Systematic Theology 4: The Doctrine of the Church and Sacraments

(6ST524/01)

McLean Presbyterian Church
Fall 2007
Monday 7:30-10 PM (9/10 – 11/26; no class on 11/19)

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Office Hours: make an appointment – I will be delighted to meet with you.

Course Goal: to grasp something of the centrality of Church and Sacraments in Christian theology and life, and grow in service to the Church, Christ’s body and fullness.

Lecture Outline

1. Introduction to Ecclesiology and Sacraments in historical-theological study.

2. The Church in Redemptive History.
   2. Christ, the Kingdom and the Church.
   3. Pentecost and the Church.
   4. Pauline metaphors for the Church.

3. Issues in The Doctrine of the Church.
   2. Ministry and Discipline.
   4. The Church and Suffering.
   5. Attributes, Marks and Aspects of the Church.

4. Introduction to the Sacraments.
   1. Covenant and Sign.

5. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
   2. Infant Baptism.
   3. The Lord’s Supper, the Reformation debate and the New Testament.

Assignments:

Read:
1. Geerhardus Vos, *The Kingdom of God and the Church* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1972), all. (This is also published under the title *The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Church.*


**Memorize** (any translation; and recite a friend): Ephesians 4:4-6.

**Exams:**

1. There is a take-home mid-term due in class October 22nd. The midterm will cover readings 1-8 and class lectures to that point. **Late papers and exams are not accepted.**

2. The final exam will be take-home, limited to three hours. It will be cumulative. Include with the Final Exam a statement that you have memorized the Scripture passage above, and list and sign what percentage of the required reading you completed. Failure to complete the reading will have a negative impact on the course grade. The final exam is due postmarked by **December 7th**.

Both mid-term and final exam are closed-book and closed-notes – you may use only an unmarked Bible.

All exams and papers should be hard copy. The paper and final should be mailed to RTS, 1028 Balls Hill Road, McLean, Virginia 22101.¹

**Paper:**

A response paper of 6-7 pages on the topic of student presentations. The presentations will be on **November 12th** (“God’s revelation defines Christian worship as it does Christian doctrine” – pro and con). The response paper is due postmarked by **December 7th**.

The goal of the response paper is for the student to interact critically with the primary source material. The student must consider carefully and fairly both sides of a debated issue before coming to a conclusion. The response paper must include footnotes and a brief bibliography.

There will be two student presentations. To encourage volunteers for the student presentations, presenters will not be required to take the final exam. The grade for the mid-term will be substituted for the final, and a generous grade will be given for the presentation.

Student presenters will be responsible for the following:

- To give a 20-25 minute presentation with discussion to follow.
- One week before the presentation, to identify and send the class bibliographical references for 100-150 pages of discussion of the topic of his or her presentation.
- On the day of the presentation, to distribute a complete typed copy of the presentation to the class, either a full research paper or an annotated outline.

¹ Any form of cheating will automatically result in failure of the course. Students may **not** consult exams or class notes from previous years.
• To provide a complete copy of all materials to the Professor one week before the presentation.
• To meet with the Professor one week before the presentation to discuss it. It is the presenter’s responsibility to make arrangements with the Professor in advance.

**Evaluation:**

Mid-term 30%
Final exam 50%
Paper 20%

Grading Scale:

The standard RTS grading scale (found on page 38 of the catalog) will be used.

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**Policy on Late Papers and Exams:**

Simply put, late papers and exams are not accepted based on the following rationale:

a. The issue is not so much an inconvenience to the professor. If that were the primary issue, then he would grade late papers because it is fundamental to his Christian commitment to put the interests of others before his own.
b. The issue concerns the apparent laxity with which extensions are often granted. This is not Christian education. Wisdom is living within boundaries. The cosmos exists because the Creator provided boundaries for air, water, land. Moreover, he provided temporal boundaries for seasons. Without boundaries, the cosmos would degenerate back into anarchy. It is the essence of Christian living that we live within boundaries. Liberals want no boundaries. They want freedom without form, liberty without law, lovemaking without marriage. This is a fundamental battle. It is distressing when Christians do not show respect for boundaries and when students do not respect temporal boundaries.
c. Wisdom also entails knowing the goal and devising a strategy to achieve it. Students must be aware from the syllabus what is required of them and should be able to strategize a successful model to achieve it. Laxity and uncertainty with regard to deadlines actually confuse the students and militate against a good Christian education. Paradoxically, “grace” sounds Christian and pastoral and “law” sounds non-Christian; but, sometimes
so-called “grace” and “pastoral concerns” encourage libertarianism and in truth is non-Christian and non-pastoral. Consciously or unconsciously students realize that there is a fudge factor here, enabling them to rationalize their not turning in work on time.

d. The issue also pertains to spiritual life, a subject on which a seminary rightly prides itself. However, the spiritual life includes self-control, discipline, etc. Students reap good fruit from hard work.”

Supplemental Bibliography

1. The Doctrine of the Church


Carson, D. A.  *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

*Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives*, Frederica Matthews-Green, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2003).


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2 Adapted from Professor Bruce K. Waltke.


Lewis, C. S. “Membership” in The Weight of Glory and Other Essays.


Wallace, Ronald S. Calvin’s Doctrine of the Christian Life

2. The Sacraments in General


Wallace, Ronald. *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Word and Sacraments*

3. Baptism


Kline, Meredith G. *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968).


4. The Lord’s Supper


