

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Continuing Education Course
November 1-5, 2004

PTHE/MHTE 622 COMMUNICATING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH
IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY
(3 Credits)

Joseph L. Castleberry, Ed.D.
Mario Guerreiro, D.Min.
John Maracle, Ph.D. (Candidate)

FALL 2004

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ministering in a Pluralistic Society is a special studies extension course partnership of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary and American Indian College. The class overviews the increasingly complex demands of communicating the gospel in a religiously pluralistic, globalized culture and suggests theologically-informed ways of thinking about mission in the 21st Century.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Explain the contemporary ideology of religious pluralism in terms of its historical, philosophical, geopolitical, and religious origins.
2. Discuss the Biblical foundations for interaction with other religions in Old and New Testament revelation.
3. Describe and evaluate different Christian responses to non-Christian religious traditions.
4. Evaluate Pentecostalism in terms of its special characteristics and their relevance for sharing Christ in an environment of religious pluralism.
5. Explore personal convictions on religious and cultural pluralism and identify effective models for spiritual integration and racial unity within the body of Christ.
6. Identify common barriers that hinder the integration of people of other faiths and cultures within the body of Christ.
7. Discuss various leadership models effective for introducing cultural pluralists to the sovereignty of the Gospel while, but also used to invite, introduce to Christ and disciple in a pluralistic world.

8. Identify the crucial issues involved in Christian relations with people of other faiths.
9. Share Christ with religious pluralists as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Stackhouse, John G. (Ed.). (2001). *No Other Gods Before Me: Evangelicals and the Challenge of World Religions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House. (208 pages)

Martin, Joel W. (1999). *The Land Looks After Us: A History of Native American Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press. (156 pages)

Peart, Norman Anthony. 2000. *Separate no more: Understanding and developing racial reconciliation in your church*. With a forward by John M. Perkins. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. (202 pages)

Ortiz, Manuel. 1996. *One new people: Model for developing a multiethnic church*. Dowers Grove: Inter Varsity Press. (158 pages)

Optional Text:

Netland, Harold. (2001). *Encountering Religious Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith and Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press. 362 pages

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Pre-session:

1. Read the required textbooks.
2. Attend all course sessions.
3. Write a five page book review of the three single-author books (all except Stackhouse).

Session:

1. Identify and describe a specific ministry challenge dealing with pluralism vs. diversity. Recommend the best model for integration, giving particular attention to the unique characteristics (i.e. cultural dynamics, organizational setting and mission, economic and educational issues, historical factors, etc.), of the ministry setting. Develop an implementation plan that includes qualitative and quantitative measures of success. Be prepared to orally present your ministry challenge and integration model to the class, allowing approximately 20 minutes for your presentation. Integration of outside research and theoretical material covered in class is expected. Be prepared to demonstrate the pros and

cons of various integration models within the context of your ministry challenge, and specifically address how success will be measured. Integration of visual aids may be used to enhance your presentation.

Post-session:

1. Read an additional five hundred pages of material related to religious pluralism and your own personal ministry situation. Submit a one page list of those readings.
2. Submit a paper in Turabian 6th edition format describing the ministry challenge and integration model described above. The paper should be 15 pages in length, typewritten and double spaced. The paper should integrate theoretical material covered in class along with supplemental research in a comprehensive integration plan. It should include a listing of supplemental research. **Due by February 5, 2005.**

All written assignments must be submitted by email as attached files to Dr. Castleberry at jcastleberry@agts.edu. The time limit is 90 days after the last day of class, or February 5, 2005. Don't wait until the last minute!

CALENDAR OF THEMES

Monday

Morning: The Rise of the Globalized Postmodern World (JC)
Afternoon: Theology of Religions(JC)

Tuesday

Morning: Inter-religious Encounter and the Process of Biblical Revelation (JC)
Afternoon: The Effect of Modernism and Postmodernism on Christianity (JC)

Wednesday

Morning: different Christian responses to non-Christian religious traditions and cultural differences.
Afternoon: personal convictions on religious and cultural pluralism and identify effective models for spiritual integration and racial unity within the body of Christ.

Thursday:

Morning: common barriers that hinder the integration of people of other faiths and cultures within the body of Christ. (MG)
Afternoon: various leadership models effective for introducing cultural pluralists to the sovereignty of the Gospel while, but also used to invite, introduce to Christ and disciple in a pluralistic world.
Oral presentations. (MG)

Friday

Morning: American Indian Religion (JM)
Afternoon: Reaching American Indians for Christ (JM)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Internet Radio Programs

Tippett, Krista. (March 11, 2004) Religion and Our World in Crisis: Christianity and Violence. An Interview with Miroslav Volf.

http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/2004/03/11_volf/

Tippett, Krista. (May 2001). A Simple Buddhist Monk. An interview about the Dalai Lama with Robert Thurman, Ken Storm, Thupten Dadak, and Siddiq Wahid

<http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/2001/05/buddhistmonk/>

Tippett, Krista. (April 4, 2003). Children of Abraham, Interview with Bruce Feiler. Available:

http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/2003/04/04_abraham/

Tippett, Krista. (October 19, 2001.) The Spirit of Islam, Interview with Omid Safi and Seemi Ghazi. Available:

http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/2001/10/19_spiritofislam/

Tippett, Krista. (February 26, 2004.) Progressive Islam in America, Interview with Kecia Ali, Omid Safi, and Michael Wolfe. Available:

http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/2004/02/26_progressiveislam/#reversion

Journal Articles

Evangelical Alliance [UK]. 'The Salvation of the Gentiles: Implications for Other Faiths,' *Evangelical Review of Theology* 15/1 (1991) 36-43.

D' Costa, G. 'The Impossibility of a Pluralist View of Religions,' *Religious Studies* 32 (1996) 223-232.

Richard, H.L. 'A Survey of Protestant Evangelistic Efforts among High Caste Hindus in the Twentieth Century', *Missiology: An International Review* 25/4(1997) 419-445.

Books

Adler, M.J. (1990). *Truth in Religion: The Plurality of Religions and the Unity of Truth*. New York: Macmillan.

Ariarajah, S.W. (1991). *Hindus and Christians: A Century of Protestant Ecumenical Thought*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Barnes, M. (1989). *Christian Identity and Religious Pluralism: Religions in Conversation*. Nashville: Abingdon.

Barr, J. (1993). *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology*. Oxford:Clarendon Press.

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- Clark, A. and B. Winter [eds.] (1993). *One God, One Lord: Christianity in a World of Religious Pluralism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.
- Copley, A. (1997). *Religions in Conflict: Ideology, Cultural Contact and Conversion in Late-Colonial India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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- _____ (1990). *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*. New York: Orbis Books.
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- Fernando, A. (2000). *The Christian's Attitude toward World Religions*. Wheaton: Tyndale House.
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SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus prepared by Joseph Castleberry and Mario Guerreiro, September 29, 2004.