The Educational Ministry of the Church
Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta
Spring, 2014
Instructor: Dr. Bruce H. McRae
Email: bhmcrae@bellsouth.net

My Background...

- An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America since 1986
- Educational Background
  - BA from Washington University in St. Louis
  - M Div from Westminster Theological Seminary
  - D Min from Fuller Theological Seminary, Los Angeles, California
  - MBA from Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA
- Ministry History
  - 1986-1988 -- Assistant Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Doraville, GA
  - 1988-1994 -- Senior Pastor, Cornerstone Community Church (PCA), Los Angeles, CA
  - 1994-2000 – Senior Pastor, Brookwood Presbyterian Church, Snellville, GA
  - 2000-2002 – Associate Director and Professor of Practical Theology, Atlanta Seminary for Ministry and Theology, Atlanta, GA
  - 2002-2003 – Executive Pastor, North Park Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, PA
  - 2003-2007 – Executive Pastor, PCA Church of the Redeemer, Atlanta, GA
  - 2005-2007 – Marketing Manager, UPS, Atlanta, GA
  - 2008-2013 – Director of Church Relations, Great Commission Publications (the publishing company owned by the Presbyterian Church in America)
  - 2003 and current – Adjunct Professor of practical theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta, GA
  - 2009 and current – Adjunct Professor of Practical Theology, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO

Course Meetings

The Educational Ministry of the Church will meet on Tuesday nights during the 2014 spring semester. The class will meet on 9 Tuesday nights, from 6 to 9 pm. See the class schedule to see which Tuesdays we will meet, and to see the readings and assignments due. If you are going to miss a class, please email me ahead of time letting me know that you will not be able to attend.

Course Purpose

The RTS course catalogue describes the purpose of The Educational Ministry of the Church as a “Study of the pastor’s role as teacher and administrator within the educational program of the church. Careful attention is given to philosophy, history, organization, curriculum, recruiting and training teachers, and the special needs of each age group.” These matters will be covered, but in addition, we will be taking a wholistic look at what I call the pastor’s responsibility to disciple the entire church to maturity in Christ against the backdrop of the very diverse ways in which churches now carry out discipleship.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, I would like each student to…
1. Understand the pastor’s vital leadership role in the entire Christian education and discipleship ministry of the Church

2. Understand that the foundation of all discipleship and Christian education is the Gospel of Grace that underlies justification, sanctification, and power for ministry

3. Learn the process of equipping, recruiting and training volunteers and teachers for the educational ministry of the church, and understand the overall process of organizing the Christian education ministry in a local church

4. Have an overview of the ministry to the various age groups in the church: children, youth, and adults

5. Gain some expertise in the criteria for evaluating curriculum for use in the local church

6. Be able to carry out gospel-centered discipleship ministry in the local church

7. Know the vital place of small groups in the church

8. Understand the place of educational ministry to special felt need groups in the church

9. Be able to develop a plan for leadership training

10. Learn how to lead the church from the basis of the eternal Biblical values that underlie and drive the ministry of the church, from which all strategy and goals must flow

**Course Textbooks**

Twelve Keys to an Effective Church by Kennon Callahan

Gospel-Centered Discipleship by Jonathan Dodson

Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City by Timothy Keller

Outgrowing the Ingrown Church by C. John Miller

The New Reformation by Greg Ogden

Transforming Discipleship by Greg Ogden

Living Your Strengths by Albert Winesman, Donald Clifton and Curt Liesveld

**Course Articles** (downloadable off the course website)

“In Search of Leadership,” “What Do Real Leaders Look Like” and “Thinking Like a Christian” by George Barna

“The Greatest Story Never Read” by Gary Burge

“A Biblical Model for Disciple-Making” by Dr. Bruce H. McRae

The Wagner-modified Houts Spiritual gifts assessment (you do NOT need to write a review of this, just take it!)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignment Due</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>Introduction&lt;br&gt;Biblical Priorities for Leading Ministry</td>
<td>“The Greatest Story Never Read”&lt;br&gt;by Gary Burge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>Dynamics of Church Renewal and Vitality</td>
<td>Outgrowing the Ingrown Church&lt;br&gt;Center Church, Parts 1 and 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Dynamics of Church Renewal and Vitality</td>
<td>Center Church, Part 5&lt;br&gt;“Thinking like a Christian”&lt;br&gt;by George Barna</td>
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<td>Mar 4</td>
<td>Adult Discipleship:&lt;br&gt;The Matter and the Manner: Training for Christian Maturity in a Relational Context</td>
<td>Transforming Discipleship&lt;br&gt;by Ogden&lt;br&gt;Gospel-Centered Discipleship&lt;br&gt;by Dodson&lt;br&gt;Center Church, Part 6&lt;br&gt;“A Biblical Model for Disciple-Making”&lt;br&gt;by Bruce H. McRae</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 11</td>
<td>Youth Ministry&lt;br&gt;Rev. Danny Mitchell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 18</td>
<td>Equipping the Saints for Ministry</td>
<td>Living our Strengths&lt;br&gt;by Winsenman et al and take the Strengths-Finder Profile online with the key-code given you in the book.&lt;br&gt;The New Reformation by Ogden.&lt;br&gt;Take the Wagner-modified Houts Spiritual gifts assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 25</td>
<td>Leadership, Leadership Training, and Specialized Ministries</td>
<td>“In Search of Leadership” and “What Do Real Leaders Look Like”&lt;br&gt;by George Barna&lt;br&gt;Center Church, Part 7.</td>
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<td>Apr 1</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td>RTS Spring Break</td>
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<td>Apr 8</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 15</td>
<td>Class Presentations on Children’s Curriculum</td>
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<td>Group Presentation and Curriculum Evaluation Paper Due</td>
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<td>Apr 22</td>
<td>The Organization of Christian Ed Ministry: Recruiting, Training, and Administration</td>
<td>Twelve Keys to an Effective Church&lt;br&gt;by Callahan</td>
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<td>Apr 29</td>
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<td>May 6</td>
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<td>Reading Critiques due</td>
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<td>May 13</td>
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<td>Educational Ministry Evaluation due</td>
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Please Note: It is possible I might have to be out of town during the semester on business. If so, the course schedule will be pushed back, and classes will be made up on April 29 and May 6 if necessary.
**Course Assignment Descriptions**

**Assignment 1: Book and Article reviews**

On the course website there is a sheet called “Book and Article Critique Format.” There are seven books and three articles assigned for this course (consider the selections by Georgia Barna to be one article), which are listed on the schedule on this course syllabus. So you will be writing a reading critique of the seven books and the three articles assigned on the course schedule. For each of these books and articles, I would like you to use this format to write down your reflections on your reading. Here is why. When you read, you must learn to REFLECT upon your reading, and not just let it pass through your head. More and more this is an assignment I have used to help students to pay attention and focus on and REFLECT on their reading, and not just passively take it in. Note that on the “Book and Article Critique Format,” you are told exactly what you need to do, and on the second page there is an example of this process used on a book called Leading Across Cultures (a book which is NOT assigned for this course!). Keep your critique to ONE PAGE. So, when this assignment is due, you will be emailing me TEN pages of book reflection and critique. And please note: DO NOT SEND ME TEN SEPARATE DOCUMENTS. Put your ten sheets into ONE document. So, you will be sending ONE ten-page document. Also note that this is an assignment that is best done while you read the book throughout the semester. Don’t procrastinate and find yourself quickly writing twelve critiques the night before the assignment is due!

**Assignment 2: Curriculum Evaluation and Presentation**

This is a group assignment. You will be put into groups, and your task is to evaluate a children’s Sunday school curriculum, write up a review of it, and then make a powerpoint presentation to the class as a group presenting your findings. One of our class sessions will be on evaluating curriculum. You must get samples of the curriculum and describe it, by asking such questions as:

- Does it take a biblical or a topical approach to how it presents the material?
- What is the theological position of the curriculum?
- What is the educational methodology of the curriculum?
- Is it teacher friendly and learner sensitive, or not?
- What overall lessons do you see the curriculum trying to present?
- Is it Christ-centered, or more values based and moralistic?
- Is it geared for a traditional classroom or for a large group/small group format? What are the advantages of disadvantages of whatever approach it takes?
- How effective are the colors and graphics?
- Are there take home papers to involve the parents at home?
- What kind of activities are done in class? How much time is spent on teaching vs activities during the class time.

Then, answer the questions: What are the strengths of the curriculum? What are the weaknesses? Write up in your findings in 10 double spaced pages, and then produce a powerpoint presentation which you will present to the class detailing your findings. Turn in both the 10 page paper and the PowerPoint presentation to me via email.

**Assignment 3: Evaluation of the Educational Ministry of Your Church**

Do an overall evaluation of the Christian Education Ministry of the Church you currently attend. Do this in no more than 20 double-spaced pages. They key way to look at this assignment is this. Imagine that you are a staff person at your church, and you have just been put in charge of the entire educational and discipleship ministry of the church. If this were the case, you would need to evaluate the current educational ministry, understand it, some up with strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement.
This evaluation should include the following:

- Does the church have a clear sense of underlying Biblical values and priorities which drive and give direction to everything the church does? If so, what are they.
- Find out what kind of discipleship and educational ministry is happening in all of age groups from the nursery up through older adults. Visit a class in each group: children, youth, adult.
- Interview the key people involved in leading these educational ministries: nursery leaders, children’s ministry leaders, youth leaders, adult Christian Education leaders, etc.a
- What kind of special educational ministries are there (i.e., ministries to special felt need or age and stage groups, etc.)
- What philosophy and vision is driving adult discipleship? Is active discipleship going on? Are their small groups in the church? If so, what do they do?
- What is the educational philosophy driving the educational ministry – if there is one!
- How involved is the senior pastor in decisions related to the educational ministry of the church, and how active is he in leading the educational ministry?
- What are the strengths of the educational program?
- What are the weaknesses of the educational program?
- How are the central biblical truths for CE being carried out, or not carried out?
- What are your underlying Biblical values that you see in Scripture should drive the ministry of a church?
- What recommendations would you make to improve the educational ministry of the church? In other words, if you were the pastor, what changes would you make to make the Christian Education ministry more effective?

Class Assignment Point Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Reviews</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Paper and Presentation</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Your Church’s Educational Ministry</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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*RTS Grading Scale*

A 97-100
A- 94-96
B+ 91-93
B 88-90
B- 86-87
C+ 83-85
C 80-82
C- 78-79
D+ 75-77
D 72-74
D- 70-71
Below 70 is an F
Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)
### Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em><em>MDiv</em> Student Learning Outcomes</em>*</th>
<th><strong>Rubric</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mini-Justification</strong></th>
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| In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.  
*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.* |            |                        |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
<th><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></th>
<th>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Students must, as part of their assignments, do clearly written and oral presentations to the class on matters of Christian Education</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>The class does not do in depth exegesis, but uses many Scripture passages to lay the foundation and practice for Christian Education in the Church</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>The course will use Reformed distinctives for Christian Ed, namely Grace-Centered Discipleship and Covenantal Theology</td>
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<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>One of the major course themes is that of making disciples through gospel-centered sanctification</td>
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<td><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>The need for a strong Christian worldview will be emphasized as part of discipleship</td>
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<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></td>
<td>Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Setting up a Christian Education program in a church must be done in a winsome way</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Preach</strong></td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>The course emphasizes teaching to make disciples, but not preaching per se</td>
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<td><strong>Worship</strong></td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>There is not much emphasis on worship per se in this course</td>
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<td><strong>Shepherd</strong></td>
<td>Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>The emphasis on shepherding and equipping will be emphasized as a major part of making disciples</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Church/World</strong></td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>The course on Christian Ed does not significantly deal with these issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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