MI 728 Mission and Gender

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Mission and Gender                                     Dr. Eunice L. Irwin
MI 728               Fall 2005

Syllabus

Course Description:

Study of the ways women and men participate in Christian mission within the contexts of their
history, society and culture; their Scriptural and theological tradition; and their personal life situation.
Special consideration will be given to women’s issues related to mission; for instance, construction of
gender identity to fit their circumstances to enable their work. The course will be run as a seminar.

Purposes:
1. To introduce students to women’s contributions in Christian mission.
2. To provide students with critical tools for discerning issues related to gender and mission.
3. To put students in touch with women, past and present, who serve as role models for doing
   Christian mission.
4. To provide students with opportunities for personal contact with men and women mission
   leaders and workers from North American and non-Western settings.
5. To encourage students to affirm and support women in mission.

Objectives: Upon completion of the course, students will be prepared:
1. To tell many stories of what, why and how women have done mission.
2. To articulate a theology of mission that is inclusive of women.
3. To participate in informed discussion of positions regarding the ordination of women and
   know how these play out in mission settings and organizations.
4. To understand styles of male and female partnership in mission.
5. To identify practical issues and gender-related pressures faced by women missionaries.
6. To speculate whether women, in the course of their ministries, have generated any new
   theories of mission.
7. To consider if women’s spirituality exists as a unique factor in mission.

Requirements:
1. Course readings and preparation for participation in weekly class sessions.  15%
2. Interview of a person who spent significant time in cross-cultural mission and
   knows gender issues faced by men and women within a local situation.
   Two-page interview summary. Due September 19. 15%
3. Participant observation of a ministry led by a woman, ideally someone working
   in a cross-cultural or multicultural setting.
   One-page detailed description of ministry event. Due October 3. 10%
4. Reading of 250-500 pages beyond the assigned texts on a special topic* related
   to the course. (See list on next page)
   Signed Reading Log, stating dates and sources read. Due November 7. 20%
5. Leading 1-hour seminar presentation on a special topic related to the course.
   Handout notes for seminar given on date of presentation. 5%
   [Note available SEMINAR dates on course schedule, set seminar date with professor.]
6. Research paper (15-20 pp.) supporting presentation. Due December 5. 35%
Special topics suggested for seminar presentations may include (but are not limited) to:

Biographies
Women’s concerns and mission responses within
Religio-cultural contexts:
  Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist,
  Chinese, Korean, Latino, or Traditional societies, etc.

Social contexts:
  Role of women
  Girl children
  Marriage practices
  Cultural dynamics of cross-cultural marriages
  Prostitution
  Employment practices
  Slavery
  Women segregated in society

Women’s contributions to theology of mission/ministry
Ordination of women and implications for ministry
Gender roles within specific mission organizations
Gender reconciliation
Feminist theories (Christian and secular)
Gender dynamics (power, decision-making, status and role issues)
Styles of male/female partnership in mission
Wisefestyles in ministry, ministerial partnering patterns
Sexual harrassment and abuse and clergy persons
Sisterhood as it is understood in different church traditions
Works started by women missionaries or mission groups
Bible women as role models for gender (in China, Korea, 1920’s to present)
Professionalization/ specialization of clergy roles and associations in mission
Spirituality and spiritual expressions of women and men
Vocations of mission – church-based, NGO-based, independent
Women’s missionary movement leaders
Mujerista and other non-Western feminist projects

Pool of probable guests and resource persons this semester:

Frances Adeney                           Presbyterian, Indonesia, USA
Don Bray                                 Wesleyan World Mission (Global Partners), USA
Kathryn Hendershot                      United Methodist Church (D.Miss. ATS 2005), USA
Anita Keith                             Episcopal (My People, International) (Canada)
Kay Rader                               The Salvation Army, Korea, England, USA
Marcia Florkey                          United Methodist Church (GBGM), USA
Questions for consideration in the class:

1. What opportunities have women found to be involved in Christian mission?

2. Cite examples of women in mission who are role models for us.

3. How have women understood mission and been able to articulate their actions in terms of mission? (This would be from their framework of the Scriptures, their culture, their tradition, and their unique gifts and callings.)

4. What obstacles have women had to face, and overcome, in order to be involved in Christian mission? [Identify theological, cultural, historical, societal or institutional positions that needed to be challenged. Historical circumstances may complicate removal of the obstacles.]

5. Are there any explanations of why women’s roles in mission have not been viewed as prominent and important as men’s roles? How do issues of clericalism, patriarchy, chauvenism and/or gender hierarchy play into the practice of Christian mission?

6. What responses have women made as they have attempted to find their place as missionaries? [Individual or movement actions related to biblical feminism, social role or stratification, valuing of the laity and/or the inclusion of women in ordination, for example.]

7. Where have women made great changes or contributions to the way Christian mission is done?

8. [Speculative: What elements are essential (if any) when women construct their identity in mission? And, are these also the elements able to sustain them within their mission work as they experience pressures from men, institutions, cultures, and/or community’s values and expectations for them? Is gender identity construction even necessary today…and if it is, in what circumstances?]
Class Schedule:

9/12  **Stereotypes, stories and basic issues in our backgrounds!**  
      Getting acquainted with course and with one another.  
      VIDEO: “The Inn of the Sixth Happiness”  
            Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, pp. xi-28

9/19  **Understanding mission and the idea of gender identity**  
      READ: Elaine Storkey, *Origins of Difference*  
            Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, pp. 29-71  
      **Due: Interview of person serving in cross-cultural mission**

9/26  **Early issues faced by American missionary women**  
            Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, pp. 73-98  
      GUEST: [TBA]  
      SEMINAR: [TBA]

10/3  **Women as mission leaders, female missionary organizations**  
      GUEST: [TBA]  
      SEMINAR: [TBA]  
      **Due: Description of Participant-Observation of Ministry Event**

10/10  **Roman Catholic sisters and lay women leading missions**  
       SEMINAR:  
       **Field Trip to Retreat Center** (overnight 10/9-10 or 10/10-11)

10/17  **Theology and theories of men and women in mission**  
       (Also, Stanley Grenz and Denise M. Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry*)  
       **Kingdom Conference Week**  
       SEMINAR: [TBA]

10/24  **Amy Carmichael as a case study for women’s mission**  
       READ: Frank L. Houghton, *Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur*  
       VIDEO: Dohnavur Fellowship Today  
       SEMINAR: [TBA]
10/31 Political, social, theological gender problems faced by women in the 20th century
READ: Dana Robert, Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers, pp. 99-221
SEMINAR:

11/7 Class Discussion
READ: Marguerite Kraft, Frontline Women:
SEMINAR:
Due: Signed Reading Log of 250-500 pages beyond assigned reading.

11/14 Contemporary 21st century women’s role in mission
GUEST SPEAKER: Kay Rader, The Salvation Army (Korea, England, USA)
SEMINAR:

11/21 FALL READING WEEK

11/28 Issues and opportunities for non-Western women in mission
READ: Wendy Murray Zoba, “Women reaching women is key to the future of missions”
GUEST SPEAKER: Marcia Florkey, United Methodist Church (GBGM)
SEMINAR:

12/5 Emerging questions and new perspectives on gender and mission
Due: Research Papers (15-20 pp) in Support of Seminar Presentation

12/12 Closing class
Class may meet on this date.

Required Readings:

Houghton, Frank L.

Robert, Dana L.
      Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.

Stocks, Janet  

Storkey, Elaine  

Zoba, Wendy Murray  
2000  “Women reaching women is key to the future of missions.” Christianity Today, August 7:40-48

Additional (Suggested) Readings:

Barton, R.R.  

Beaver, R. Pierce  

Belenky, Mary F., Blythe M. Clinchy, Nancy R. Goldberger, and Jill M. Tarule  

Bilezikian,  

Drummond, Lewis A. and Betty Drummond  

Grenz, Stanley and Denise M. Kjesbo  

Tucker, Ruth A. and Walter L. Liefeld  