

LIDLAW COLLEGE

Te Wananga Amorangi

R222.830 Conversion and Personhood

NQF Level: 8
Credit Value: 30

DELIVERY MODE: Laidlaw Auckland Campus, Mode 2

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course draws on insights from psychology, philosophy, and neurophysiology in exploring the interrelation of the Christian doctrines of conversion and human personhood within a Trinitarian theological framework. Along the way it critiques various historical and contemporary doctrines of conversion and Christian and secular theories of personhood. It examines the outworking of Reformed doctrine and the consequences of Enlightenment thinking for Evangelicalism while exploring alternative Protestant theologies of conversion and personhood. Theologically, this work centers on Christian understandings of human personhood as both created and redeemed and as Christologically defined, and on the work of the Holy Spirit.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- a) Explain and evaluate understandings of personhood from psychology, philosophy and neurophysiology and relate these to biblical understandings of personhood.
- b) Review and critique Enlightenment understandings of personhood and show to what extent they have influenced subsequent Christian theology and underpin contemporary Christian viewpoints.
- c) Critically assess how a Trinitarian theology of personhood challenges various prevalent contemporary Christian and secular understandings of personhood.
- d) Review and evaluate historical and contemporary social-science and theological understandings of conversion.
- e) Articulate a Trinitarian perspective on conversion and personhood.
- f) Explain and critically assess how scientific and social science understandings of personhood contribute to theologies of personhood and conversion.

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R222.830 Conversion and Personhood
Course Assessment and Delivery

Campus: Auckland
Lecturer: Sue Patterson

Summer Semester, 2014-15
NQF Level 8, 30 Credits

Lecture dates and times: 9am-4pm (including breaks), 12-16 January

CONTENT OVERVIEW:

1. What is human personhood?

- a. Personhood from the perspectives of psychology, philosophy and neurophysiology.
- b. Biblical understandings of human personhood.
- c. Enlightenment understandings of personhood. To what extent do they still influence today's world and underpin contemporary Christian viewpoints?

2. Personhood, divine and human.

- a. Being in Christ as human participation in God's triune personhood. Human personhood defined trinitarianly.
- b. How a Trinitarian theology of personhood challenges various prevalent contemporary Christian and secular understandings of personhood.
- c. Human personhood as *converted* personhood.

3. What is Christian conversion?

- a. The Enlightenment legacy in various theologies of conversion and contemporary social science.
- b. Biblical understandings of conversion in relation to trinitarianly defined personhood.

4. Thinking together personhood and conversion:

- a. A Trinitarian perspective on conversion and personhood in relation to perspectives from science and social science.
- b. The role of these models in explaining God's workings in creation, the person and saving work of Christ and the agency of the Holy Spirit.
- c. Conversion, personhood, community, and mission. A Trinitarian economy of conversion and personhood in community. Converted personhood, worship, and witness.

c. ASSESSMENT TASKS AND DUE DATES:

1. Book Review (10%), 1500 words, learning outcomes b, c, due Friday midnight 9 January

Write a book review of Colin Gunton's, *The One, The Three, and the Many*. Your review should summarize accurately the book's content and offer critical analysis.

2. Essay 1 (40%): 3500 words, learning outcomes a, b, c. Due date: Friday midnight 27 February.

Topic:

Choose two perspectives on human personhood from the areas of theology, psychology, philosophy and neurophysiology covered in class (do not choose two from the same area). Critically evaluate (1) the extent to which these two perspectives cohere, (2) how each of these perspectives relates to biblical models of personhood, and (3) the ways in which they either support or undermine a Trinitarian theology of personhood.

3. Essay 2 (50%): 4000 words, learning outcomes d, f. Due date: Wednesday midnight 1 April.

Topic:

Write a report on the post-Enlightenment history of secular social-science perspectives and Christian theologies of conversion. Critique the impact of these understandings on contemporary Christian theologies of conversion. Evaluate how insights on human personhood from psychology and neurophysiology contribute to the development of a Trinitarian theology of conversion.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT:

Book review:

- a) Comprehensive review of book's contents.
- b) Cogent report on the book's critique of Enlightenment understandings of personhood.
- c) Lucid exposition of the author's view on how a Trinitarian theology of personhood challenges various prevalent contemporary Christian and secular understandings of personhood.
- d) Good presentation (grammar, spelling etc.) and accurate footnoting of passages.

Essay 1:

- a) Perspectives lucidly described and contrasted.
- b) Key biblical understandings identified and described.
- c) Connections between theologies, secular perspectives, and biblical understandings identified and evaluated.
- d) Theologies and perspectives related insightfully to Trinitarian theology of personhood
- e) Presentation (spelling, grammar etc.), bibliography and footnoting appropriate to course level.

Essay 2:

- a) Theologies and perspectives lucidly described and contrasted.
- b) Contemporary theological impact of perspectives critically evaluated.
- c) Insights on personhood from psychology and neurophysiology critically evaluated.
- d) Insightful Trinitarian theological thinking in relation to personhood and conversion.
- e) Presentation (spelling, grammar etc.), bibliography and footnoting appropriate to course level.

LEARNING HOURS:

Lectures	30
Pre-Reading and book review	60
Further Reading	100
Essay 1	55
Essay 2	55
TOTAL	300

f. TEXTBOOKS:

Gunton, Colin. E. *The One, the Three, and the Many: God, Creation, and the Culture of Modernity*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Green, Joel B. *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible*. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2008.

Markham, Paul N. *Rewired: Exploring Religious Conversion*. Eugene OR: Pickwick, 2007.

[Other short readings may be added]

g. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Anderson, Ray S. *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology*. Pasadena CA: Fuller, 1982.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *The Cost of Discipleship*. London: SCM, 1959.
- Cortez, Marc, *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies*. London: T & T Clark, 2008. [available as e-book]
- Grenz, Stanley J. *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Jeeves, Malcolm, *Minds, Brains, Souls and Gods*. Downers Grove IL: IVP, 2013.
- Jeeves, Malcolm, (ed.) *Rethinking Human Nature: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2011.
- Jeeves, Malcom, (ed.), *From Cells to Souls and Beyond: Changing Portraits of Human Nature*. Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2004. [available as e-book]
- Larsen, Timothy and Daniel J. Treier (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kerr, Fergus, *Theology After Wittgenstein*. 2nd ed. London: SPCK, 1997.
- McFadyen, Alistair L. *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Marshall, Bruce. D. *Trinity and Truth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Macmurray, John, *Persons in Relation*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1999.
- Macmurray, John, *The Self as Agent*. New edition. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1991.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. Westminster: John Knox Press, 1996.
- Patterson, Sue. *Realist Christian Theology in a Postmodern Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Rambo, Lewis. R. *Understanding Religious Conversion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Rolnicks, Philip, *Person, Grace and God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Swöbel, Christoph and Gunton, Colin E., *Persons - Divine and Human*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992.
- Smith, Gordon T., *Transforming Conversion: Rethinking the Language and Contours of Christian Initiation*. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Stackhouse, John. G. Jr. (ed.) *What Does it Mean to be Saved? Broadening Evangelical Horizons of Salvation*. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2002.
- Suchocki, Marjorie Hewitt. *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology*. New York: Continuum, 1999.
- Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Torrance, Alan J. *Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996.
- Van Inwagen, Peter and Dean Zimmerman (eds.) *Persons: Human and Divine*. Oxford UK: Clarendon Press, 2007.
- Zizioulas, John, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997.