

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MHTH/THEM 639/ PTHM 640 Theology of Religions

February 26-March 2, 2007 (M-F)

Professor: Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Dr.Theol.habil. vmk@fuller.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Technically known as “theology of religions,” this course introduces the student to various approaches to how Christianity relates to other religions and religious pluralisms. Catholic and Protestant, including Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic, responses will be critically discussed. Studying theology of religions entails some knowledge of living faiths; therefore, through reading and case-studies, issues related to Islam-, Hindu-, and Buddhist – Christian encounter will also be studied.

OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the plurality of religions and an ideology of pluralism as a challenge to Christian theology and mission in the new millennium.
- Gain basic knowledge of and perspectives on the ways Christian theology in general and Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic theology in particular have responded to the challenge of pluralism
- Begin to study other religions from the viewpoint of Christian Theology.
- Demonstrate awareness that religious plurality is a core issue for practitioners and academicians in theological, missiological, and pastoral education.

TEXTBOOKS:

- 1) Knitter, P. *Introducing Theologies of Religions*. Orbis, 2002.
- 2) Kärkkäinen, V.-M. *An Introduction to the Theology of Religions. Biblical, Historical & Contemporary Perspectives*. InterVarsity, 2003 (relevant sections).
- 3) Tennent, T. C. *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable. Evangelicalism in Conversation with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam*. Baker Academic, 2002 (relevant sections).
- 4) **Select ONE book on ”Evangelical and/or Pentecostal-Charismatic views”:**
 - Cordua, W. *Tapestry of Faiths: The Common Threads between Christianity & World Religions*. InterVarsity Press, 2002
 - McDermott, G. R. *Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions?* InterVarsity Press, 2001.
 - Pinnock, C. *A Wideness in God’s Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions*. Zondervan, 1992.

Ramachandra, V. *Faiths in Conflict: Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World*. IVP, 2000.

Yong, A. *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions*. Baker Academic, 2003.

While neither Evangelical nor Pentecostal-Charismatic, the student may also select one of the following titles (or a similar title):

Newbigin, L. *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*. Eerdmans, 1989.

Newbigin, L. *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth*. Eerdmans, 1991.

5) **Select ONE book on "Case Study: Christianity Encounters a Living Faith"**

The student may suggest his/her own choice to be approved by professor. For assistance, see below and SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.

On **Muslim**-Christian encounter: e.g.,

Chapman, C. *The Cross & Crescent: Responding to the Challenge of Islam*. InterVarsity, 2004 **or**

Sanneh, L. *Muslims and Christians in West Africa*. Orbis, 1996.

On **Buddhist**-Christian encounter: e.g.,

Gross, R. & Muck, T. eds. *Buddhists Talk About Jesus-Christians Talk about the Buddha*. Continuum, 2000 **or**

Zacharias, R. *Jesus Talks with Buddha: There is One God and Who is His Prophet?* Multnomah, 2001.

On **Hindu**-Christian encounter: e.g.,

Tennent, T. *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2000.

Brockington, J.L. *Hinduism and Christianity*. St. Martin's Press, 1992.

6) The student should also have access to a **scholarly introduction** to living faiths or a particular faith. For suggestions, see SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.

BASIC OUTLINE:

DAY 1 (Monday)

Introduction to the Theology of Religions: issues, concepts, typologies

“Total Replacement Model”: Is Christianity Meant to Replace Other Faiths? (Barth)

”Fulfillment Model”: Roman Catholic views (Vatican II)

DAY 2 (Tuesday)

”Fulfillment Model”: Roman Catholic views cont. (Rahner; D’Costa)

”Mutuality Model”: The Challenge of Pluralistic Theologies part 1 (Hick, Panikkar, Knitter)

DAY 3 (Wednesday)

”Acceptance Model”: The Challenge of Pluralistic Theologies: part 2 (postmodernity; Heim)

”Partial Replacement Model: The Mainline Protestant Views” (Pannenberg; Newbiggin)

DAY 4 (Thursday)

Evangelical Theologies of Religions:

Leading Evangelical Theologians of Religions: Ramachandra; Netland; McDermott; Tennent, etc.)

Pentecostal-Charismatic Theologies of Religions:

The State of the Question

Leading Pentecostal-Charismatic Theologians of Religions: Pinnock; Yong

Begin Case Studies on Christianity’s encounter with living faiths (student presentations)

DAY 5 (Friday)

Dr. Kärkkäinen’s constructive proposal towards an Evangelical theology of religions

Continue Case Studies on (student presentations)

Presentation of research topics for essays

METHODOLOGY:

Method employed will be that of systematic and missiological theology. Biblical, historical, and contemporary perspectives, including contextual and intercultural, will be synthesized to help students deal with main topics of and challenges to the theology of religions and interfaith encounters.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

A. Pre-Course:

- 1) **Reading:** To prepare for the week of instruction, students are required to read carefully all the required texts. Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* and Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to the Theology of Religions* are the two foundational texts which give an overview of main players, concepts, issues, and trends of developments. Special attention needs to be given to a careful study of these texts.
- 2) **Critical Reading Responses:** The following critical responses should be prepared by the student prior to coming to the class (3 pages each, double spaced):
 - a) **Knitter** offers a four-fold typology of various approaches to the theology of religions. Give an outline of this typology, indicating some theologians and theological movements which fall under each category (taking also into consideration those discussed in Kärkkäinen). At the end of each main part of the book, Knitter offers an evaluation of insights and problems of each category. Focus on one of these of your choice and give your tentative response to the questions posed by Knitter.
 - b) **Kärkkäinen** presents an overview of biblical, historical and contemporary views in the theology of religions. Utilizing the typology developed by Knitter, select six to eight contemporary theologians for a closer look and assessment making sure that all categories of Knitter will be covered.
 - c) **Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic Views:** Having selected the book of your choice in category 4) of Required Texts, produce a critical analysis of the book by paying attention to the following questions: What is the main thrust of the book? What are the key issues? What is the author's main concern or burden? What are the main contributions of the book? What are the challenges or weaknesses? What is your own reaction to the book? This paper will also serve as the basis for class presentation (see "Class Period" for details).

Papers are due on the first day of the class (February 26; no grace periods).

B. Class Period:

- 1) **Attendance and Active Participation:** Attending all class sessions throughout the five days of instruction is not only mandatory but also necessary for successful completion of the course. In addition to careful note making, students are expected to participate actively in class discussion whether plenary or in groups.

- 2) **Class Presentations:** Students are expected to participate actively in the planning and facilitation of class presentations according to the following guidelines:
 - a) **Evangelical and Pentecostal Charismatic Views:** Based on your selection of the book in category 4) of TEXTBOOKS, each student prepares an oral presentation of 15 minutes based on but not limited to the critical reading response. Additional 10 minutes can be used for class discussion facilitated by the presenter. If two or more students have selected the same book, they will collaborate and prepare a joint presentation; in that case, time resources are 25 minutes for presentation and 15 minutes for discussion. Written synopsis of no more than two pages should be made available for the class.
 - b) **Case Study on Christianity Encounters a Living Faith:** Collaborate with one or two student colleagues to produce a joint presentation of 25 minutes (plus 15 extra minutes for discussion) on some aspects of Christian –Muslim/ Hindu/ Buddhist encounter. Draw from readings in Tennent and the book of your choice in category 5) of TEXTBOOKS. These case studies will be conducted on Thursday afternoon and Friday.

C. Post-Course:

- 1) **Critical Reading Response:** Produce a three-page critical reflection on one of the interfaith-topics provided by Tennent gleaned also from other readings and class discussions and presentations.

- 2) **Research Paper:** Write a paper of 8-10 pages on a topic of your choice in the Christian theology of religions and/or Christianity's encounter with living faiths. Get the approval for your topic during the week of instruction. Prepare to introduce briefly your topic and how you are going to approach it on the last day of class.

GRADING PROCEDURE:

1) Reading log ¹	10 points
2) Reading responses	20 points
Pre-course (each 5):	15
Post-course:	5
3) Class presentations (each 10)	20 points
4) Research paper	<u>50 points</u>
TOTAL	100 Points

Final grade will be determined as follows:

A	96-100 points
A-	90-95
B+	82-89
B	72-81
B-	66-71
C+	61-65
C	51-60
C-	46-50
F	Below 46

¹ Reading log means simply a record of readings accomplished (book, pages, date).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- The required text, Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to the Theology of Religions*, pp. 356-65, contains a fairly comprehensive up-to-date bibliography students can consult for further reading and study. The following titles have appeared after the release of that book:
- Kärkkäinen, V.-M. *Trinity and Religious Pluralism. The Doctrine of the Trinity in Christian Theology of Religions*. Ashgate, 2004.
- Mortensen, V., ed. *Theology and the Religions: A Dialogue*. Eerdmans, 2003.
- Parry, R. & C. Partridge, eds. *Universal Salvation: The Current Debate*. Eerdmans, 2004.
- Ramachandra, V. *Faiths in Conflict: Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World*. IVP, 2000.
- Serretti, M., ed. *The Uniqueness and Universality of Jesus Christ: In Dialogue with the Religions*. Eerdmans, 2004.
- Tiessen, Terrance L. *Who Can Be Saved? Reassessing Salvation in Christ and World Religions*. IVP, 2004.

For some aspects of living faiths and interfaith encounter, see the following titles:

World Religions: Introductions

- Anderson, J.N.D. *Christianity and Comparative Religion*. IVP, 1971.
- Baillas, L.J. *World Religions: A Story Approach*. Twenty-Third Publications, 1991.
- Eliade, M. *Essential Sacred Writings from Around the World* (formerly titled *From Primitives to Zen*). Harper & Row, 1967.
- Forman, R.K.C. ed. *Religions of the World*, 3rd ed. St. Martin's, 1993.
- Gorduan, W. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. IVP, 1998.
- Haverson, D.C. *The Compact Guide to World Religions*. Bethany House, 1996.
- Heinegg, P. *Christianity and World Religions*, Orbis, 1993.
- Hopfe, L.M. *Religions of the World*, 6th ed. Macmillan, 1994.
- Hume, R.E. *The World's Living Religions*, rev. ed. Scribner's, 1959.
- Kramer, K. *World Scriptures: An Introduction to Comparative Religion*. Paulist, 1986.
- Kung, H. & Bechert, H. *Christianity and the World Religions: Paths to Dialogue*. Orbis, 1993.
- Lewis, J.F. & Travis, W.G., *Religious Traditions of the World*. Zondervan, 1991.
- Matthews, W. *World Religions*, 2nd ed. West, 1994.
- Miller, A. et al. eds. *Religions of the World*. St. Martin's, 1988.
- Muck, T. *Those Other Religions in Your Neighborhood: Loving Your Neighbor When You Don't Know How*. Zondervan, 1992.
- Nielsen, N.C. *Religions of the World*, 3rd ed. St. Martin's, 1993.
- Nigosian, S.A. *World Faiths*, 2nd ed. St. Martin's, 1994.
- Oxtoby, W. ed. *World Religions: Eastern Traditions*. Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Noss, D.S. & Noss, J.B., *A History of the World Religions*, 9th ed. Macmillan, 1994.
- Smart, N. *World Religions: A Dialogue*. Penguin, 1966 (or newer edition)
- Smith, H. *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Tradition*. HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.

Dictionaries of Religions

- Eliade, M. ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 16 vols. Macmillan, 1987.
- Hastings, J. ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 13 vols. Scribner's, 1908-26.
- Hexham, I. *Concise Dictionary of Religion*. IVP, 1993.

Islam/Muslim-Christian Encounter

- The Holy Qur-an: English Translation and the Meanings and Commentary*, trans. Al-Madinah, Mushaf and an-Nabawiyah. Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran, n.d.
- Arkoun, M. *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, ed. and trans. R.D. Lee Westview, 1994.
- Cragg, K. *The Mind of the Quran*. George Allen and Unwin, 1973.
- Dharmaraj, J. & Dharmaraj, G. *Christianity and Islam: A Missiological Encounter*. ISPCK, 1998.
- Denny, F.M. *An Introduction to Islam*, 2nd ed. 1994.
- _____. *Islam and the Muslim Community*. Harper and Row, 1987.
- _____. *An Introduction to Islam*. Macmillan, 1985.
- Esposito, J.L. *Islam: The Straight Path*, 3rd ed. Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Farah, C. *Islam*, 6th ed. Barron's Educational Service, 2000.
- Geisler, N. & Saleeb, A. *Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross*. Baker, 1993.
- George, T. *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad?* Zondervan, 2002
- Haddad, Y. *The Muslims of America*. Oxford University Press, 1993.
- International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Spring 2000, vol. 17, no. 1 is dedicated to the topic of Christian-Islam encounter with several helpful contributions.
- Jomier, J. *How to Understand Islam*. SCM Press, 1989.
- Waines, D. *An Introduction to Islam*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Zebiri, K. *Muslims and Christians Face to Face*. One World, 1997.

Hinduism/Hindu-Christian Encounter

- Brockington, J.L. *Hinduism and Christianity*. St. Martin's Press, 1992.
- Deutsch, E. & Buitenen, J.A.B., eds., *A Source Book of Advaita Vedanta*. University of Hawaii Press, 1971.
- Hay, S. ed. *Sources of Indian Tradition*, 2d ed. Columbia University Press, 1988.
- Kulandran, S. *Grace: A Comparative Study of the Doctrine in Christianity and Hinduism*. London: Lutterworth, 1964.
- LeSaux, H. *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point*. Bangalore: National Press, 1969.
- Lipner, J. *The Face of Truth*. SUNY Press, 1986.
- Parrinder, G. *Avatar and Incarnation*. Oxford: One World Publications, 1997.
- Radhakrishnan, S. ed. *The Principal Upanisads*. Delhi: HarperCollins, 1996.
- Tennent, T. *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000).
- Zacharias, R. *Jesus among Other Gods*. Word, 2000.
- Zaehner, R.C. *Hinduism*. Oxford University Press, 1966.

Buddhism/Buddhist-Christian Encounter

- Burt, E.A. ed. *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha: Early Discourses, the Dhammapada, and Later Basic Writings*. Signet Classics, 1955.
- Cleary T. ed. *Dhammapada: Sayings of the Buddha*. Bantam, 1995.
- Cobb, J. & Ives, C. *The Emptying God: A Buddhist-Jewish-Christian Conversation*. Orbis, 1990
- Corless, R. & Knitter, P. *Buddhist Emptiness and Christian Trinity*. Orbis, 1990
- DeBary, W.T. *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China and Japan*. Vintage, 1972.
- Fernando, A. *Buddhism Made Plain*, rev. ed. Orbis, 1985.
- Gross, R. & Muck, T. eds. *Buddhists Talk About Jesus-Christians Talk about the Buddha*. Continuum, 2000.
- Hamilton, C.H. ed. *Buddhism: A Religion of Infinite Compassion: Selections from Buddhist Literature*. Bobbs-Merrill, 1952.
- Hanh, Thich Nhat. *Living Buddha, Living Christ*. Riverhead Books, 1995.
- _____. *Going Home-Jesus and Buddha as Brothers*. Rivrhead Books, 1999.
- Heine, S. ed. *Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue*. MacMillan, 1995.
- Lefebure, L.D. *The Buddha and the Christ: Explorations in Buddhist and Christian Dialogue*. Orbis, 1993.
- Lopez, D. & Rockefeller, S. *The Christ and the Bodhisattva*. SUNY Press, 1987.

Robinson, R.H. & Johnson, W.L. *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction*, 3rd ed. Wadsworth, 1982.
Sanneh, L. *Muslims and Christians in West Africa*. Orbis, 1996.
Williams, P. *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*. Routledge, 1989.
Zacharias, R. *Jesus Talks with Buddha: There is One God and Who is His Prophet?* Multnomah, 2001.

Other

The Bhagavad-Gita. Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, 1998.
Bloom, H. *The American Religion: The Emergence of a Post-Christian Nation*. Simon & Schuster, 1992.
Boyce, M. *A History of Zoroastrianism*, 2 vols. Brill, 1982.
Chai C. & Chai W. *Confucianism*. Barron's Educational Series, 1973.
Ching, J. & Kung, H. *Christianity and Chinese Religions*. Doubleday, 1989.
Geisler, N. and Corduan, W. *Philosophy of Religion*, 2nd ed. Baker, 1988.
Hick, J. ed. *Truth and Dialogue in World Religions: Conflicting Truth Claims*. Westminster, 1974.
Hiebert, P.G. & Tienou, T. & Shaw, D. *Understanding Folk Religion*. Baker, 1999.
Kung, H. *Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of World Religions*. Continuum, 1993.
Mbiti, J.S. *African Religions and Philosophy*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1969.
The Essential Tao. HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.
Young, D. *Confucianism and Christianity: The First Encounter*. Hong Kong University Press, 1983.

SPECIFIC DATA:

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