

P – 4.0 A Reading List in Reformed Theology

2a

Introduction:

This syllabus is designed to introduce candidates who have not attended Presbyterian seminaries to many of the issues and to some of the most important primary and secondary literature of the Reformed theological tradition.

It is assumed that each group of selections will be carefully read and that a critical response paper will be submitted to the mentor appointed by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. While the form of these responses may be negotiated, a recommended format would include the following: (1) a brief summary of each selection; (2) a comparison or dialogue among the selections concerning one or more issue that appears in each; (3) a position statement by the candidate locating himself or herself within or perhaps apart from that dialogue.

There are seven sections to this syllabus. It is recommended that the readings in each section be read in the order indicated. The schedule for the reading and response papers will be determined by the mentor and candidate, but it is intended that the number and difficulty of these selections are similar to what might be expected in a semester-long independent study course at the seminary level, and that these assignments will be taken with a corresponding seriousness. All of these books should be available in a seminary library.

Reading Assignments:

Section 1: The Historical Development of the Reformed Tradition

Issues: These introductory readings are intended to give the candidate an understanding of the historical development and breadth of the Reformed theological tradition.

William C. Placher, *A History of Christian Theology*, pp. 101 - 199, 219 - 236, 255 - 270.

Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin, Geneva and the Reformation*, pp. 1 - 24.

John Leith, *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*, p. 17 - 55.

William Stacy Johnson and John Leith, *Reformed Reader*, vol. 1, pp. xix - xxxi.

Section 2: Christology and the Faith of the Ecumenical Church

Issues: Following two readings from creedal and historical sources, the remaining readings in this section offer four contemporary Reformed approaches to the doctrine of Christ. The Second Helvetic Confession declared, "We abhor the impious doctrine of Arius and the Arians against the Son of God" (*Book of Confessions* 5.063). Why did such strong language seem to be necessary? How would our salvation be affected if Jesus was not fully one with the Father? Can the truth represented in the classical creeds be restated effectively in other language, or would any attempts at translation result in changing the doctrine about Christ in some essential way?

Nicene Creed, *Book of Confessions* 1.1 – 1.3

William C. Placher, *A History of Christian Theology*, pp. 68 - 87.

Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christian Faith, An Introduction to the Study of the Faith*, pp. 280 - 293.

Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, vol. 1, pp. 120-142.

William Stacy Johnson, *The Mystery of God*, pp. 100 - 125.

William C. Placher and David Willis-Watkins, *Belonging to God: A Commentary on A Brief Statement of Faith*, pp. 51 - 69.

Section 3: Scripture, the Word, and the Church

Issues: All Christians affirm the authority of Scripture, but within the Reformed tradition there are different ways of describing that authority, ranging from equating the words of Scripture with the words of God (Turretin) to identifying Scripture as the humanly-written witness to God's self-revelation in Christ (Barth). Where does the Presbyterian Confession of 1967 stand?

Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin, Geneva and the Reformation*, pp. 221 - 260.

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, sections I.6.1 - I.7.5.

François Turretin, selection from *Institutio theologiae elencticae*, in *Reformed Reader*, vol. 1, pp. 31 - 32.

Westminster Confession of Faith, *Book of Confessions* 6.001 - 6.010.

Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, pp. 3 - 36.

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I.1, pp. 99 - 124.

Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth*, pp. 34 - 44.

Section 4: God's Gracious Election

Issues: In contrast to other Christians, Reformed Christians have wanted to say that our salvation is God's doing from beginning to end, and that our faith is the product of the working of grace within us and not its cause. But is there any way of affirming this without also saying that God has arbitrarily determined who will and who will not be saved?

Augustine, *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love*, sections XCV - C.

Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin, Geneva and the Reformation*, pp. 270 - 281.

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, sections III.21.1 - III.24.5.

Second Helvetic Confession, *Book of Confessions* 5.052 - 5.061.

1903 Declaratory Statement of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., appended to the Westminster Confession of Faith, *Book of Confessions* 6.191 - 6.193.

Karl Barth, selection from *Church Dogmatics*, in *Reformed Reader*, vol. 2, pp. 85 - 89.

Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth*, pp. 84 - 98.

Section 5: Baptism, the Sacrament of Rebirth

Issues: A Sacrament may be defined as a human action instituted by Jesus, through which God accomplishes something that humans cannot do. What is the relationship between the symbol and the divine action (the "sign" and the "seal") in baptism? Can infant baptism still be maintained when many who have been baptized are not being raised in the faith?

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, sections IV.15.1 - IV.15.18; IV.16.1 - 16.

B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin*, pp.1 -20, 87 - 123.

Scots Confession, *Book of Confessions* 3.21.

Second Helvetic Confession, *Book of Confessions* 5.169 - 5.192.

H. J. Wotherspoon and J. M. Kirkpatrick, *A Manual of Church Doctrine According to the Church of Scotland*, 2nd ed., pp. 14 - 38.

Karl Barth, selection from *Church Dogmatics*, in *Reformed Reader*, vol. 2, pp. 272-273.

Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth*, pp. 239 - 243.

William H. Willimon, *Peculiar Speech: Preaching to the Baptized*, pp. 1 - 23.

Directory for Worship, *Book of Order* W-2.3000 - 2.3014.

Section 6: The Eucharist, the Sacrament of Christ's Presence

Issues: Presbyterian debates about the frequency of communion often hinge on one's view about what happens in the Sacrament: is the action of the Lord's Supper a symbolic representation of Christ's sacrifice which requires our attentive response in order to be effective, or is the Eucharist primarily a divine act by which Jesus becomes present to us independently of our ability to perceive that presence? What does it mean to speak of "the real presence of Christ"?

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, sections IV.17.1 - 10.

B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin*, pp. 124 - 190.

John Nevin, selection from *The Mystical Presence*, in *Reformed Reader*, vol. 2, pp. 277 - 280.

Scots Confession, *Book of Confessions* 3.21.

Second Helvetic Confession, *Book of Confessions* 5.169 - 5.184; 5.193 - 5.210.

H. J. Wotherspoon and J. M. Kirkpatrick, *A Manual of Church Doctrine According to the Church of Scotland*, 2nd ed., pp. 14 - 21, 38 - 47.

Directory for Worship, *Book of Order* W-2.400 - 2.4012.

Section 7: The Christian, the Church, and the World

Issues: What is the church's responsibility for and mission to the world in which it lives? What does it mean for a Christian to be in the world but not deriving her identity from the world? Does the secularization of the world around us require a different stance on the part of Christians from what seemed to be appropriate when culture appeared to be more Christian?

Form of Government, *Book of Order* G-1.0200; G-3.000 - 3.0401.

Jack Rogers, *Presbyterian Creeds*, pp. 175 - 191

The Theological Declaration of Barmen, *Book of Confessions* 8.01 - 8.28.

Karl Barth, "The Christian Community and the Civil Community" in Clifford Green, *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom*, pp. 265 - 296.

Confession of 1967, *Book of Confessions* 9.31 - 47; 9.53 - 56

Directory for Worship, *Book of Order* W-7.1000 - 7.7001.

Brief Statement of Faith, *Book of Confessions* 10.1 - 10.6.

William C. Placher and David Willis-Watkins, *Belonging to God: A Commentary on A Brief Statement of Faith*, pp. 159-183.

Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, *Resident Aliens*, pp. 15 - 48.

Adapted from a syllabus prepared
for the CPM of the Presbytery of New Hope
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Version 2a Rev. 11/19/01