

**The Educational Ministry of the Church
Reformed Theological Seminary
Fall, 2011**

Instructor: Dr. Bruce H. McRae

Email: bhmcrae@bellsouth.net (this is the easiest way to reach me!)

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
 - 1994-200 – 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
 - 2003 and current – Adjunct Professor of practical theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta, GA
 - 2008 and current – Director of Church Relations, Great Commission Publications (the publishing company owned by the Presbyterian Church in America)
 - 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 8 Monday nights from 6-9 pm, starting on August 29. See the class schedule to see which Monday nights we will meet. 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 this course in this way. The Educational Ministry of the Church is 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.”

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. Learn the process of 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
3. Have an overview of the ministry to the various age groups in the church: children, youth, and adults
4. Gain some expertise in the criteria for evaluating curriculum for use in the local church
5. Be able to carry out gospel-centered discipleship ministry in the local church
6. Know the vital place of small groups in the church
7. Understand the place of educational ministry to special felt need groups in the church
8. Be able to develop a plan for leadership training
9. Have a working knowledge and understanding of the central biblical truths needed to lead the Christian education ministry of a church.

Course Textbooks

Introducing Christian Education, edited by Michael J. Anthony

Perhaps the standard textbook today on the basic overview of the ministry of Christian Education in the local church.

The Practices of a Healthy Church, by Donald J. McNair

A basic, non-mega-church focused book on the ingredients of a healthy church, and strategies for leading a church in an effective manner.

Course Articles (downloadable off the course website)

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

“The Greatest Story Never Read” by Gary Burge

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

Course Schedule of Topics and Reading/Written Assignments

Class Date	Topic	Reading Assignment Due	Assignment Due
Aug 29	Biblical Foundations for Christian Education	Anthony, Chapters 1-3 McNair, Chapter 1	
Sep 5		Labor Day. No class	
Sep 12	Christian Education Scope and Sequence, and Curriculum Rev. Mark Lowery	Anthony, Chapters 10-15 McNair, Chapters 2-3	
Sep 19	Children's Ministry Ms. Sue Jakes	Anthony, Chapters 21-22	Paper on "The Core Values of a Well-Rounded Ministry" Due
Sep 26		No Class	
Oct 3	Youth Ministry Rev. Danny Mitchell	Anthony, Chapter 23	
Oct 10	Adult Discipleship: Training for Christian Maturity and Equipping Service	Anthony, Chapters 5-9, 24-25 "The Greatest Story Never Read" by Gary Burge "A Biblical Model for Disciple-Making" by Bruce H. McRae	
Oct 17	Leadership, Small Groups, Leadership Training and Specialized Ministries	Anthony, Chapter 19, 26-31 McNair, Chapters 4-11 "In Search of Leadership" and "What Do Real Leaders Look Like" by George Barna	
Oct 24		No Class	
Oct 31	The Organization of Christian Ed Ministry: Recruiting, Training, and Administration Mr. Dan Boulton	Anthony, Chapters 16-18, 20	
Nov 7	Class Presentations on Curriculum		Group Presentation and Curriculum Evaluation Due
Dec 12			Final Project Due by 6:00 pm via email

Course Assignment Descriptions

Assignment 1: Paper on “The Core Values of a Well-Rounded Ministry”

In 5 pages or less, double spaced, write a paper on what you believe are the core values of a church ministry. In other words, as you think about leading a ministry, before you get into the mechanics of leadership, you must think of the underlying biblical values that you want a church to accomplish. The McNair book discusses some of these. So, take some time to reflect. As you develop a vision for a church ministry, what are the underlying biblical priorities and directives that you would want driving your entire ministry? This is critical to Christian Education, because Christian Education encompasses every aspect of a church. You can use any resources you wish in writing this paper.

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.

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. You should be able to do this in 10-20 pages. This evaluation should include the following:

- Find out what kind of 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.
- 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 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

Assignment	Value	Percentage
Core Values of Ministry	100	20%
Curriculum Paper and Presentation	200	40%
Evaluation of Your Church’s Educational Ministry	200	40%
Total Points	500	100%

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)