

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**Continuing Education Course**  
**Northwest College**  
**5520 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast**  
**Kirkland, WA**  
**September 24-28, 2001**  
**2 Credit Hours**

**P THE 640 THE CHURCH IN POSTMODERN CULTURE**

**Earl G. Creps, Ph.D.**

**Fall 2001**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A discovery of the impact of postmodernism on culture and the church and the ways in which Christian leaders can turn this challenge into an opportunity.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The course is an arena in which four kinds of personal discoveries are made:

*Knowledge Discoveries...*

1. The nature of postmodernism as a worldview, a culture, and a lifestyle
2. The impact of postmodernism on culture and on the church
3. The theology of postmodernism as a distinct spirituality
4. The relevance of various ministry forms in engaging postmoderns

*Attitude Discoveries...*

1. That well-managed change is a friend and not an enemy
2. That the message of the gospel can be delivered in many diverse ways
3. That the only relevant church is the missional church

*Character Discoveries...*

1. The humility required for radical dependence on the Spirit
2. That challenge of authenticity
3. The investment in others through real relationships

*Skill Discoveries...*

1. The discernment to know when ministry models apply to our local context
2. The learnings necessary to preach to postmoderns
3. The role of technology in communicating with postmoderns.
4. The renewed place of the supernatural in postmodern ministry

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### **COURSE TEXTBOOKS**

#### *Required Texts*

Guder, Darrell L. *The Continuing Conversion of the Church (The Gospel & Our Culture Series)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000. (222 pages)

Grenz, Stanley. *A Primer on Postmodernism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996 (211 pages)

McLaren, Brian D. *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000. (227 pages)

#### *Alternative Texts*

Sweet, Leonard. *Aquachurch: Essential Leadership Arts for Piloting Your Church in Today's Fluid Culture*. Loveland: Group Publishing, 1999. (269 pages)

Sweet, Leonard. *SoulTsunami*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999. (443 pages)

Henderson, David W. *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth in our Changing World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996. (235 pages)

Carson, D.A., ed. *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000. (406 pages)

Long, Jimmy. *Generating Hope: A Strategy for Reaching the Postmodern Generation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997 (235 pages)

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

1. *Church.com: Is Culture Our Friend, Our Enemy, or Our Opportunity?*
2. *Carpe Mañana: Maintenance Church or Missional Church?*
3. *The End of the World as We Know It: A Field Guide to Postmodernity*
4. *The Truth Isn't What It Used to Be: Postmoderns Experience the Message*
5. *Up Close and Personal: Postmoderns Grow into Christ-Followers*

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. Pre-session**

1. *Read:* all the Required Texts (approximately 660 pages). Substitute from the Alternate Text list for any required books you may have already read. Read from the Alternate Text list in order.

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2. *Write*: a 3-5-page paper summarizing what you believe to be the 5 most important ideas from the readings, and *why* you feel they are the "big ticket items." Be prepared to make an oral presentation of your conclusions in class, and to turn in the paper at the first class session.
3. *Report*: you will sign a reading report on the first day of class indicating that you have completed the assigned texts.

### **B. During the session**

Be present and on time for all sessions. Participation in class interaction, exercises, and assignments is required for peer learning.

### **C. Post-session** (choose 2 of the following 5 options)

1. *Reading Reflection*: read one of the Alternate Texts and write a 7-10 page paper that outlines the author's central thesis and responds to it in terms of your ministry context. This is a reflective assignment, not a library research assignment.
2. *Personal Growth Plan*: write a 7-10 page paper detailing your plan for learning more about PM culture and developing the ministry skills relevant to it over the next year. Describe the area in which you feel the most need for development. The plan should include reading, personal research, peer consultations, spiritual disciplines, changes in your ministry context, and other personal growth assets. Skills should include communication, leadership, and discipleship as minimums.
3. *Sermon*: using insights gained from readings and class interactions, write a sermon of significant length designed to reach a PM, pre-Christian audience. *Do not recycle old messages!* You may do either a manuscript, or a very, very detailed outline. While all sermons must be turned in hard copy, they may be accompanied by audio cassette and/or media support (e.g., PowerPoint, video clips, etc.) If you speak without notes, an audio cassette is required.
4. *Research Paper*: choose a major theme related to the course and write a 7-10 page research paper. The paper should identify and reflect upon key ideas related to the topic, report on some of the major literature in the area, and apply conclusions to your ministry context.
5. *Internet Project*: research postmodern churches on the internet and prepare a 7-10 page paper on your findings. The presentation should include descriptions of the various churches, their worship styles, and other key features. Draw conclusions about their use of the internet itself, the application (if any) of their ministry model to your own (i.e., what you learned from them that could be applied in your context), and conclude by developing your own typology of postmodern churches.

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All written assignments are to be typed, double-spaced and represent quality graduate level work. The grade will be lowered if the work is scratched through, contains grammatical errors, misspelled words or poor sentence structure. If a paper contains more than 5 errors on any page, the highest grade it may receive is a "D". It is your responsibility to carefully proofread your paper. You may use others to proofread your paper, but not to write it or do research for you.

All written assignments must follow the *Turabian* style manual, 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

All assignments should be turned in stapled, and with the student's name, address, phone and email, and the course number, on the cover.

**Due date:** December 28, 2001

**Note: The participant will be charged a \$15 change-of-grade fee if work is turned in after the due date stipulated on the syllabus, even if permission has been given by the instructor.**

### **GRADING PROCEDURE**

	<i>Points</i>
Pre-session reading:	25
Reading report	10
Class participation	25
Post-session option	70
Post-session option	70

Grading will be on a percentage basis, with 90% of the total points (180) required for an A, 80% of the points (160) required for a B, etc. Pluses and minuses will be used for point totals within 5 points of any grade level.

Submit all assignments to:

Earl Creps  
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary  
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Springfield, MO 65802  
1-800-467-2487  
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### **SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY**

A topical bibliography will be distributed at the first class session.

### **SPECIFIC DATA**

Course syllabus prepared by Earl Creps, May, 2001.