



McMaster Divinity College

Mission and Evangelism

MS 3P1410/MS 5P1380

(CC/PS)

Winter 2026

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Office # 237

Class Begins Wednesday, Jan. 7, 4:00-5:50 pm. This course is available in-person or via livestream. The class meets weekly at the appointed time until Apr. 8. The class will not meet the week of Feb. 18 (Reading week).

Instructor Biography

Dr. Lee Beach is the Associate Professor of Christian Ministry, the Garbutt F. Smith Chair in Ministry Formation and the Director of Ministry Formation at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario. He teaches courses on the church in culture, pastoral ministry and Christian spirituality. Prior to coming to MDC Lee pastored for over 20 years with the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada serving churches in Peterborough, Cobourg and Scarborough, Ontario. He currently participates in Ancaster Village Church in Ancaster, Ontario where he lives with his family. He is the author of the book, *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope after Christendom* (IVP) and co-author (With Dr. Franklin Pyles) of the book *The Whole Gospel for the Whole World: Experiencing the Four-Fold Gospel Today* (Wipf and Stock).

Course Description

This course is an exploration of the challenges of and approaches to mission and evangelism in a 21st century, Western context. Students will be encouraged to develop and/or hone their own theology of mission and evangelism as well as formulate creative approaches to mission and evangelism within the Western cultural context. Particular attention will be given to evangelistic challenges, possible approaches to evangelism, congregationally based mission and issues of contemporary social concern.

Course Objectives:

Knowing:

1. To help students understand foundational scriptural and theological principles and/or categories for the mission of the Church in contemporary Canadian culture, and in light of the concerns of post- Christendom.
2. To understand key features of contemporary Western/Canadian culture as they relate to issues of spiritual need, and the proclamation of the Christian message.
3. To become conversant with a range of relevant approaches to mission and evangelism in the context of the contemporary church.

Being:

1. To encourage reflection and integration in terms of personal, congregational, and political aspects of Christian identity.
2. To help students develop confidence in their own ability to proclaim the Christian gospel and lead a congregation in evangelistic enterprise.

Doing:

1. To give students the opportunity to develop their own philosophy of mission and evangelism for local church ministry and consider strategies for implementation.
2. To equip students with relevant strategies for personal and congregational mission.

Working together as a learning community

A core value of our class is that it is a “learning community,” designed to be a place where each member of the community can grow through positive affirmation and constructive input. We should all come to the community as people in process, open to be deconstructed and formed through our mutual learning experience.

As a responsible member of our learning community, you will be expected to commit yourself to the class throughout the semester that we are together. This means that in our class interactions you will endeavor to treat all members of our class with respect and dignity. Your presence is necessary for our community (that is our class) to function at an optimal level, therefore it is expected that each student will be “present” in class, either in person or online for

each class session. aspect of the course and in attendance for the online class meetings. Assignments should be handed in on time and in good order as an attachment to an email to the professor. Assignments should be sent in on or before the due date specified in this syllabus. All assignments handed in after the due date may be subject to a penalty of 3% for each day (including weekends) that they are late.

Instructor's role and availability

As professor it is my responsibility to empower each class member as a learner by treating each student with respect and dignity. I come to position myself as a fellow learner in the community and to offer information, reflection, experience, and questions for us to reflect on together. Further, it is my responsibility to give good evaluation and feedback to your thinking, both as you offer it to the class in our discussions and through written work so that your growth through this class can be maximized as a result of our collaboration.

I will do my best to answer any email enquiries within 24 hours during week days (Mon.-Fri). I do not generally answer emails Saturdays or Sunday. If an email is sent later in the afternoon on a Friday it will probably not be answered until Sunday evening or Monday morning. I will do my very best to grade assignments within three weeks of submission.

I am not only available but also welcome and enjoy connections with each of you outside class time. If you would like to meet together in person or via Zoom please feel free to make an appointment with me for a time that works for both of us.

Required Reading

Bowen, John P. *The Unfolding Gospel: How the Good News Makes Sense of Discipleship, Church, Mission and Everything Else*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2021.

Paulsen, Judith. *A New and Ancient Evangelism: Rediscovering the way God Calls and Sends*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2024.

Assignments

1. Paper: What is the Gospel?

The heart of mission and evangelism is the proclamation and embodiment of the Christian gospel. But what is the gospel? What is this message that the church is charged to offer to the world? This paper asks the student to reflect on the simple, and yet complex question, "what is the gospel?" The paper should explore ways this question has been answered in various church traditions, key biblical and theological perspectives and ultimately your own vision of what you believe the gospel is and why it is good news for people today. The paper should include interaction with at least 8 sources including course textbooks. This assignment is connected to the learning objectives articulated in Knowing #1 and Being #1.

The paper will be due Feb. 25, 2026. This paper should be 10-12 pages (double spaced) and will constitute 40% of the overall course grade.

2. Video Presentation: Here's the Gospel

This assignment invites you to offer an oral presentation of the gospel in response to the question, "what do Christians believe?" This presentation can be NO MORE than 5 minutes in length and must capture the essence of your first paper in a way that would be intelligible to someone who is not a Christian and is generally unfamiliar with Christian teaching but asks you, in 5 minutes or less to share your faith with them. You can record this video using any platform that you are familiar with as long as you can provide the instructor with a link so that he can easily access your presentation (if you need help with this just let the instructor know and he will be glad to help you figure it out). The presentation should be clear, creative, and authentic. Please do not read it off of notes. Treat this assignment as if a friend or colleague asked you to explain your faith to them, make it natural, as if you were in an actual conversation with someone who was genuinely interested in understanding what you believe. If you read it from notes that will affect your mark. Also, please keep the presentation to 5 minutes or less. If your presentation is longer than 5 minutes it will affect your grade. Of course, faith sharing takes longer than 5 minutes, but we should be able to articulate the essence of the Christian gospel in a concise way and this assignment asks you to develop your ability to do that. Please submit this presentation as a link to the instructor on the date it is due. This assignment is designed to address the learning objectives articulated in #2 under the categories knowing, being and doing.

This presentation is due Mar. 4, 2026. It will constitute 20% of the course grade. Grades will be based on clarity of the presentation, thoughtfulness, creativity, authenticity and length.

3. Research and Reflection Paper: How can we do mission and evangelism in the 21st Century?

This paper should offer an introductory biblical foundation for mission and evangelism and an analysis of ways that the church in North America has approached mission and evangelism in recent church ministry. The paper should critically engage with those approaches that challenge your own understanding of a theology of the church, post-Christendom culture and mission. Are there good examples of mission and evangelism that you have read about or experienced? Are there approaches that you think are antiquated and no longer useful? Finally, the paper should offer ideas on how the church can and should do mission in the contemporary world with a view to engaging with your particular specialization in the following way;

Church in Culture: In the final section of the paper please give attention to particular trends and/or cultural contours that you think can be fruitful places for missional engagement and evangelistic conversation.

Pastoral Studies: In the final section of the paper please give attention to how you would go about equipping a church for missional effectiveness (i.e. casting vision, training, leading in missional endeavors, etc.) in the contemporary context.

***If you are not using this course as a specialization you can choose any one of these directions for the final section of your paper.**

The paper should demonstrate comprehension of course materials, required texts and pertinent research on the issue of evangelism and mission (at least eight sources, including course texts should be employed). This assignment seeks to help achieve the learning objectives found in knowing #2&3 and Doing #1&2.

This paper should be approximately 10-12 pages and is due Apr. 1, 2026. It will constitute 40% of the total course grade.

Course Outline and Expectations

First Class: Course Introduction: Jan 7, 4:00 pm ET

- Meeting content will include: Course overview, introductions, student questions and some introductory lecture material.
- Student Responsibilities: Please review the course syllabus before this meeting and come prepared to offer a brief (1-2 minute) introduction of yourself (occupation, professional background, personal/family situation, your hopes for the course), and bring any questions you have about the course.

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Section One: A Biblical Theology of Mission and Evangelism

- Weeks of Jan. 14, 21, 28. We will consider various introductory aspects of a theology of Mission and evangelism through lecture and class discussion.
- Student Responsibilities: Attend class and participate in the discussions as you are comfortable. Also, begin engaging with the course texts, beginning with Bowen's *The Unfolding Gospel*.

Section Two: Evangelism, Ethics and Approaches to Contextualization

Weeks of Feb. 4, 11, We will look at the ethics of evangelism in Post-Christian North America as well as how to approach the issue of contextualizing the message to our cultural context.

**No class Feb. 18 (Reading week).

Student Responsibilities: Attend and participate in class meetings. Prepare your paper *What is the Gospel?* for submission Feb. 25. Begin Reading the course text *A New and Ancient Evangelism*.

Section Three: The Practice of Mission and Evangelism: Issues and Approaches

- In this section of the course we will explore practical ideas on mission and evangelism in the North American context today. In particular we will explore specific cultural issues that provide opportunities for missional engagement. These include, creation care/environmental issues, reconciliation with indigenous peoples, “spiritual but not religious,” creative ways to engage our culture as an “alternative community.”
 - Student Responsibilities: Join us for class each week and continue reading the course text books. Submit your oral presentation “Here is the Gospel” Nov. 4. Work on and submit your final paper Apr. 1.
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Additional notes:

A. Textbook Purchase

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

B. Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one’s own (regardless of

the means of its production, including AI) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

A special note about AI: You are expected to do your own thinking and to write your own papers, etc., and not to have AI do this work for you. There may be value in using an AI tool to help you locate and collate resources or to help you "tidy up" your English grammar, usage, and mechanics, especially if English is not your native language. However, using AI to create content for you and then submitting that content as if you created it is considered plagiarism (i.e., submitting work that is not one's own as if it is one's own) and is a violation of the academic honesty policy.

C. Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSVue (2022), TEV/GNB/GNT (1976), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

D. Style

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses, <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/current-students/#mdc-style-guide>.

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Absence Due to Illness

If you must miss class due to an illness, you must contact me (via email) as soon as possible to let me know. Likewise, if I should become ill, I will communicate with you via A2L about how we will make up class sessions.

Although much of the course content will be made available via A2L, it would still be a good idea to have a friend take notes for you, if possible.

Inclement Weather

If on a class meeting day MDC closes due to inclement weather, I reserve the right to move the lessons and, where possible, class activities for the week to A2L (asynchronous format). This will help to ensure that we stay on target in the course.

Disclaimer

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

Mission and Evangelism Reading and Research List

Adeney, Francis S. *Graceful Evangelism: Christian Witness in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010.

*Barrett, Lois Y. et. al. *Treasures in Jars of Clay: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

*Beach, Lee. *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope after Christendom*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2015.

*Beaudoin, Tom. *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Bessenecker, Scott A. *The New Friars: The emerging Movement Serving the World's Poor*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2006.

*Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series, No.16, Mayknoll: Orbis, 1991.

*Braatan, Carl and Jenson, Robert eds. *The Strange New World of the Gospel: Re-evangelizing in the Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

*Brueggemann, Walter. *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-Storied Universe*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.

*Chester, Tim (editor). *Justice, Mercy and Humility: Integral Mission and the Poor*. UK: Paternoster, 2002.

*Chilcote, Paul W. and Lacey C. Warner (editors). *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Clapp, Rodney. *A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society*,

Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1996.

Flemming, Dean. *Recovering the Full Mission of God: A Biblical Perspective on Being, Doing and Telling*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2013.

*Frost, Michael. *Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian*, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006.

*_____ and Hirsch, Alan. *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission In the 21st Century Church*, Peabody: Mass: Hendrickson, 2003.

*Green, Michael. *Evangelism in the Early Church*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.

Guder, Darrell, (editor) *Missional Church*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

*_____. *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2000.

Guthrie, Stan. *Missions in the Third Millennium: 21 Key Trends for the 21st Century*, Waynesborough, Georgia: Paternoster Press, 2005.

*Hastings, Ross. *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-Evangelizing the West*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2012.

*Hauerwas, Stanley and William Willimon. *Resident Aliens*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1989.

*Heath, Elaine. *The Mystic Way of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

*_____. *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006.

*Hunsberger, George and Van Gelder, Graig (ed.'s), *The Church Between Gospel and Culture; The Emerging Mission in North America*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

Kallenberg, Brad. *Live to Tell: Evangelism for a Postmodern Age*, Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002.

*Malesic, Jonathan. *Secret Faith in the Public Square: An Argument for the Concealment of Christian Identity*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009.

*McKnight, Scot. *A Community Called Atonement*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007.

*Middleton, Richard J. and Walsh, Brian J. *Truth is Stranger Than it Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1995.

Moltmann, Jurgen. *The Open Church: Invitation to a Messianic Lifestyle*, London: SCM, 1978.

*Muck, Terry and Adeney Francis. *Christians Encountering World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.

*Nelson, Gary. *Borderland Churches: A Congregations Introduction to Missional Living*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2008.

*Newbiggin, Leslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

*_____. *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.

*Ott, Craig and Strauss, Stephen J. *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments and Contemporary Issues*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010.

Smith, Gordon T. *Beginning Well: Christian Conversion & Authentic Transformation*, Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2001.

*Stone, Bryan. *Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness*, Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007.

Stone, Bryan. *Evangelism After Pluralism: The Ethics of Christian Witness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2018.

Tennent, Timothy C. *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*. Kregel: Grand Rapids, 2010.

*Van Gelder, Craig. *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000.

*_____. *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.

*_____ (editor). *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Developing Contextual Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

*Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*, Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2006

* Available at Mills Library.

