3-Day Pre-Seminar & Summer Conference: 3 Units
Beyond Suffering: A Christian View on Disability Ministry
June 12-16 2012 (Including Summer Conference)

Professor: Kathy McReynolds Ph.D
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Required Texts:


4) The Holy Bible (Select Scriptures: No Paraphrase Please)

Course Description:

How could a good and loving God allow such evil and suffering: war, poverty, famine, and starvation? People with disabilities suffer from the evils of the world more than many other people groups. How could God allow this to happen to the most vulnerable? Considered one of the largest underrepresented groups, there are over 650 million people worldwide who live with a disability (roughly 10% of the world’s population). It is also one of the largest unchurched groups on earth. This is most unfortunate because people affected by disability have much to teach us about spiritual transformation. Their specific plight—their sufferings both personally and publically—mirror the human condition and Christian journey in many unique ways.

The purpose of this course is to explore the problem of evil in general and then to examine ways in which the disability community provides the global church with a dynamic model of spiritual transformation. The serious student will take away from this course not only a deeper understanding of the disability community and the church’s obligation to reach out to those who are most vulnerable, but he/she will also learn to embrace their own brokenness in a whole new way. This course will benefit those who are majoring in biblical studies, education, counseling, human services, business, any health-related field, or intercultural studies.
**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course the student will be able to:

**Cognitive Objectives:**

1) Identify and define some of the most prominent physical and intellectual disabilities.

2) Interpret and explain some of the major biblical passages which address disability issues.

3) Understand and describe Christianity as a knowledge tradition which reflects the ways things really are.

4) Explain some primary historical perspectives on the image of God and disabilities.

5) Identify and explain some of the major bioethical issues which affect people with disabilities.

6) Understand the relationship between Christianity and human services.

**Affective Objectives:**

1) Move to embrace your own sufferings as a way of spiritual transformation.

2) Grow to appreciate all persons with disabilities, to view them with dignity, and to engage them as equally valuable to the Body of Christ.

3) Desire to stand for justice in order to correct the wrongs that society causes or allows to happen to those affected by disabilities.

**Behavioral Objectives:**

1) Develop an integrated biblical worldview of suffering, disability, & your discipline.

2) Put together a model that facilitates the full inclusion of people with disabilities into the life of the church.

3) Actively seek to bring people with disabilities into the Church in accordance with the “Luke 14 Mandate.”
Course Requirements:

All Written Assignments & Practicum Due by Friday August 31st. Please email assignments as attachments to kmcreynolds@joniandfriends.org.

1) Read all of the Lessons and Readings in the Beyond Suffering Study Guide.

Complete the assignments in the Study Guide: the Exegetical Project should be 5-6 pages for graduate level and the Ministry Project should also be 5-6 pages for graduate level work. The Reflection Questions at the end of each lesson should be no more than a page for each lesson (16 pages total). Please read the assignment requirements that are in the Study Guide carefully.

2) Read Why O God? Suffering and Disability in the Bible and Church.

Then write an 8-10 page position paper that defines and summarizes your position on God and his use of various types of suffering and disability. If appropriate, please provide an exegesis of various biblical passages related to suffering and disability. Theological reflection and contemplation of the various author’s thoughts are expected to be conveyed in your paper.

3) Read The Bible, Disability and the Church: A New Vision of the People of God.

Then write a 3-4 page critical review of the book.
Course Policies:

1) Attendance: You must attend all three days of the seminar and the entire Summer Conference.

2) Participation: Critical thinking and discussion are essential to this class. Also, because you will be interacting with the comments made by fellow classmates, it is vitally important to keep an open mind in this process.

3) Style of Papers: Your papers are to be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides in no larger than 12 point lettering. Please staple your paper and number each page!

Grading:

- BYS Study Guide, Readings & Reflection Questions 250 points possible
- Exegetical Project 100 points possible
- Ministry Project 100 points possible
- Critical Book Review 50 points possible

500 total points possible

Grading Scale:

480-500: A  408-419: C+
460-479: A-  400-407: C
448-459: B+  380-399: C-
440-447: B  368-379: D+
420-439: B-  360-367: D
  341-359: D-
  340 or below: F
Course Outline: (Tentative Schedule)

Tuesday, June 12 2012

Overview of Specific Disabilities
History of Human Services

9am-12pm

- Disability Overview
- Woundedness
- Origins of Contemporary Services Patterns Part I
- Discussion

- Stretch Break

- Christianity & History of Human Services Part II

Lunch 12pm-1:30pm

1:30pm-5pm

- Christianity & History of Human Services Part III

- Stretch Break

- Discussion
Wednesday, June 13 2012

Biblical & Theological Views of Suffering

9am-12pm

- A Personal Word

-Stretch Break

- Introduction to the Problem of Suffering and Disability
- The Ways We Suffer
- Discussion

Lunch: 12pm-1:30pm

1:30-5pm

- Luke as a Framework for a Theology of Suffering and Disability
- The Messianic Banquet
- The New Testament & the Weight of Glory
- Contemporary Theological Studies

-Stretch Break

- Butterfly Circus: Doorpost.com
- Discussion
Thursday, June 14 2012

Suffering & The Sovereignty of God

9am-12pm

- Theology as a Governing Discipline
- The Eye of the Mind: Augustine’s Theory of Knowledge
- Seeking Faith
- Discussion

- Stretch Break

- God’s Problem
- Evil & Suffering
- God’s Sovereignty

Lunch 12pm-1:30pm

1:30pm-5pm

- The Church: A Theological Framework
- What Happens When Disability First Strikes a Family?

- Stretch Break

- Evangelizing Those Affected by Disability
- The Church: Breaking Through Barriers