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CD 510 Foundations of Christian Discipleship

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Foundations of Christian Discipleship, CD510

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This syllabus may be amended prior to the beginning of class.

Introduction

Welcome to Foundations of Christian Discipleship.

I am so glad you have elected to take this course. While the title of the course suggests a beginning point, I want you to know that it will become a broader stroke and a stronger look at the formation of Christ within the life of the believer. Please be aware that this course is a broad overlook of Christian Education – hence the title Foundations of Christian Discipleship. We will look at the history of Christian Discipleship to the current state. This course will include methods of change, the Wesley connection, and the use of technology in Christian discipleship. It will not include, at least in any big detail, small group ministry or any other specific method of discipleship. This is a course that is designed to give you a broad perspective of Christian discipleship.

This course is designed to lead us into the foundations of Christian Discipleship. Over the next few weeks (and believe me, while they seem long, they are but a blink of an eye), we will be . . .

- ❖ exploring the roles and responsibilities of the local church director/minister of education,
- ❖ discovering methods for "equipping of the saints."
- ❖ examining foundational theories and practices in training teachers,
- ❖ investigating program planning,
- ❖ specifically focusing on
 - nurturing,
 - facilitating,
 - administering, and
 - coordinating the church's educational ministries.

Course Objectives

When you complete this course, you will be able to:

- ❖ Identify biblical principles which inform the educational ministry of the church, its purpose, process, and leadership roles.
- ❖ Identify the emphases that will be present in a philosophy of Christian education which is in harmony with Wesleyan perspectives.
- ❖ Begin to develop a philosophy of Christian education based on findings from the social sciences and in harmony with biblical principles and his/her theological perspective.
- ❖ Describe the relationship between nurture and evangelism and identify the potential of reaching persons for Christ through Christian education ministries.
- ❖ Explain how the minister of education functions as equipper of teachers, guide in ministry planning, and servant leader to enhance the Christian education ministries of the laity.
- ❖ Apply insights from communication research in planning the people change needed for increased effectiveness in Christian education ministries.
- ❖ Sense a growing conviction that effective Christian education ministries are essential if the church is to fulfill the great Commission.

Required Texts

Is It a Lost Cause? Having the Heart of God for the Church's Children, Marva J. Dawn
Educating Congregations: The Future of Christian Education, Charles R. Foster.
John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples, D. Michael Henderson.
Creative Ministry, Henri Nouwen.
Reaching Out, Henri Nouwen.
Patterns in Moral Development, Catherine M. Stonehouse.
The Gospel of Mark

Recommended Readings

United Methodists, Foundations: Shaping the Ministry of Christian Education in Your
Congregation AND Planning for Christian Education, Carol Fout Krau, Ed.
Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur, Ken Hemphill
Disciple making Teachers, Josh Hunt and Larry May
The Ministry of Nurture, Duffy Robbins
Why Nobody Learns Much about Anything at Church, Thom and Joani Schultz
Natural Church Development, Christian Schwarz.

Course Schedule

Module 1 - Biblical, Wesleyan Foundations for Christian Education Ministries

- Week 1 – Introduction to the Course
 – Biblical principles: Our Purpose
 Read: Dawn pp. 1-11
- Week 2 – Biblical Principles: Old Testament Foundations
 Read: Foster pp. 11-50
 – Biblical principles: Jesus as Model Teacher
 Read: Foster pp. 51-79
- Week 3 – Wesleyan Perspectives
 Watch: Video – Wesleyan Distinctives
 Read: Henderson pp. 83-126
 – Developing a Biblical, Wesleyan Foundation for Christian Education
 Read: Henderson pp. 127-160

❖ Wesley and Christian Education - Due Week 4

Module 2 – The Minister of Education’s Philosophy of Christian Education

- Week 4 – Components in a Philosophy of Education
 Read: Nouwen Chapter 1
 – Varied Views on Education
 Read: Foster pp. 80-108
- Week 5 – A Developmental Perspective on Education
 Read: Stonehouse Patterns in Moral Development
 – Insights from Religious Educators
 Read: Foster pp. 109-135
 – The Power of Story
 Read: Nouwen Chapter 2
 Dawn pp. 13-46

❖ Philosophy of Christian Education – Due Week 6

Module 3 - Making Disciples Through Christian Education

- Week 6 – The Sunday School – Effective Today?
 Read: Dawn pp. 47-88
 (Hemphill or Hunt)
 – Small Group Ministries
 Read: Henderson pp. 11-81

❖ **Journaling #1 – Due Week 7**

- Week 7 - Releasing the Outreach Potential of Christian Education
 Read: Dawn pp. 89-125
 (Schwartz)
- Discipling Across the Life-span I
 Read: Dawn pp. 127-163
 (Robbins or Schultz)
- Week 8 - Discipling Across the Life-span II
 Read: Dawn 164-200

Module 4 - The Minister of Education as Servant Leader in Christian Education

- Week 9 - The Process of Bringing about Change in Christian Education
 Read: Mark 9-11
 Review: Outline of Change
- The Minister of Education as Change Agent
 Read: Mark 12-14
- Week 10 - Christian Education: Ministry of the Laity
 Read: Nouwen Chapter 4
 Dawn pp. 201-249
- Recruiting Lay Volunteers in Christian Education
 Read: Mark 1-3
- Week 11 - Nurturing Volunteers
 Read: Nouwen Chapter 3
- Equipping Volunteers
 Read: Mark 4-8

❖ **Change in Grace Church – Due Week 11**

- Week 12 - Guiding in Ministry Planning
 Read: Mark 15-16
 (Foundations and Planning for Christian Education)
- Review: Outline for Evaluation
- Curriculum: Resources for Volunteers
- Evaluation
- The Vision of the Leader
- Week 13 - Using Technology to Stretch Discipleship
- Presentation technology – why use it?
- Online Resources
- Bible Study online, anyone?

Weeks 14-16 – Final projects presented in class.

❖ **Journaling #2 – Due Week 12**

❖ **Final Projects – Due Week 15**

Course Assignments

❖ **Wesley and Christian Education – 25 points**

Summarize the distinctives of a Wesleyan theology presented in the video, Wesleyan Distinctives, and in chapters 3 and 4 of John Wesley's Class Meeting. Also, reflecting on your experience, what has not been in harmony with those distinctives? Finally, what would you as minister of Christian education do to help your lay people have a teaching ministry that would more adequately reflect Wesleyan distinctives.

❖ **Philosophy of Christian Education – 20 points**

A good philosophy will address these four questions:

1. Why? Why do we disciple? What purpose does it fill?
2. What? What are we doing when we disciple?
3. Who? Who fills the roles?
4. How? How do we disciple others? How do we be disciples? How do we mix the two?

Prepare an outline of your philosophy of Christian education using the themes found in the readings and show how your philosophy is supported in course materials. Your paper should address the four questions listed above as well as articulate statements of your basic beliefs about the Aim, Content, Environment, and Evaluation in Christian Discipleship. The statements are not to be more than 50 words per aspect, on the average. In the remaining 1-2 pages of your paper briefly discuss how Deuteronomy 6, the example of Jesus, Stonehouse, Foster (chapters 1-4), and other insights you may have that support the basic belief statements of your philosophy. Be prepared to discuss your philosophy in class.

❖ **Change in Grace Church – 25 points**

○ **Option 1**

A case study: You came to Grace Church in January and have been serving as Minister of Education for 10 months. After observing Vacation Bible School last summer you decided that a change in curriculum is needed. A dedicated group of women have led vacation Bible school for the past 3 years; they love working together and want to lead the VBS again next summer. Based on other information, you believe change is needed. Use Everett Rogers' paradigm as a guide for identifying elements necessary in the change process and develop an action plan for guiding your VBS leaders toward adopting new curriculum resources for next summer's VBS and using them effectively.

○ **Option 2**

You came to Grace Church in January and have been serving as Minister of Education for 10 months. After observing some of your adult Christian education classes, you decide that a change in curriculum is needed. A dedicated group of people have led purchased materials every year for the past 3 years; they love working together and expect to be involved in this effort. Each year they ordered materials from a certain publisher without looking at other possibilities, and felt good about the materials. You believe there are more creative resources available that will provide more significant learning experiences for the adult students in your classes. Use Everett Rogers' paradigm as a guide for identifying elements necessary in the change process and develop an action plan for guiding your leaders toward adopting new curriculum resources for next the next year.

❖ **Journaling – 20 points**

I know, I never enjoyed journaling when I was in your shoes. In fact, I avoided it as much as possible. However, I took a course as a PhD student on the Philosophy of Education in which we had to journal. Wow! It really made a difference in my knowledge and interaction with the texts. So, here are the instructions for this little exercise.

A. Do the reading!

B. As you read, take notes.

(Only note the things that are of interest to you. This is not a hoop to jump through. Write when it's pertinent to you. I generally either write or highlight in the text or put sticky notes on the page where the quote or thought occurred, then later type it into a Word or Excel document.)

C. Then, think about how these impacts you.

D. Write about that interaction. (It can be a story, an occurrence in your own life, or some other way the item has interest to you.)

❖ **Final Project – 10 points**

(Note: All final projects require a class presentation at the end of the semester.)

Option 1: Group Presentation and Report

In research for the paper, each student will interview an active Christian education professional who is effective in the designated area of ministry (topics listed below). Each student will also be responsible for researching the literature for further insight on the topic. Together as a group, decide what information is needed for the final paper. Develop questions to use in interviews. Assign areas of research to each group member. Each student will write a 4 - 5 page report of important findings from his/her personal interview and research. In the report include insights on the C.E. professional's role in the ministry. Identify the resources you have consulted.

Possible Topics (areas of expertise)

1. Small group ministry
2. Technology in education
3. Children's Ministries
4. Youth Ministries
5. Adult Education/Ministries
6. Singles Ministries
7. Senior Adult Education
8. Other (must be pre-approved by instructor)

Option 2: Research Paper

This may be one of the best things you can do for yourself through your seminary experience. To complete this project, you and I will need to discuss some ideas based on your interests. Here, I am more interested in designing a research project that will prepare or enrich your understanding of your field. The grading for this project will be based on the objectives and the level of scholarly research that you perform.

Possibilities:

1. Application Dialogue and Report

This project is open to persons serving regularly each week in the educational ministry of a local church. You will meet for one hour online weekly (for a minimum of 12 hours) with one or two other students to discuss how you can implement in your ministry the principles being explored in this course and to evaluate applications tried. Obviously this is a team project, in which you will need the participation of others in the class who is also in ministry in a local church.

In your dialogue sessions review key concepts from your reading. What in your experience affirms or brings into question these ideas? Which concepts: seem to hold the greatest potential? Challenge your current thinking? Are confusing to you? Seem unworkable? Could be applied in your current ministry? How will you adjust your ministry in the light of your learning? Even though I may not be able to apply the whole plan, what piece might I start with? What piece could be applied in a small church?

Each week submit a note to me (the CD510 office) for your group indicating the meeting time, those present, and a brief outline of the topics discussed. At mid term and at the end of the semester each person will submit a 1 - 2 page evaluation of the application dialogue experience. Report actions taken as a result of the dialogue sessions. The grade will be based on fulfilling meeting time requirements and the significance of the applications.

Evaluations due twice during the semester – to be pre-arranged with instructor.

2. Interview, Observation and Report

Interview professional and volunteer C.E. workers and observe C.E. ministries. Generate a list of questions to ask interviewees and to have in mind as you observe. The

list may change as the semester progresses. Questions should allow for expanding your understanding of topics related to course content.

Write a 10 page paper based on your interviews and observations, integrating your findings with course content. Discuss the insights you gained, their relationship to course content and implications for your future ministry. Append a list of the questions which guided your exploration and the names of persons interviewed.

The grade will be based on the paper and observations. Papers are due May 10.

Option 3: Video “Paper”

This could prove to be a very interesting project. Throughout the semester, I am asking you to pay attention to any videos/movies that seem to have a connection with Christian Discipleship. Look for videos or movies that you can analyze with the perspective of the knowledge you have gained through this course. (ie - Simon Birch and the Wesleyan Context of Christian Discipleship.) We will need to establish what the objectives are for this paper on an individual basis. Therefore, the grading for this project will be based on those objectives and the level of scholarly research that you perform.

Option 4: Research

I want this paper to be something you can use as you start your work. So, come to my office and we will devise a research topic that will direct you toward more learning in the specific area you want to cover.

❖ Exams

Shout for joy! Be thankful and praise His name. There are no exams. We could do that, but I prefer to find out what you have learned, not just what I want you to learn. Therefore, the grade weight will be placed on your written assignments and your interaction in the discussion groups.

General Instructions

- ❖ All papers and exams are to be type written in 12 point type and double spaced.~
- ❖ All papers must be submitted to instructor through email
- ❖ Inclusive language is to be used.
- ❖ Document the source of ideas and quotes using an official form of documentation.
- ❖ Type your name and email address clearly on the front of all papers.

GRADING

All projects will be graded on a 4.0 scale.

To receive a "B" for the class, (1) papers, (2) journaling, and (3) class participation will be averaged for the course grade. The following grades will be assigned for the grade points listed below:

A – 100 – 90 points

B – 89 – 80 points

C – 79 – 70 points

D – 69 – 60 points

To receive an "A" for the class, (1) papers, (2) journaling, (3) class participation, and (4) the final paper will be averaged for the course grade. If the accumulated grade point is 3.7 or lower, an A- will be assigned.

If assignments are submitted late, grades will be lowered unless a change in deadline has been arranged with the professor.