



**BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY  
UNIT OUTLINE**

**GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY**

UNIT TITLE	CHURCH: UNITING PURPOSES & PRACTICES
UNIT CODE	C74038
UNIT STATUS	Elective
HOST FIELD	C
PREREQUISITE/S	C51013 or C73113 Introducing Theology
INCOMPATIBLES	Nil
CREDIT POINTS	10cp
REQUIREMENTS	3 hours per week contact and 7 hours per week study over a 13-week semester. A weekly seminar program in which 7 seminars will consist of student presentations of responses to set introductory readings; three will consist of participation in cross-denominational small groups; and three will consist of discussions of an advanced scholarly ecclesiological text.
FREQUENCY OF OFFERING	Annually – semester 1
PREPARED BY	Rev Dr Geoff Thompson
UNIT COORDINATOR	Rev Dr Geoff Thompson
TEACHING STAFF	Rev Dr Geoff Thompson, with sessional input from Rev Dr David Pascoe and Rev Dr Don Saines.
DATE PREPARED	13 September 2006

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**Rationale**

The twentieth century was a period of wide ranging reflection on the nature of the church. The emergence of non-Western churches, the rise of the ecumenical movement, the encounter with other religions, and Western secularization generated new accounts of the church and its mission. For much of this period critical ecclesiological discussion, as typified in Avery Dulles' influential *Models of Church*, came to be characterised by using single overarching themes (eg "sacrament", "herald", "institution", "servant") as models by which to understand and explain the church. More recent work in ecclesiology has shown a tendency to move away from this models-approach and to develop ecclesiologies which pay close attention to the concrete church and its distinctive practices. This move reflects the recent wider theological interest in ecclesial practices and provides a new framework in which to develop constructive ecclesiologies and by which to address traditional confessional differences. Nevertheless, this orientation of ecclesiology is subject to several distinctively protestant qualifications. First, protestants will insist that an emphasis on practices will not neglect the Reformers' critique of the *habitual* mediation of grace. Second, they will be alert to the way

that practices can become self-justifying and separated from the purposes they serve in the gospel of Christ. Third, they will also regard such ecclesiological reflection upon the church's received practices as an element of one of those practices, namely the practice of reform. Subject to these qualifications, ecclesiological reflection so understood sets up a dialectic between received practices, biblical exegesis, doctrinal critique, ecumenical conversation and doctrinal reconstruction. This approach to uniting ecclesial purposes and practices is able to cast light on the origin and recent history of the Uniting Church in Australia.

### Relation to course

The unit contributes to the postgraduate course because as an established field of critical enquiry, ecclesiology offers a particular discourse through which to develop a critical understanding of the community in which the student's other theological studies are situated, and because it provides the opportunity to integrate their critical biblical and historical studies into the church's self-understanding.

### Aims

The unit aims to introduce students with classical and contemporary discussions of the church, its purposes and practices, with particular reference to such discussions as they have played out in the Uniting Church in Australia. The unit also aims to equip students to analyse and critique way doctrinal, biblical and historical studies mutually inform one another in a major contemporary ecclesiological text.

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	
At the end of this unit the student will be able to:	
1.	Demonstrate an understanding of (a) the biblical and theological foundations of the doctrines of the church, and its practices and purposes and (b) the way doctrinal, biblical and historical studies mutually inform each other in this discipline;
2.	Articulate the content and significance of historical, confessional ecclesiological differences, assess their function and authority in contemporary ecclesiological discussions, and understand how they have shaped the ecclesiology of the Uniting Church in Australia;
3.	Identify the various relationships which exist between baptism, eucharist, worship, church order and mission in the contemporary world;
4.	Offer critical commentary on a major contemporary ecclesiological text.

### Content

- 1 The roots of the church in the messianic mission of Jesus
- 2 Historical developments and doctrinal disputes surrounding baptism; the relationship between the practice of baptism and the concept of sacrament
- 3 The reading of scripture as a constitutive practice of the church
- 4 Historical developments and doctrinal disputes surrounding the eucharist; the relationship between the practice of the eucharist and the concept of sacrament
- 5 The Christological and Pneumatological basis of the church's mission of worship, witness and service
- 6 The church's identity in relation to Israel, the religions, civic society and popular spirituality
- 7 Historical developments and doctrinal dispute surrounding church order; the derivation of order from mission and identity; the relationship between lay and ordained ministries
- 8 Ecumenical dialogue on *BEM*, Scripture and Mission

## Organization and Teaching Strategies

A weekly program of three contact hours. Three of those weeks will be shared with the staff and students of the parallel Anglican and Catholic Ecclesiology units. One hour each week will be scheduled as follows:

- (i) a seminar program (in six of the weeks) in which students will, through the reading of key Uniting Church documents, relate the lecture content to the ecclesiological convictions of the Uniting Church
- (ii) cross-denominational small group discussions which will follow the lecture presentations made in the joint ecumenical classes (in three of the weeks)
- (iii) guided reading (in four of the weeks) of a scholarly ecclesiological text. Such guided reading will be presented as training in the reading of such a text and as preparation for the book review.

## Assessment

	Type of assessment	No of words	Weighting %	Due date	Learning Outcomes covered
1	<b>2 Reading Reports</b> on any two Uniting Church document studied in the tutorial program. Each report must be spoken to and defended in the seminar. Assessment will include the oral presentation.	650-750	20	Week 4	2, 4
3	<b>Book Review</b> of a scholarly ecclesiological text	1950-2250	30	Week 10	1, 3, 5
4	Essay on a topic which deals with the ecclesiological significance of a particular ecclesial practice.	2500-3000	50	Week 14	1, 3

## Notes on Assessment

- Items 1 and 2 Will develop the student's ability to reflect critically on the historical processes involved in ecclesiastical development, by applying such historical insights to a contemporary church context.
- Item 3 Will develop the student's ability to convey opinions and ideas clearly and fluently in written form
- Item 4 Will develop the student's ability to collect, analyse and organize information and ideas; to evaluate opinions, make decisions and reflect critically on the justifications for decisions; and to identify problems, to create solutions, to innovate and improve current practices.

## Bibliography

### Textbooks

A set of readings (available for purchase from the college) consisting of the various Uniting Church texts required for the seminar program plus some other supporting papers and articles. A set is also available in the Trinity Theological College Library.

World Council of Churches. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Geneva: WCC, 1982.

Also available at <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/faith/bem1.html>

## Recommended

- Avis, Paul (ed). *The Christian Church: An Introduction to the Major Traditions*. London: SPCK, 2002.
- Küng, Hans. *The Church*. New York: Image, 1976.
- Maloney, Francis. *A Body Broken for a Broken People: Eucharist in the New Testament*. Rev ed; Burwood/Peabody: Dove/Hendrickson, 1997.
- White, James F. *Sacraments in Protestant Faith and Practice*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999.
- Yoder, John Howard. *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1992.

## References – Books

- Barrett, CK. *Church, Ministry and Sacraments in the New Testament*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1985.
- Buckley, James J & David S Yeago (eds). *Knowing the Triune God: The Work of the Spirit in the Practices of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Elwood, Christopher. *The Body Broken: the Calvinist Doctrine of the Eucharist and the Symbolization of Power in Sixteenth-Century France*. New York/Oxford: OUP, 1999.
- Harrington SJ, Daniel J. *The Church According to the New Testament: What the Wisdom and Witness of Early Christianity Teach Us Today*. Franklin, Wisconsin: Sheed & Ward, 2001.
- Hartman, Lars. 'Into the Name of the Lord Jesus': *Baptism in the Early Church*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997.
- Healy, Nicholas M. *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology*. Cambridge: CUP, 2000.
- Kärkäinen, Veli-Matti. *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2002.

## References - Journals

- Bos, Rob. "That Other Controversy: Debates over Baptism in the UCA, 1997-2003". *Uniting Church Studies* 11:1 (2005), 1-20.
- Cross, Richard. "Catholic, Calvinist, and Lutheran Doctrines of Eucharistic Presence: A Brief Note towards Rapprochement". *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 4 (2002), 301-318.
- Farrow, Douglas. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: In Support of (something like) a Reformed View of the Eucharist". *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3 (2001), 167-186.
- Gunton, Colin. "Election and Ecclesiology in the Post-Constantinian Church". *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53 (2000), 212-227.
- Grenz, Stanley J. "Ecclesiology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*. Ed Kevin J Vanhoozer; Cambridge: CUP, 2003, 252-268.
- Healy, Nicholas M. "Practices and the New Ecclesiology: Misplaced Concreteness". *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 5 (2003), 287-308.
- Horrell, David G. "Leadership Patterns and the Development of Ideology in Early Christianity" in *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*. Ed David G Horrell; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999, 309-337.
- Hughes, Graham. "Limping Priests: Ministry and Ordination". *Uniting Church Studies* 8:1 (2002), 1-13.
- Mostert, Chris. "The Ministry of Lay and Ordained". *Trinity Occasional Papers* II:2 (1983), 16-31.
- Mostert, Christiaan. "Church, Ministry and Ordination: What Relation?" *Uniting Church Studies* 10:1 (2004), 16-35.
- Roberts, Richard, H. "A Postmodern Church? Some Preliminary Reflections on Ecclesiology and Social Theory". *Essentials of Christian Community*. Ed David F Ford & Dennis L Stamps; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996, 179-195.

- Schwöbel, Christoph, "The Creature of the Word: Recovering the Ecclesiology of the Reformers" in *On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community*. Ed Colin E Gunton & Daniel W Hardy; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989, 81-109.
- Thompson, Geoff. "Christ, Church and Scripture: Doctrinal Reflections on Paragraph 5 of the *Basis of Union*". *Uniting Church Studies* 11: 2 (2005), 30-49.
- Webb, Val. "Is it Permissible To Ask Why We Ordain At All?" *Uniting Church Studies* 3:1 (1997), 13-38.

#### **References - Online and Other IT resources**

- World Council of Churches: <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/faith/>
- World Alliance of Reformed Churches: <http://warc.ch/dt/erl2/index.html#txt10>
- The Vatican: <http://www.vatican.va/archive/index.htm>