



GRACE COMMUNION  
SEMINARY

# GCS NEWS

A Newsletter for Students and Alumni of Grace Communion Seminary

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## President's Letter



### Theology, doxology, and godly living

I don't know who said it first, but several have repeated it: "Theology leads to doxology." Learning about God leads us to praise God (or at least it should). A theology that doesn't cause us to worship is an incomplete theology. Theology is an organized exploration of how various teachings connect with one another, so it should include teaching about worship. But it should be more than a dry fact that we are supposed to respond to what we learn about God – it should also lead us or exhort us into a worshipful response.

I have been to several theology conferences, and few of the presentations seemed to have this response in mind. Theology was an object to dissect, a debate to be won, a way for presenters to make their name known. It seems as if academic theology is supposed to be dispassionate discussions about ideas, and presenters should not get too enthusiastic about their topic. The response they want from the audience is that people will praise the presentation!

Some churches have become a theology discussion club. People gather, discuss some point of the Bible or theology, go home, and it does not seem to affect their life. Their theology is irrelevant to life, and I might say irreverent as well. God is not looking for armchair theologians who talk about him but don't do what he says (Luke 6:46).

Some people learn Trinitarian theology and come away with this message: God loves

everyone, Jesus died for everyone, he's got everything covered. God is already working in the world, and he does everything a lot better than we do, so we don't really need to do anything. We are invited to participate with him, and it's nice to be invited, but not much hinges on whether we do anything. If we don't feel compelled, then it doesn't matter much. It's easier to just get together with friends to sing a few songs on Sunday, to be happy that we have been given the message of grace, and we go home, and wonder why our church is getting smaller.

Something is missing in our theology if we forget that God is "the One who commands." Pagan deities required worship, but they didn't have many commands for everyday life. They didn't care whether you were good or bad – that was left to the decrees of kings and governors. But the God of Israel had a lot to say about the way people live, and so did Jesus, Paul, and other New Testament writers.



God gives commands because he loves us and cares about the way we treat one another. He also wants to live with us, and he cares about the way that we treat him, too. Some attitudes

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and actions are going to foster a good relationship, and others reflect and reinforce a bad one. So our theology needs to include this: God's nature is that he is the sort of being who wants us to love and honor others. He is the sort of being who wants us to be involved in his project for the world.

The "invitation" is actually a command, commonly called the Great Commission. If our theology doesn't lead us to this, it's falling short. If our theological chain of reasoning leads to the idea that "we don't really need to do anything," then we have taken a wrong turn. We have tried to opt out

of God's plan for our own growth and development; we have snubbed our nose at what he wants for us. Even if we get the hypostasis, perichoresis and kenosis right, it's just a language game unless we also get life right. Theology should lead to worship, and worship includes obedience.

If we take a hint from Titus 2:12, we could also say that theology leads to eusebia, to godliness, to right living, and our theology is not complete until it tells us what "right living" includes. Good theology includes ethics. Here again, the academic conferences seem to obscure the connection – theology

is in one room, and ethics is discussed in another. People might discuss the doctrine of the church without any reference to what the church is supposed to do. It's as if they are watching a movie, analyzing the lines, gestures, backgrounds, etc., without realizing that they are actually in the movie, but not playing the role they are supposed to.

A good doctrine of the church includes its mission – not just a dry exploration of what that mission is, but it should encourage us to engage in it.

*Michael Morrison, PhD*  
*President*

## New Resource for Students

There is a new way to check student progress on the GCS website. On the Dashboard of student access to the website, you now have an option called Student Resources. From Student Resources, you can access your completed program requirements and also where you can sign your enrollment agreements. If you are eligible for a scholarship, you will complete the application in this same location. If you have any questions about using the new Student Resources section, please contact the Registrar at [registrar@gcs.edu](mailto:registrar@gcs.edu).



### Student Resources

- Program Requirements Completed
- Scholarship Application
- Sign Enrollment Agreements

## GCS Online Assembly - May 21, 2024

### A Time to Gather for Devotion and Prayer



On January 23, 2024, Grace Communion Seminary held its first convocation (assembly) to start our semester and academic year. We met by Zoom and shared in a short devotional, and prayers for the work that we are doing together. The meeting was attended by current students, alumni, faculty members and board members on four different continents. Thank you to everyone who attended.

We will have another convocation for the Summer semester on May 21, 2024 at 8:00pm Eastern Daylight Time. Invitations with Zoom links will be sent to all students who register for summer semester courses. If you aren't taking a class this semester but still want to attend the assembly, send an email to Georgia McKinnon at [registrar@gcs.edu](mailto:registrar@gcs.edu).

In a world with more than 24 time zones, we know that everyone may not be able to attend our gathering. If you have a schedule conflict at this time slot, let us know for our future planning considerations.

# Upcoming Classes for Summer Semester

Academic Advising and Registration for the Summer Semester: April 29 – May 9

## BI501 — Biblical Interpretation, Michael Morrison

When different people read the Bible, they sometimes come to different conclusions. We need a way to find out which reading is more likely to be right. We need to think about what we are doing when we read, and hopefully that will help us be more open to what the text actually says. BI501 Biblical Interpretation will help us read, study, understand, and explain the Bible in a way that can help others understand what the message means for us today.

## CH502 — Church History: The Second Millennium, Steve Dolson-Andrew

Step into the riveting saga of Christianity's journey through time! Uncover the triumphs, trials, and transformative moments that shaped the world's largest faith. Gain profound insights from our spiritual forebears that will impact your life and ministry today. From antiquity to contemporary practice, the GCS Church History courses offer a thrilling exploration of faith, power, and resilience. Learn about the ancient roots of your Christian faith, connect with centuries of tradition, and understand the forces that continue to shape our world today. Enroll now and embark on an unforgettable voyage through the rich history of the Christian faith.

## CM504 — Practice of Ministry, Ted Johnston

Do you now serve (or feel called to serve) within the church as a pastor or ministry leader (including Avenue champion)? If so, the Practice of Ministry course is for you! This course explores the trinitarian, incarnational roots of all Christian ministry and looks at how to live out that theology in the day-to-day ministries of the church, including worship planning, administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, preaching and teaching, pastoral care, evangelism, discipleship, church administration, and ministry to families.

## CM513 — Trinitarian Worship, Lance McKinnon

Everyone has a theology, and everyone worships, from the Christian to the atheist. In Trinitarian Worship, we will pursue distinguishing a Christian worship understood from a biblical, Christ-centered, and historically orthodox theology. From this trinitarian and Christocentric foundation we will engage in shaping liturgical practices that escape the common fixation on the worshiper and move to center on the One whom we worship. In this way the course aims to equip pastors, worship leaders, and others involved in planning and conducting a local church's worship service. Using a theological-historical framework, and surveying various useful tools, we will seek to discern fitting liturgical practices that aid in renewing worship in a local church resulting in a witness to Jesus Christ, our High Priest, who leads us to share in his worship of the Father by the Spirit.

## CM514 — Missional Living, Charles Fleming

Missional Living is designed to help students catch the vision beautifully expressed in one of the class textbooks by Michael Reeves, which says:

*Mission is rooted in the Trinity, in the very being and nature and heart of God. And this is something deeply heart-winning and attractive in Him. If there is one thing I really want, above all, to communicate in this book, it is the great truth that God is mission. As we partake in the Father's pleasure in His Son, and the Son's pleasure in His Father, and the Spirit's enlivening of their mutual love, it causes us to share their love for the world.*

If you take Missional Living, you can expect instruction to include video recorded lectures, inspiring reading, discussion forums, spiritual formation practices as well as online meetings with other students to discuss practical ways to implement insights learned. The course is part of a GCI initiative to better equip pastors pursuing a master's degree and lay members who serve in GCI's Love Avenue.

# Schedule of Courses

All schedules are tentative

**Summer 2024:** Registration begins April 29. The first lecture will be posted on Monday, May 13. Other lectures will be posted on Mondays, May 20 through July 22. All work is to be completed by August 11.

|       |                                       |                          |
|-------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| BI501 | Biblical Interpretation               | Mike Morrison            |
| CH502 | Church History: The Second Millennium | Stephen L. Dolson-Andrew |
| CM504 | Practice of Ministry                  | Ted Johnston             |
| CM513 | Trinitarian Worship                   | Lance McKinnon           |
| CM514 | Missional Living                      | Charles Fleming          |

**Fall 2024:** Registration begins August 26. The first lecture will be posted on Monday, September 9. Other lectures will be posted on Mondays, September 16 through November 11. All work is to be completed by December 8.

|         |                                      |                     |
|---------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| BI540   | Using Biblical Greek Study Tools     | Mike Morrison       |
| CH501   | Church History: The First Millennium | Steve Dolson-Andrew |
| CM507   | Experiencing the Trinity             | Larry Hinkle        |
| CM508   | Church Planting and Development      | Randy Bloom         |
| CM511   | Homiletics                           | Dan Rogers          |
| FE501-3 | Field Education                      | Randy Bloom         |
| TH515   | Theological Ethics                   | Gary Deddo          |

**Spring 2025:** Registration begins January 6. The first lecture will be posted on Monday, January 20. Other lectures will be posted on Mondays, January 27 through March 24. All work is to be completed by April 6.

|       |                            |               |
|-------|----------------------------|---------------|
| BI520 | New Testament Survey       | Mike Morrison |
| CM503 | Christian Counseling       | Ted Johnston  |
| CM506 | Trinitarian Youth Ministry | Jeff Broadnax |
| TH507 | Theology of C.S. Lewis     | Gary Deddo    |

All schedules are tentative. If fewer than five students register for a course, it may be cancelled, at the discretion of the instructor. **Thesis and Capstone courses for the master's degrees are offered in all semesters.**



# CONGRATULATIONS To Our Recent 2024 Graduate

Master of Theological Studies (MTS)

**Takalani Musekwa**



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Financial support from alumni and friends like you has a profound impact on the seminary's mission of *"Equipping Men and Women for Church-based Ministry."*



If you have a passion for the provision of seminary training informed by an Incarnational Trinitarian faith, GCS is grateful for your partnership through prayer and financial support.



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