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MS 635 Renewing the Church for Mission

Howard A. Snyder

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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
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 some videos.

TEXTBOOKS

(The following books are recommended for more in-depth reading, but not required:
The Great Giveaway, by Steve Fitch
Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church, by Howard Snyder
The Other Six Days, by R. Paul Stevens)

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

1. Pre-Intensive Assignment (Due Dec. 31, 2007): The assignment consists of two parts:
   a. Read Community of the King (Snyder) and Colossians Remixed (Walsh & Keesmaat). Submit a one-page report simply indicating that the reading has been completed, and total number of pages read.
   b. Write a ten to fifteen page paper (double-spaced) which:
      1) discusses two topics or themes found in either or both of these two books;
      2) identifies and briefly discusses biblical passages of relevance to these two topics; and
      3) discusses the significance of these topics in your current context of ministry.

2. Reflection Paper of approximately five pages (double-spaced) due on January 25. This should discuss your reflections and learnings regarding one or more topics dealt with in class during the week. This is not a research paper.
3. Post-Intensive Assignment (Due Feb. 28, 2008): This assignment also consists of two parts:
   a. Read An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches (Anderson) and If Jesus Were Mayor (Moffitt).
      Submit a one-page report simply indicating that the reading has been completed, and total number of
      pages read.
   b. Complete a major project, which may be any one of the following: a research paper, case study,
      ministry project, strategy plan, or other form of project. Projects may be done individually or in groups
      of two or three. 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
      The nature of this project will be discussed and decided upon during the week of classes.

      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 form.

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.)

EVALUATION

There will be no final examination. In grading, the course components will be weighted approximately as
follows: Class participation (25%), Pre-Intensive Project (30%), reflection papers (15%), major project (30%).
SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF CLASSES

Tuesday, Jan. 22

INTRODUCTION: RENEWAL, REVIVAL, REFORMATION
MODELS OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCH RENEWAL
RENEWAL: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES

Wednesday, Jan. 23

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH
THE CHURCH AS LIVING ORGANISM
CHURCH RENEWAL MOVEMENTS: HISTORY

Thursday, Jan. 24

CHURCH RENEWAL MOVEMENTS: PRINCIPLES
THE ECOLOGY OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE
THE GIFTED, MINISTERING COMMUNITY
SOME CONTEMPORARY MODELS

Friday, Jan. 25

LEADERSHIP FOR RENEWAL
STRUCTURING FOR RENEWAL
RENEWAL AND THE REIGN OF GOD
BIBLIOGRAPHY – Renewing the Church for Mission

*Especially recommended. SEE IN ADDITION recent issues of Revitalization, bulletin of the Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements (Asbury Seminary) and significant books recommended there.

INTRODUCTION/FOUNDATIONS


**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**


INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORKS


**PRACTICAL MODELS**


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


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


**CASE STUDIES**


SOCILOGICAL PERSPECTIVES / NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS (NRMs)


# WEEKLY READING REPORT

**Name_______________________________________________**     **Date_____________**

Readings completed this week:

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