ME 770 MS 635 Renewing the Church for Mission

Howard A. Snyder

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ME 770/MS635. RENEWING THE CHURCH FOR MISSION

[Syllabus available also on the Seminary Network as: ME770 - S03]

DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the recurring phenomenon of renewal in the church as a key aspect of a biblical and contemporary ecclesiology. It seeks an understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in renewing the church, drawing from biblical foundations, historical models, and contemporary examples of congregational renewal and renewal movements. Application is made especially to the life of the local congregation.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are:

1. To help students develop a biblical and practical ecclesiology.
2. To help students appreciate how God has worked historically in renewing the church.
3. To impart hope for congregational vitality today.
4. To provide practical insights into the dynamics of congregational health.
5. To provide a forum for discussion of issues of church renewal.
6. To introduce students to important resources on church renewal.
7. To help students develop into leaders in church renewal.

STRUCTURE OF COURSE

We will follow the topics as listed on the schedule, below, interweaving biblical, historical, and contemporary perspectives. Readings are assigned to cover material which, for the most part, we won't have time to deal with fully in class. Classes will be a combination of lecture and discussion, with occasional videos.

REQUIREMENTS

In addition to class participation, each class member is expected to complete the following requirements:

1. Complete the assigned readings as listed on the schedule.

The following are required texts:

Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ’s Body, by Howard Snyder
The Other Six Days, by R. Paul Stevens
Natural Church Development, by Christian Schwarz
Churches That Make a Difference, by Ronald Sider, Philip Olson, and Heidi Rolland Unruh

The following books are recommended:

A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society, by Rodney Clapp
God’s Transforming Spirit: Black Church Renewal, by Preston Washington
Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church, by Howard Snyder

2. Submit a weekly reading report. Use the forms provided in this syllabus; make extra copies as needed. It is expected that you will carefully read the assigned texts, and as much of the recommended reading as you have time for. Please note that a minimum reading
requirement of 800 pages must be fulfilled to receive credit for the course. The assigned reading totals a little less than 800 pages, so you will want to read some of the recommended reading, as well. Most of the books and articles listed as recommended reading are on reserve in the library.

3. Write two 5-page (approx.) reflection papers dealing with topics or issues which arise in the readings and/or class discussion. Format: For ease in handling, please submit papers stapled on the upper left-hand corner, and without any cover or binder.

4. Major Project: Each student will propose a major project to be completed as a requirement for the course. This may be a research paper, case study, ministry project, strategy plan, or other form of project. Projects may be done individually or in groups of two, three, or four. Some suggested topics:
   - Biblical principles of church renewal
   - Analysis of a particular renewal movement
   - Comparative analysis of two or more movements
   - Study of a contemporary church or movement
   - Planning for congregational renewal
   - Beginning or strengthening small groups in the congregation
   - Identifying and using spiritual gifts
   - Analysis of a particular factor in renewal, viewed biblically and/or historically
   - Preaching/teaching for renewal
   - Theology of renewal
   - Strategies for renewal
   - Biblical models for renewal
   - Music as a factor in renewal
   - A plan for building community in the church

You will first write an initial proposal (1 to 2 pages) including a description of the project, what you hope to learn, the approach or methodology to be used, and an initial bibliography or list of sources.

Format of project report: 10-30 page paper (double-spaced). Length will vary, depending on the type of project. Research papers will tend to be longer; reports on projects in ministry will tend to be shorter, but will fully document the project. Include reference notes (footnotes or endnotes) as appropriate, and bibliography. A permissible alternative is to submit the project in video or audio cassette form.

DUE DATES:

- Proposal for major project due: Feb. 25
- 1st reflection paper due: Mar. 11
- 2nd reflection paper due: Apr. 15
- Major project due: May 20

GUIDELINES FOR FINAL PAPER (Major Project)

1. You may use either the anthropological style (recommended by the ESJ School) or the Chicago/Turabian style (footnotes, with bibliography) — but be consistent. The paper must be computer-printed, and should include appropriate documentation of sources cited or consulted. (See “Academic Writing in the ESJ School,” available as a hand-out from the ESJ School Office.)

2. Attach a title page giving the paper’s title, your name, course name and number, and date. Staple in upper left-hand corner. Please do not use a cover or binder. (I may later request a second clean copy of your paper for my files.)
3. The paper should be at least 10 pages (double-spaced, 10 or 12 pt. font), and not more than 30 pages, as noted above. The grade will depend on the content, development and clarity of presentation, and evidence of excellent research or project execution, not length.

4. The paper should contain no spelling errors. Use a spell-checker.

5. Please avoid these common mistakes:
   Improper or incomplete footnote/endnote style or bibliographic entry style
   Improperly placed (for U.S. English) quotation marks:
   (Question marks, exclamation points, and semicolons are placed outside the quoted material unless they are part of the quotation.)
   Improper use of its and it’s.
   its is a possessive, meaning “belonging to it.”
   it’s is a contraction, meaning “it is.”

6. Students for whom English is not their natural language may want to get editorial assistance. I will evaluate only the final product. Correct English tends to have a favorable influence on grade.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: See the current seminary Catalog, p. 25. Each Tuesday evening class counts as two class sessions (6:00-7:15, 7:30-8:45)

EVALUATION

There will be no final examination. In grading, the course components will be weighted approximately as follows: Class participation (20%), readings (30%), reflection papers (20%), major project (30%).
SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READING  (See Bibliography for full information on readings.)

FEB. 11 -  INTRODUCTION: RENEWAL, REVIVAL, REFORMATION

FEB. 18 -  MODELS OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCH RENEWAL
  Read: Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 11-48; Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 6-14; Sider, Olson & Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference*, 11-44

FEB. 25 -  RENEWAL: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES
  Read: Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 49-59; Stevens, 3-23; Sider, Olson & Unruh, 45-62

MARCH 4 -  THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH
  Read: Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 61-76; Stevens, 24-49; Sider, Olson & Unruh, 63-83

MARCH 11 -  THE CHURCH AS LIVING ORGANISM
  Read: Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 77-88; Stevens, 50-68; Schwarz, 83-102
  Recommended: Clapp, 94-113; Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful*, chap. 4 (“Buddhist Economics”); Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, chap. 4; Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 145-200

MARCH 18 -  CHURCH RENEWAL MOVEMENTS
  Read: Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 89-102; Sider, Olson & Unruh, 84-102

MARCH 25 -  CHURCH RENEWAL MOVEMENTS
  Read: Stevens, 71-105; Sider, Olson & Unruh, 103-26
  Recommended: Barreiro, *Basic Ecclesial Communities*, 1-45; McNicholas, “A Study of the Charism of Angela Merici,” 1-42; Chenu, 239-69; Bloesch, *Wellsprings of Renewal*, chaps. 1-2 (pp. 11-27); Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 271-336

APRIL 1 -  THE ECOLOGY OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE
  Read: Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 103-26; Stevens, 106-30; Schwarz, 15-60
  Recommended: Getz, *Building Up One Another*, Intro. and chap. 1 (pp. 4-19); Meyer, *One Anothering*, Intro. and chap. 1 (pp. xv-11); Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 203-228; Snyder, *Liberating the Church*, 37-93; Snyder, *Radical Renewal*, 83-147; Clapp, 114-39

[APRIL 7-12 — READING WEEK]
APRIL 15 -  [NO CLASS]

APRIL 22 -  THE GIFTED, MINISTERING COMMUNITY
Read: Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 127-38; Stevens, 131-59; Schwarz, 61-82; Sider, Olson & Unruh, 129-65

APRIL 29 -  SOME CONTEMPORARY MODELS
Read: Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 139-53; Stevens, 163-90; Scandrett-Leatherman, “Ritual and Resistance; Communal Connectivity in a Church Retreat.” *Missiology* 27:3 (July 1999), 311-31 (on reserve).

MAY 6 -  LEADERSHIP FOR RENEWAL
Read: Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 154-68; Stevens, 191-242; Schwarz, 103-15; Sider, Olson & Unruh, 166-204

MAY 13 -  STRUCTURING FOR RENEWAL
Read: Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 169-90; Schwarz, 116-27; Sider, Olson & Unruh, 205-45
Recommended: Clapp, 187-211; Snyder, *Kingdom, Church, and World*, chaps. 8-9 (pp. 79-93); Wilke, *And Are We Yet Alive*, chap. 4 (pp. 65-83); Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 401-35; Snyder, *Radical Renewal*, 149-57

MAY 20 -  RENEWAL AND THE REIGN OF GOD
Read: Stevens, 243-55, Sider, Olson & Unruh, 249-314
Recommended: Newbigin, *Household of God*, 153-74; Snyder, *Kingdom, Church, and World*, chaps. 10-11 (pp. 95-120); Snyder, *Liberating the Church*, 9-36
BIBLIOGRAPHY – Renewing the Church for Mission

*On reserve in the library.

INTRODUCTION/FOUNDATIONS


**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**


INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORKS


**PRACTICAL MODELS**


Richards, Lawrence. *Lay Ministry: Empowering the People of God*.


Snyder, Howard A. *Kingdom, Church, and World*.

Snyder, Howard A. *Radical Renewal: The Problem of Wineskins Today*.


**CASE STUDIES**


**SOCIOCOLICAL PERSPECTIVES / NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS** (NRMs)


### WEEKLY READING REPORT

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