



## Grace Communion Seminary

### CM06 Trinitarian Youth Ministry

#### Short Syllabus

**Instructor:** Ted Johnston

#### **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**

- Root, Andrew. *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007. ISBN 978-0-8308-3488-4 (sells for about \$12.50).
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York : Touchstone, 1959. ISBN : 978-0-648-81500-8 (sells for about \$9.00).
- Whitfield, Charles. *Boundaries and Relationships: Knowing, Protecting and Enjoying the Self*. Deerfield Beach: Health Communications, 1993, ISBN 1-55874-259-X (sells for about \$11.00).
- Torrance, Thomas F. *The Mediation of Christ*. Helmers & Howard, 1992. ISBN 0-939443050-3 (sells for about \$13.00).

#### **Optional Textbook**

- Barth, Karl. *The Call to Discipleship*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press Facets edition, 2003. ISBN 0-8006-3632-5 (sells for about \$10.00).

## **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 compare a *trinitarian, incarnational* approach to youth ministry to other approaches. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to online discussions, including reporting on a visit to an existing youth ministry program in the student's community.
5. Students will design a youth ministry program that is faithful to a trinitarian, incarnational theology in their particular 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 posted to the online forum. These responses then lead to an online dialog between students and with the class teacher as the class interacts in community in ways that mirror the community that the class advocates.

## **Course Requirements**

*Trinitarian Youth Ministry* is organized in accordance with the chapter topics in the course’s primary textbook, “Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry” (one topic for each week of the course). This textbook is augmented with readings from “The Cost of Discipleship,” “Boundaries and Relationships,” “The Mediation of Christ,” online articles and written lectures from course instructor Ted Johnston and guest lecturer Greg Williams (who directs Generations Ministries for Grace Communion International). To these readings are added a variety of projects, two written papers, the viewing of videos and contributions to the online discussion forum. These class assignments are summarized in the chart below and described in detail in the text below that.

<b>Course Assignments Summary</b>		
<b>Week Number</b>	<b>Topic for the Week</b>	<b>Assignments for the week</b> (see details following this chart, including requirements for online discussions)
1	<i>Theology forms ministry</i>	Reading: lecture, books and articles Project: view two online videos
2	<i>The history of youth ministry in North America</i>	Reading: lecture, books and articles Project: visit a local youth ministry meeting
3	<i>Our relational motivations</i>	Reading: lecture, books and articles
4	<i>Who is Jesus Christ?</i>	Reading: lecture and books
5	<i>Where is Jesus Christ?</i>	Reading: lecture and books Project: begin work on reaction paper (due no later than Monday of week 8)
6	<i>What then shall we do?</i>	Reading: lecture, books and articles Project: continue work on reaction paper
7	<i>Place-sharing</i>	Reading: lecture and books Project: view GenMin website and the movie “Goodwill Hunting,” continue work on reaction paper
8	<i>Relational transformation</i>	Reading: lecture, books and articles Project: turn in reaction paper (see week 5)—due no later than Monday this week
9	<i>Place-sharing in community</i>	Reading: lecture and books Project: view assigned videos
10	<i>Local application</i>	Reading: lecture, books and articles Project: begin work on final report
11	(work on projects)	Project: continue working on final report
12	(work on projects)	Note: your final report is due no later than Monday this week

## Course Assignments Details

### **Week one: *Theology forms ministry***

#### **Assigned reading:**

- Root: preface and introduction (pp. 9-23)
- Bonhoeffer: introduction and costly grace (pp. 35-56)
- Article: Post-Relational Youth Ministry—read online at <http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/post-relational-youth-ministry-beyond-youth-work-as-we-know-it/>
- Lecture: *Theology Forms Ministry*, Ted Johnston

#### **Assigned projects:**

- View two “You’re Included” interviews with Jeff McSwain at: <http://www.gci.org/yi/mcswain23> and <http://www.gci.org/yi/mcswain24>
- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week’s assigned reading and viewing. Then interact with comments from other students and the class instructor.

### **Week 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)
- Article: *Reconsidering the Non-Negotiables*—read online at <http://genmin.gci.org/Web%20Documents/Reconsidering%20the%20Non-negotiables.pdf>
- Article: *Trends in American Child Rearing Practices*—read online at <http://genmin.gci.org/Web%20Documents/Child%20rearing%20practices%20history.htm>
- Lecture: *The Historical Ascent of Relational Youth ministry*, Greg Williams

#### **Assigned projects:**

- During this week or next, visit in your community a regular meeting of an established youth ministry group (church based or parachurch is acceptable).
- Post this week and next (in the online discussion forum), your observations about that visit, and about the assigned reading. Interact with the comments from other students and the course instructor.

### **Week 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)
- Article: *Meeting Them Where They Are—Thoughts on Adolescent Development*—view online at:  
<http://genmin.gci.org/Web%20Documents/Adolescent%20development.pdf>
- Article (chart): *Stages of Development in Youths*—view online at  
<http://genmin.gci.org/Web%20Documents/Stages%20of%20development%20in%20youth.pdf>
- Lecture: *Incarnational Ministry vs. Personal Influence Strategy*, Ted Johnston

#### **Assigned project:**

- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and the course instructor.

### **Week 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*, Ted Johnston

#### **Assigned project:**

- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and the course instructor.

### **Week 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*, Greg Williams

### **Assigned projects:**

- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and from the instructor.
- 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 Monday of week eight.** Note that this paper will be graded for content, style, grammar and spelling.
- Note: an interim grade for your contributions to the online discussion forum will be given this week in order to assess your progress in the course.

### **Week 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)
- Article: *Perichoretic Parenting*—online at:  
<http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/news/2006/20061002smaill.cfm?doc=141>
- Article: *The Bible for the Postmodern World*—online at:  
<http://genmin.gci.org/Web%20Documents/The%20Bible%20as%20metanarrative%20NT%20Wright.pdf>
- Lecture: *Participating in Jesus' Ministry*, Ted Johnston

#### **Assigned project:**

- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and from the instructor.

## **Week seven: Place-sharing**

### **Assigned reading:**

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

### **Assigned projects:**

- Become familiar with the content of the *GenMin* website at:  
<http://genmin.gci.org/>
- View the movie *Goodwill Hunting*
- This week and next post in the discussion forum your reactions to the movie, to the content of the GenMin website, and to the assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and from the instructor.

## **Week eight: Relational transformation**

### **Assigned reading:**

- Root: chapter 8 (pp. 166-196)
- Bonhoeffer: the work and suffering of the messengers (pp. 206-217)
- Article: *Evangelizing Postmodern Youths*—online at:  
<http://www.gci.org/church/youth/postmodern>
- Article: Excerpt from the book, *Postmodern Youth Ministry*—online at:  
<http://media.youthspecialties.com/store/samples/pdf/p/pmymch1.pdf>
- Lecture: *Postmodern, Post-Christian Culture*, Ted Johnston

### **Assigned projects:**

- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and from the instructor.
- Note: your 500 word **reaction paper** (see week 5) is due no later than Monday of this week.

## **Week nine: *Place-sharing in community***

### **Assigned reading:**

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

### **Assigned projects:**

- View online two *YouTube* videos that discuss the GCI Pastoral Internship Program:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpXVJYhtkbk>  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2mDjmrsA\\_w&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2mDjmrsA_w&feature=related)
- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned video viewing and textbook reading. In commenting on the videos, observe the uniqueness of the pastoral interns and comment on the relationships that developed. Interact with comments posted by other students and by the instructor.

## **Week ten: *Local application***

### **Assigned reading:**

- Root: appendix (pp. 218-219)
- Bonhoeffer: the saints and the image of Christ (pp. 272-304)
- Article: *Ministry to Millennials*—online at:  
<http://genmin.gci.org/Web%20Documents/millennials.pdf>
- Article: *Blending Builders, Boomers, Busters, and Bridgers*—online at:  
[http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200201/200201\\_046\\_blending.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200201/200201_046_blending.cfm)
- Lecture: *Putting It All Together*, Ted Johnston and Greg Williams

### **Assigned projects:**

- Begin work on your 15 page **final report**, which is due no later than Monday of week 12. See the week 10 lecture for final report requirements. Note that this paper will be graded for content, style, grammar and spelling.

## 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		
Course lectures	43	3.6	
Root textbook	197	13.1	
Bonhoeffer textbook	155	10.3	
Whitfield textbook	25	1.3	
Torrance textbook	98	8.2	
Online articles/essays		7	
On-site youth ministry visit, assigned movie		10	
Online forum participation: commenting on assigned reading, video viewing, field visits, and comments from other students and the course instructor (10 sections; 3.5 hours/section)		35	60
	Number of pages		
Reflection paper at week five	1	2	10
Final research/project report	15	45	30
Total estimated hours		135.5	100

## **Grading criteria**

The final course grade will be given by combining the grades for individual assignments, weighted as follows:

- 60% of total grade: the grade given for *online forum contributions*. Those contributions will be graded based on the quality, thoroughness and consistency of contributions, which include:
  - written summarization of key points gleaned from assigned reading (including lectures) and assigned projects (visits, video viewing, etc.)
  - written interaction with what other participants (including students and instructor)
  - an interim grade for this part of the course will be given at week five in order to assess progress
- 10% of total grade: the grade given to *the reaction paper*
- 30% of total grade: the grade given to *the final report*