**Controversies in Mission Syllabus and Discussion Questions**

**I. Description**

In this course you will reflect on Christian mission in the 21st century by exploring controversial issues related to mission theology, missionaries and the peoples and organizations involved in mission, and mission practice.

**II. Learning Outcomes**

*After completing this course, you will be able to:*

1. Articulate current controversial issues related to the theology, people, and practice of mission.

2. Evaluate the positions of mission thinkers and practitioners on different sides of the issues.

3. Construct a 21st century missiology based on Scripture, context, and current and historical practice.

**III. Books and Resources**

Scheuermann, Rochelle Cathcart and Smither, Edward L. *Controversies in Mission: Theology, People, and Practice of Mission in the 21st Century.* EMS Monograph 24. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2016.

[“Report to World Evangelical Alliance for Conveyance to Wycliffe Global Alliance and SIL International.”](http://www.worldea.org/images/wimg/files/2013_0429-Final%20Report%20of%20the%20WEA%20Independent%20Bible%20Translation%20Review%20Panel.pdf) (free download).

On mission theology, choose one (1):

Ott, Craig, ed. *The Mission of the Church: Five Views in Conversation.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.

Hesselgrave, David J. and Stetzer, Ed, eds. *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millenium.* Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.

On people of mission, choose one (1):

Borthwick, Paul. *Western Christians in Global Mission: What’s the Role of the North American Church?* Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2012.

Hibbert, Evelyn and Richard. *Leading Multi-Cultural Teams.* Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2014.

**IV. Assignments**

1. Choose three (3) of the issues raised in the *Controversies in Mission* monograph and write a 1500 word (about 5-6 page) position paper on each.

2. Choose one issue raised in the readings (different from assignment 1) and write a 3000-4000 word (about 12-15 pages) a longer position paper on the issue. Your writeup should accurately and charitably present the various sides of the issue and provide a constructive way forward for mission practice.

2. From your choices of Ott, Hesselgrave and Stetzer, Borthwick, and Hibbert, write two (2) 1000-word (about 4 page) critical book reviews. The review should communicate a fair and accurate understanding of the authors’ main points and also offer a critical evaluation of the book’s strengths and weaknesses.

**V. Assignment weights**

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| **Assignment** | **Weight** |
| Position Papers (3) | 45% (15% x 3) |
| Research Paper | 25% |
| Critical Book Reviews (2) | 30% (15% x 2) |

**VI. Course Schedule (forthcoming)**

*Controversies in Mission: Theology, People, and Practice of Mission in the 21st Century*

Discussion Questions

Chapter 1: Controversy on Paul’s First Missionary Journey (Robert Priest)

1. What is your reaction to Priest’s claim about the apostle’s name that change—that he was Paul the missionary instead of Paul the convert? How does this differ from the historic mission practice of giving converts “Christian” names?

2. Respond to Priest’s claim that John Mark left the mission team because of its success—that Gentiles were believing the gospel.

3. How does Priest’s admonition from Proverbs 19:12 (“It is not good to have zeal without knowledge”) apply to the task of mission and missiology, including navigating controversial issues?

4. Consider the eight implications for navigating controversies that Priest gleans from the experience of Paul the missionary. Which point do you find most significant in your ministry or work?

Chapter 2: The Case for Prioritism (Chris Little)

1. What is holism? What is prioritism? Given what you have read, how should we define Christian mission?

2. How does our understanding of the Kingdom of God influence this discussion?

3. How does one’s view of mission in Word and deed affect how they practically engage in mission and in how financial resources are allocated in the work of mission?

Chapter 3: Carl F.H. Henry’s Regenerational Model of Evangelism and Social Concern (Jerry Ireland)

1. How does Henry’s understanding of revelation inform the discussion on evangelism and social concern?

2. What were Henry’s arguments for prioritizing proclamation in the work of mission?

3. Ireland argues that Henry advocated the priority of proclamation on a macro level instead of a micro one. What are the implications for this in the work of mission?

Chapter 4: Reconsidering the Formative Role of Ethics within Missiological Practice (Greg Mathias)

1. How do you respond to Mathias’ claim that pragmatism drives missiology? Do his examples of the Church Growth Movement and marketing missions support this claim?

2. How does a proper pneumatology lead to a more virtuous practice of mission?

3. What are the practical implications of re-envision the Great Commission as a formative endeavor?

Chapter 5: Power Play in the Korean American Church (Eunice Hong)

1. What are the biggest things that strike you about the dynamics of first- and second- generation Korean pastors and their congregations?

2. What seem to be the root causes for the misuse of power and control on the part of Korean pastors?

3. What seems to be the way forward for pastoral leadership in first- and second- generation Korean congregations? What might other immigrant churches learn from this case study?

Chapter 6: Submission or Cooperation (David Dunaetz)

1. What is the submission paradigm? What are its strengths and weaknesses for mission organization health?

2. What is the cooperation paradigm? What are its strengths and weaknesses for mission organization health?

3. How do the lessons from these two paradigms inform missionary organization health moving forward, especially as organizations become increasingly multi-cultural?

Chapter 7: The Controversial Image of the US American in missions? (Kenneth Nehrbass)

1. How has the media shaped images of US Americans living abroad, including cross-cultural missionaries?

2. How do you respond to the claim that the “ugly American” is no more real than the “ugly Canadian, Pakistani,” etc.?

3. Of the possibilities that Nehrbass proposes for responding to anti-western sentiment while engaging in mission (self-loathing, challenging the perception, leveraging the perception, distancing from the perception) what do you find most useful and constructive?

Chapter 8: A Continuing Role for Western Bible Translators? (David Beine)

1. What premises from Gravelle support a local translation model?
2. What are the dangers of a primarily local Bible translation model?
3. What cautions does Samuel Escobar bring to this discussion?
4. Do you think there is a continued role for Western Bible translators? Why or why not?

Chapter 9: Up from the Pit: Immigration, Deportation, Pain and Hope (Miriam Adeney)

1. What common themes are found in the three immigration stories told by Adeney?
2. What Scriptural principles does Adeney bring to bear on the issue of immigration?
3. What kinds of ministry does Adeney propose might be among and because of immigrants?
4. How does Adeney’s article challenge or affirm your own thoughts about immigration?

Chapter 10: The Necessity of Retaining Father and Son Terminology in Scripture Translations for Muslims (Mark Hausfeld, et al.)

1. What are the issues that Hausfeld et al. believe arise from using specialized translations for Muslims?
2. How do Hausfeld et al answer their own questions “Can the gospel of Jesus Christ be properly understood apart from the use of familiar language? Was Jesus’ identity as Messiah intrinsically bound to His familiar relationship as a Son to God, His Father?”
3. After reading Chapter 11, where do you find Hausfeld et al. to be strong? On which points are they weak?

Chapter 11: The World Evangelical Alliance Global Review Panel Report: A Sympathetic Dissenting Opinion (Kevin Higgins)

1. In what ways does Higgins agree with the WEA on translations for Muslims?
2. Identify at least three reasons why Higgins disagrees with the WEA Global Review Panel Report. Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. In light of Chapter 10, do you think Higgins has made his case? Where is he strong? Where is he weak?

Chapter 12: Consequences of the Divine Terms Controversy in Bible Translation (Mark Naylor)

1. What does Naylor mean by the “Fifth Context?”
2. What does Naylor argue to be the issues that have led to the Divine Familial Translation controversy?
3. What does Naylor suggest as a way forward? Why does he see the controversy as beneficial to translation?

Chapter 13: Teaching Bible Interpretation in Intercultural Contexts (Larry Caldwell)

1. What does Caldwell take issue with in terms of Biblical interpretation? Do you find this to be true in your own setting?
2. What steps does Caldwell suggest for Bible interpretation?
3. What strengths and weaknesses do you find in Caldwell’s proposal? Will his methodology work?

Chapter 14: Saving the Future of Evangelical Missions (David Hesselgrave)

1. In the 20th century, Western missions went in two main trajectories. What were the strengths and weaknesses of each trajectory? How have these helped or hurt Church mission in the 21st century?
2. What was Roland Allen’s “Resubmission” proposal? How does Hesselgrave apply this “resubmission” idea to the future of missions?
3. Why does Hesselgrave think faith statements are so important in missions? Do you agree?
4. Do you agree with Hesselgrave that a “tsunami” is coming? If so, how does Hesselgrave and how do you answer the question “How can the evangelical movement survive the coming tsunami and best preserve biblical missions?”