HT506 – Church and the World
Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte
Spring Session, 2009

I. Details
A. Times: Tuesdays, 9:00-12:00 PM (including one-hour break for Chapel)
B. Instructor: Dr James Anderson
C. Contact: janderson@rts.edu

II. Purpose
A. To familiarize the student with the theological landscape of the 20th century: its major movements and its most influential figures.
B. To provide the student with an overview of areas in which the church has engaged with different aspects of culture: philosophy, science, politics, etc.
C. To help the student understand the forces that have shaped modern evangelicalism (i.e. to understand “how we got to where we are now”).
D. To give the student an appreciation of the contemporary challenges faced by the church through its call to be “in the world but not of the world”.

III. Course Overview
A. Background: The Enlightenment and Its Heirs
B. Church and Theology: Liberalism and Its Discontents
C. Church and Philosophy: The Resurrection of Theism
D. Church and Science: Darwin versus Design
E. Church and Culture: Niebuhr’s Christ and Culture
F. Church and Geography: The Next Christendom

IV. Course Requirements
A. Class attendance and thoughtful participation.
   1. As per seminary policy, you are required to attend all the lectures. If you know that you will be unable to attend class on a particular date, please inform me in advance.
   2. There will be opportunity for class participation and questions during the lectures.
   3. A proportion of your final grade will depend on your attendance record and your participation in the classes (thoughtful interaction with the professor and other students).
B. Reading assignments. See below for the reading requirements.
C. Analysis and application paper.
   1. The paper is due on May 15th. It should be submitted to the secretary at the main front desk on or prior to this date. Late submissions will be penalized.
   2. You should write a paper (between 3500 and 4000 words, excluding footnotes) based on one of the thinkers covered in class (Barth, Bultmann, Tillich, Moltmann, Hick, Niebuhr, etc.). You are free to choose whichever one you want, but be sure to
choose one that gives you the scope to write a good paper. If you’re in any doubt, consult with me first!

3. The paper should be themed as follows: Imagine if your chosen thinker were to attend your local church for a year (either your home church or the church where you currently worship). Based on your understanding of the main concerns and claims of your chosen thinker, what recommendations would he (or she) give as to how your church could more faithfully or effectively engage with the world around it? (Clearly you will have to consider what would count as ‘faithful’ or ‘effective’ for this particular person!)

4. In essence, the paper requires (a) analysis of your chosen thinker, (b) analysis of your church’s current engagement with culture/society, (c) application of the former to the latter, and (d) an evaluation of this application in the light of Scripture and reason.

5. Your paper should include all of the following:
   i. An explanation (not merely a statement) of what your chosen thinker would recommend for your church, documented from at least one primary source and any number of secondary sources.
   ii. An explanation of why these recommendations would be made for your church.
   iii. A positive appraisal of these recommendations (i.e. how your church could benefit from the insights of this person). If you can’t find anything positive to say, then you should choose another thinker!
   iv. A critical assessment of these recommendations in the light of your reading of Scripture.

6. Your paper will be graded according to the following criteria, in no particular order: responsible use of sources, responsible use of Scripture, creativity, clarity, structure and coherence, practical relevance, evidence of critical thinking, and good writing style (inc. grammar, spelling, and punctuation).

7. The paper should be word-processed (not hand-written), using a 12-point font and double line-spacing for the main text. Use footnotes (10-point font) rather than endnotes. Do not include a bibliography (any references should be provided within the footnotes). The formatting of footnotes and bibliographic references should resemble that found in the standard journals (e.g. JBL, JTS, JETS, NTS).

D. Midterm exam.
   1. The date of the midterm exam will be announced at the start of class.
   2. The format of the exam will be a series of multiple-choice questions based on the material covered to date.

E. Final exam.
   1. The final exam will be taken in exam week; details will be given nearer the time.
   2. **Important:** Please read the exam questions very carefully before attempting to answer them! You will receive no marks for an answer that does not address the question as stated.
V. Grading
A. Attendance and class participation — 10%
B. Midterm exam — 15%
C. Final exam — 25%
D. Analysis and application paper — 50%

VI. Required Reading
D. J. Gresham Machen, Christianity & Liberalism (Eerdmans, 1923). [Various reprints are available.]
E. John M. Frame, “How to Write a Theological Paper”, Appendix F in The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God (P&R, 1987). [A copy of this will be provided.]

Note: You should obtain copies of all of the above. A reading schedule will be provided at the start of class.