

# ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## *PTH 551 Effective Evangelism and Assimilation*

Dr. Steve Lim

Fall 2005

### COURSE SYLLABUS

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines our changing cultural landscape and the challenges facing the church's mission in this context. Emphasis is placed on understanding the unchurched and how the church can more effectively be a witness, through the application of biblical principles, to reach and assimilate people into the church.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the priority and process of evangelism in the New Testament.
2. Identify the hindrances to evangelism today, and appreciate the challenges of developing more effective evangelism.
3. Understand the generational and cultural contexts in which the Church proclaims the gospel.
4. Comprehend the relevance of the gospel for individual and societal needs.
5. Understand the foundational objectives, strategies, and methods for effective evangelism.
6. Enhance the quality of personal witness and corporate evangelism.
7. Identify means for assimilating people into the local church.
8. Design an outreach strategy for a specific ministry context.

#### TEXTBOOKS

##### ***Required:***

Mittelberg, Mark. *Building a Contagious Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 2000.

Rusaw, Rick & Eric Swanson. *The Externally Focused Church*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2004.

Hunter, George G. *Radical Outreach: The Recovery of Apostolic Ministry & Evangelism*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003.

***Recommended:***

Hybels, Bill and Mark Mittelberg. *Becoming a Contagious Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1994.

McLaren, Brian. *More Ready than You Think*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002

Richardson, Rick. *Evangelism Outside the Box*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

- I. BIBLICAL EVANGELISM: PRIORITY AND PROCESS
  1. Jesus
  2. Early Church
  
- II. UNDERSTANDING OUR CHANGING CULTURE
  1. Generations
  2. Worldviews and religions (PTH 622 Comm. Christian Faith in a Pluralistic Society or CCFPS)
  3. Other significant factors in target audience
  
- III. RELEVANCE OF THE GOSPEL
  1. Individual needs (CCFPS)
  2. Societal needs (CCFPS)
  
- IV. HINDRANCES TO HARVEST IN THE CHURCH
  1. Power challenged churches
  2. Nonmissional churches
  3. Lack of serious disciple-making
  4. Flawed understanding of conversion and witness
  5. Substitutes for genuine harvest
  6. Lack of relationships with non-Christians
  7. Lack of friendliness and genuine Christian community
  8. Lack of servanthood
  9. Ignorance of changing culture: worldviews, concerns, questions
  10. Inappropriate strategies and methods
  11. Incomplete message that is perceived as irrelevant
  12. Inadequate apologetic based on rational arguments

## V. FOUNDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

1. Spiritual renewal and empowerment
2. Determination to be a missional church
3. Serious disciple-making (PTH 650 Building a Disciple-Making Ministry)
4. Understanding of conversion and witness
5. Rejection of substitutes for genuine harvest
6. Relationships with non-Christians
7. Welcoming and genuinely Christian community
8. Holistic ministries
9. Cultural understanding and relevance (PTH 622 Communicating Christian Faith in a Pluralistic Society or CCFPS)
10. Appropriate strategies and methods
11. A complete and relevant message (CCFPS)
12. An adequate, more broadly based apologetic; intelligent response to tough questions and issues (CCFPS)

## VI. STRATEGIES FOR EVANGELISM

1. Demonstrate spiritual power
2. Employ multi-faceted approach to individual witness: relational, testimonial, intellectual, confrontational
3. Employ team and community witness
4. Develop holistic ministries
5. Employ penetrating as well as invitational approaches
6. Target children and youth
7. Target specific groups: generational, socio-economic, ethnic, neglected
8. Target responsive groups
9. Start new services
10. Plant new churches
11. Preach with persuasion

## VII. METHODS OF EVANGELISM

1. Witness
2. Seeker services (Willowcreek, Saddleback)
3. Seeker retreats (IVCF, Young Life)
4. Revival services (Brownsville)
5. Evangelistic studies and discussions (Alpha, IVCF GIGs)
6. Side door evangelism
7. Event evangelism
8. Community events
9. Crusade evangelism (Billy Graham, Luis Palau)
10. Servant evangelism
11. Worship evangelism
12. Recovery ministries
13. Media and literature evangelism

## VIII. ASSIMILATION

1. Connecting: friendship, small groups, Sunday school
2. Growing: class for new believers/newcomers, discipling ministry (PTH 650 Building a Disciple-Making Ministry)
3. Involving: opportunities for ministry according to gifts and interests

## METHODOLOGY

Class and small group discussions, student presentations, supplementary readings, tapes, videos, and lectures will be used to facilitate learning. A project will be assigned which requires students to integrate the concepts that they learned.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### *Presessions*

1. ***Before the September 9-10 weekend:***
  - a. Read Mark Mittelberg, *Building a Contagious Church* (approx. 385 pp.)
  - b. Submit a two page typewritten "Reading Analysis." Indicate which concepts and practices were of most value to you and the reasons why. State the overall value of the book to you and assess its strengths and limitations. Your goal is not simply to summarize, but primarily to analyze and evaluate. These are **due at the beginning of the first class session, Friday, September 9**. The value of an intensive weekend class is multiplied when you have had prior opportunity to interact with the material and reflect on it.
2. ***Before the October 7-8 weekend:***
  - a. Read George Hunter's book, *Radical Outreach*.
  - b. Submit a "Reading Analysis" as described for the first book. This is **due at the beginning of the first class session, Friday, October 7**.
3. ***Before the November 4-5 weekend:***
  - a. Read Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson's book, *The Externally Focused Church*.
  - b. Submit a "Reading Analysis" as above. This is **due at the beginning of the first class session, Friday, November 4**.
  - c. Read any supplementary materials selected or designated. (Available in the library on 2 Hour Reserve)

### **Sessions**

1. Attend all sessions punctually. **Bring books due to be read** and be prepared to discuss them.
2. Participate in class through discussion, small groups, and a brief student presentation (5 to 6 minutes) on a chapter from one of the textbooks and/or one of the supplementary readings. Story-telling, public readings, or a skit may substitute for the presentation.
3. **Chapel** will be part of our class on *Friday, November 4 at 7:15 pm.*

### **During the semester**

- Choose **one of three options** below:
  1. Share a meaningful **witness** with 3 individuals. For each, write a one or two paragraph summary briefly describing the context and principles applied from the course. Submit these to the Faculty Secretary **as each occurs**, but no later than **Friday, November 4 at the beginning of class**
  2. Collect 15 useful **illustrations** (stories, statistics, quotes, lyrics, cartoons, etc.) for the 19 areas of "Relevance of the Gospel." These may be spread over many areas or be limited to a few areas of your choosing. These may come from books, periodicals, or media. **Limit those from collections to a total of 5. Cite sources for all illustrations.** Submit these on **Friday, November 4, at the beginning of class.**
  3. Any combination of 1 and 2. Each experience of witness reduces the total number of illustrations by 5.

### **Post-session**

1. Complete a take home **examination** and turn in to the Faculty Secretary by **Tuesday, November 15, 4:00 p.m.**
2. **Option A:** Design a **comprehensive outreach strategy** for a **specific ministry context and target audience.** This may be a church or ministry with which you have had past or present involvement, or it may be an anticipated ministry in your future. This project should **integrate the insights gained** through your reading, class participation, and experiences in outreach. The length should be **10 to 12 pages.**
  - a. Describe the ministry context and target audience in terms of generations, worldviews, culture, and other applicable characteristics. Elaborate on the issues and factors to which you would need to be especially sensitive. *(Approximately 2 to 3 pages)*

- b. Describe comprehensively the strategies and means of evangelism which you would employ. Explain why you are choosing them and excluding others.

**Option B:** Choose a topic from the 19 areas of the relevance of the gospel (to be distributed in class), and write a **10 to 12 page research paper**. In general, the presentation of the need, exploration of alternative solutions, the biblical response, and support material for the biblical response should each comprise approximately one-fourth of the paper. Do **not** use more than 2 items from the supportive material given in class. You may use any of the items that you have personally collected.

**Due:** This paper should be submitted to Dr. Steve Lim or the Faculty Secretary no later than **Friday, December 2 at 4:00 p.m.**

**Format:** Use Times-New Roman font, 12 point type. Make all margins 1" and place page numbers in the upper right hand corner. *Quotes longer than two lines should be single-spaced and indented.* Be sure to cite your sources through an attached bibliography and footnotes. *If used, lists and summaries longer than a quarter page should be placed in appendices.*

**Recommendations for Papers.** Strive to write at a graduate level, realizing that what may have been acceptable in undergraduate work may not be for master's degree papers. While the quality of your content is the most important, the use of poor grammar, punctuation, spelling, and style detracts. Deficiencies in these areas will result in a lower grade. (After graduation, they will reflect poorly on your ministry.) If possible, ask several people knowledgeable in English and writing to thoroughly critique your work before submission. Recognize, as all good writers do, that extensive rewriting is a normal part of writing well. Allow time for the process of revision, which may require several drafts.

### **GRADING PROCEDURE**

Reading analyses	11.5%	30 points (@ 10 per book)
Class participation, including class presentation	5.8%	15 points (@ 5 per weekend)
Assignment: witness or illustrations	5.8%	15 points
Examination	38.5%	100 points
Post-session paper	38.5%	100 points
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>260 points</i>

### **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

This will be distributed during the course.

### **SPECIFIC DATA**

Revised by Dr. Steve Lim, June 30, 2005