



Grace Communion Seminary

CM506 Trinitarian Youth Ministry

(Face-to-Face Meetings in Charlotte)

Short Syllabus

Instructor: Greg Williams, DMin & Jeffrey Broadnax, MPS

GCS Mission Statement

“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.

Course Description: Trinitarian Youth Ministry

This course examines the relationship of theology and youth ministry practice as it has developed in North America. The course explores the centrality of Jesus in all ministry in the relationship that Jesus already has with young people. That relationship is explored in its post-Christian, post-modern cultural context, with an emphasis on the importance of mentoring as a relational/incarnational tool in youth ministry.

Required Textbooks

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Touchstone, 1959.
ISBN: 978-0-648-81500-8 (sells for about \$10).

Root, Andrew. *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8308-3488-4 (sells for about \$13).

Torrance, Thomas F. *The Mediation of Christ*. Helmers & Howard, 1992. ISBN 0-939443050-3 (sells for about \$14).

Whitfield, Charles. *Boundaries and Relationships: Knowing, Protecting and Enjoying the Self*. Deerfield Beach: Health Communications, 1993, ISBN 1-55874-259-X (sells for about \$8).

Optional Textbook

Barth, Karl. *The Call to Discipleship*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press Facets edition, 2003. ISBN 978-0800636326 (sells for about \$10).

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will identify and describe an approach to youth ministry that is expressive of a theology of ministry that is Trinitarian, Christ-centered and incarnational. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to online discussions and the short reflection paper.
2. Students will describe the history of youth ministry in North America and the trending of North American culture toward post-Christendom and post-modernity. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to the online discussions and in the final paper.
3. Students will describe how these historical/cultural forces impact the contemporary practice of youth ministry. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to the online discussions.
4. Students will provide an analysis of the existing youth ministry and youth programs in their setting (this would include youth configurations related to family, church or neighborhood). What are the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats? This outcome will be demonstrated through class discussion and a short reflection paper.
5. Students will design a youth ministry program that is faithful to a Trinitarian, incarnational theology in their ministry setting. This outcome will be demonstrated in the final paper, which sets forth the student's assessment of current youth ministry programming and their proposal for the redesign of that programming.

Course Objectives

This course seeks to address the application of Trinitarian (Christ-centered, incarnational) theology to the practice of Christian ministry to, with and through teens (youth). Rather than ministry that seeks merely to *influence* teens toward certain goals, with this approach youth ministers participate in sustained, meaningful ways in what the incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Jesus Christ is actually doing through his ongoing relationship, in the Spirit, with young people and their ministers. The course is designed to benefit youth ministers, pastors, parents, grandparents and guardians—all who wish to participate in Jesus’ ministry to and through young people, with the primary focus being on congregationally based ministries that seek to disciple older children and teens.

The course begins with an overview of the relationship between the *theology* and *practice* of youth ministry, and a review of the historic development of youth ministry within North America. The course then continues by exploring the centrality of Jesus in all ministry—and how youth ministry may be viewed as our active sharing in the relationship that Jesus, in the Holy Spirit, already has with young people. Next, the course explores that relationship in an increasingly post-Christian, post-modern cultural context.

The course also explores the importance of *mentoring* as a relational-incarnational tool in service of a Trinitarian-incarnational approach to youth ministry. Online class discussions will examine the practical application of these concepts within the context of contemporary, “real world” youth ministry.

The course includes a variety of readings (in textbooks and journal articles), and places significant emphasis on students’ responses to those readings as they interact in the classroom with the instructor and their peers.

Course Requirements

Trinitarian Youth Ministry is organized in accordance with the chapter topics in the primary textbook, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry* (one topic for each lecture). This textbook is augmented with readings from *The Cost of Discipleship*, *Boundaries and Relationships*, *The Mediation of Christ*, online articles and accompanying lectures (the written lectures were originally written by Ted Johnston and Greg Williams, both of whom served as church administrators in Grace Communion International). To these readings are added a variety of projects, three written papers, the viewing of videos and contributions to classroom

discussions. These class assignments are summarized in the chart below and then described in detail in the text that follows.

Course Assignments Summary

| Lecture Number | Topic for the Lecture | Discussion Questions |
|---|--|---|
| Pre-class (once a student is registered the reading assignment begins) | Read all textbooks (estimated 33 hours) View Root's online video: Andrew Root at: https://www.gcs.edu/mod/page/view.php?id=4437 | To be completed before arriving for July 27, 2020 class (Classes will begin at 9:00 am on Monday July 27 at the GCI Home Office in Charlotte and conclude by Tuesday July 28 at 4:45 pm) |
| Pre-class | Youth Ministry analysis in home setting. | Write a reaction paper (minimum of 500 words, 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font, double spaced) due July 27 at first class |
| sessions in Charlotte | | |
| 1 | Theology forms ministry | What has been your experience in youth ministry? Speak about Root's experiences and definition of "Relational Youth Ministry." Discuss Bonhoeffer's concepts of cheap grace vs costly grace. |
| 2 | The history of youth ministry in North America | What strikes you about the historical development of youth ministry? How does this inform our practice today? How do the writings of Root, Bonhoeffer and Torrance interpenetrate one another? |
| 3 | Our relational motivations | "Evangelicals are willing to engage with the current culture in hopes of influencing youth to develop a relationship with Jesus" – What are your thoughts about this statement? Root says that youth ministry "is not about influence but accompaniment" – explain. |
| 4 | Who is Christ? | Root describes Jesus Christ as "the incarnate, crucified and resurrected God-man" – how would you unpack this? How does "Who is Jesus?" shape youth ministry? |

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| 5 | Where is Christ? (survey of personal boundaries + a 2-page reflection paper) | Explain why a youth minister engages youth. Then explain how a youth minister engages youth. |
| Online Classes Resume | | |
| 6 Aug 3-9 | Place-sharing | Define the concept of “place-sharing.” Describe ways that Jesus met people where they were. How does the church provide supplemental support to parents? What is your churches philosophy toward YMin? |
| 7 Aug 10-16 | Relational transformation | Jesus Christ, the incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Son of God, actively and redemptively is present, ministering in the Spirit within our world. The questions to consider are: 1. Where and how is Jesus ministering? 2. How may we join with him, as “place-sharers” in his ongoing ministry? |
| 8 Aug 17-23 | What then shall we do? | In light of the reading, how do you see the call to discipleship? How does the Holy Spirit play a role in the life of the minister? In the life of the student? |
| 9 Aug 24-30 | Place-sharing in community | Be prepared to discuss Root’s “Rules of Art for Meaningful Relationships.” Speak about Roots “connection-relationship” delineation. |
| 10 Aug 31 – Sept 6 | Local application (course summary) | What concepts have stood out for you? How will this shape your future ministry? |
| | Final Project | Note: your final report is due no later than Wed Sept 20, 2020 |

Course Assignments Details

Class one: Theology forms ministry

Assigned reading:

- Root: preface and introduction (pp. 9-23)
- Bonhoeffer: introduction and costly grace (pp. 35-56)
- Analysis paper of Existing Youth Ministry (minimum of 500 words 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font, double spaced),
- Lecture: *Theology Forms Ministry*

Class two: History of youth ministry in North America

Assigned reading:

- Root: chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 25-61)
- Bonhoeffer: the call to discipleship (pp. 57-78)
- Torrance: chapter 1 (pp. 1-23)
- Lecture: *The Historical Ascent of Relational Youth ministry*

Class three: Our relational motivations

Assigned reading:

- Root: chapter 3 and introduction to part two (pp. 62-84)
- Bonhoeffer: single-minded obedience (pp. 79-85)
- Torrance: chapter 2 (pp.24-46)
- Lecture: *Incarnational Ministry vs. Personal Influence Strategy*

Class four: Who is Jesus Christ?

Assigned reading:

- Root: chapter 4 (pp. 85-103)
- Bonhoeffer: discipleship and the cross (pp. 86-93)
- Torrance: chapter 3 (pp. 47-72)
- Lecture: *The Mediation of Christ*

Class five: Where is Jesus Christ?

Assigned reading:

- Root: chapter 5 (pp. 104-123)
- Bonhoeffer: discipleship and the individual (pp. 94-101)
- Whitfield: chapter 2 (pp. 11-38)
- Lecture: *Relational Ministry as Participation in God's Presence*

- Complete the “Survey on Personal Boundaries” found in chapter 2 (pp. 11-14) of Whitfield’s book. Read the full chapter and write a **reaction paper** (minimum of 500 words 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font, double spaced), summarizing and analyzing what you have learned about yourself through taking the survey and reading chapter 2. Discuss which boundary areas in your life need the most personal attention/development. **The reaction paper is due no later than Sunday Aug 9.** Note that this paper will be graded for content, style, grammar and spelling.

Class six: What then shall we do?

Assigned reading:

- Root: chapter 6 (pp. 124-141)
- Bonhoeffer: The disciple and unbelievers (pp. 182-188)
- Torrance: chapter 4 (pp. 73-98)
- Lecture: *Participating in Jesus’ Ministry*

Class seven: Place-sharing

Assigned reading:

- Root: chapter 7 (pp. 142-165)
- Bonhoeffer: the great divide (pp. 189-195)
- Lecture: *The Complicated Person*

Class eight: Relational transformation

Assigned reading:

- Root: chapter 8 (pp. 166-196)
- Bonhoeffer: the work and suffering of the messengers (pp. 206-217)
- Lecture: *Postmodern, Post-Christian Culture*
- **Youth Group Visit:** summarizing and analyzing what you observed as in alignment with our course? What were the challenges of the group? How did this experience inform your goals for back home? **The reaction paper is due no later than Friday Dec 29.** Note that this paper will be graded for content, style, grammar and spelling.

Class nine: Place-sharing in community

Assigned reading:

- Root: chapter 9 (pp. 197-217)
- Bonhoeffer: the body of Christ & the visible community (236-271)
- Lecture: *Mentoring Youth*

Class ten: Local application

Assigned reading:

- Root: appendix (pp. 218-219)
- Bonhoeffer: the saints and the image of Christ (pp. 272-304)
- Lecture: *Putting It All Together*

Post-class assignments

Supplemental reading in preparation for final project:

- Article: *Reconsidering the Non-Negotiables*
https://web.archive.org/web/20160402052508/http://www.generationsministries.org/uploads/2/5/2/7/25278738/reconsidering_the_non-negotiables.pdf
- Article (chart): *Stages of Development in Youths*
<https://web.archive.org/web/20170114055423/http://www.son.wisc.edu/net/wistrec/net/developstagetext.html>
- Article: *Perichoretic Parenting*
<https://web.archive.org/save/https://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/articles/perichoretic-parenting/>
- Article: *Evangelizing Postmodern Youths*
<https://web.archive.org/web/20150908001755/https://www.gci.org/church/youth/postmodern>
- Article: *Blending Builders, Boomers, Busters, and Bridgers*
https://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/-/media/Enrichment/Issue-PDFs/2002/EJ_2002_01_Winter.pdf#page=28

Final Project:

- Begin work on your 15-page **final report**, which is due no later than Friday December 29. Note that this paper will be graded for content, style, grammar and spelling, and include the following four components.

1. Core concepts.

Summarize what you feel are the core concepts that you have learned in this class. Provide short quotes from assigned reading that highlight these concepts (be sure to follow the formats for quotes, including footnoting and a bibliography in the standard GCS report/paper requirements). You can mention

here outside reading that meaningfully has informed your understanding of these concepts.

2. Personal observations.

In this section we want you to reflect on how your thinking has been impacted by what you have learned. Please give concrete examples, but you need not write in long detail.

3. Assessment of existing program.

In this section, you will assess what your congregation is now doing to minister to and with youth (older children and teens). What is working? What is not? What is consistent with the core concepts you have learned in this course? What is not? Why? As part of this assessment, survey a few student participants, asking them: • How has your life been impacted by being a part of the youth group this last year? • Describe your current relationship with Jesus. • What church programs or events have helped you most in developing your relationship with Jesus?

4. Strategic plan for new program.

In this section, I want you to provide a specific plan for developing your youth ministry in your congregation (if you work with more than one congregation, chose just one). Since various sizes and types of congregations are represented by the students in this class, there is no one-size-fits-all requirement here. For some of you this plan may be about launching a program that does not yet exist. For others it will be about radically altering an existing program, for still others it will be about “tweaking” an existing program that is already operating well. Be sure to include specifics here – names, goals, dates and budgets. Address staffing, including training staff. Get real and specific. What I want you to come up with is a concrete plan that you can then take to your leadership and begin to enlist them in refining (or completely overhauling) the plan as you progress forward. If your plan includes educating your congregation about some of these issues, say so and perhaps include a sermon or Bible Study outline that you would use.

Here are the final report formatting requirements: The final report is to be no less than 15 pages long (in 12 point Times New Roman font, double spaced). In formatting the report, be sure to adhere to the requirements for papers/reports outlined in "How to Format a Paper for GCS Classes" at <https://www.gcs.edu/mod/book/view.php?id=5016>.

Estimated hours to complete course assignments

Following is an estimate of the number of hours that students will need to spend to complete course assignments. Some students will complete the assignments in less time, and some will take more.

| Assignment | | Estimated hours for average student | Percentage of final grade |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Number of pages | | |
| Root textbook | 197 | 13.1 | |
| Bonhoeffer textbook | 155 | 10.3 | |
| Whitfield textbook | 25 | 1.3 | |
| Torrance textbook | 98 | 8.3 | |
| Online articles/essays | | 7 | |
| On-site youth ministry analysis | | 5 | |
| Classroom participation: commenting on assigned reading, discussion with other students and the course instructor (7 lectures over 2 days / 3 classes online) | | 24 | 50 |
| | Number of pages | | |
| Reflection paper on Personal Boundaries | 2 | 3 | 10 |
| Reflection paper on Youth Ministry analysis | 2 | 3 | 10 |
| Final research/project report | 15 | 60 | 30 |
| Total estimated hours | | 135 | 100 |