



WSBM 140 CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY & LIVING

Bryan Born, DTh (instructor of record)
 With Willingdon Pastoral Staff
 Winter 2024

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 Tuesdays 7 – 9 PM

Equipping the people of God – head, heart and hands – through the Word of God, helping them know Jesus personally and carry on his mission.

Course Description

This WSBM foundational course introduces the core theological convictions of our church family within the larger theological framework of Jesus' Lordship over all of life. Students will (1) develop a healthy approach to doing theology, (2) examine the articles of the MB Confession of Faith and the key biblical texts that define these articles, and (3) reflect on the tangible impact of these convictions on the corporate church body, as well the lives of individual church members.

Course Objectives

1. To examine carefully all the articles of the *Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith* and the key biblical texts that inform these articles;
2. To reflect on the practical implications of these convictions on the corporate church body, as well as the lives of individual church members;
3. To develop a healthy understanding of how to engage theological concepts within the church body.

Required Reading

- *Confession of Faith of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches: Commentary and Pastoral Application*. Kindred Press, 2019.

Recommended Reading

- Bates, Matthew. *The Gospel Precisely: Surprisingly Good News about Jesus Christ the King*. Renew, 2021.
- Bartholomew, Craig G. and Michael W. Goheen. *The True Story of the Whole World: Finding Your Place in the Biblical Drama*. Faith Alive, 2009.
- Boyd, Gregory A. and Paul R. Eddy. *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology*. 2nd ed., Baker Academic, 2002.
- Grenz, Stanley J., et al. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. IVP, 1999.
- McKnight, Scot. *King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited*.

- Zondervan, 2011.
- Middleton, J. Richard. *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology*. Baker Academic, 2014.
 - Wright, N. T. *How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels*. HarperOne, 2012.

Student Projects & Grading

1. Weekly Confessional Reflections (40%)

In this course, students will prepare for each class by (i) reading in advance the relevant *Articles* and the accompanying *Commentary* and *Pastoral Application* sections of the *Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith*, and (ii) submitting prior to class an online weekly reflection for each article (minimum 100 words) on the course Moodle site.

The reflection should respond to this question: “*How does the present article affect the practice/life of a local church corporately and individually?*”

Note: The first weekly reflections on Articles 1 and 2 due are at the same time as Articles 3-5.

2. “Why a Confession of Faith?” Paper (25%)

Students are required to read the new *Introduction to the MB Confession of Faith (2023)* found at

https://www.mennonitebrethren.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/FL001_cof_Introduction2023.pdf, and then answer the following questions:

- a. What stood out to you as important regarding the way the *MB Confession of Faith* is structured in terms of its theological themes (see first four pages)?
- b. How should the MB Confession of Faith function in your personal life, as well as within the community of Willingdon Church (or your home church)?
- c. How would you describe the difference between ‘creedal beliefs’ and ‘shared convictions’?
- d. How should we handle differences in belief within the church body?

The paper should be approximately 3-4 pages (double spaced).

Due Date: February 27, 2024

3. Healthy Theological Discussion - Baptism Debate Report (25%)

For this paper, students will read a chapter from Greg Boyd and Paul Eddy’s *Across the Spectrum* (provided on the course Moodle site), which presents two opposing views on baptism (within evangelical theology).

For each of the two views on Baptism, students will write a *summary* of the arguments (beginning with the *thesis/main point*), *which the proponents of each view could read and consider to be an accurate and robust presentation of their view*. Your Baptism Debate Report should include the biblical texts cited in support of each view, mention the arguments against each view, and offer your reflection on which view you

believe is most biblical. This Report should be approximately 3 pages double-spaced.

Due Date: March 26, 2024

4. Memorization (10%)

The *Apostles' Creed* (available on the course Moodle site) is to be recited from memory at a meeting (in-person or over Zoom) with Pastor Bryan Born by the week of March 12 or earlier. Students are responsible for scheduling a time with Pastor Bryan Born in advance.

Course Requirements Summary:

Assignments	Due Date	Value
Weekly Reflections	Weekly	40%
Why a Confession?	February 27	25%
Memorization	March 12 (week of)	10%
Baptism Debate Paper	March 26	25%

Course Outline

Date	Weekly Reflections Due	Topic	Assignments Due
Feb 6	Articles 1-2	Introduction the <i>Confession</i> - <i>The Apostle's Creed</i> - <i>The Nicene Creed</i> "God" "Revelation of God" (Pastor Bryan Born)	Confessional Reflections (every week)
Feb 13	Articles 3-5	"Creation and Humanity" "Sin and Evil" "Salvation" (Pastor Richard Young)	
Feb 20	Articles 6-7,10	"Nature of the Church" "Mission of the Church" "Discipleship" (Pastor Ray Harms Wiebe)	
Feb 27	Articles 8-9	"Christian Baptism" "Lord's Supper" (Pastor Angus Sheung)	Why a Confession?
Mar 5	Articles 11,14	"Marriage, Singleness, and Family" "The Sanctity of Human Life" (Pastor Ruben Heyn)	
Mar 12	Articles 12,13	Society and State"	Memorization

		Love and Nonresistance” (Ken Esau, CCMBBC Director of NFLT)	
Mar 19	Articles 15-16	“Stewardship” (TBA) “Work, Rest, and the Lord’s Day” (Elisangela Molinari)	
Mar 26	Articles 17-18	“Christianity and Other Faiths” (Pastor Bryan Born) “Christ’s Final Triumph” (Pastor Brody Loewen)	Healthy Theological Discussion

Additional Resources

- Tennent, Timothy C. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*. Zondervan, 2007.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God’s People: A Biblical Theology of the Church’s Mission*. Zondervan, 2010.

On the Lord’s Prayer and Creeds

- Wright, N. T. *The Lord and His Prayer*. Eerdmans, 2014.
- McGowan, Andrew B. *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective*. Baker Academic, 2014.

On Conversion

- Smith, Gordon T. *Beginning Well: Christian Conversion & Authentic Transformation*. IVP, 2001.

On Creation

- Bournas-Prediger, Steven. *For The Beauty Of The Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*. 2nd ed., Baker Academic, 2010.
- Richter, Sandra L. *Stewards of Eden: What Scripture Says about the Environment and Why It Matters*. IVP, 2020.

On Sin and Atonement

- Anderson, Gary A. *Sin: A History*. Yale University Press, 2009.
- McKnight, Scot. *A Community Called Atonement*. Abingdon, 2007.
- Morris, Leon. *The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance*. IVP, 1997.

On the Trinity

- Collins, Paul M. *The Trinity: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2008.

On Baptism

- *Baptism: Three Views*, edited by David F. Wright, IVP Academic, 2009.
- *Understanding Four Views on Baptism*, edited by John H. Armstrong, Zondervan, 2007.

On the Lord's Supper

- *The Lord's Supper: Five Views*, edited by Gordon T. Smith, IVP Academic, 2008.
- Wright, N. T. *The Meal Jesus Gave Us: Understanding Holy Communion*. Westminster John Knox Press. 1999.

On Nonresistance & on the Church and the State

- *The Power of the Lamb*, edited by John E. Toews and Gordon Nickel, Kindred Press, 1986.
- Ellul, Jacques. *The Subversion of Christianity*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Wipf & Stock, 1986.

On Marriage and Singleness

- Parrott, Les and Leslie Parrott. *Relationships: How to Make Bad Relationships Better and Good Relationships Great*. Zondervan, 1998.
- Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. IVP Academic, 2009.
- Hill, Wesley. *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality*. Zondervan, 2016.
- Bennett, David. *A War of Loves: The Unexpected Story of a Gay Activist Discovering Jesus*. Zondervan, 2018.

On Work, Rest, Sabbath, and Money

- Buchanan, Mark. *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath*. Thomas Nelson, 2006.
- Stevens, R. Paul. *Work Matters: Lessons from Scripture*. Eerdmans, 2012.
- Stevens, R. Paul. *Money Matters: Faith, Life, and Wealth*. Eerdmans, 2021.

On New Creation

- Wright, N. T. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. HarperOne, 2008.