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SF 650 Contemporary Prayer Movements

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Contemporary Prayer Movements
SF 650
1 Credit Hour

In 1991, Margaret M. Poloma and George H. Gallup, Jr., published their book, *Varieties of Prayer*. It was a study of a Gallup survey on Religion in American Life. Specifically, it examined the importance of prayer in the lives of Americans. The authors observed: “It is...accurate to say that most Americans, while believing in prayer, are desperately in need of help in understanding and practicing prayer.” In the decade since those words were written a “prayer movement” has emerged in North America with multifaceted expressions including: national prayer coalitions, united prayer events, churches with prayer coordinators or “prayer pastors,” and a multitude of prayer ministries. Most are committed to mobilizing the church for prayer. Many are also committed to helping people understand prayer. We believe that it is important for seminarians to have the opportunity to hear from national and international leaders in the prayer movement in order to discover what is happening “in the field,” experience intensive teaching on prayer, to reflect theologically on the ideas presented, and to respond to God’s invitation to pray. Each year we invite a prayer leader to campus for a workshop and use this as an opportunity for this kind of creative engagement.

This year’s event on “Contemplative Praying” is scheduled for February 13-14, 2004. Our workshop leader is Jan Johnson, a professional writer and spiritual director who has authored 27 books and over 1000 articles. Some of her more recent books include: *Savoring God’s Word: The Soul-Transforming Practice of Scripture Meditation* (to be released by NavPress in January, 04); *Dallas Willard’s Study Guide to The Divine Conspiracy* (Harper San Francisco); *Growing Compassionate Kids* (Upper Room Books); and *When the Soul Listens, Listening to God, and Enjoying the Presence of God* (all NavPress). Sessions will be held in McKenna Chapel from approximately 7-10PM on Friday and 9-5 on Saturday. There will be a one-hour lunch break. Fast food options are available in the area. Persons may take this as a 1 credit course, for Continuing Ed. Credit, or as a workshop (in which case a $25 fee is assessed, payable at the door).

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Course Objectives
Students will....
1. report on their experience of the weekend
2. demonstrate a knowledge of the assigned literature.
3. articulate their understanding of the model of prayer taught/experienced by the workshop leader
4. reflect theologically on the prayer model that was presented

Required Assignments:

- Read the assigned texts (totaling between 400-500 pages)
- Attend each of the seminar sessions (totaling 12 hours)
- Hand in a copy of your notes from the seminar as evidence of your attendance and as part of the written requirements for this class. These notes will be attached to your reflection paper (see below)
- Turn in a 8-10 page reflection paper that integrates the seminar and texts, specifying what emerged for you as discoveries, distilling those aspects of your theology of prayer that pertain to the theme of the workshop, identifying the questions which your are still processing, and speculating about how you might incorporate some of the ideas to which you were exposed into your own life and ministry. Write cogently and succinctly, being intentional about referring to specific pages in texts and statements from the presenter, rather than over-generalizing your responses.

Class Texts:
- Jan Johnson, *When the Soul Listens* (NavPress, 187 pages)