

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Course	GOSPEL, CHURCH AND CULTURE: MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD MISS 0782 1S
Date and Time	JANUARY 13 – APRIL 11, 2025 MONDAYS 6:45 PM – 9:35 PM SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Instructor	GIRMA BEKELE, PhD Email: gbekele@tyndale.ca
Class Information	The classes will be livestreamed on Mondays from 6:45 PM – 9:35 PM. Students may participate in live-streamed office hours as posted below. Office Hours: By Appointment
Course Material	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Preparing missional leaders in the postmodern world requires serious examination of the ideologies and cultural milieu of contemporary society. This course examines the main features of the postmodern culture, the meaning of faithfulness to the gospel, the good news of God’s salvation, and the nature and mission of the Church. Church’s witness and service to the world is studied and presented not as one of the functions of the church but as its essential nature. Missional leadership takes seriously the calling of all God’s people to minister in every sphere of life as faithful witnesses to the gospel of salvation.

The course reflects on the church as intrinsically missionary - called to be so by God because God Himself is always reaching out in mission to humanity. The very identity of the church is missionary; and as such it needs to take the world and its struggles seriously.

The course will analyze the changing landscapes and context of contemporary mission, within the wider context of mission history and in the succession of various paradigms within that history.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. **Develop a Comprehensive View of Missiology:** Articulate the missiological foundation of the Bible, understanding its overarching narrative and themes.
2. **Evaluate Complex Issues:** Analyze the intricate relationship between the Church and the world, particularly focusing on the dynamics of Mission and Social Concern, in a well-reasoned and balanced manner.
3. **Identify Diverse Voices:** Recognize and appreciate the specific contributions of various theological perspectives in contemporary mission dialogue, including Latin American, Black (North) American theologies, and insights from diverse African contexts.
4. **Conduct Cultural-Social Analysis:** Create categories and frameworks for analyzing cultural and social factors in specific ministry contexts, exploring how culture shapes our understanding of the Gospel, the Church, and ministry.
5. **Examine Contextualization:** Critically assess the role of contextualization in presenting the Gospel, addressing the balance between faithful communication of the message and relevance to diverse cultural settings.
6. **Engage with Multiethnic Contexts:** Explore effective strategies for how the Gospel and the Church can engage with and address the challenges of a multiethnic, pluralistic culture, particularly within the Canadian context.
7. **Reflect on Contemporary Mission Issues:** Critically reflect on contemporary mission challenges and integrate these reflections into personal, congregational, and global aspects of Christian identity and practice.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Carson, D.A. [*Christ and Culture Revisited*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008/2012 [eBook, 2013].

Newbigin, Lesslie. [*Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986.

Newbigin, Lesslie. [*The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

- Guder, Darrell L. [Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.
- Grenz, Stanley J. *Faithful Presence: The Promise and the Task of Christian Leadership*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015.
- Palmer, Nate. *Cultural Engagement: A Crash Course in How to Be a Consistent Christian in a Conflicted Culture*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2021.
- Wright, N. T. *The Witness of the Spirit: A Theological Introduction to the Gospel and Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Wright, Christopher J. [The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
 - Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
 - Well-lit and quiet room
 - Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
 - Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
 - A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*
- *exceptions with permission from professor

D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Careful completion of the assigned readings **in advance**, in conjunction with reflecting on their relation to the ideas presented in the lectures. It is expected that students will read all of the assigned reading prior to the scheduled lecture of the week.

Guidance and rubrics for each assignment will be provided in class.

1. Three book reviews: 30% of final grade. (This assignment is related to Learning Outcomes, 1 and 2)

Three book reviews 500-750 words.

Newbigin, Lesslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986.

Due date: February 10

Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.

Due date: March 10

Carson, D.A. *Christ and Culture Revisited*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.

Due date: April 10

2. Discussion Comments: Dates vary; 20% of final grade. (This assignment is related to Learning Outcomes – 3 and 4)

15-minute Class Presentation/reflection (*last class):

***The Church's Responsibility in Communicating the Gospel in Contemporary Canadian Context:
With your local case in point***

Discussion forums are a key aspect of this course. They are your opportunity to relate and reflect on major themes being studied, to share your ideas with your peers, and benefit from the ideas presented by your colleagues in the group. The purpose of this activity is to allow you to experience how our community's cross-cultural and denominational backgrounds can help to broaden your perspective on areas where the gospel needs to challenge us, the church, and the society we live in. The aim is to make this a collaborative learning experience that functions as a prototype of how the church as body of Christ is intended to operate.

3. Integrative Term Paper: Due on April 11, 2024, by 9am; 50% of final mark. (This assignment is related to Learning Outcomes – 5.6 and 7)

A 15-page integrative term paper, which applies central ideas from the readings and class discussions to your own ministry.

The integrative paper should:

- Focus on the main thesis "what is the role of the church in communicating the message of the gospel in the postmodern context of North America."

- Draw on course material, including all assigned readings and lectures.
- Interact with key ideas about the nature of Gospel and its relation to culture.
- Provide your own personal reflections and constructive suggestions related to specific implications of a missional paradigm for holistic ministry.
- Suggest possible obstacles or assets in embracing such a paradigm.

F. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Three Book Reviews	30 %
Discussion/Presentation/Comments	20 %
Integrative Term Paper	50 %
Total Grade	100 %

H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, “Documenting Chicago Style”](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the Chicago Manual of Style or reference the [tip sheet, “Citing Sources in Theology”](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

I. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

J. VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS

The approach of the course is the integration of the mind (the academic), heart (transformation) and hands (right actions for mission): Scripture-based, Christ-centered and grace-empowered in a pastoral context. The course challenges students to think critically and encourages them to be intentional in seeking spiritual maturity that is sensitive to the needs of the world, especially the needs of those who are at the margins of society. It is only to the extent that one is willing to be transformed that one can truly become the vehicle of the transforming power of the Gospel. In terms of the academic journey, students are expected to demonstrate Christian integrity in their work.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week One (Jan 13)

Introduction: What is Culture?

Reading:

- Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, pp.1-38, 171-197
- Carson, *Christ and Culture*, 1-31

Week Two (Jan 20)

God's Mission – The Missiological Foundation of the Bible

Reading:

- Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, pp.89-140
- Guder, *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology*. pp. 1-19, 90-120

Week Three (Jan 27)

The Historical Survey: Analysis of Paradigm Shifts in the History of Mission

Reading:

- Bekele, Girma. *Mission, Evangelism and Theology: How David Bosch forged the synthesis*. Public Lecture Presented at Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, January 18, 2011 *
WILL BE POSTED

Week Four (Feb 3)

Factors Shaping Contemporary Global Missions: Voices and Current Trends

Reading:

- David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* *pp 357-371
- Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, pp 179-200
- Van Engen, Charles, *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), *pp.17-31

Week Five (Feb 10)

The Culture of the Early Church & Mission after Christendom

Readings:

- Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, Chapters 1&2

FEB 17 – FAMILY DAY NO CLASS READING DAYS: FEB 18-21

Week Six (Feb 24)

Modernity I

Readings:

- Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, Chapters 3&4

Week Seven (Mar 3)

Modernity II

Readings:

- Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, Chapters 5&6

- Carson, D.A. *Christ and Culture*, 67-114

Week Eight (Mar 10)

Postmodernity I

Readings:

- Selected Articles
- Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, pp.141-170; 211-244

Week Nine (Mar 17)

Postmodernity II

Readings:

- Carson, D.A. *Christ and Culture*, 115-144

Week Ten (Mar 24)

The Gospel and the Kingdom of God: The Gospel and Social Concern I

Readings:

- Sider, Ron. *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, Part II, A Biblical Perspective on Poor and Possessions
- Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church*, Chapters 1-4

Week Eleven (Mar 31)

The Gospel and the Kingdom of God: The Gospel and Social Concern II

Readings:

- “Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment”: A Joint Publication of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Fellowship. Available online:
<http://www.lausanne.org/en/connect/regions/europe.html?id=79>
- An Evangelical Manifesto: The Washington Declaration of Evangelical Identity and Public Commitment May 7, 2008; Washington, D.C. (will be posted)
- Wright, Christopher J., *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*, pp. 222-243.

Week Twelve (Apr 7) – Each student will do 5-10 Minutes Class Presentation

- 1. Vocation and Ministry in Daily Life/Vibrant Contextual Congregation***
- 2. The Church's Responsibility in Communicating the Gospel in Contemporary Canadian Context: With your local case in point***

Background reading:

- Sider, *Good News*, Chapters 9-11.
- Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, pp. 211-244

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

An asterisk marks books of major importance for the topic.

Adams, Michael. *Better Happy than Rich? Canadians, Money and the Meaning of Life*. Toronto, ON: Penguin, 2000.

*Adams, Michael. *Sex in the Snow: Canadian Social Values at the End of the Millennium*. Toronto, ON: Penguin, 1998.

Adeney, Bernard T. *Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multicultural World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1995.

Bakke, Ray. [A Theology as Big as the City](#). Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997.

Bauman, Zygmunt. [Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World](#). Cambridge: Polity, 2001.

_____. *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity, 1998.

_____. [Liquid Modernity](#). Cambridge: Polity, 2000.

Beeby, H.D. [Canon and Mission](#). Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.

Bevans, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992.

Bibby, Reginald. *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Stoddart, 2002.

_____. *Unknown Gods*. Toronto, ON: Stoddart, 1993.

_____. *Mosaic Madness*. Toronto, ON: Stoddart, 1990.

*Bosch, David. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991.

Brownson, James V. [Speaking the Truth in Love: New Testament Resources for a Missional Hermeneutic](#). Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998.

Carson, D.A. [Christ and Culture Revisited](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.

- * Clapp, Rodney. [*A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society*](#). Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996.
- Clark, David, ed. *Changing World, Unchanging Church? An Agenda for Christians in Public Life*. London: Mowbray, 1997.
- Dorr, Donal. *Mission in Today's World*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000.
- Drane, John. *The McDonaldization of the Church*. Macon, GA: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2000.
- Eagleton, Terry. [*The Idea of Culture*](#). Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000.
- Friedman, Thomas L. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. New York: Anchor Books, 1999.
- Friesen, Duane K. *Artists, Citizens and Philosophers: Seeking the Peace of the City*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2000.
- Fuellenbach, John. *Church: Community for the Kingdom*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002.
- _____. *The Kingdom of God: The Message of Jesus Today*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995.
- Gay, Craig M. *The Way of the (Modern) World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Gibbs, Eddie. [*Church Next: Quantum Changes in How we do Ministry*](#). Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000.
- Grenz, Stanley J. [*A Primer on Postmodernism*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Guder, Darrel. *Missional Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.
- _____. [*The Continuing Conversion of the Church*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.
- _____. *The Incarnation and the Church's Witness*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.
- _____. "Missional Theology for a Missionary Church." *Journal for Preachers* 22, no. 1. (Advent 1998).
- _____. "The Missional Center of Reformed Worship." *Reformed Liturgy and Music* 32, no. 2 (spring 1998): 100-104.

- _____. [Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.
- Hammond, Pete, R. Paul Stevens & Todd Svano. [The Marketplace Annotated Bibliography: A Christian Guide to Books on Work, Business and Vocation](#). Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002.
- Harvey, Barry. [Another City: An Ecclesiological Primer for a Post-Christian World](#). Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.
- Heath, Joseph. *The Efficient Society: Why Canada is as Close to Utopia as it Goes*. Toronto, ON: Penguin, 2001.
- Hegeman, David Bruce. [Plowing in Hope: Toward a Biblical Theology of Culture](#). Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1999.
- * Hunsberger, George R., and Craig van Gelder, eds. *Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Iyer, Pico. *The Global Soul: Jet Lag, Shopping Malls, and the Search for Home*. Toronto, ON: Random House, 2000.
- Jenkins, Philip. [The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Kenneson, Philip D. [Beyond Sectarianism: Re-Imagining Church and World](#). Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.
- Kirk, J. Andrew. [The Mission of Theology and Theology as Mission](#). Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997.
- _____. [What is Mission? Theological Explorations](#). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2000.
- Kostenberger, Andreas J., and Peter T. O'Brien. *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. [Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada](#). New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Lundin, Roger. [The Culture of Interpretation: Christian Faith and the Postmodern World](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Lyon, David. [Jesus in Disneyland: Religion in Postmodern Times](#). Oxford: Polity, 2000.

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- Oden, Thomas C. [*After Modernity...What?*](#) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990.
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- Page, Patricia N. *All God's People Are Ministers: Equipping Church Members for Ministry*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1993.
- Pickard, Stephen K. [*Liberating Evangelism: Gospel Theology and the Dynamics of Communication*](#). Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.
- Posterski, Don, and Gary Nelson. [*Future Faith Churches: Reconnecting with the Power of the Gospel for the 21st Century*](#). Kelowna, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1997.
- Postman, Neil. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. New York: Random House, 1992.

Rhodes, Stephen A. [*Where the Nations Meet: The Church in a Multicultural World*](#). Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998.

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Sampson, Philip, Vinay Samuel, and Chris Sugden, eds. [*Faith and Modernity*](#). Oxford: Regnum, 1994.

Samuel, Vinay, and Chris Sugden, eds. *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel*. Oxford: Regnum, 1999.

Sanneh, Lamin. [*Religion and the Variety of Culture*](#). Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996.

Sider, Ronald J., Philip N. Olson, and Heidi Rolland Unruh. *Churches that Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002.

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