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:

January 9
Widening the circle of theology and the church: Liberal theology
Reading:
Rieger, God and the Excluded, chapter 1.
Modernity and empire
Reading:

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

January 11
Postmodernity and global capitalism
Reading:

January 14
Where is God? Beyond liberal theology
Reading:
Rieger, *God and the Excluded*, chapter 2

January 15
What about Bible and tradition? Postliberal theology
Reading:
Rieger, *God and the Excluded*, chapter 3

Theology turning to the other

January 16
What is still missing?
Reading:

January 17

**Theological transformation once again**

**Reading:**
Rieger, “Constructing a Common Interest Theology from the Underside,” in: *Liberating the Future*.

January 18

**Concluding session: Where do we go from here?**

**Reading:**

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 e-mail. 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 ACCOMMODATIONS

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.