

# CARIBBEAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*Educating and training ministerial leadership*



## PHL312 World Religions

### Mission Statement

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

### Professor

### Course Description

After the introduction to the concept of religion, *People and Their Beliefs* surveys ten of the prominent living religions of the world. They are: animism of the Third World, religions of India (Hinduism and Sikhism), of East Asia (Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Shintoism), and of the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). The course treats the origins, development, tenets, and literature of each religion and evaluates each in the light of Christian concepts. The course concludes with an analysis of the departure of heretical sects from orthodox Christian principles. The overall purpose is to stress the abundant life in Christ.

### Resources

You will use *People and Their Beliefs*, an Independent-Study Textbook by Paul Wright, as both the textbook and study guide for the course. The Holy Bible is the only other requirement. Bible quotations in the independent-study textbook are from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted. Some assignments require you to access the Global University Library Web site or other academic sources. Instructions for accessing the Internet are provided in the Undergraduate Writing Assignment Guidelines (UWAG) in the Student Packet. If you are enrolled in this course for three credits, the third credit will be earned by completing a collateral reading assignment (CRA). This assignment is based on the textbook *Understanding New Religious Movements*, Second Edition, by John A. Saliba. The instructions for completing this assignment are in the student packet.

### 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.

### 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.

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## **Course Introduction**

Religious belief can be described from many different viewpoints. The historian's view will be different than the sociologist's view, while the theologian will look at a religion from yet another point of view. Religion can be described in ways that it influences family life, the community, relationships with those outside the community, and the values that control all these relationships. However, in studying a religion, the primary concerns are usually with the beliefs themselves and people's responses to them. The first question is, "Are these beliefs based on truth?" From an outsider's point of view, one may ask, "How do these beliefs agree with what I believe?"

For the Christian, the understanding of spiritual things comes as the Spirit of God reveals them to him through the study of God's Word. The Christian looks at the study of his religion as theology, the term that is usually given to the study of one's own religion. A theology is developed from a study of the sacred writings of the religion. Therefore, as the Christian studies other religions, the measuring tool against which he surveys the religion is the Bible, the sacred Scripture of the Christian.

The study of other religions reveals that they all have some system of doctrine, and most have sacred writings on which their beliefs are based. The understanding of these beliefs, writings, and doctrines will assist the Christian in knowing how to approach the followers of other religions.