

Course syllabus
Summer 2019

MISSIONAL SPIRITUALITY

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A missional spirituality is “an attentive and active engagement of embodied love for God and neighbor expressed from the inside out.” Working with the diversity of learning styles, this *transformative* course will explore theological foundations and spiritual practices centered in the Great Commandment (Mark 12:28-34). The course will consider an integrative paradigm rooted in the love of God and in the context of corporate spirituality. Students will wrestle with the rhythm of spiritual life as incarnational missionaries, learning how to love the Lord our God from all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.

Bernard of Clairvaux reminds us that *lex immaculata caritas est* (The divine law is love). Love is like a river: it has a source and an outlet, then through a natural rhythm returns to its source. This circular movement also describes the nature of our Trinitarian God.

In modern spiritualities the interior life of personal devotion is emphasized. A needed corrective is our rediscovery of the outward movement of God into the world: *missio Dei*. But pendulums tend to swing, and we have contemplatives on one hand and activists on the other. Where is the spiritual life rooted? Where was it rooted for Jesus? The life of devotion and mission are inseparable. We are formed by the Spirit in community for the sake of others, where inner life both forms and feeds mission.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objectives of this course are drawn from the Great Commandment: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. These will correspond in our practice as follows: heart and soul (being); mind (knowing); and strength (doing). Students will:

Being:

1. Be challenged to be an *example* of what it means to embody and express love for God from all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love for your neighbor as yourself.
2. Acquire an enlarged *paradigm* regarding the corporate nature of the priesthood of all believers who practice a missional spirituality in the world.
3. Based on a rigorous Christology that will inform your spirituality and mission, *surrender* to living in Christ as Lord and to Christ living in you.
4. Incorporate key *practices*, both personal and corporate, that will cultivate growth for the sake of others, and import new meaning in your life as a disciple.

Knowing:

1. Define the nature of Christian spirituality and its relationship to Christian mission; what it means to be an *incarnational* missionary.
2. Describe the contemporary *challenges* to a missional spirituality.
3. Understand the *theological foundations* of a missional spirituality and the surrendered life.
4. Understand the importance of theological reflection in context.
5. Describe a framework for missional spirituality as a rhythm of inward and outward life.

Doing:

1. Recall and reflect critically on key biblical texts that represent a missional spirituality and state *examples* of missional spirituality in action.
2. Participate in the discussion, practice, and evaluation of your individual and corporate *experience* of a missional spirituality.
3. Design and implement a *strategy* that will nurture personal and corporate growth in Incarnational, missional spirituality.

“The man who is wise will see his life more as a reservoir than a canal. The canal simultaneously pours out what it receives; the reservoir retains the water until it is filled, then discharges the overflow without loss to itself. Today there are many in the church who act like canals, the reservoirs are far too rare.

“You too must learn to await this fullness before pouring out your gifts, do not try to be more generous than God.” - Bernard of Clairvaux, “In Cantica” Sn. 20

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality: Embodying God’s Love From the Inside Out*. IVP, 2011. 232 pages.

Kent Carlson & Mike Lueken: *Renovation of the Church: What Happens When a Seeker Church Discovers Spiritual Formation*. IVP, 2011. 178 pages.

Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. Image Books, 1986. 160 pages.

James K. A. Smith. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation*. Baker Academic, 2009.

B. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

There are four tracks presented here. Track A is for the Church and Culture Major; Track B is for the Christian Worldview Major, Track C is for the Pastoral Studies Major, and Track D is for Counselling and Spiritual Care.

Tracks A & B. Reflections on a Text: Due: June 14. 20% of final grade

- a. Read Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom* and interact critically with the key arguments relative to post-Christendom, post-secular, consumer culture. How do Smith's arguments illuminate the challenges of missional life and spiritual formation in 2019? Summarize your reflections in 5-6 pages. Submit on the first day of class.

Tracks C & D. Reflections on a Text: Due: June 14. 20% of final grade

- a. Listen to the first hour of "Becoming Human," Jean Vanier delivering the Massey lectures in 1998. <http://vanier-mass.notlong.com/>
- b. Read *Missional Spirituality*, chapters 3 through 9. After reading each chapter, write a brief summary (two paragraphs at most) and then reflect on your own life. What are your personal challenges? What are your ministry challenges? What new insights arise? What new practices might you engage? What questions are you left with? 5-6 pages. Submit on the first day of class.

All Tracks. Keep a Journal. Due June 14. 20% of final grade

Part of spiritual formation is taking time to reflect on what God may be teaching us. Keep a Journal of your learnings and musings in and through this course. This may include:

- Things that particularly strike you in a class or in a reading or in writing an assignment: reflect on why they strike you and what they might mean for you
- What is going on in your life that relates to the content of the course—personal experiences or conversations, things at church, movies you may see, books you may read, etc.
- Reflections on your own spiritual history and past experiences
- Written prayers and dialogues with God about what you are learning.

Length: 1500-2500 words. The three parts may be of varied lengths.

Tracks A & B. Theology and Practice: Due: July 5. 40% of final grade

Read: The textbook by Helland & Hjalmarsen, *Missional Spirituality*, over a 6-week period with a small group as an experience of communal praxis.

The Setting: TIE (Three Is Enough) Small Group Experience

Form a small group (with two other people) and learn in a communal setting. In his book *Christianity Beyond Belief*, Todd Hunter calls these TIE groups (Three Is Enough, or 3IE; elsewhere they are called "triads"). Learning and spiritual formation best occur in community rather than in isolation, though silence and solitude are important for spiritual growth. Todd writes, "God's purpose for us is that we become his cooperative friends and serve others in our everyday lives. 3IE provides an imagination and structure for prayerfully paying attention to the Spirit, the people, and the events of our life. 3IE is a simple way to practice following God in the way of Jesus. The focus is on God, others,

and our own personal spiritual transformation. 3IE is three friends who decide to pray, study and serve together. Functioning in natural places of community—the workplace, school, or coffee shop, 3IE groups go on a Journey Inward of spiritual transformation and a Journey Outward of serving others.

Your assignment is to present in an organized fashion, the core material from the course and the book *Missional Spirituality* to the group. Lead a discussion on the material and invite their response. You should draw from the course reading and classroom discussion. This group is to meet for 6 weeks for a minimum of 60 minutes each week and then work through selected discussion questions and practices at the end of each chapter in *Missional Spirituality*.

The Summary: 12-page paper or 30-minute podcast

Write a **6-page** outline (or compose a 30-minute podcast) of the material that you presented to the group, together with the discussion questions and practices you selected

and experienced (1 page per week, or 5-minute podcast per week).

Write a **6-page** summary (or a 30-minute podcast) of the group discussion with an evaluation of the discussion as well as an evaluation of the weekly practices (1 page per week, or one 5-minute podcast per week).

A suggested approach is to write the two pages or compose one ten-minute podcast (one outline and one summary) each week over the course of the 6 weeks, for a combined total of 12 pages (2 per week) or a podcast of 60 minutes (10 minutes per week).

Tracks C & D. Theological Research Paper: Due: July 5. 40% of final grade

Read: Kent Carlson & Mike Lueken, *Renovation of the Church*

Read: Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*

Browse: Take 4-5 hours (40" each) to browse selected articles that draw your interest on the following blogs to glean questions and insights that pertain to spiritual formation:

<http://www.dwillard.org/articles/default.asp>

<http://www.inwardoutward.org/>

<http://missionalchurchnetwork.com/>

<http://weare3dm.com/>

<http://www.edstetzer.com/>

<http://journalofmissionalpractice.com/>

<http://unoh.org/>

Develop: Integrative Project

Based on your reading of the texts, online videos, class interactions, online reading, and chosen projects, develop a 3000 word course project that integrates your learning experience. The objective is for you to delineate and design a strategy according to the main contours of a holistic spirituality of missional life.

After an Introduction, develop the integrative project along four major lines:

1. Describe core *theological* foundations of a missional spirituality and the life of surrender to Christ Jesus as Lord. 3 pages.
2. Describe four or five representative *practices* that will help form and feed mission for an *individual* context. 3 pages.
3. Describe four or five representative spiritual *practices* to re-engage for a renewal of the *corporate* context of a missional spirituality. 3 pages.
4. Design a practical *strategy* that will nurture personal and corporate growth in Incarnational, missional spirituality. 3 pages.

Length: 5,000 words

All Tracks. Practices of Missional Spirituality. Due: July 5. Value: 10%.

Over the span of the course you will keep a reflective journal of your learning and personal growth. In addition to your journal, write a four page paper reflecting on one spiritual practice in relation to your life and work. This can be a new practice you are exploring, or one that has been a long standing rhythm in your life. Choose from the following topics:

- 2) Prayer / 3) Abiding
- 3) Worship / 4) Abundance
- 5) Gratitude / 6) Generosity
- 7) Hospitality / 8) Discernment
- 9) Fasting / 10) Sabbath (rest)

All Tracks: In-Class Participation. 10% of final grade

IV. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS & CLASS SCHEDULE

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Reflections on a Text - Due: June 14, 2019	40%
Journal - Due: June 14, 2019	20%

Major Project - Due: July 5, 2019	40%
Practices of Missional Spirituality – Due July 5	10%
Participation	10%
Total Grade	100%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Monday: Introductions, Overview and Challenges to a Missional Spirituality

Tuesday: Theological Foundations and Loving Self – Finding the Center

Wednesday: Loving God from Heart and Soul

Thursday: Loving God from Mind and Strength

Friday Morning: Loving Neighbor and Missional-Incarnational Living

V. POLICIES

A. Textbook Purchase

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

B. Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty
 ~ <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

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 the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (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://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

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.

VI. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Benner, Juliet. *Contemplative Vision: A Guide to Christian Art and Prayer*. Downer's Grove: IVP, 2011.

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