



## GCS Goals and Objectives

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Grace Communion Seminary  
3120 Whitehall Park Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28273-3335

**GCS Mission:** “*Equipping the Saints for Pastoral Ministry.*” We are committed to equip the saints for pastoral ministry through quality graduate-level distance education programs in biblical, theological, ministerial and pastoral studies informed by Incarnational Trinitarian faith.

**Institutional Goals:** Grace Communion Seminary seeks to:

1. Serve graduate-level educational needs of pastors and others engaged in Christian ministry who seek to grow deeper in relationship with our Triune God and to be able to serve more effectively in the Incarnational life of the church in Jesus Christ.
2. Provide formal programs of instruction and other learning opportunities that foster intellectual curiosity, facilitate the work of the Spirit in transforming the student, arouse the social and moral conscience of its students, and cultivate in them a willingness to respond to God as he leads them to address the global needs of humanity.
3. Provide seminary education that conveys the Trinitarian nature of God in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.
4. Provide courses and programs that meet traditional academic standards, but are designed to suit the needs of bivocational pastors who can study only on a part-time basis, and also allow fulltime students to progress at a traditional pace.

**Institutional Objectives:** Grace Communion Seminary seeks to:

1. Provide quality distance education programs for graduate students in biblical, theological, historical, ministerial, and pastoral studies that are centered in Incarnational Trinitarian theology. Our goal is that our overall course completion rate is at least 90 percent, and of the students and alumni who complete our surveys, at least 90 percent say that they would recommend these studies to a friend.
2. Provide credentialed faculty members who have experience in teaching and in ministry-related areas. Our goal is that at least 75 percent of our faculty have doctorates in a field relevant to the courses they teach. Of those who do not have a doctorate, at least 67 percent will have more than one master's degree, with training in fields relevant to the courses they teach; the remaining third may have only one master's, but with exceptional expertise for the course they teach.
3. Provide adequate administrative staff to facilitate direction and coordination of student services, faculty development, financial accountability, and technological support. Our goal is that we have at least 40 hours per week of support staff for every 30 full-time-equivalent students.
4. Provide structured graduate-level programs in a semester-long format that is readily accessible to clergy and others engaged in Christian ministry in a flexible manner through technologically sound, cost-effective educational systems. Our goal is that we offer two master's degrees; accessibility will be demonstrated by at least 90 enrollments per year.
5. Provide holistic Christian education through online courses by means of directed readings, online lectures, written assignments, practical application experiences, examinations, and interaction with peers and professors. Our goal is that we offer at least 20 courses each year.
6. Provide a curriculum that enables students to meet personal goals in higher education, from taking courses of their choice in the Master's Level Continuing Education Courses, to a master's degree program.

Our goal is that 100 percent of our courses, with the exception of capstone courses, may be taken either for continuing education, or may be applied toward a master's degree.

7. Provide courses that give students a good foundation in biblical studies, theology, church history, and Christian ministry, suitable for pastoral work or for further study. One key indicator for this is student performance on the summative exam.
8. Provide effective interactions between students and faculty, as measured by at least a 90 percent positive rating on our end-of-semester survey. All student complaints will be investigated by the Dean of Faculty within 14 days.

## **Overview of GCS Programs of Study**

Churches need pastors and ministers who have formal education that prepares them to handle the larger questions of the meaning of our existence and equips them with tools to provide spiritual meaningfulness for the daily commitments and responsibilities of its church members. Many ministers and pastors serving our church today hold careers outside of fulltime ministry, so we have a flexible program of study to facilitate their time and travel constraints.

For this important purpose, we provide a flexible curriculum, with the first level leading toward the second. Students start in the Master's Level Continuing Education (MLCE) program, in which they may choose from courses across the GCS curriculum. All of our courses are offered at the master's level, and all courses taken in the MLCE may be used for a master's degree. Many lay persons and dual-career ministers value additional education at the graduate level, but may not feel the need to complete a full master's degree.

We have two degree programs the Master of Pastoral Studies, and the Master of Theological Studies. Either degree requires completion of fourteen courses (42 units). All students in a course are given the same assignments and are evaluated on the same grading scales, regardless as to their personal goals.

## **Purpose Statement: Why Grace Communion Seminary?**

Grace Communion Seminary serves the needs of pastors and others engaged in Christian service who want to grow deeper in relationship with our Triune God and to be able to more effectively serve in the Incarnational life of the church in Jesus Christ.

**Grace** is the essence of our lives. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ reveals God to us, grants us life in him, leads us in forgiving and being forgiven, and gives us salvation. Our Triune God and his grace and love through Jesus Christ is the center of our theology.

**Communion** defines the relationship we have with God, Jesus, and one another. The communion of the Holy Spirit binds us with Jesus who is the head of the Church, enlivens God's love in our hearts, and unites us as followers of Jesus Christ. We live in inseparable unity in Christ in the perpetual effects of his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost.

**Seminary** describes the scope of our educational goal. We are committed to enabling pastoral ministry in the universal church that effectively shares the love of the Father with the world. We teach from a perspective of Trinitarian Incarnational theology.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

## **Educational Philosophy**

GCS provides holistic Christian education for laity and ministry to develop biblical and theological understanding for pastoral leadership by means of directed readings, online lectures, written assignments, practical application experiences, and interaction with colleagues and professors.

We see as fundamental to the accomplishment of these purposes a profound dedication to the search for and dissemination of truth. We believe, therefore, that the students, faculty, staff, administrators, and board members

should be committed to and supported in their pursuit of knowledge and truth.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

Through maintaining the educational objectives in our curriculum, the student is intended to accomplish the following learning outcomes:

1. Explain the revelation of the Bible in its historical and cultural setting as it relates to God, Jesus Christ, and salvation, and its application for faithful living today.
2. Reason from a sound theological basis as new covenant Christians centered in Trinitarian Incarnational faith.
3. Model the love of God the Father, the grace of the Son Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit in congregations.
4. Conduct the work of pastoral ministry in witness to and representation of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.
5. Integrate biblical exegesis with sound theological exposition that informs personal spiritual growth and that directs effective ministry in Jesus Christ.

## **Foundational Tenets**

The Statement of Beliefs of Grace Communion International provides the doctrinal foundation for GCS.

### **We believe:**

- There is one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- God the Father made all things through the Son, sent the Son for our salvation, and gives us the Holy Spirit.
- The Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, was born of the virgin Mary, fully God and fully human, and is the perfect revelation of the Father and the perfect representative of humanity. He suffered and died on the cross

for all human sin, was raised bodily on the third day, and ascended to heaven. Standing in for all humanity before the Father, Jesus Christ provides the perfect human response to God. Since he died for all, all died in him, and all will be made alive in him.

- The Holy Spirit brings sinners to repentance and faith, assures believers of their forgiveness and acceptance as God's dearly loved children, and works in them to conform them to the image of Jesus Christ.
- The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God that testifies to Jesus Christ. The Bible is fully authoritative for all matters of faith and salvation.
- Salvation comes only by God's grace and not by works, and it is experienced through faith in Jesus Christ. Christians respond to the joy of salvation when they gather in regular fellowship and live godly lives in Jesus Christ.
- We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come.

(For full *Statement of Beliefs*, go to <http://www.gci.org/aboutus/beliefs>.)

### **Nondiscriminatory Policy**

Grace Communion Seminary admits students of any race, sex, color, creed, age, or national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, age, or national origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.