

## **Our Mission from God: Evangelism**

Course of Study School 313

8:30 – 4:00 p.m. June 20, July 11, August 15

NTC Ministry Center, 500 Maplelawn Drive, Plano, TX 75075

Paragraph 202 of *The Book of Discipline* states that, “The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God.” The local church fulfills this mandate through its evangelistic outreach. The purpose of this course is twofold: to clarify and strengthen understanding of evangelism and its biblical and theological roots and to develop practical tools and techniques to lead local churches in the evangelistic task.

Books required: *The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor*, Scott J. Jones; *Faith Sharing*, H. Eddie Fox and George E. Morris (a new revised version is available through Upper Room books); *How to Reach Secular People*, George G. Hunter III; and *Evangelism in the Small Membership Church*, Royal Speidel. An additional very helpful resource which we will reference is Adam Hamilton’s *Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White*. You may also want to acquire *Vital Ministry in the Small-Membership Church, Insiders/Outsiders, a Theology of Evangelism* by Karen Spencer-Barnes and M. E. Barnes, which is downloadable from Upper Room Bookstore for a small fee. (It’s hard to locate the download, so I’ve pasted in the link:

[http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore/description.asp?item\\_id=195499](http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore/description.asp?item_id=195499))

### Assignments:

Session One: Read Bishop Jones’ *The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor* and the Barnes’ *Insighters/Outsiders* resource. Then select one of the following topics and write a 1000-1200-word paper explaining the writer’s perspective and how the insights are helpful in one’s own understanding and ministry. This is one paper on the topic you choose.

- Bishop Jones lifts up the Wesleyan tradition that love is God’s most basic attribute and offers numerous scriptural examples. How does this conviction support his contention that humanity’s problems can be solved and that God’s actions to bring wholeness and justice are invitational as they invite persons to participate in the reign of God? How do you understand the role of God’s love as the underpinning of the Christian evangelistic outreach?
- Is evangelism a process or a product? What is the relationship between evangelism and church growth? Summarize the issues in Chapter Four, and explain why you agree or disagree.
- What does Bishop Jones mean when he says that evangelism is enculturated, and how does this relate to the inherent inclusiveness of the Christian mission? Describe how he grounds his understandings in Incarnation. How does this relate to the challenges the church faces in evangelizing an incredibly diverse world?

- Discuss Chapter 7's discussion of evangelism and other religions. What is your response to Bishop Jones' question on page 175, "What should Christians do?"
- *Insiders/Outsiders* employs the *Igniting Ministry* paradigm of evangelism as an expression that *opens your heart, opens your mind, and opens doors*. How will the basic understandings and practical ideas be helpful (or not) in your ministry?

Week Two: Read *Faith Sharing* and *How to Reach Secular People*. Both books deal with evangelistic outreach in the modern world. Write a brief (500-word) summary of each book and its central arguments. Select one of the books and briefly describe how you plan to incorporate its insights into your own evangelistic efforts. (For extra credit, read the Adam Hamilton book and consider his insights into how to deal with the issues that divide us as a church and culture. How do we address these thorny issues while simultaneously reaching out to share the Gospel?)

Week Three: Read *Evangelism in the Small Membership Church*. Develop a four-week instructional series for your congregation incorporating insights from the book. You may use PowerPoint and other media. You will have an opportunity to present an overview of your series to the class.

This session will also include a presentation on the United Methodist Church's ReThink Church programming and how this partnership of the connectional and local church can strengthen your evangelism/disciple-making efforts.

***Grading:***

1. The most important criterion for grading written work will be completing the assignment according to directions given.
2. Clear, direct, and relevant responses.
3. Clear, careful, and coherent formulation of ideas.
4. Clear, concise, accurate, and careful writing.
5. All work must be original. Material drawn from published sources (including the Internet) without proper attribution will result in a failing grade.

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