

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE 639 Sp. St.: The Openness of God Debate

James H. Railey

Fall 2002

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will address the issue of the Openness of God view that is currently a major item of controversy in American Evangelicalism. The Openness of God view will be examined in light of the biblical view of God, the traditional Evangelical approach to the doctrine of God, and the unique contributions of Pentecostalism to the doctrine of God.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon the completion of this course, the student will have demonstrated in class discussions, papers, and examinations

1. A basic familiarity with the biblical view of God.
2. An understanding of the view of God presented in the Openness of God position.
3. An understanding of the traditional Evangelical approach to the doctrine of God.
4. An appreciation for the contributions of Pentecostalism to the doctrine of God.
5. A greater understanding of and ability to present the doctrine of God to those to whom they will minister.

TEXTBOOKS

Boyd, Gregory A. God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.

Pinnock, Clark H. Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001.

Ware, Bruce A. God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000.

COURSE OUTLINE

Introduction

1. The Openness of God
2. The Traditional Evangelical View of God
3. The Biblical View of God
4. The Pentecostal View of God

METHODOLOGY

The primary method of instruction will be lecture by the professor. Time will be made for discussion on material germane to the course. The student will participate in the learning experience in the class hour through taking notes, discussion, preparing a major paper, and interaction with the assigned texts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. The student is expected to attend all class sessions. "Barring a serious medical emergency, credit cannot be granted for courses in which a student has been absent beyond the equivalent of more than 2 weeks . . ." (2002-2003 Catalog, 71).
2. The student is expected to submit a 3-5 page typed critique of the Boyd book on September 13, 2002. The critique should evidence graduate level interaction with the argument of the book. The student should also be prepared to participate in class discussion of the text on that day.
3. The student is expected to submit a 3-5 page typed critique of the Pinnock book on October 4, 2002. The critique should evidence graduate level interaction with the argument of the book. The student should also be prepared to participate in class discussion of the text on that day.
4. The student is expected to submit a 3-5 page typed critique of the Ware book on October 25, 2002. The critique should evidence graduate level interaction with the argument of the book. The student should also be prepared to participate in class discussion of the text on that day.
5. The student should submit a 15-page research paper on a subject from the list to be provided by the professor. The paper should conform in style to A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, (current edition), by Kate L. Turabian, using footnotes for resource documentation. (NOTE: Students in the Counseling Programs may use the author-date format for documenting resource usage parenthetically presented in chapter 10 of Turabian). The paper will be graded on content, composition, and style. The paper is due November 27, 2002.
6. The student should sustain a mid-term and final exam (the final will not be comprehensive). Both exams will be essay in nature and, except for a personal emergency, must be taken on the assigned dates. The mid-term is scheduled for Wednesday, October 16, 2002, and the final exam is scheduled for Wednesday, December 18, 2002, 7:30-10:00 a.m.

COURSE GRADING

The grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Book Critiques	25%
Exams	50%
Paper	25%

Grades are recorded and averaged on the basis of the following grade scale: A=12; A-=11; B+=10; B=9; B-=8; C+=7; C=6; C-=5; D+=4; D=3; D-=2; F=1.

All assigned work for the course must be submitted for the student to receive a passing grade for the course. The grade of I (Incomplete) may be granted only for extenuating circumstances upon the written request of the student. Except in the case of severe extenuating circumstances the granting of the grade of I will mean that the course grade, assigned when the work is completed, will be reduced by one letter grade.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- _____. *The Case for Freewill Theism: A Philosophical Assessment*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- Basinger, David, and Randall Basinger. *Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986.
- Bloesch, Donald G. *God the Almighty: Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Love*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.
- Boyd, Gregory A. *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- _____. *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000.
- _____. *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- Boyd, Gregory A., and Edward K. Boyd. *Letters From a Skeptic*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Press, 1994.
- Caneday, A. B. "The Implausible God of Open Theism: A Response to Gregory A. Boyd's *God of the Possible*." *Journal of Biblical Apologetics* 1 (2000): 66-87.
- Clayton, Philip. *The Problem of God in Modern Thought*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Cobb, John B., Jr., and Clark H. Pinnock. *Searching for an Adequate God: A Dialogue Between Process and Free-Will Theists*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Fretheim, Terence E. *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1994.

- Geisler, Norman L. *Creating God in the Image of Man?* Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1997.
- Helm, Paul. *The Providence of God*. Contours of Christian Theology, ed. Gerald Bray. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
- Helseth, Paul K. "On Divine Ambivalence: Open Theism and the Problem of Particular Evils." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44:3 (September 2001): 493-511.
- Olson, Roger E., "Evangelical Theology and the Openness of God." *Christianity Today* 39 (January 9, 1995): 30-32.
- Pinnock, Clark H. "God as Most-Moved Mover: How the Pentecostal Theology of Experience is Changing Our Understanding of God." *Worship Leader* IX:6 (November-December 2000): 32-39.
- _____. "God Limits His Foreknowledge." In *Predestination and Free Will*, ed. David and Randall Basinger, 156-158. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986.
- _____. *Grace Unlimited*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1975.
- _____. *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001.
- Pinnock, Clark H., ed. *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
- Picirilli, Robert E. "An Arminian Response to John Sanders' *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44:3 (September 2001): 467-491.
- _____. "Foreknowledge, Freedom, and The Future." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43:2 (June 2000): 259-271.
- Piper, John. "Why the Glory of God is at Stake in the Foreknowledge Debate." *Modern Reformation* 8:5 (September-October 1999): 39-43.
- Rice, Richard. "Divine Foreknowledge and Free-Will Theism." In *The Grace of God, The Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock, 121-139. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989.
- _____. *God's Foreknowledge & Man's Free Will*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1985.
- Sanders, John. *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

_____. "Why Simple Foreknowledge Offers No More Providential Control Than the Openness of God." *Faith and Philosophy* 14:1 (January 1997): 26-40.

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Wright, R. K. McGregor. *No Place for Sovereignty: What's Wrong with Freewill Theism*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

SPECIFIC DATA

Prepared by James H. Railey, July 2002.