ME 770 Renewing the Church for Mission

Howard A. Snyder

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ME770/MS635. RENEWING THE CHURCH FOR MISSION

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:

- *The Community of the King*, rev. ed. (2004), by Howard Snyder
- *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*, by Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger
- *The Other Six Days*, by R. Paul Stevens
- *Churches That Make a Difference*, by Ronald Sider, Philip Olson, and Heidi Rolland Unruh

The following books are recommended:

- *God’s Transforming Spirit: Black Church Renewal*, by Preston Washington
- *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, by Howard Snyder
- *Natural Church Development*, by Christian Schwarz

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** (MS635) 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. ME770: The minimum reading requirement is 1,200 pages.

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. 21
1st reflection paper due: Mar. 7
2nd reflection paper due: Apr. 11
Major project due: May 16

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

An extensive bibliography for this course is provided in the seminary network version of this syllabus, where it can be consulted, printed, or downloaded.

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.”
   Footnote reference numbers (if used) placed before a period or comma:

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.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

“It is the policy of Asbury Theological Seminary to use inclusive or non-sexist language in all Seminary publications, literature and communications” (Statement of Inclusive Language, ATS Website). This should be reflected also in students’ written assignments, in all generic references to human beings—e.g., “humanity” or “humankind” rather than “mankind”; “her/his” or “their” rather than “him.” It is appropriate to refer generically to a person (human being) as “her,” “him,” or “their.” While cultural issues and sensitivities obviously enter here, in current U.S. English terms such as “man” and “mankind” are understood by many as excluding women, whatever the intent. So for theological and missiological reasons it is better to be inclusive. (See the seminary website for the policy statement and guidelines.)

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. 7 – INTRODUCTION: RENEWAL, REVIVAL, REFORMATION
Read: Gibbs & Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 7–12, 15–26
Recommended: Gibbs & Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, Appendix A (239–328)

FEB. 14 – MODELS OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCH RENEWAL
Read: Snyder, *Community of the King*, 9–32; Sider, Olson & Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference*, 11–44

FEB. 21 – RENEWAL: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES
Read: Snyder, *Community of the King*, 33–60; Stevens, 3–23; Sider, Olson & Unruh, 45–62

FEB. 28 – THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH
Read: Snyder, *Community of the King*, 61–68; Stevens, 24–49; Sider, Olson & Unruh, 63–83

MARCH 7 – THE CHURCH AS LIVING ORGANISM
Read: Snyder, *Community of the King*, 69–88; Stevens, 50–68; Gibbs & Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 27–46

MARCH 14 – CHURCH RENEWAL MOVEMENTS
Read: Sider, Olson & Unruh, 84–102; Gibbs & Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 47–64

MARCH 21 – CHURCH RENEWAL MOVEMENTS
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; Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 89–102

MARCH 28 – THE ECOLOGY OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE
Read: Snyder, *Community of the King*, 89–114; Stevens, 106–30; Gibbs & Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 89–115
Recommended: Schwarz, 15–60; 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; Decoding the Church, 103–26; Clapp, 114–39

APRIL 4 – [NO CLASS – Reading Week]

APRIL 11 – THE GIFTED, MINISTERING COMMUNITY
Read: Snyder, Community of the King, 115–37; Stevens, 131–59;
Sider, Olson & Unruh, 129–65
Snyder, Liberating the Church, 168–218; Clapp, 140–71

APRIL 18 – SOME CONTEMPORARY MODELS
Read: Stevens, 163–90; Gibbs & Bolger, Emerging Churches, 117–34; Scandrett–Leatherman, “Ritual and Resistance; Communal Connectivity in a Church Retreat.” Missiology 27:3 (July 1999), 311–31
Recommended: Howard A. Snyder, “Pastoral Leadership and the Priesthood of All Believers” in Eller, Servants of the Word: Ministry in the Believers' Church, (Case study of Irving Park Free Methodist Church, Chicago; Washington, 25–116; Cosby, Handbook for Mission Groups, 9–66; Smith, Going to the Root; Warren, The Purpose Driven Church; Slaughter, Spiritual Entrepreneurs; Gordon, Real Hope in Chicago

APRIL 25 – LEADERSHIP FOR RENEWAL
Read: Snyder, Community of the King, 138–57; Stevens, 191–242; Sider, Olson & Unruh, 166–204; Gibbs & Bolger, Emerging Churches, 135–53
Recommended: Schwarz, 103–15; Clapp, 172–86; Washington, 117–39; Webber, The Majestic Tapestry, chaps. 1, 5; Barrett, The House Church, chaps. 2 and 12 (pp. 29–43, 157–64); Snyder, Liberating the Church, 220–58; Snyder, Radical Renewal, 161–97

MAY 3 – STRUCTURING FOR RENEWAL
Read: Snyder, Community of the King, 158–94; Sider, Olson & Unruh, 205–45;
Gibbs & Bolger, Emerging Churches, 155–90
Recommended: Schwarz, 116–27; 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 9 – RENEWAL AND THE REIGN OF GOD
Read: Snyder, Community of the King, 195–220; Stevens, 243–55, Sider, Olson & Unruh, 249–314; Gibbs & Bolger, Emerging Churches, 191–238
Recommended: Newbigin, Household of God, 153–74; Snyder, Kingdom, Church, and World, chaps. 10–11 (pp. 95–120); Snyder, Liberating the Church, 9–36; Decoding the Church, 154–90
INTRODUCTION/FOUNDATIONS


**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**


INTERRUPTIVE FRAMEWORKS


PRACTICAL MODELS


Johnson, Douglas W., and Alan K. Waltz. *Facts and Possibilities: An Agenda for The United


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**


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


WEEKLY READING REPORT

Name_______________________________________________     Date_____________

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