

**ME 570: Mission of the Church in the Contemporary World**  
**Methodist Theological School in Ohio**  
**Fall 2015**

Tuesdays 2:00 PM–3:30 PM  
Weekly Online (60 minutes)  
G 133  
3 Semester Hours

Dr. Joon-Sik Park  
jpark@mtso.edu  
Office (Werner 217): 740-362-3367

---

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will explore the nature and purpose of the church in the contemporary world. The mission of the church will be looked at through four images of the church under the overarching vocation of the church as “Witness”: “Prophet,” “Community,” “Servant,” and “Evangelist.” Students will be encouraged to construct their own understanding of the identity and calling of the church, which could be translated into a missional ecclesiology appropriate to their own ministry contexts. Attention will also be given to theological and ethical understandings of the relationship between church and culture. This course will combine lectures, class discussions, student presentations, and a site visit.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. To see mission as integral and central to the identity and calling of the church.
2. To examine critically historical alternatives with regard to relating Christian faith to culture.
3. To construct a missional ecclesiology that is theologically and ethically grounded, and culturally and contextually relevant.
4. To articulate the mission of the church so as to communicate it plainly and clearly to one’s own community of faith and ministry.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Driver, John. *Images of the Church in Mission*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1997.  
George, Sherron K. *Called as Partners in Christ's Service: The Practice of God's Mission*. Louisville: Geneva Press, 2004.  
Hall, Douglas John. *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997.  
Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of Church*. London: SCM Press, 1953.  
Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951.  
Sherman, Amy L. *Restorers of Hope*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997.

**SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:**

O’Connor, Elizabeth. *Call to Commitment*. New York: Harper and Row, 1963.  
Yoder, John H. *The Politics of Jesus*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

### (1) *Class Attendance and Participation:*

- Regular attendance is expected in all classes. During unavoidable absences, students are responsible for missed work. An excessive number of absences may result in grade reduction or course failure, despite successful completion of all assigned work. In most cases, a student will not be allowed credit for a course if he or she is absent for 25% of the class sessions. As it relates to blended courses, students may not be allowed credit if they are absent for 25% of class meetings or if 25% of online course work is not completed. Use of Skype or similar technology is not a substitute for attendance in class.
- Much of the value of this course will come from interaction among the participants. Students are thus to prepare for each class session by carefully reading the assigned texts, and to take an active part in the discussions.

### (2) *Weekly Online Participation and Response:*

- Students are expected to be fully present online. Weekly online participation and response is an essential and vital aspect of learning. In this hybrid format, the student's role requires more active and self-disciplined participation. Online participation may include: turning in an assignment, posting *an initial response and subsequent postings* to the discussion board *from midweek through Saturday*, and other communication reflecting ongoing learning in the course. (See Populi each week for the assignment and online activity.) If no student response occurs during a week of the term, the student is considered absent. Lurking (reading only) does not earn credit, nor does it contribute to the class learning and community.
- Each student will lead online discussion once during the semester. They initiate the discussion by articulating what they understand to be the central issues raised by the week's readings and/or video/lecture and by posing two or three questions for discussion. Leader's postings (around 200 words) should be posted by noon on the Thursday of the week. Students will sign up for the week in which they fulfill this assignment.
- It is important to manage your time. Because hybrid courses move quickly and require self-discipline, it is important to efficiently manage time. It would include not waiting until the last minute to turn in assignments or responses. Technology is not fail-proof; you would need to allow time for unforeseen problems.
- Each student will belong to a Missional Formation Group. Most focused discussions will take place within one or two groups. Groups are also designed to serve as Wesleyan class meetings, providing mutual support in a journey toward missional formation.

### (3) *Critical Book Reviews:*

Students are required to complete **two book reviews and one book summary**, critically reflecting on the text for implications for the nature and mission of the church. (Some of the books did not use gender-inclusive language as theirs was an age not yet sensitive to the issue.) Each review is to be 2 pages (1.5-spaced) in length; and to use parenthetical citations, if necessary—e.g., (Newbigin, 73). Name and save the reviews as "Review1(Last Name)" and "Review2(Last Name)."

The following is the quote from "How to Write a Book Review" by Joel Green, which I believe provides helpful guidelines:

"First, the review should indicate a thorough knowledge of the book as a whole, read on its own terms. . . . with an eye to several important questions, including: What is the book's

fundamental aim? Central theme(s)? Presuppositions? Method(s)? Second, the review should engage the book critically and personally. . . . Is its argument cogent? How has the reading of this book shaped you? . . . Whenever possible, you should situate your critique of the book within the larger discussion of the subject [that is, mission of the church].”

Given the limited length of your review, it is to be **succinct** and **to the point**. You would thus need to be very **selective** of the themes to critically reflect on. What I hope to see are indications of **your thorough reading of the text** and of **your critical engagement with it**. Also you are to briefly share how the text has shaped and affected your personal understanding of mission.

(4) *Online Group Presentation on “Images of the Church”:*

John Driver’s book offers 12 biblical images of the church in mission. Each group is responsible for introducing the class to 2 images of the church in its 20-minute presentation. **The use of PowerPoint, Prezi, or equivalent technology is expected. The more inventive and insightful your presentations, the more likely the class will be interested and responsive.** A grade will be given for each group.

For tech support regarding online presentation, please contact Shannon Harper (Gault 245) at [support@mtso.edu](mailto:support@mtso.edu).

(5) *Reflection on the Mission of a Local Congregation:*

Students are to write a 1-page (double-spaced) critical reflection on their local church’s theology of mission as well as on its practices of mission. If feasible, interviewing of the pastor or other church leader (e.g., the mission chair) is encouraged in order to identify the sources behind the vision and practices of mission. The reflection is to be shared online for group discussion.

(6) *Site Visit:* There will be a site visit to Church for All People and the Free Store (946 Parsons Ave, Columbus, OH 43206), an urban ministry of the West Ohio Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, on October 27.

(7) *Integrative Research Paper:*

**A carefully integrated and researched** paper of 2,500 words (1.5-spaced) not counting notes and bibliography is **due by noon, December 8**. The focus of the paper is to be on constructing one’s own missional ecclesiology, which is biblically and theologically grounded, and culturally and contextually relevant. What is expected of each student is to wrestle with **the question of the nature and purpose of the church**. The paper should reflect a working knowledge of resources currently available. In addition to careful research, the students are encouraged to engage various aspects of the course learning, including the readings, in an integrative way.

*Two Options:*

- a. Students may articulate and critically engage the ecclesiology of a book of the New Testament, a particular Christian tradition, or a major theological figure, as a basis to ground one’s ecclesiology in; or
- b. Students may choose an important topic that does concern the missional nature and vocation of the church, and provide a comprehensive, critical theological reflection on it (e.g., ministry with the poor, integral short-term mission trips, missional church movement, mission education).

In either option, the focus is to develop one’s own missional ecclesiology.

**WRITTEN WORK:**

All written work must be typed with 12-point font. It will be evaluated on the basis of (1) clarity of the writing, (2) critical interaction with the text, and (3) the student's own integrative reflection. There will be a **penalty for late papers** commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse.

**INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:**

In accordance with MTSO's policy on inclusive language, all students are expected to use gender inclusive or gender neutral language in their writing and in the classroom discussions when referring to human beings.

**PLAGIARISM:**

Plagiarism is a serious matter of academic, professional, and personal integrity. All students at the masters level are expected to understand the requirement to provide attribution when the work of others is used. Students are also expected to be familiar with and understand the school's policy on Academic Misconduct found in the Student Handbook. If a student has questions about attribution, citation, and how to avoid plagiarism they should consult the course instructor, the school's writing instructor, or library staff. When in doubt it is better to provide attribution even if one is uncertain about the proper citation form. Please note that *plagiarism includes self-plagiarism*—that is, students may not utilize work submitted for one class in another class. Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct that results in disciplinary actions per the Student Handbook that may range from failing an assignment or course to expulsion.

**Please See Student Handbook for Sections Providing Policy Details on the Following:**

**ADA**—MTSO seeks to remove barriers to inclusion in its learning communities. Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs at the beginning of the semester. Please contact the Director of Student Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Any accommodation must be agreed upon prior to the due date of the affected course requirement.

**Electronic Devices**—Turn mobile devices off or “vibrate only” during class. Browsing the Internet or engaging in email or social network conversations during class is discouraged. Instructors have the right to impose grading penalties for disruptions due to electronic devices. Students are to demonstrate, through their engagement and participation in class, that their attention is focused in the classroom.

**Human Subjects Research**—Research by MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel that collects non-public information from and/or about living individuals or contemporary organizations/groups for purposes of publication or public presentation (including class assignments) must be approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee. MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel should err on the side of caution and apply for committee approval of any activity that may fit this description.

**Incompletes**—To receive a course grade of Incomplete, students must submit the petition form from the Registrar with all signatures to the Dean's Office before the last day of regularly scheduled classes. See Student Handbook for intensive term deadlines. Any petition submitted without a due date for outstanding work will be denied. If work is not complete by the due date the Registrar will record the grade of F for the course.

**PASS/FAIL**—The decision to exercise this option must be made before the end of the second week of the course by completing the appropriate form available through the Registrar. To receive a grade of “pass” the student must do at least the equivalent of C- work in the course.

**EVALUATION:**

- 10% Class Attendance and Contribution
- 20% Online Assignments (including leading online discussion)
- 20% Critical Book Reviews (10%x2)
  - 5% Book Summary
  - 5% Reflection on the Mission of a Local Congregation
- 10% Group Presentation on the Images of the Church
- 30% Final Research Paper

**GRADING STANDARDS:**

- A+ (97%), A (93%), A- (90%):  
Superlative work that demonstrates a profound commitment to the course material, and excellence in thinking and performance as well as depth of insight.
- B+ (87%), B (83%), B- (80%):  
Very good work that completely fulfills all the requirements of the course in a conscientious and dedicated manner, and that demonstrates good mastery of the course content.
- C+ to C-:  
Satisfactory work that fulfills all the requirements of the course in an acceptable manner, but that falls short of demonstrating rigor and mastery.
- D+ to D-:  
Unsatisfactory work that reflects poor thinking and performance as well as lack of clear comprehension and understanding of the subject.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

<b>August 25 (Week 1)</b>			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (8/26–8/29)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the Course</li> <li>• What Is the Church Doing in the World? (Mission Statements of GBGM and Our Communities of Faith)</li> <li>• Four Images of the Church</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video Watching: Darrell Guder, "<u>Is the 'Missional Thing' a Problematic Cliché?</u>"</li> </ul>

<b>September 1 (Week 2)</b>			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (9/2–5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Missional Church"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alan Hirsch, "Defining Missional" (<a href="http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2008/fall/17.20.html?paging=off">http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2008/fall/17.20.html?paging=off</a>)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• *Discussion on "Introduction" (pp. 16-44) in Driver, <i>Images of the Church in Mission</i></li> </ul>

September 8 (Week 3)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (9/9–12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Types of Christ (Church) and Culture Relationship in Niebuhr's <i>Christ and Culture</i></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Book Summary of Niebuhr, <i>Christ and Culture</i> (2 pages, 1.5-spaced)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion on <i>Christ and Culture</i></li> </ul>

September 15 (Week 4)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (9/16–19)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Christ and Culture"(continued)</li> <li>Church as Alternative Community</li> <li>Missional Ecclesiologies in Creative Tension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John H. Yoder, "Christ and Powers" &amp; "Let the Church Be the Church";</li> <li>Joon-Sik Park, "Missional Ecclesiologies in Creative Tension"</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations (1) on "Images of the Church in Mission" (the Way &amp; Sojourners; and the Poor &amp; the Kingdom of God)</li> </ul>

September 22 (no class)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (9/21–26)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video Watching and <b>*Discussion:</b> "Edinburgh 2010" &amp; "Lausanne III"</li> </ul>

September 29 (Week 6)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (9/30–10/3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edinburgh 1910 &amp; 2010</li> <li>Lausanne III</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical Reflection Paper on "Cape Town Commitment" and "Together Towards Life" (2 pages, 1.5-spaced)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video Watching and Discussion: "The Shadow of Hate"</li> </ul>

October 6 (Week 7)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (10/7–10)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Racism</li> <li>The Holocaust and the Righteous Gentiles</li> <li>Video: "Weapons of the Spirit"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook, "Beyond Diversity: Cultural Competence, White Racism Awareness, &amp; European-American Theology Students"</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations (2) on "Images of the Church in Mission" (new creation &amp; new humanity; and people of God &amp; family of God)</li> </ul>

October 13 (Mid-Term Recess)			
------------------------------	--	--	--

October 20 (Week 8)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (10/20–24)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry with the Poor</li> <li>“Restorers of Hope”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sherman, <i>Restorers of Hope</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion Questions on <i>Restorers of Hope</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations (3) on “Images of the Church in Mission” (shepherd/flock &amp; salt/light/city; and spiritual house &amp; witnessing community)</li> </ul>

October 27 (Week 9)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (10/28–31)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site Visit (1:30–2:45 [12:30–3 :45]) --Church for All People and the Free Store</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hall, <i>The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity</i></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Discussion on Hall, <i>End of Christendom and Future of Christianity</i></li> </ul>

November 3 (Week 10)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (11/4–7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Church of the Saviour in D.C.</li> <li>Mission Statement of The United Methodist Church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Journey Inward, Outward, &amp; Forward”</li> <li>“Grace upon Grace: Mission Statement of The United Methodist Church”</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video Watching and *Discussion: “Restore (Parts 1 &amp; 2)”</li> </ul>

November 10 (Week 11)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (11/11–14)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership in Mission</li> <li>Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sherron George, <i>Called as Partners in Christ’s Service</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion Questions on <i>Called as Partners</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing of and Discussion on the “Mission of a Local Congregation” Reflection</li> </ul>

November 17 (Week 12)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (11/18–21)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Household of God:</i> Lesslie Newbigin and Missional Ecclesiology</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical Book Review of Newbigin, <i>Household of God</i> (2 pages, 1.5-spaced)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening of a Lecture and *Discussion: Dana Robert, “Global Christianity: Issues for Pastoral Ministry in the 21st Century”</li> </ul>

November 24 (Thanksgiving Break)			
----------------------------------	--	--	--

<b>December 1 (Week 13)</b>			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (12/2–5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift of the Center of Christianity</li> <li>• Conclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew F. Walls, “The Expansion of Christianity”</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-page (1.5-spaced) Synopsis of the Research Paper</li> </ul>

<b>December 8 (Week 14)</b>			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online
		<b>Final Research Paper due by Noon, Dec. 8</b>	

\***Online discussion** to be led by a student leader.