Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology

Fall 2015

STSP 4725 – Church on the Move: Ecclesiology Applied

Contemporary ecclesial movements and their catechetical, pastoral and spiritual perspectives

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Course Description

Did the proliferation of religious movements during the twentieth century represent a new and dynamic element within the Church? What is the impact of this phenomenon at the start of the 21st century? Why do many ecclesial movements raise tensions and conflicts within the wider community?

During this course you will study new ecclesial movements from perspective of the Catholic experience in Europe through the socio-political upheaval of the last century, and then extend your study to examine some movements that originated in the Americas. Your scope will be learn about and understand lay ecclesial movements from within each movement by attempting to study the circumstances that led to their formation and development, “listening to” the testimony of their founders, leaders and members.

Since new ecclesial movements and communities continue to proliferate, it is not be possible to survey them all in the context of one semester course. Therefore, in the course we will concentrate on select movements that have an international impact. For your part, you study the historical origins of select movements, their expansion, their membership, and their growth. You will have the opportunity to investigate the evangelical and social motivations that have given rise to this phenomenon, examining the pastoral plans, the catechetical projects and the spiritual ideals at the foundation of each movement.

Format and Evaluation

Format: Lecture/discussion of assigned readings [3.0 units]. Evaluation: Participation in class discussion of assigned readings; research paper (20 pages) with summary presentation for class (20 minutes).

Timetables

Class schedule: Fall Semester, Monday, 09:40-12:30, Classroom 3. Office hours: Monday: 8:15-9:15, 13:00-16:30; Tuesday: 10:00-11:00.
Objectives

You will learn the inner workings of representative contemporary movements in the Church, especially in terms of their vision of faith and “their place in the world.”

You will survey differing models of Church by “hearing” the testimony of leaders and members of contemporary ecclesial movements and evaluating their impact on the surrounding Society and the wider Church.

You will learn methods for doing theological research and the ability to communicate this in a critical, research paper.

Evaluation:

Your final grade will be calculated on the basis of the completion of reading assignments, class participation, and written work.

In terms of participation, this presumes your active presence at all the class sessions, except in the case that you are sick or otherwise impeded and that notify the instructor before the scheduled class session. You are invited to participate in discussions, and special value will be given to group or class discussions when assigned readings are due.

In terms of written work, this will consist in the composition of a research paper (15/20 pages, which you will complete in three installments) or a class presentation (20 minutes, with a written outline, which you will make available to all the members of the class).

Theme for the research paper or class presentation project:

To fulfill the requirement of a research paper or class presentation, you will have the opportunity to investigate a contemporary ecclesial movement of your choice. In presenting the movement, you may concentrate on three questions: A) What practical service does the movement propose in its mission in Society or in the Church? B) What vision of faith does the movement accept (explicitly or otherwise)? C) What operative model of Church lies at the basis of the movement’s activities and contributions?

Scheduling

STSP 4725 is slated to meet on Thursday mornings, during the second and third class periods (9:40-12:30). During the first class meeting, we will firm up the instruction calendar and due dates for assignments. A commitment in Rome necessitates my absence during the second half of the Fall Term; some additional hours for classes will be required in the month of September (possibly two Saturdays) to facilitate covering the required academic hours, given that there will be no class sessions from mid-October to mid-November. Lecture schedules and reading deadlines will be finalized during the first week of class.
Texts and readings

Required Reading


Professor’s notes (available through Shattuck Square Copy Central; estimated cost $35, available in hard copy and digital, ebook versions).

Course Outline:

Introduction

Contemporary Scene: Youth and Church
The Quest for “Spirituality”
The Proliferation of Church Groups
Spiritual Movements and the Catholic Experience

1 - Catholic Action

Residue of 19th Century: restoration within ongoing revolution
Grass-roots responses and thrust toward unity
Local realities under Roman umbrella
Apostolic action forms a new ecclesiology

2 - The Catholic Worker

Early 20th Century: American Landscape
Philosophy and Radicalism: Dorothy Day and Pierre Maurin
Action to Movement and beyond

3 – Cursillos of Christianity

Spanish Civil war – the veneer of Christianity is rubbed off
Faith formation through witnessing
Christian formation prepares for pilgrimage in faith
Pilgrim journey becomes way of life
From experience to movement, and a new ecclesiology

4 - The Focolare Movement

World War II – Christ in the Bombing Shelter
Ecumenical Dimension of the Focolare Movement
Spirituality of Unity

5 – Communion and Liberation (CL)

Action calls for reflection in post-christian search for authenticity
Theological and educational foundations
Pastoral Applications

6 - New Catechumen Communities (Neocatechumenate)

Biblical movement seeps down to the grass roots: Exodus as personal
Phases in the Journey of conversion and commitment
Some problems raised by the New Catechumen Communities

7 - The Renewal in the Spirit (Charismatic Movement)

American Catholics between ecumenism and national identity
What is the Renewal in the Spirit?
Catechetical proposal, pastoral plan, spirituality

8 - Christian Volunteerism

Call to concrete contribution and mentality of service
Expansion of Volunteerism
Accompaniment as a model for Christian growth
Gospel Motivation

9 - Basic Ecclesial Communities (Small Christian Communities)

Latin American origins: fundamental option for the poor
Purpose, identity and organization
Ecclesiology of essentials and action
Social and Historic Role

10 - Evaluating Contemporary Movements in the Church

Ecclesial movements and the Church Universal
Theological models behind contemporary Movements
Models of a Church - World Relationship
Common Characteristics
Shadows and Light
Criteria for Discernment
Selected bibliography

Magisterium.

Pertinent Church documents are listed in chronological order. Unless otherwise noted, each document can be found on the website of the Holy See (Vatican).


Francis, Pope. “Vigil of Pentecost with the Ecclesial Movements.” Address of Holy Father Francis, St. Peter’s Square, Saturday, 18 May 2013.

_____. “Solemnity of Pentecost, Holy Mass with the Ecclesial Movements.” Homily of Pope Francis, St Peter’s Square, Sunday, 19 May 2013.

General works.


Catholic Worker Movement


**Opus Dei**


**Focolare Movement**


**Cursillo of Christianity**


**Communion and Liberation**


**Basic Ecclesial Communities.**


**The Neocatechumenal Way**


**Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Renewal**


**Volunteerism**


**Ecclesial Movements: Opposition and Controversies**


