

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Continuing Education Course
2 or 3 Credit Hours

**P THE 640 COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL
TO POST-CHRISTIAN AMERICA**

http://www.agts.edu/conferences/roundtable_2003july/roundtable_july2003.html

**A class/conference experience provided by the
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary**

www.agts.edu

with

Dr. Leonard I. Sweet

at

**The Assemblies of God General Council
Washington, DC**

July 28-29, 2003

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COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Communicating the Gospel to Post-Christian America is a *Leadership Roundtable* conference experience hosted by AGTS in cooperation with Dr. Leonard Sweet. It will be the site *and* the raw material for theological reflection on our emerging culture and the kinds of communication strategies that must emerge to engage it.

COURSE REGISTRATION

Conference information and registration are available from the AGTS Continuing Education office in several ways:

- http://www.agts.edu/conferences/roundtable_2003july/roundtable_july2003.html
- By telephone: 1-800-467-AGTS
- By email: agts-ext@agts.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course/conference is an arena for learning and growth of several kinds:

- *Cultural exegesis*: understanding and interpreting major forms of cultural influence that are creating the context in which the Christian gospel must be communicated.
- *Theological reflection*: hearing culture as posing critical theological questions and exercising the reflective skills needed to begin the process of developing meaningful answers.
- *Personal reframing*: seeing personal and corporate communicative ministry as an evolving, holistic, missional calling rather than a set of static roles played by executing a list of functions.
- *Professional networking*: developing relationships with other leaders devoted to the challenge of communicating the gospel in emerging culture in an environment that maximizes long-term peer learning.
- *Communication enhancement*: growing in the character, skills, and gifts associated with the communication arts as they relate to the emerging culture and church.

COURSE READINGS

(*Note*: you can save on shipping costs by ordering texts from the AGTS bookstore. Call Arlene at 1-800-467-AGTS x1055, or email her at adilley@agseminary.edu)

Beaudoin, Tom. *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998. (240 pages)

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

Grenz, Stanley J. *A Primer on Postmodernism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996. (204 pages)

Johnston, Graham. *Preaching to a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. (189 pages)

Kimball, Dan. *The Emerging Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. (272 pages)

Lose, David J. *Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003. (264 pages)

Martoia, Ron. *Morph! The Texture of Leadership for Tomorrow's Church*. Group, 2002. (207 pages)

Metzger, Will. *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*. 3rd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002. (270 pages)

McLaren, Brian D. *The Story We Find Ourselves In: The Further Adventures of a New Kind of Christian*. John Wiley, 2003. (192 pages)

_____. *More Ready Than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002. (160 pages)

_____. *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey*. John Wiley & Sons, 2001. (192 pages)

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

McManus, Erwin R. *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind*. Loveland, CO: Group, 2001. (224 pages)

Morgenthaler, Sally J. *Worship Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999. (320 pages)

Nash, Robert N. *An 8-Track Church in a CD World: The Modern Church in the Postmodern World*. Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2001. (144 pages)

Newbigin, Leslie. *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991. (90 pages)

Sweet, Leonard, Brian McLaren and Jerry Haselmayer. *A Is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. (338 pages)

_____. *Carpe Manana: Is Your Church Ready to Seize Tomorrow?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001. (208 pages)

_____. *Postmodern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century Church*. Broadman & Holman, 2000. (224 pages)

Towns, Elmer and Warren Bird. *Into the Future: Turning Today's Church Trends into Tomorrow's Opportunities*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. (244 pages)

Troeger, Thomas H. *Ten Strategies for Preaching in a Multimedia Culture*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996. (125 pages)

COURSE OUTLINE

1. Plenary sessions will feature presentations by Leonard Sweet as well as Byron Klaus and Earl Creps. Additional small group sessions and panel discussions will also be included in the experience. Informal times of interaction will enrich both the presentations and the relationships formed at the event. A conference schedule is available at:
http://www.agts.edu/conferences/roundtable_2003july/roundtable_july2003.html
2. A brief orientation session will be held during the conference for all those taking it as a for-credit class. You will be notified at the conference of the time and place. This will give us a chance to meet and ask questions about the course assignments. Attendance is required.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

a. Pre-conference:

1. *Read:*
 - *Two credit option:* read at least 1000 pages from the Text list.
 - *Three credit option:* read at least 1500 pages from the Text list.

(*Note:* do not select books read previously. Additional readings are referenced in the online *Resource List* at the end of this syllabus.)

2. *Write:*
 - *Two credit option:* write a 4-5-page response to the pre-session readings.
 - *Three credit option:* write a 7-10 page response to the pre-session readings.

The pre-session reflection paper should briefly describe some of the major themes in the reading and then discuss those that are most significant for your ministry context. The nature of the paper is to be synthetic, applying the readings to your life and ministry, and describing some of the challenges faced in those applications.

3. *Communicate:* email your pre-conference paper to (ecreps@agts.edu) or turn them in by the end of the conference.

b. During the class/conference

Be present for all conference sessions, workshops, and events. Participation in events, experiences, and relationships is critical for learning and growth.

c. Post-conference projects:

TWO CREDIT OPTION: choose 2 of the following 7 options

THREE CREDIT OPTION: choose 3 of the following 7 options.

(*Note:* if you have participated in other conference-based courses on this theme, you must select Post-Session options or topics which you have not previously used.)

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 to be a high-quality reflective essay, not a library research assignment.
2. *Ministry Development Plan:* write a 7-10 page paper detailing your plan for developing communication skills for ministry in emerging culture. This should include background research, personal growth, training, skill enhancements sought, implementation challenges, and a timeline.
3. *Sermons:* using insights gained from the class/conference, write two sermons of significant length designed to reach a pre-Christian emerging culture 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 audiocassette and/or media support (e.g., PowerPoint, video clips, etc.) If you speak without notes, an audiocassette is required.
4. *Research Paper:* choose a major theme related to the course/conference 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. Supporting footnotes and a 15-item bibliography are required.
5. *Internet Project:* research internet-based models of ministry and prepare a 7-10 page paper on your findings. The presentation should include a brief review of the literature, descriptions of the various models, web links, and other key features. Draw conclusions about their use of the internet itself, and 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).
6. *Multimedia Project:* using the course/conference as a starting point, develop a brief multimedia (Web-based, PowerPoint, etc.) presentation that would accomplish either of two goals: making the emerging church comprehensible to the mainstream church, or, making the gospel comprehensible to a postmodern audience.

7. *Self-Designed Project*: every student has the option of proposing one or more Self-Designed credit projects that relate specifically to a ministry or research interest relevant to the course subject matter. These projects must be approved in advance by the professor.

All written assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, represent high-quality, original, graduate-level work, and follow the *Turabian* style manual, 6th edition.

All assignments can be emailed to the professor (ecreps@agts.edu) with a title page that includes your name, address, phone and email, course number, title, and site.

Due date: post-session projects are to be postmarked no later than October 29, 2003. All students are eligible for a one-week extension by request. However, the grade for late work will be lowered by one letter grade for each week by which it exceeds the deadline.

(**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

	<u>2 credit option points</u>	<u>3 credit option points</u>
Pre-session writings:	75	100
Conference attendance	50	50
Post-session options	2 x 100 = 200	3 x 100 = 300

Grading will be on a percentage basis, with 90% of the total points required for an A, 80% of the points required for a B, etc. Plusses and minuses will be used for point totals within 2 points of any grade level.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Emerging Church/Emerging Culture: A Select Resource List is available at my AGTS faculty web page. A downloadable pdf version is also available there.

http://agts.edu/faculty/faculty_publications/bibliographies/creps_bibliography/index.html

The free Acrobat reader required to read pdf files is available at:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>

SPECIFIC DATA

Course syllabus prepared by Earl Creps, March, 2003.