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CD 511 The Pastor and Christian Discipleship

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The Pastor and Christian Discipleship - CD511

Provisional Syllabus

Spring, 2007

FM 103: Office hours TBA

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I was more convinced than ever, that the preaching like an apostle, without joining together those that are awakened and training them up in the ways of God, is only begetting children for the murderer.

-- John Wesley, 1763

Course Description (highlights on our journey)

CD511 explores the foundations of Christian discipleship in Scripture, theology (including Wesleyan distinctives), and educational and human development theories. It examines the pastor's role in forming and transforming disciples across the lifespan, discerning and communicating a vision for Christian discipleship, and empowering laity to fulfill that vision.

Course Objectives (targets I aim for you to hit)

My goal is for this experience to help you grow in your ability to communicate the faith through teaching and discipling ministries with children, youth, and adults (all ages and stages). You will also learn to lead others, facilitating their growth as Christians and as effective servants in education ministries. In the midst of all the tools, techniques, and to do lists, I will be praying that this course enhances your own faith and opens up more room for Jesus to be your true Teacher, your ultimate Guide along The Way.

By the end of our CD511 experience, you will be able to:

1. Articulate biblical and theological principles for the church's educational/discipling ministry (purpose, process, and leadership roles).
2. Evaluate educational perspectives from the social sciences and the field of religious education.
3. Design teaching plans using the learning style model for instruction.
4. Recruit and equip God's people for ministries with all ages and assist your congregation in understanding how lay and clergy work together as the Body of Christ.
5. Lead the laity to implement and evaluate new ways of doing CE ministry using insights from change theory to design plans.

6. Develop your theology or philosophy of Christian education and discipleship, which integrates findings from the social sciences, with biblical and theological perspectives, and considers Christian education's connection to evangelism and the Great Commission.
7. Articulate your excitement for Christian education's role in helping the people of God grow in Christ and fulfill the Great Commission

Required Texts

1. *Postmodern Children's Ministry: Ministry to Children in the 21st Century*, Ivy Beckwith
2. *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster
3. *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices*, Craig Dykstra
4. *A Many Colored Kingdom*, Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, S. Steve Kang, & Gary A. Parrett
5. *Disciple Making Teachers: How to Equip Adults for Growth and Action*, Josh Hunt with Larry Mays
6. *The Kolb Learning Style Inventory* Version 3.1
7. *Making Disciples: Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition*, Sondra Higgins Matthaai
8. *In The Name of Jesus*, Henri Nouwen
9. "Learning from Gender Differences," Catherine M. Stonehouse (article at ATS bookstore)

Electronic Element

You'll notice a CD511(SP06) icon on your FirstClass desktop. Occasionally we'll continue an in class discussion on line. I'll also post updates, articles, and detailed assignment descriptions. So watch for the little red flag and double-click accordingly! This is also a great place for your Discipleship project team to communicate - you'll have your own folder for that by the second week of the semester.

Course Requirements

1. Integrative Paper #1 (10 Points)

A. *Reflect on your spiritual journey responding to the following questions.*

- i. What influences have played a significant role in your discipling?
- ii. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the discipling you have received?
- iii. How does your spiritual journey, whether or not you are from the Wesleyan tradition, relate to John Wesley's description of the Way of Salvation?
- iv. What evidences of prevenient grace do you see in your story?

B. *As you think of discipling others:*

- i. What role will you give to Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as you assist others in "doing theology"?
- ii. What aspects of a Wesleyan view of persons impress you as being most important for effective discipling, and why?

Grading Criteria

- a. Significance of reflections on personal experiences of being disciplined
- b. Grasp of Wesleyan perspectives

2. Integrative Paper #2: (10 Points)

Recall a lesson you taught in a church related setting. In one or two sentences indicate the topic and lesson goal. (If you have not taught, recall a class session in which you were a student.)

- A. What did you (or your teacher) include in that class session which related to the learning style preference of the divergers (imaginative learners), assimilators (analytical learners), convergers (common sense learners), and accommodators (dynamic learners)? Describe why, according to the learning style theory of Kolb and McCarthy, each learning activity or teaching method was of value to specific kinds of learners. Which learners, if any, would have found very little designed for their learning style preference? Describe what was missing that they needed.
- B. If you could teach that class again, what specific learning activities would you add to implement more fully what you have learned about learning styles and to better serve the different learners? **Be sure to give additional learning activities**, even if you think the first plan was fine and the new suggestions would only be alternate approaches. Briefly explain your reason for adding each learning activity.

Grading Criteria

- a. Grasp of learning style theory.

- b. Ability to relate learning style theory to practice.

3. Integrative Paper #3: (15 Points)

You came to Grace Church in June two years ago. After observing Vacation Bible School for two summers you decided that a change in curriculum is needed. A dedicated group of men and women have led vacation Bible school for the past 5 years; they love working together and want to lead the VBS again next summer. Each year they ordered materials from a certain publisher without looking at other possibilities, and felt good about the materials. VBS is one of the church's main means of outreach to the community. You believe there are more creative resources available that will provide more significant learning experiences for the children. A church across town used one of the resources you would like your leaders to consider. Their pastor excitedly told you about their experience and showed you a video of their VBS in action.

- A. Use Everett Rogers' paradigms and Bridges' transition principles as guides for identifying elements necessary in the change process and develop an action plan for leading your VBS leaders in considering, and adopting new curriculum resources for next summer's VBS and using them more effectively.
- B. Briefly explain which aspect of Rogers' paradigms is implemented by each step in your action plan. Your plans should implement insights from Everett Rogers' paradigm of the Innovation-decision Process, and may reflect approaches from the Collective Innovation-decision-making Process, or the Authority Innovation-decision-making Process discussed in class, as well as insights from Bridges' material on transition (also discussed in class).

Grading Criteria

- a. Understanding of Rogers' paradigms and Bridges' principles
- b. Ability to plan workable strategies based on theory and the situation.

4. Cross-Cultural Conversation (10 points)

So much of what we read stems from an American, white, middle-class, often male perspective. But this represents just one small thread in the fabric of God's "many colored kingdom." Therefore, for this assignment, you need to spend time with someone on campus who is different than you culturally. We're blessed with many international students here, as well as African, Asian, bi-cultural, European, and Hispanic Americans.

Ask a classmate, friend, or perfect stranger to join you in **two, 1-hour conversations with a purpose**: explore the person's background (demographics: geographic, family, religion, education, age, etc.); invite them to tell their story about how they came to know Christ and how they experienced discipleship throughout their faith journey. This may include the influence of grace people, as well as toxic people. Take good notes so that you can summarize what you learned in a 2-3 page paper. Include how his or her experiences differed from yours because of culture, and one thing this person's story taught you about God.

5. Age-Level Ministry Plan in Teams (30 points)

The Age-Level Ministry Team project sets the stage for you to think and plan with your colleagues and share practical applications of the concepts and ideas being explored in this course. Jump right in, contribute your ideas, and learn from others. Make this more than an academic requirement. As a team you can experience discernment through Christian community and develop a creative plan that could make a significant difference in the lives of your church family.

Form a 5-6 member team and submit a list of your group members to me. I will then set up team folders for you in our CD511 icon for you to communicate electronically. Within the first two weeks of the semester, meet in person to organize and take on specific responsibilities. You'll work on the following two assignments.

A. Book Summary (5 Points)

Each group member will select a different book from the reading list corresponding to the age-level discipling plan you will develop.

You will prepare a one-page summary of key insights from the selected book you read and lead them in a brief discussion of your book's major concepts. Spend a minimum of 20 minutes discussing each book. In the Course Schedule, note the dates by which the books are to be completed. On the due date listed for your specific book in our weekly syllabus, **give me a copy of your one-page "summary of key insights" and the date when the group discussed your book.**

Grading Criteria: Clarity and Significance of insights identified

B. Age-Level Discipling Plan (25 Points)

Sondra Matthaei, in *Making Disciples*, states, “To be Christian in the language of the Wesleyan tradition means having a ‘living faith’ made evident through love of God and neighbor, **a living faith that continues to grow across a lifetime**” (p. 38). She also endeavors to set forth “a Wesleyan ecology of faith formation, an interconnecting network of **relationships, structures, and practices** that [constitute] an environment for nurturing and sustaining a holy life in communion with God and others” (p. 35).

How can we in our churches provide an environment in which persons come to and grow in that living faith described above? That’s what Christian discipleship is all about.

As an age-level ministry team you will **develop a discipling plan for a church**. Your goal in this project is to integrate the insights of this course and additional research each group member will do, into a discipling plan that will “serve the present age,” to use Charles Wesley’s words (*Hymn: A Charge to Keep I Have*). Each group member will research and develop the plan for one age group, 3-4 pages in length.

Each age-level plan will grow out of:

- Insights from *Making Disciples* by Sondra Higgins Matthaei
- Discoveries from Scripture and other course materials
- Additional literature research
- Research of what churches are doing
- Reflections on realities and needs of the twenty first century church
- Your own ministry experiences

Also your group will provide a 1-2 page introduction and conclusion that highlight the discipling goals and key principles implemented throughout the plan. Combine the introduction and age-level plans into a team document that is **not more than 20 pages, double-spaced**.

Here’s the game plan

1. Forming the team

- Within the first two weeks of the semester meet to organize your group work.
- Select the person who will develop the plan for:
 - Children: birth to 5 years plus their parents
 - Children: 6-12 years of age
 - Students: middle school, high school, college

- Younger adults: 20s through the 30s
 - Middle adults: 40s-60s
 - Senior Adults: 65-90s
 - Decide how to lead the group process and write the introduction and conclusion sections.
 - Set meeting times outside of class for discussing the selected books.
2. Read and reflect on Matthaëi pages 11-98
- Identify what you believe to be the 3-6 most important insights from the reading.
 - How and why are these insights important in the discipling of your assigned age group?
 - In a group meeting and in your electronic team folder, share the insights you identified and their importance to your age group.
 - From other course readings and class sessions collect insights on discipling for your age group.
3. Each group member will do research beyond the course materials.
- Conduct literature research in at least one additional source.
 - Research what two churches offer for the age group you chose to study.
 - Observe the church ministries for your age group and talk with those who lead the discipling ministries for them (staff and laity).
 - What **relationships, structures, and practices** are present to nurture the faith of your assigned age group?
 - Which relationships, structures, and practices discussed by Matthaëi are present? Which are missing?
 - Which relationships, structures, and practices are most important for your assigned age group?
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses you see in the church's discipling ministry?
 - Does this ministry operate out of a vision (mission) statement? If so, attach a copy to your final report.
4. Develop a discipling plan for your assigned age level. Design specific plans to implement the insights from *Making Disciples* by Sondra Higgins Matthaëi and other discoveries from course materials, additional reading, church research, and your ministry experience. **The plans should grow out of biblical convictions and reflect the realities and needs in the contemporary church.**
- What would ministry for your age group look like if it provided relationships, structures, and practices that nurture a living faith?

- Make your plans specific enough that a lay minister could work with them to develop an improved or new ministry for the age group.
- You may want to suggest implementing some plans immediately and beginning others later –be reasonable regarding how many new things a volunteer team can handle at one time.
- In each age level plan cite at least 2 course texts, one additional resource, and your church research (list the specific churches you studied).

5. Write your plan in a 3-4 page paper, double-spaced, and submit it to the group. Read each contribution and give constructive feedback. Then prepare your group paper by refining the age level sections, writing the introduction and conclusion and forming them into one coherent paper.

At end of the paper indicate who wrote each section and who led the group process.

Grading Criteria

- Integration of course concepts into the plan
- Significance of relationships, structures, and practices identified for each age group
- Practical insights from church research
- Scope of the plan

6. Basic Beliefs Creative Presentation (20 Points)

You will work on this project across the semester, processing your learning and refining it into an integrative, creative presentation you could use in your church. As you do your reading, keep a record of the insights that stand out to you as basic beliefs to guide your discipling ministry.

Working from notes you make across the semester, develop 10-12 statements that capture your basic beliefs about effective, disciple making, Christian Education. Statement should be significant concepts, clearly articulated in 15-30 words.

Example: Effective discipling begins with the teacher or parent's relationship with God (Deut. 6:5-6, Module One notes)

The statements should provide a good overview of the course content. Develop a creative presentation of your Basic Beliefs statements to share with others, such as your congregation, lay leadership team, or Christian education staff. Design the presentation to take no more than 10 minutes. Any written copy for the presentation should not exceed 1000 words.

Include a 50-75 word statement identifying the audience you are targeting and the goal of your presentation. Begin early to think about the creative medium you might use. Later in the semester we will discuss possibilities.

The project may be submitted to me as an attached file, or on a computer disc for power point presentations, video, or in hard copy forms.

Grading Criteria

- a. Clarity of statements
- b. Significance of belief statements (rooted in Scripture first, other resources secondarily)
- c. Creativity of the presentation

7. Reflection Paper on *In the Name of Jesus* (5 points)

Choose 2-3 insights from Nouwen's story that you want to carry with you into ministry. Describe how you will keep these insights in front of you.

Grading Criteria

Just in case you don't have your 2004-2006 academic catalog handy, I've retyped the section on grading descriptions (see p. 29):

A = exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives

B = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

C = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives

D = Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives

F = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Incomplete Work

The official end of each term is 4:00 pm on the last day of the examination schedule. This hour is the deadline for handing in all course work. Each instructor may set an earlier deadline for submission of any or all course work. The student must petition the faculty person involved and the student's advisor for permission to receive an "I" at the end of a semester. **A grade of "I" denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment.** If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F" (p. 29, 2004-2006 Academic Catalog).