MISSIONS - MS 518  
Fall Term 2007, Tuesdays: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.  
Reformed Theological Seminary/Charlotte  
Dr. John W. P. Oliver

Course Description

This course examines issues in the world mission enterprise in light of today’s challenges, opportunities, and obligations. The biblical mandate for missions is clarified, the historical spread of Christianity with missionary movements and leaders is reviewed, and barriers to missions are examined. Contemporary issues in present-day missionary endeavors are mentioned briefly at term’s end, but cannot be dealt with extensively in a two-hour introductory course in missions. Such issues would form a considerable part of the content of a subsequent course in missions, were there such in our present curriculum.

Course goals

1. To inform the student on the role of the pastor in leading the congregation in obedience to the Great Commission.

2. To enable the student to understand the biblical/theological basis of world evangelization; that world evangelization is the goal of the Gospel. It is not an option; it is an obligation.

3. To introduce the student to the general history and the leading personalities of the Christian world of missions, the realm of international missionary cooperation, and authentic evangelical ecumenicity.

4. To develop a strategy for missions that will be personally, professionally and denominationally effective in programming the local church into the biblical mission as given by our Risen Lord.

5. The course will introduce the student to the resources available for continuing growth in the study and presentation of the mandate given by our Lord to evangelize the world.

Means of Achieving the Aims

1. The student has the assignment to read one missionary biography (previously unread by the student!) that is legitimately book-length (no evangelical cliff notes, please!), which will be presented in a one or two page written report. The biography is about a missionary (technically) as opposed to evangelists or other outstanding leaders (Billy Graham, George Whitefield et al) or a movement (such as the Welsh Revival of 1904). Ideally the student will select a missionary about which little is previously known. The idea is to learn of someone basically unknown heretofore to the student (Who are Mary Slessor, “Praying Hyde,” Henry Martyn etc?) On September 4, 2007 the student’s selection should be turned in (typed, please) on a sheet of paper that includes on successive lines, in order, the student’s name, the missionary’s name, the name of the biography with the author, publisher and number of pages. Copies of the written report(Two pages at most; one, if possible!) are to be provided for the professor and each class member. This written
assignment is due on September 25, 2007.

2. A brief (and somewhat polemical!) essay of three to five pages dealing the method of providing missionary support is to be submitted. The essay is to look at both sides of the issue of the so-called faith mission means of missionary support vis-a-vis missionary salaries paid from a general (denominational or agency) fund. While the essay should look at both sides of the issue, it should argue for one position as well as shore up the view that missionaries should itinerate to secure prayer support from individuals, Christian groups and congregations. This is due November 6, 2007.

3. The reading of the primary text, From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya, should be basically divided by the weeks of the term. (490 pages divided by thirteen weeks in the term equals 38 pages a week!). The subjects of class presentations will often (generally) coordinate with information from the sections of the book. Tucker=s book is very readable and should be enjoyed as the mind and heart are informed and moved. Please - stay current in reading Tucker=s book!

4. A short-answer examination during the period for finals will principally review material discussed in class which in most cases will coordinate with the material in From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya. Two questions to be answered along with the final examination (which if answered positively will be a nice help toward a good grade) will be whether or not both required text books (From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya and Back to Jerusalem) have been read in their entirety. Without doing the required reading, it is not possible to receive higher that a C+ even if all other grades are an A!

Field Trip to JAARS at Waxhaw

On Tuesday, October 16, 2007, the class will assemble at 1:00 p.m. at the JAARS (Jungle Aviation and Radio Service) headquarters in Waxhaw, N.C. Annually, the staff there provide a most informative tour for the Missions Classes at RTS. The tour will be completed by 3:00 p.m. Class members are invited to be Dr. Oliver=s guests for lunch in the JAARS cafeteria. General serving begins at Noon, and, by special arrangement to assist class members, will continue until 12:30 p.m. Those who have a morning class lasting until Noon should ask the professor to be excused at 11:45 a.m. if they wish to have lunch in the JAARS cafeteria. Students should allow forty-five minutes to drive from the campus to JAARS, park and be in the serving line before 12:30 p.m. The class will assemble (at 1:00 p.m.) in the small auditorium just beyond the entrance/lobby of the main building. Attendance will be taken. This is always a highlight for our Missions Classes here at RTS. The Lord has raised up JAARS and used it in amazing ways to further the Gospel, especially through Bible translation. Directions to JAARS will be provided in class.

Class Participation

Prayer for Missions

Each student enrolled for credit will take a turn leading in prayer for the country (countries) named for the date of class sessions in Operation World. Before the prayer, a TWO-MINUTE (ONLY) summary about the country to be prayed for should be given from material in Operation World. Of
particular interest in the two-minute summary would be, for example, the percentage of Christians to total population, several of the major missionary agencies at work in that country etc. (Keep it concise and memorable!)

*Presentation of Missionary Agencies*

Each student enrolled for credit will present a one-page written report on an assigned missionary agency and provide copies to distribute to the entire class. The agency will be assigned by the professor who may make brief comments about the various agencies. The students’ written reports should note size (number of missionaries), well-known names (if any) in the history of the mission (for example, Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission/Overseas Missionary Fellowship), doctrinal stance (broadly and traditionally evangelical, Reformed, Dispensational and Evangelical etc.), views (if any) about church government and sacraments where church-planting is part of the mission, how support is attained and the principle countries and/or geographical areas where missionaries are deployed. Many of the agencies will have nearly-identical and traditionally-evangelical doctrines. If that is the case for a particular agency, it is sufficient to note such without elaborating on the various parts of the statement. Please note particular exceptions such as holding to a certain form of baptism, church government or details of eschatology that exclude other Bible-believers holding different views. In completing this assignment and receiving copies from each other a file on major evangelical agencies could be started.

*Texts*

The basic text is *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, Ruth A. Tucker, Zondervan.

The supplemental text is *Back to Jerusalem*, Paul Hattaway (and three Chinese House-Church Leaders), Gabriel Publishing.

A rather lengthy bibliography related to Missions will be distributed separately to those who wish to have one. This bibliography does not have titles from the last several years.