

# CARIBBEAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*Educating and training ministerial leadership*



## COM453 Cross-Cultural Communications

### Mission Statement

CST is committed to connect, serve, and train for Pentecostal ministry, leadership, and missions throughout the world.

### Professor

### Course Description

Though an extremely important activity, cross-cultural communications has only recently received much attention as a direct object of investigation. The study of culture has not, however, been overlooked. Anthropology is directly concerned with the study of culture. Similarly, other social and behavioral sciences have looked at humanity's cultural differences. Cross-Cultural Communications gratefully draws from these other disciplines and contributes its own valid emphasis in a very practical way. How do cultural differences make a difference in the way people interact? How might one improve communicative skills in a shrinking world? This course attempts to help the student discover answers to these current problems. Perhaps the most important aspect of this course relates to the word mission. This Study Guide and the textbook are dedicated to the special task of helping the person who would become a "sent one" to present Christ and His kingdom in an environment other than his or her own familiar culture. To do this, we address the relationship of communication and culture, how to reach people where they are, how different people think and express ideas across cultures and subcultures within a culture, and how the thought and expression of people affect their behavior.

### Resources

You will use Cross-Cultural Communications, A Study Guide by Del Tarr with the textbook it was written to accompany: Communicating Christ Cross- Culturally by David J. Hesselgrave (1991 edition). The Holy Bible is required. Bible quotations in this Study Guide are from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise stated. Some assignments require you to access the Global University Library Web site or other academic sources. Instructions for accessing the Web site are provided in the Undergraduate Writing Assignment Guidelines (UWAG) in the Student Packet. Note: This Study Guide was originally written to accompany the 1978 edition of the textbook. Since some sections of this textbook were omitted from the 1991 edition of Hesselgrave, we have included supplemental readings at the end of this Study Guide. You will read the indicated supplemental reading when it is included with the appropriate textbook reading assignment.

### Course Procedures

Classroom lectures, group discussion, audio-visual presentations, handouts, and case studies constitute some of the various methods that will be utilized in order to attain the course objectives.

## Objectives

The key concepts presented in the lesson are derived from the objectives. Study each objective carefully as you begin each lesson. First, identify the key concepts presented in the objective, and second, identify what each objective is asking you to do with the key concepts. For example, in the objective, Assess the positive and negative ways that colonialism affected the spread of Christianity, the key concept is colonialism affected Christianity. In this objective you are asked to assess positive and negative ways—or show the good and bad effects colonialism had on the spread of Christianity.

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## Course Introduction

Many diplomats and political leaders of the world believe that only through successful cross-cultural communication will humankind and society survive. Because of the vast improvement in transportation of the last few decades, the world is indeed becoming a global village. However, people's ability to communicate well with their once distant neighbors has not kept pace. In this modern age of technology the overseas witness for Christ has found it increasingly easy to go and live in formerly hostile geographical areas of the world. Electronic communication is a modern wonder that allows great segments of the earth's population to witness a single event simultaneously. The increasing contact between peoples who are culturally very different is our central problem. Human communication between members of the same race, community, and even the same family, can be very difficult. In addition, communication between different kinds of people demands much attention and effort.

Good understanding between people does not just happen naturally. The person who aspires to be an effective witness for Christ should know this about the process of human dialogue: any message ends up being more a product of the receiver than of the sender! Gospel communicators must stop believing the old false idea that "meaning is mainly in words." Research and objective experience show that "meaning is primarily in people." Cross-cultural communicators will be successful in the measure that he or she learns enough about the hearers to properly adapt the message to them. The purpose of a cross-cultural communicator is to cause the audience of one or more persons to understand the message being sent in a way that substantially corresponds with what is intended.

The sender of a message is responsible to be "receiver oriented." The words and symbols used by the sender must be chosen carefully on the basis of the best understanding of what their impact on the receiver will be. Cross-cultural communications is a rapidly growing and popular subject—not just in the world of Christian witness. The disciplines of philosophy, psychology, theology, the social sciences, and others are recognizing the importance of studying communications. It is an interdisciplinary subject. No matter where one's interest and learning are centered, if one wishes to transfer learning to someone else, a study of communications is essential for effectiveness. The study and understanding of communications in general will enhance any other area of knowledge. Therefore the study of cross-cultural communications is a very practical pursuit.

If this is your first course on communications, you may find many new words. All areas of study seem to have their own vocabulary. The extensive glossary provided in this Study Guide will be helpful. Remember that every meaningful word you learn increases the scope of your world. Welcome to the course Cross-Cultural Communications!