., *Liberating the Future: God, Mammon, and Theology, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.* 

Gayraud Wilmore, "Black Consciousness: Stumbling Block or Battering Ram?" in: Liberating the Future.

Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Liberation Theology and the Future of the Poor," in: *Liberating the Future*.

#### January 17

# Theological transformation once again Reading:

Frederick Herzog, "New Birth of Conscience," in: Liberating the Future.

Joerg Rieger, ed., *Theology from the Belly of the Whale: A Frederick Herzog Reader*, Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999, chapters 3, 6, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 30, 31, 39. Rieger, "Constructing a Common Interest Theology from the Underside," in: *Liberating the Future*.

Rieger, ed., *Theology from the Belly of the Whale*, Introduction.

M. Douglas Meeks, "Economy and the Future of Liberation Theology in North America," in: *Liberating the Future*.

#### January 18

# Concluding session: Where do we go from here?

## Reading:

Rieger, God and the Excluded, chapters 5 and 6.

### Assignments

#### 1. Four-page papers

These papers should give a brief summary of the readings and—equally important—engage in critical reflection of what you have read in light of the challenges of ministry in the tensions between God and people who are excluded. Plan to give equal room to both parts.

#### In preparation for January 8-10:

Write a four-page paper in which you engage the readings on and by Schleiermacher.

#### In preparation for January 11-15:

Write a four-page paper in which you engage either the readings on and by Barth or on and by Lindbeck.

#### Week of January 16-18:

Write a four-page paper in which you engage the theological approach of Frederick Herzog.

All four-page papers are due before the class starts. These papers may be submitted via email. Late papers will not be accepted. Be prepared to share your paper with the class, at

the discretion of the instructor. Format: A typewritten paper of approximately four pages, double spaced.

### 2. Research paper

The research paper is an opportunity to zero in on specific theological issues, theologians, or theologies in light of the challenges of ministry in the tensions between God and people who are excluded. In a resolution entitled "Attention to General Requirement and Elective Courses in Respect to Mexican American Concerns" the Perkins faculty has committed itself "to provide opportunity wherever feasible and consistent with the objectives of the course for minority students to pursue the subject with special reference to their own minority group." I strongly support this decision, but would encourage all students to give some consideration to their social location in the research paper.

The length of the research paper should be limited to 15 pages, typewritten and double spaced. In order to structure the project, a brief proposal stating the basic idea of the paper and the approach to be taken, as well as a preliminary bibliography, is due on January 18, 2013. The deadline for turning in the paper itself is February 4, 2013. Final papers may be submitted via e-mail.

### 3. Grading

Each four-page paper will count for 20 percent, the final research paper will count for 40 percent of the grade.

#### MINORITY CONCERNS AND THE PERKINS CURRICULUM

In 1975 the Perkins Senate passed resolutions which bear on the relation of the Perkins curriculum to this school's common concern for the status of ethnic minority groups and of women both in education for ministry and in the ministry itself. The following statement summarizes these resolutions with respect to all courses except those in the area of ministry.

- 1. Instructors and students alike are urged to use inclusive language, images and metaphors which will give full and positive value to both the past contributions and the future prospects of ethnic minorities and women in the church and in society at large.
- 2. Instructors and students alike are urged to give sensitive consideration to the role of images from a predominantly white and male culture in shaping both the

language and concepts of Christian theology and the models and methods of Christian ministry that are widely current today.

3. Instructors are urged to make every effort to provide, in the assignments and formats of their courses, opportunities (1) for women students and students from ethnic minority groups to pursue their study with special reference to their own status or tradition and (2) for all students to become acquainted with the special problems and conditions that affect women and ethnic minority groups in church and society.

#### DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS

If you need academic accommodations for a disability, you must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4563) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Then please schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.