

CHRISTOLOGY

TH 203-3, J-Term 2008

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

January 3-24, 2008, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Gardencourt 213

Instructor:

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This online syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of a course. The syllabus given out in the class may differ from this online version and its content supersedes that of the online syllabus.

Dear Fellow Travelers in Christology,

Attached is the syllabus for J-Term. This should give you plenty of time to order books on-line if you wish, and get a head start on the reading. I do recommend that you read the Placher text ahead of time. Please let me know if you have questions or schedule problems.

I look forward to seeing you all in class on January 3!

Amy

“Every Christmas Day the Christians of Akropong in Ghana sing this hymn:

Jesus’ birthday

Fills me with joy;

Jesus Christ is my savior

If Jesus had not been born,

We would forever be lost;

Jesus Christ, I thank you. (translation of Ghanaian Akan language)

They sing this hymn without any awareness that Christmas itself was originally a Christian substitute for a pre-Christian New Year religious festival in northern Europe. One may hope that they will one day sing it at the traditional New Year festival of Odwira to welcome and worship the One who achieved once and for all purification for their sins, their Great Ancestor, Iesu Kristo.”

-- Kwame Bediako

“The statement ‘the Jews killed Jesus’ makes as much sense as the statement ‘the Americans killed Kennedy.’”

--Clark Williamson

“The problem is not that Jesus was a man. The problem is that men aren’t more like Jesus.”

--Elizabeth Johnson

Objectives:

1. Students will become acquainted with central themes and issues in contemporary Christology, including Christology written from Global South perspectives
2. Students will be able to articulate their own Christology

Requirements (see assignment details below):

1. Share a Christological hymn or song with the class. Keep up with readings for each day and participate constructively in class discussions (15%)

2. Present your Christology-in-progress to the class twice and write your own Christological credo (60%)
3. Write a 5-page paper in response to a contemporary Global South Christology (25%)

Required Texts:

William C. Placher, *Jesus the Savior: The Meaning of Jesus Christ for Christian Faith* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2001)

Marit Trelstad, ed. *Cross-Examinations—Interrogating the cross for its meaning today* (Fortress Press, 2006)

Recommended Text:

Marcus Borg and N.T. Wright, *The Meaning of Jesus, Two Visions* (Harper San Francisco, 1999)

CLASS SCHEDULE

Note: Readings from required books by William Placher and Marit Trelstad are in SMALL CAPS

<u>Date</u>			<u>Subject/Assignment</u>
Th	1/3	Incarnation	PLACHER, 1-57; Sergius Bulgakov, “The Virgin and the Saints in Orthodoxy”; Nancy Duff, “Mary, the Servant of the Lord: Christian Vocation at the Manger and the Cross”
F	1/4	Incarnation	David Jensen, <i>In the Company of Others: A Dialogical Christology</i> 74-89; 135-57; Karl Barth, <i>Church Dogmatics</i> , II/2, pp. 94-127; Elizabeth Johnson, <i>She Who Is</i> , pp. 150-169
M	1/7	Ministry	PLACHER, 61-107; John Howard Yoder, “Christ, the Light of the World,” and “Christ, the Hope of the World”; Howard Thurman, <i>Jesus and the Disinherited</i> , pp. 11-57
T	1/8	Writing Day—no class	
W	1/9	Ministry	SHORT PAPER DUE Kirsteen Kim, “Jesus Christ in the Pluralistic context of Indian Religions”; Andrew Walls, “The Ephesian Moment”; Katharina von Kellenbach, <i>Anti-Judaism in Feminist Religious Writings</i> , pp. 39-74
Th	1/10	The Cross	PLACHER, 111-159; Essays in TRELSTAD, Part. I, by TERRELL, POLING, STREUFERT, THOMPSON, TRELSTAD

<u>Date</u>		<u>Subject/Assignment</u>	
F	1/11	The Cross	Essays in TRELSTAD, Parts II-III by MOLTSMANN, VARGAS, NELSON, MOE-LOBEDA, MCDANIEL, HEIM, WEAVER, BROCK, HALL, MOLTSMANN, TAYLOR; Hans Boersma, “Eschatological Justice and the Cross”
M	1/14	Writing Day—no class	
T	1/15	Present Progress reports	
W	1/16	Resurrection	PLACHER, 159-198; N.T. Wright, “The Transforming Reality of the Bodily Resurrection” and Marcus Borg, “The Truth of Easter”
Th	1/17	Resurrection	Karl Barth, Church <i>Dogmatics</i> , IV.3.1, pp. 282-313 Some Sermons: http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/sermons/speeches/070408.htm http://www.pres-outlook.com/HTML/easter2005stroup.html http://www.pres-outlook.com/HTML/easter2005rigby.html
F	1/18	Ascension and Return	Luke Timothy Johnson, <i>The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters</i> , pp. 176-215; Marcus Borg, “The Second Coming Then and Now” and N.T. Wright, “The Future of Jesus”
M	1/21	Martin Luther King holiday—no class	
T	1/22	Christology and Religious Pluralism	Harold Netland, <i>Dissonant voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth</i> , pp. 234-277; John Hick, <i>The Myth of Christian Uniqueness</i> , pp. 16-36; Joseph D. Nozick, <i>The Diversity of Religions: A Christian Perspective</i> , pp. 36-64; Clark Pinnock, <i>A Wideness in God’s Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions</i> , pp. 49-78
W	1/23	Present progress reports	
Th	1/24	Conclusion	

Date

Subject/Assignment

Assignment Details

Let Amy know ahead of time if you will be absent.

1. Pick a Christological hymn or song and bring copies to class on the day you signed up. Be prepared to explain briefly why you like the Christology of the music you chose and lead the class in singing it/ listening to it.
2. Your final Christological Credo (*Credo* is Latin for “I believe”) is a statement of your own Christological beliefs. It should be 15-20 pages, double-spaced, and should cover the 5 main divisions of the syllabus: incarnation, ministry, the cross, resurrection/ascension/return, Christ and pluralism. You are free to draw on other theological resources beyond class readings. It is due **January 30**.
Prepare a five to eight-minute oral report on your Christology-in-progress for the days noted in the calendar. On 1/15, members of the class will take turns reporting on their views of incarnation, ministry and the cross. On 1/23, the focus will be on resurrection/ascension/return and Christ and pluralism. Be prepared to explain where you are theologically settled and where you are struggling. Note class readings that have been helpful, confusing, or provocative.
3. Write a 5-page, double-spaced paper on a Christological piece written from a Global South perspective. I have listed some suggestions below (all on reserve) but you are free to choose something else, in consultation with me. (A suggested resource is *Bibliography on Christology in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America*. Ref. Z7757.D48 T474 no. 5 BT198.) Your paper should (1) respond theologically to anything that surprised or troubled you in the reading, and (2) reflect more generally on how the reality of a global church affects the doing of contemporary Christology, including your own Christological articulations. We will discuss these papers in class on the due date, **January 9**.

Bibliographical Suggestions for Short Paper (on reserve):

Kwame Bediako, *Jesus and the gospel in Africa : history and experience* Orbis, 2004. Read chapters 1, 2, and 3, “Cry Jesus!,” “Jesus in African Culture,” and “How is Jesus Christ Lord?”

Virgilio Elizondo, *A God of Incredible Surprises: Jesus of Galilee*. Read chapters 11 and 12, “A New Humanity” and “If Jesus Had Lived in San Antonio”

Virginia Fabella and Mercy Ambe Oduyoye, eds. *With Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology*. Read chapters 3 and 4 “The Christ-Event from the Viewpoint of African Women” and “The Christ for African Women”

Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *The grace of Sophia: a Korean North American Women’s Christology*. Read chapter 7 “The Grace of Sophia and the Healing of Han”

George M. Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*. Read chapter 7 “The Table Fellowship of Jesus: Its Significance for Dalit Christians in India Today”

Choan-Seng Song, "The Transposition of Power," and "The Politics of the Resurrection," in *Third Eye Theology: Theology in Formation in Asian Settings*, pp. 241-276.

Diane B. Stinton, *Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary African Christology*. Pick **one** of the following chapters: 3. Jesus as Life-giver, 4. Jesus as Mediator, 5. Jesus as Loved One, 6. Jesus as Leader

M. Thomas Thangaraj, *The Crucified Guru: an Experiment in Cross-Cultural Christology*. Read chapters 4 and 5, "The Crucified Guru" and "Possibilities and Problems"

BlackBoard Readings (in the order in which they appear in the syllabus):

1/3

Sergius Bulgakov, "The Virgin and the Saints in Orthodoxy" in Clendinin, ed. *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003)

Nancy Duff, "Mary, the Servant of the Lord: Christian Vocation at the Manger and the Cross" in Gaventa and Rigby, eds. *Blessed One: Protestant Perspectives on Mary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), pp. 59-70.

1/4

David Jensen, *In the Company of Others: A Dialogical Christology* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001), pp. 74-89; 135-57

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II/2, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark), pp. 94-127

Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), pp. 150-169

1/7

John Howard Yoder, "Christ, the Light of the World," and "Christ, the Hope of the World," in Yoder, *The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 181-218

Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), pp. 11-57.

1/9

Kirsteen Kim, "Jesus Christ in the Pluralistic Context of Indian Religions"

Andrew Walls, "The Ephesian Moment," in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), pp. 72-81

Katharina von Kellenbach, *Anti-Judaism in Feminist Religious Writings* (Atlanta: American Academy of Religion, 2000), pp. 39-74.

1/11

Hans Boersma, "Eschatological Justice and the Cross" in *Theology Today* (July 2003):186-99

1/16

N.T. Wright, "The Transforming Reality of the Bodily Resurrection," in *The Meaning of Jesus, Two Visions*, (Harper SanFrancisco, 1999), pp. 111-127.

Marcus Borg, "The Truth of Easter" in *The Meaning of Jesus, Two Visions* (Harper San Francisco, 1999), pp. 129-143.

1/17

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV.3.1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark), pp. 282-313

1/18

Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters* (Doubleday, 2003), pp. 176-215

Marcus Borg, "The Second Coming Then and Now" in *The Meaning of Jesus, Two Visions* (Harper San Francisco, 1999), pp. 189-196.

N.T. Wright, "The Future of Jesus" in *The Meaning of Jesus, Two Visions* (Harper San Francisco, 1999), pp. 197-204.

1/22

Harold Netland, "No Other Name: The Question of Jesus," in *Dissonant voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth* (Vancouver: Regent college Publishing, 1999), pp. 234-277

John Hick, "The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity," in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989), pp. 16-36

Joseph Dinioia, *The Diversity of Religions: A Christian Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1992), pp. 36-64

Clark Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), pp. 49-78