Exposition of New Testament Themes: The Life of Christ
TTBE 732 ED
Course Syllabus
Fall, 2009

COURSE INFORMATION

Professor: Philip Taylor
Email: Philip.S.Taylor@biola.edu
Biola University Phone: 562-944-0351, ext. 3025

Class Meetings: Mondays, 4:30 to 7:10 PM
Classroom: 1st night BUS 102, after that School of Education Conference Room
Office is located in the Education Building.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

TTBE 732 ED: Exposition NT Theme: The Life of Christ
This course is a chronological and expositional study of Jesus Christ’s life on earth
emphasizing the historical, cultural and theological interpretation of key events of
Christ’s life. In this course we will focus on Jesus’ curriculum, his teaching objectives,
his teaching techniques, his methods for securing attention, and how he worked with his
disciple/students to ensure that learning had taken place.

COURSE TEXTBOOK/ COURSE PACK:


[Students may substitute the NASB version Robert L. Thomas, and Stanley N. Gundry: *A
Harmony of the Gospels with Explanations and Essays Using the New American
numbering system but the course pack has both numbering systems.]

1995.

Philip Taylor, *Course Pack for TTBE 732*. Biola University, La Mirada, 2009
[This may be downloaded from the Blackboard: Course Documents folder]
GOALS & ANTICIPATED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Goal #1: To gain a basic knowledge of the chronology, culture, and background of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ.
Goal #2: To identify Jesus’ curriculum and to be able to summarize it in order to teach others.
Goal #3: To understand Jesus’ teaching strategies in the gospel accounts and how he used them to make “disciples” who could take what they had been taught to teach others.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance and participation.
This course will emphasize interactive learning. I will assume that you have read and thought about the assigned readings for each class session. Your questions and input are encouraged. There are no excused absences. There is an automatic 25-point deduction for each absence. If there is an emergency that will cause a student to fall behind in the course the student is encouraged discuss it with the professor and to contact the Dean of the School of Education to discuss any issues related to attendance, course assignment continuation, and possible grade delay.

2. Reading and Teaching Observations 300 points/ 30%
The main text for the class is A Harmony of the Gospels. In the class notes there are “Self Tests” that are not graded but will be noted. The “self tests” are merely to help you to evaluate what you have learned or needed to go back and learn.

Teaching observations, Part 1: Scaffolding
While reading A Harmony of the Gospels you are to keep a journal of observations on how Jesus used items and situation that were familiar to his audience to connect the physical world with the spiritual.

Teaching Observations, Part 2: Disequilibrium
Jesus does and says things that will upset the disciple’s understanding and/or expectations. In teaching it is a prerequisite to learning. Equilibrium occurs when a person’s existing knowledge is sufficient to explain an action or phenomenon. There has to be something that disturbs the learner’s equilibrium and causes a situation where learning can take place. It provokes: thought, reflection, conversations and forces the learner to evaluate assumptions and existing knowledge. It assumes that the teacher understands the learner’s background and culture.

1. Intentional Disequilibrium (Where Jesus deliberately put the disciples into a situations that challenged some of their cultural/spiritual assumptions)
2. Situational Disequilibrium (Jesus’ responds to an upsetting situation),

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3. Teaching Disequilibrium (Anything that contradicts what they thought they knew)
4. Cultural Disequilibrium (Where Jesus confronted a cultural norm)

3. **Yancey Response Papers: 300 points/ 30% (3 times 100 = 300)**
   There will be **THREE** 3 to 4 page response papers to Philip Yancey’s *The Jesus I Never Knew*.
   Read the critique/commentary that is posted on Blackboard in the Course Documents folder on the three chapters.

   Chapter 5: Profile: What Would I Have Noticed?
   Chapters 6-7: Beatitudes: Lucky are the Unlucky and The Message: Sermon of Offence
   Chapter 9: Miracles: Snapshots of the Supernatural

   Each response paper is worth 100 points. Papers are to be double-spaced and in 12 point font. They may be either emailed or printed. This is NOT to be a summary of Yancey.
   Were there any insights that you found to be especially provocative or interesting?
   Were there any controversial issues that resonated with you?
   Were there any areas where you may have agreed or disagreed with Yancey?
   Has this chapter changed your perspectives on Jesus Christ?
   Were the critic’s evaluations too harsh in their criticism or were they fair and balanced?

4. **Jesus’ Curriculum 300 points/ 30% (3 times 100 = 300)**
As we go through the life of Christ I have divided his “curriculum” in to 11 areas.
Students will be asked to write 3 to 4 page summaries of **three** of Jesus’ “curriculum” topics.

   What were his kingdom curriculum learning objectives and what did they need to know about these topics?
   1. Righteousness: Jesus’ vs. the Pharisee’s TSiDeK external righteousness
   2. Spiritual Warfare & Healing Power Encounters
   3. Money, Wealth, Future Rewards
   4. Prayer
   5. Servant Leadership
   6. Holy Spirit
   [As time permits we will cover these]
   7. Ministering Issues
   8. Fear and Conflict
   9. Accountability (Mystery)
   10. Multicultural Issues and the prophetic perspective
   11. Jesus as: Messiah; Atonement; Intercessor
Rubric for Grading Curriculum Papers
One of the course objectives for this class is to be able to summarize Jesus’ teaching on these topics in order to teach others. If you had to teach on this subject would it make sense?

Proper grammar, spelling, and format that is appropriate to graduate level work (10%)

Introduction and summary conclusion (20%)
Use of scripture references (10%)
Organization and clarity (60%)
Summary of key passages and key points from those passages
Charts [they are optional] that have key points and are understandable
Implications for 21st century disciples

5. Jesus the Master Teacher 100 points/ 10%
Students will be asked to write 5-6 page summary of several aspects of Jesus as a “master teacher” and to document the points from scripture.

As we go through a chronological study of the life of Christ it will be helpful to have categories relating to the teaching ministry of Jesus. Many of these will be discussed in class. In each section these are the types of questions we will be asking:

How did Jesus gain the attention of his pupils?
How did Jesus use “disequilibrium” situations as opportunities for lessons?
How did Jesus use metaphors, allegories, stories, to make connections between the physical world and the spiritual world?
How did Jesus use questioning strategies to stimulate learning?
What were some of the assessment strategies used by Jesus?
How did Jesus check for understanding?
How did Jesus provide for guided and independent practice?

GENERAL INFORMATION

Attendance
There is an automatic 25 point deduction for each absence. Department policy states that after a student has missed 25% of the class (4 absences) there is an automatic no credit for the course.

Grading Points and Percentages
Reading Log: A Harmony of the Gospels & Self tests 300 points 30%
Three Response Papers on Yancey (3 x 100 points each) 300 points/ 30%
One summary of Jesus the Master Teacher 100 points/ 10%
Three summaries of curriculum areas (3 x 100 points each)  
300 points/30%  
Total Possible: 1000 points/100%

**Talbot Grading Standards**

**Student Disabilities:**
Students desiring accommodations on the basis of physical, learning, or psychological disability for this class are to contact Disability Services. Disability Services is located in the Learning Center (upstairs in the Biola Library) and can be reached by calling 562.906.4542 or extension 4542 from on campus.

**Student Emergencies:**
Students desiring accommodations for personal emergencies should contact the Dean of the School of Education for an extension on course assignments and possible grade delay.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:**
Biola University sees any form of plagiarism as a serious problem with serious consequences. Please refer to the academic integrity statement in the Student Handbook, Academic and Behavioral Standards section. Academic dishonesty is representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own, without giving credit for the source is plagiarism.

**Biola University’s Grading Standards for Written Work**
Whereas Biola University desires to maintain the highest standards with respect to the composition of all written work, any student paper exhibiting poor grammar, spelling errors, typographical errors, or other sub standard academic expressions shall have the overall grade for that paper reduced accordingly. Generally, a paper will be deemed substandard in ineligible to receive an “A” grade when in averages three or more compositional errors per page. Moreover, at the discretion of the professor, the substandard paper may be returned to the student for correction and resubmission with appropriate grade penalties. Students deficient in writing skills may seek assistance at the Biola Writing Center.

**School of Education Appeal Policy**
It is the desire of the School of Education to serve each student equitably and fairly in each and every circumstance. Should you encounter a situation in which you feel that you have been treated unfairly (e.g., grading, classroom work relationship) please follow the Matthew 18:15-16 principle. Begin by communicating directly with the person with whom you have the concern (e.g., professor, colleague, peer, master teacher) in a timely fashion. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, please ask for assistance by bringing in a second person (e.g., peer, student teacher supervisor, professor). If you need further assistance, appeal in writing to the next person in authority (e.g., professor,
undergraduate chair, graduate chair) as soon as possible. If you are further in need of assistance, a written appeal may be directed to the Dean of Education (Dr. June Hetzel) and you will receive a response within two weeks.

*The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus to fit the educational needs of this particular class in any way deemed appropriate.

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**NASV COURSE CALENDAR FALL 2009***

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**Yancey Chapter 5: Profile: What Would I have Noticed?**

*Yancey begins with an analysis of various attempts to provide physical descriptions of Jesus. He points out that nowhere does anyone who had personally seen Jesus, give us a physical description of him. He came to some interesting conclusions regarding Jesus.*
A critic who was responding to chapter 5 of Philip Yancey’s book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, wrote this essay. Do you agree or disagree with it and why or why not? Was the critic being too hard on Yancey or was he on target?

“I personally found this chapter to be superficial and full of theological and practical banalities. After reading A. B. Bruce’s *The Training of the Twelve* and G. Campbell Morgan’s *Jesus, the Great Physician*, I found Yancey’s journalistic generalizations to be somewhat simplistic. He seems to have missed the point that the early church’s Jewish background would have prevented them from any physical description of Jesus. The Jewish abhorrence of idolatry was in contrast to the pagan Greco-Roman world that was full of idols and images of notable personalities. He also missed the point that we do not have a physical description of anyone in the New Testament with the possible exception of Zaccheus as a “short man.” To follow Yancey’s logic, we should conclude that everyone was “ordinary” in appearance.

To his credit he does point out the dangers inherent in the TV and Hollywood genre. Like Yancey, I too have used a variety of video adaptations of the Gospels in a Sunday school class. I did so with some apprehension and reluctance. Without a proper understanding of the written Gospel accounts, the inherent danger is to visualize backwards. Instead of exegesis we have visual *isogesis*. It has been my observation that the visual pollution has caused students to read the Gospels with an image of Jesus that is more in keeping with Hollywood than Bible. I have found that I first have to force students to study the text in order to have a working grasp of the facts and background of the Gospels, before I show the Hollywood movies. I confess that I teach students to view the Hollywood movies with critical eyes as they compare the Gospels with the video image. We do “thumbs up and thumbs down” as we compare and contrast the Bible to the movies. My young movie critics categorized the various actors who played the role of Jesus as “the scary Jesus” in *The Greatest Story Ever Told*; the “happy Jesus” in *Matthew*; the “blow dried Jesus” in *The Jesus Movie*; “the nice guy Jesus” in *Jesus 2000* (the TV version); and “the boring Jesus” in *Jesus of Nazareth*. Unfortunately, none of them seem to compare favorably with the Jesus in the Gospels.

But this is part of a much wider problem. Yancey missed the opportunity to explore in depth the whole area of iconography, and the use and misuse of icons. These “visual aids” to worship are so ingrained within the world wide Christian culture that it becomes almost impossible to go anywhere without one. This would include the “Big Scary Jesus” [known on campus as “BSJ”] on the east wall of the Biola University science building. He does have a passing resemblance to a popular movie star. Yancey does make the valid point in that our images of Jesus “tell more about us than it does about Him.” God first created man in His image and likeness and now we have now fashioned Him into our likeness.

The second area of Yancey’s journalistic profiling of Jesus that seems to be more on target, is the personality profiling of Jesus. Yancey cannot resist the modern western world’s fascination with categorizing and compartmentalizing people and their interaction with others. Here again instead of a Jesus in the Gospels, we have the
“sensitive to women Jesus,” the “not afraid to cry Jesus,” and “the manly man Jesus.” This may preach well in a church or Sunday school, but I find it to be another form of “psychological isogesis.” It isolates Jesus from his cultural context and his historical setting.

As one who has dedicated his life and ministry to understanding the Bible as it was written, I relate to many of Yancey’s observations about growing up with a distorted view of Jesus. Yancey has pointed out the dangers inherent with in the problem, but I am not sure that his journalistic solution is the answer. We live in a “video world” where it is easier to watch a movie about Jesus than to do the work to read and understand the written text about him in his cultural context. As a teacher I have to exhort, and at times intimidate with a test and grades, in order to force students to study the Gospel text before going to the video-iconographic Jesus.”

[The following, was written by a Biola graduate student in response to this chapter. I have used it with his permission]

Yancey asked: “would we have been any more receptive to Christ if he appeared today?”
That is a fair question and speaking for myself, I probably would not have been that receptive. Although I don’t consider myself part of today’s orthodox evangelical Christianity, I also don’t like people who “rock the boat” and don’t follow the norms. I like people who “go with the flow” and “blend in with the crowd,” and that definitely was not Jesus’ modus operandi. I am suspicious of people who have too much appeal and who have too much of a following. Therefore, I probably would not openly oppose Jesus if He lived in “my world,” but I would be suspicious and would remain at “arms-length” until I knew more. In that sense, the Jesus I never knew would probably be the Jesus I would never know.

Chapter 6: Beatitudes: Lucky are the Unlucky
A critic in responding to this chapter wrote this essay. At what points would you agree or disagree with the writer’s observations on this chapter in Yancey? Was the writer being too hard on Yancey or was it a fair and balanced criticism?

“After reading Yancey and several other writers on the Beatitudes, I cannot help but think that they have missed the most basic step in interpreting the passage. This is the third or forth time that I have read this chapter in Yancey’s book, and each time I see something new. It may be a disadvantage to know that he used this chapter as a launching platform for another book, Soul Survivor: How My Faith Survived the Church. I found his candor regarding the evolution of his thinking to be refreshing, but as I tried to follow the logic of his “steps,” I think that Yancey might have missed the most important “step.” The step that Yancey missed was that the Beatitudes present an outline of the stages of discipleship. J. W. Shepherd [The Christ of the Gospels, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1973. p. 176] seems to come closer to the mark when he notes that in the context, Jesus had just spent the night in prayer and had selected twelve “apostles.” Shepherd views the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount as “a kind of ordination
sermon” for the twelve. After saying that Shepherd then seems to jump to what Yancey calls his second step, the “blessing” for the disciples.

It is amazing to me that Yancey seems to have violated a basic hermeneutical principle: the simplest sense may make the most sense. A. W. Pink seems to come closer to the point when he notes in his book *Gleanings from the Sermon on the Mount*, that “poor in spirit” was the preliminary condition for someone accepting God’s grace. It is in the wider cultural context of “unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” The life and ministry of Jesus came into conflict with the externals of the Jewish religion. The “poor in spirit” does not seem to be referring to the physically poor as Yancey contends, but to those who recognize that they are the “spiritually poor.” This is a precondition to even being open to receive grace. Those who “mourn” are mourning over their sin, and have come to recognize their need for grace. The “humble” or “meek” are those who cannot approach a holy God but who need a holy God to approach them. This sees the first three Beatitudes as “pre-evangelism.”

In his book on Jesus’ training of the disciples, A. B. Bruce [*The Training of the Twelve*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1973. p. 44] notes that the Beatitudes are notable for what is not presented in them, and would have been expected in a traditional rabbinic discourse. There is no mention of circumcision, ritual cleansing, or any of the traditional Jewish expectations for God’s blessing. Yancey seems to come closest to this in his “second” step but missed the wider cultural and social context of the sermon.

According to this view those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” are those who have accepted the message of grace, and as the recipients of grace and God’s mercy, are now dispensers of “mercy” (merciful). One preacher put it, “there is no bragging at the foot of the cross.” In the context of the “commissioning of the apostles,” the “pure in heart” are the ones who walk circumspectly in grace, and are ready to become agents of peace or “peacemakers” between men and God. Jesus will get very specific when he sends out the twelve in Matthew 10, when he outlines the cost of becoming “peacemakers.” They will be “persecuted for the sake of righteousness.”

I enjoyed Yancey’s insights on the profound advantages of being poor. He has some interesting social commentary on being physically poor, but it may not have been what Jesus had in mind in the Beatitudes and the wider context of the Sermon on the Mount. The poverty being described both in the context of Matthew and Luke is the voluntary poverty of those who have committed themselves to the kingdom of Jesus Christ. If he had just used the Luke passage he would have been on firmer ground. He may have come closer to the mark in his assessments of the “psychological reality” of those who have chosen a life of service over “success.” But here again I am not convinced that it is the primary point of the Beatitudes.”
Chapter 7: Message: A Sermon of Offense
According to Yancey many people consider the Sermon on the Mount to be platitudes of religious asceticism. Yancey then presented a list of men and groups who have tried to translate the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount into everyday life: Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, the Anabaptists (Mennonite, Amish), Quakers, Dispensationalists, and Albert Schweitzer. He then went on to discuss the problems that each individual or group had in attempting to practically live out the ideals. Yancey contrasted Tolstoy’s quest to live out the Sermon on the Mount and his attempts to reach perfection with Dostoevsky’s grace approach to God. He then relates it back to his own experience in growing up in a fundamental Biblical church where he suffered the “delayed effects of biblical child abuse” (140). He concludes with the idea that there is a dual message in the Sermon on the Mount.

A critic in responding to this chapter wrote this essay. At what points would you agree or disagree with the writer’s observations on this chapter in Yancey? Was the writer being too hard on Yancey or was it a fair and balanced criticism?

After reading this chapter I was even more frustrated with Philip Yancey. He did an adequate job of outlining the historical attempts to practically implement the Sermon. But once again he totally ignores the Jewish rabbinic context of the Sermon. Jesus is giving in a concise form this criticism of Orthodox Judaism and their externals approach to religion. When Jesus said: “you have heard it said” he is quoting their rabbinic commentary. The rabbis had categorized the biblical commands down into major and minor commands.

Chapter 9 “Miracles: Snapshots of the Supernatural”
A critic in responding to this chapter wrote this essay. At what points would you agree or disagree with the writer’s observations on this chapter in Yancey? Was the writer being too hard on Yancey or was it a fair and balanced criticism?

Yancey traces the evolution of his ideas about miracles from the “vending machine” concept of “miracles” to taking a journalistic look at the Gospels accounts of Jesus’ miracles. He tries to view the miracles through the eyes of a first century journalist who would be observing the ministry of Jesus and the reactions of his audience. After looking at 10 or 12 of Jesus’ miracles, Yancey concludes that the miracles of Jesus “did little to solve the problem of pain on this planet.” But what they did do was to give us a glimpse of a time in the future, when God will solve the problems of the curse on this earth. From Yancey’s perspective the miracles of Jesus’ that were “supernatural,” will someday be “natural.” Sin, disease, and demons that are “natural” now, will someday be problems that Jesus will ultimately solve.
I felt that Yancey glossed over the Messianic aspect of Jesus’ miracles. The miracles were part of his prophetic and messianic credentials as the Messiah of Israel. Yancey did not really deal with the fact that in Matthew 12, Jesus’ miracle working power was attributed to Satan and that there was a subsequent “judicial blindness” (see Isaiah 6) that had come upon the leaders of Israel. The whole point of the healing of the blind man on the Sabbath in Jerusalem and the subsequent investigation by the leaders was that it became an indictment of their unbelief and spiritual blindness concerning Jesus’ messianic credentials.

A second area where Yancey was conspicuous by his silence, were the situations where miracles happened as automatic, unpremeditated, and unconscious responses to faith, as in the healing of the bleeding woman. The opposite was also true. According to Mark 6:5, on Jesus’ final visit to unbelieving Nazareth, he “could not do any miracles there…and he was amazed by their lack of faith.” Yancey should have commented on the issue of faith of the crowd as a precondition for many of the healing miracles.

I was somewhat confused by Yancey’s quoting of C. S. Lewis on the idea that the miracles do not usually contradict natural law, but “rather replicate the normal activity of creation at a different speed and on a smaller scale” [168]. It seems to me that the resurrection miracles contradict that statement. The gospels record three resurrection miracles, not counting Jesus’. How does the resurrection of Lazarus, the son of the Nain widow, and Jairus’ daughter fit into the idea that miracles do not contradict natural law, but “replicate the normal activity”?

A forth area where I felt that Yancey was not always clear, was in Jesus’ dealing with demonic oppression. After reading Clinton Arnold, Neal Anderson, and Ed Murphy on the topic, and I felt that Yancey had not done an adequate job of clarifying Jesus’ confrontation with the demonic element. Later on Jesus was accused of using the power of Satan to cast out demons (Matthew 12). That accusation seems to be based upon the fact that Jesus did not utilize any of the Jewish religious rituals or formulas in casting out demons. I realize that Yancey was limited on space but a large portion of Jesus’ miracles had to do with these power encounters with demons and their affect upon individuals. It deserved more attention.

A fifth area not addressed by Yancey was how much should the Church continue the ministry to the sick? There are many parts of evangelical Christianity that believe that the Church should be a continuation of Jesus’ healing ministry with “power encounters” (i.e. John Wimber). Also should the church be involved in hospitals and healing ministry? Traditionally the church (especially the Roman Catholics and Presbyterians) have been the leaders in this area. It has been part of their belief that the Christians should be involved in ministering to people’s bodies and souls. The criticism has been that in their efforts to heal bodies they often neglect to heal souls. The missionaries even have a cynical term for the fruits or results of missionary medicine; they call them “rice Christians.” Feed them rice or medicine, they will be “Christians.” Stop the ministry and they will no longer be “Christians.”
Was this an accurate and fair summary of Yancey’s chapter on Jesus’ miracles?

How did Jesus’ miracles establish his messianic credentials for the believer and become a condemning “side show” for the unbeliever? Is that still true today?

According to Yancey what assumption did the Jews of Jesus’ day, and many people today, make about disease and God? In the case of AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, smoking, and drugs, is that a valid or invalid observation and why or why not?

According to Yancey, Jesus wanted the afflicted to know that they were loved by God and that contrary to rabbinic tradition, they were not cursed. How would you answer the observation that God has built into the sin afflicted world, inherent consequences for sin?