

## Syllabus

TITLE OF THE COURSE: Troubling Parables for Today

COURSE NUMBER: SPRS-4260

Fall Semester, 2014

Tuesday, 2:10-5:00 PM

Dorsey O. Blake, Instructor

Location – Starr King School for the Ministry, Fireside Room

E-mail: dblake@sksm.edu

Phone: (510) 549-4710

### Brief course description:

The course will engage the life and works of Clarence Jordan, scientific farmer and New Testament Greek scholar. In 1942, he co-founded the interracial farming community “Koinonia” in Americus, Georgia. It was an example of his commitment to seeing the Word made flesh even though Koinonia was riddled with bullets fired by the Ku Klux Klan and boycotted by local merchants and residents. Jordan is the author of the Cotton Patch Series of Versions of New Testament texts. We will focus on his parables of liberation. Jordan felt that it was imperative to contextualize the parables of Jesus as narratives speaking directly to conditions in the United States: Jerusalem became Atlanta; crucifixion became lynching. His texts audaciously and brilliantly address racism, militarism, economic justice, sustainability, the nonviolent revolution beckoning to be born and the spirituality underlying all of this. The course will also examine his work: ***The Substance of Faith***. In this profoundly engaging book Jordan explores the God Movement idea with great precision, wit, earthiness, irony, passion, faith, scholarship, practicality, commitment, and accountability. It’s an extraordinary resource for sermons.

### Learning objectives:

1. Comprehend the motivation behind the founding of Koinonia Farm
2. Analyze historical and contemporary use of the liberation parables of Jesus
3. Explore various contexts for Biblical Hermeneutics as exemplified in the liberation parables.
4. Discover the power of parables and why Jesus used them.
5. Facilitate confidence in creating new versions of parables for today’s usage.
6. Demonstrate an ability to relate parables to current personal, societal, and systemic issues.
7. Develop an appreciation of the revolutionary nature of the Sermon on the Mount
8. Understand the context and players for which and whom the Sermon was addressed

### Learning Activities:

1. lecture, discussion

2. working in teams
3. audio presentations
4. writing
5. oral presentations (to be determined based upon the number of students in the class)

**Requirements:**

1. Full participation in the class including discussion, writing assignments, oral presentations, and team work
2. Weekly reflection papers (2-3 pages).
3. Final paper (5-7 pages) in which the student writes a parable or explores one of the many themes presented by Jordan

**Grading Policy:**

Full classroom participation counts for 50% of the grade. Full classroom participation includes discussion, team work, and oral presentations. Weekly reflection papers count for 25%. The final paper also counts for 25% of the grade.

Attendance at each class session is essential. Two excused absences are allowed. The second unexcused absence will necessitate a discussion with the instructor.

**Calendar of Assignments**

September 2

Introduction of each other and Clarence Jordan/Audio Interview

September 9

DVD Briars in the Cotton Patch: The Story of Koinonia Farm  
Dean Arthur Holder, Guest Scholar

September 16

Audio Disk 1 The Cotton Patch Parables  
Cotton Patch Parables of Liberation, pp. 11-34  
Foreword  
Preface  
Introduction  
Shattering the Status Quo  
Overcoming Old Allegiance

September 23

Cotton Patch Parables of Liberation, pp. 35-70  
Reaching Out for Liberation  
God Against the Church!  
God Against the Rich

September 30

Audio Disk 2  
Cotton Patch Parables of Liberation, pp. 71-93  
Disturbing the Peace  
Children of Arrogance

October 7

Audio Disk 3 The Cotton Patch Parables  
Cotton Patch Parables of Liberation, 94-125  
Children of Grace  
Counting the Cost  
Trade with These Ideas

October 14

Audio Disk 4 The Cotton Patch Parables  
Cotton Patch Parables of Liberation, pp.126- 147  
The Works of Mercy  
The Parabolic Life

October 20-24 **Reading Week, No class**

October 28

Introduction and I. Incarnational Evangelism  
The Substance of Faith, pp. 7- 37  
Introduction  
The Womb of God  
The Sons of God  
The Humanity of God  
Incarnational Evangelism

November 4

II. The Substance of Faith  
The Substance of Faith, pp. 38-54  
The Substance of Faith  
The Adventure of Three Students in a Fiery Furnace

November 11

III. The God Movement  
The Substance of Faith, pp. 55-92  
The Demonstration Plot  
The Lesson on the Mount – I  
The Lesson on the Mount – II  
Was Jesus Really Poor?  
The Currency of the Kingdom

November 18

IV. The Distinct Identity

The Substance of Faith, pp. 93-118

Metamorphosis

Jesus Christ Revealed

The Mind of Christ in the Racial Conflict

Making a Habit of Love

November 25

V. Persisting Threats to Authentic Faith

The Substance of Faith, pp. 119-142

An Ancient Heresy Incarnate

Judas

Taking the Name in Vain

December 2

VI. God's Destination for Man (Humanity)

The Substance of Faith, pp. 143-160

The Meaning of the Sabbath

The Father's Pursuing Love

The Death of Jesus

Persisting in Love

A Spirit of Partnerships

December 9

Final Presentations and Reflections

Textbooks:

Required:

Jordan, Clarence and Doulos, Bill Lane, *Cotton Patch Parables of Liberation*

(Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1976, ISBN: 0-8361-9151-X) \$18.00

Jordan, Clarence, Dallas Lee, ed., *The Substance of Faith* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2005, ISBN: 1-59752-144-2) \$22.00

Reference:

Barnette, Henlee, *Clarence Jordan: Turning Dreams Into Deeds* (Smyth Helwys Publishing, Inc., 1992, ISBN 1-880837-00-5), \$9.00

Coble, Ann Louise, *Cotton Patch For The Kingdom: Clarence Jordan's Demonstration Plot at Koinonia Farm* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2002, ISBN 0-8361-9166-8), \$16.00

Hollyday, Joyce, ed., *Clarence Jordan: Essential Writings* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003, ISBN 1-57075-497-7), \$18.00

Jordan, Clarence, *Sermon of the Mount* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1952, ISBN 0-8170-0501-3), \$11.00

Weiner, Kay, *Koinonia Remembered: The First Fifty Years* (Americus, GA: Koinonio Partners, INC., 1992), \$10.00

