



GRACE COMMUNION
SEMINARY

GCS NEWS

A Newsletter for Students and Alumni of Grace Communion Seminary

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President's Letter



Dear Students, Alumni
and Donors,

We are now coming to the close of our Summer semester and looking towards the Fall semester of the upcoming academic year. I've been thinking and praying on my own and with others wondering if there is a particular word from the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ we need to hear in these continuing times of uncertainty. Let me offer one to you for your edification and encouragement.

I've been hearing comments from various sources, within and outside of GCS/GCI, on two topics—the theme of love and the theme of freedom. However, I've recognized that love and freedom are often spoken of independently. For some, freedom is in the forefront. For others, love seems to be the central concern. Such separation of the two can leave the impression that they are not only independent of one another, but are in tension with each other. And often, those who advocate for one or the other, in Christian or even in secular contexts, come to recommend or even demand opposite courses of action and reaction. Perhaps you've noticed the same.

This observation prompted a recollection of my reading, conversations and thoughts over the years that seems important today. What I've recalled is that in Jesus Christ and

according to biblical revelation, the gifts of true love and true freedom have their source in our Triune God. They are actually one indivisible gift of grace.

In Jesus Christ and according to his gospel, our Triune God's kind of love and freedom can never be separated. They always go together. In fact, they cannot be separated without doing damage to the truth and reality of the gift of God given to us. A freedom enacted without God's own kind of covenant love or a love extended without the kind of covenant freedom the living God gives us will end up twisting and distorting both. In short,

the gift of life the Living God gives us in Jesus Christ is strictly the freedom to act in love in a way that points to God's own kind of covenant love that has been freely given to us.

This means that the freedom we have in Christ is a means to a very particular end (*telos*). We are not set free merely to be free, to be unconstrained, to make any choices we might please. We

are not free to do evil or, in the words of Paul, free to fall back into slavery (Gal. 5:1). That is a misuse and abuse of the gift of freedom in Christ. We are set free in Christ for one thing and one thing only: to think, respond and act towards others in a way that points to God's own kind of freely-given, holy, true, good and transforming love.



Cont.

That love has a special character and name both in the Old Testament and in the New. In the OT the key word (*hesed*) is translated “lovingkindness,” “steadfast love” and sometimes “mercy” or “covenant love.” It is often associated with God’s faithfulness (see Deut. 7:9). This divine love directs us to what is true, what is good, what brings fullness of life in personal relationship with the Living God.

In the New Testament, this unique love has been given a distinctive name. That love is referred to as *agapē*. Such love is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. We can benefit from it and share in it by the ongoing ministry of his Holy Spirit. This holy *agapē* love is distinct from the natural loves of affection, attraction or friendship (*storgē*, *eros*, *phileō* in Greek).

As C.S. Lewis has reminded us, this supernatural love of Christ’s directs, purifies, and sanctifies all the natural loves. It prevents them from misuse, from degenerating, from becoming idols that enslave us or bring about division, alienation, chaos and destruction. On their own, they will not lead to life here and now, nor to life eternal. All the natural loves must, in the end, be crucified, rescued, saved and sanctified by God’s own covenant/*agapē* love.

With this holy love, the Triune God loves us to maturity in Christ. He directs and enables us to share more and more in Christ’s own worshipful love for the Father and to receive his merciful and forgiving love for us that rescues and saves us from evil, from fear, from lies, from deceit, from temptation, from eternal death.

But such Christ-like love requires also the accompanying gift of freedom in

Christ. The two cannot be separated. For freedom in Christ Jesus we have been free (Gal. 5:6). Such love as God in Christ has loved us cannot be coerced by force, by fear or moved by the promises of earthly favors or benefits. Such faithful love that leads to life cannot be moved by threat or promise of humanly imposed legal or circumstantial consequences—either in our churches or in our cultures or nations.

Each and every person stands before



the face of the Living God as a personal agent directly accountable to the absolute authority of his sovereign, free and holy covenant love. Anyone or anything that authoritatively interposes itself into that sacred relationship will foster the dehumanization and depersonalization of the individual and damage and distort human relationships, whether personal or public.

In the life of Jesus Christ and his teachings we can see most clearly the enactment of the gift of true freedom exclusively serving the purposes of God’s own transforming holy covenant love. Each interaction of Jesus with every person he met and

in all his interactions with the Father in the Spirit exude his freedom to act towards others out of trust in the Father’s covenant love. He opens the door and invites us all to respond freely to receive that covenant love—and then to freely extend it to others in his name.

For us, then, the transforming covenant love of Christ is exercised out of the kind of freedom Christ gives. And the freedom Christ gives is a means to be used to exercise one thing only—the faithful covenant love that leads to life, a life that knows, honors, and is transformed by the worship of our Creator and Redeemer, The Holy One, The Great ‘I Am.’ Our Triune God is the one who loves in freedom and who freely and steadfastly has perfectly loved us for eternal fellowship and communion in the coming new heaven and earth.

What God has joined together, let no one divide asunder.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Dr. Gary Deddo
President

P.S. Before I end let me first express my thanks to everyone who attended the GCS Information Meeting at the GCI Virtual Celebration in July and for the GCS staff who put it on! I found it to be a wonderful and valuable event.

P.P.S. Also, let me remind you of the special tuition discount available to GCS alumni who have taken classes (see registrar’s article on page 4.) As registration opens, please be sure to check out what’s being offered this Fall.

From the Dean — New Program



We have a new program that is designed for local church ministry leaders — a seven-course Diploma in Christian Ministry.

We are working with instructors to offer a special course for three areas: A course in leading small groups for discipleship leaders, a new

course in worship for worship leaders, and a new course in missional living for those who lead witness or outreach. These can then be grouped with six additional courses to lead to a diploma. You can get the full details of this on page 6.

The first new course to debut for this program will be this spring: Small Group Bible Study Leadership, taught

by Gary Deddo. You are of course welcome to take this course no matter what area of ministry you work in, and even if you don't plan on getting a diploma. We hope to have the other new courses roll out in summer and fall 2022, and we hope to see you there!

*Dr. Michael Morrison
Dean of Faculty*

— New Practice

Home computers have been known to fail, so we encourage you to save a copy of your final papers as part of your GCS portfolio.

The final papers of many courses will be needed if you ever decide to pursue a Master of Divinity degree. Even if you do not currently plan to get the MDiv, you might change your mind later, or you might want those papers for some other reason. Here's how you

can put all your final papers in one place so that you will continue to be able to access them:

- Log in and go to your dashboard. In the right column is a box labelled "Private files." Click on "Manage private files," then upload a copy of your papers (label them by course number), and you will be able to access them in future semesters.

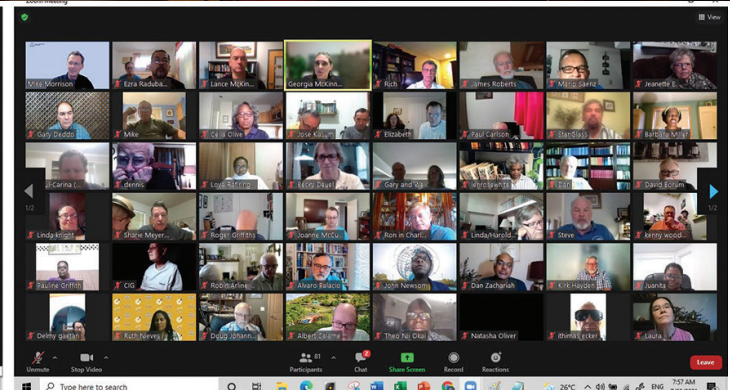
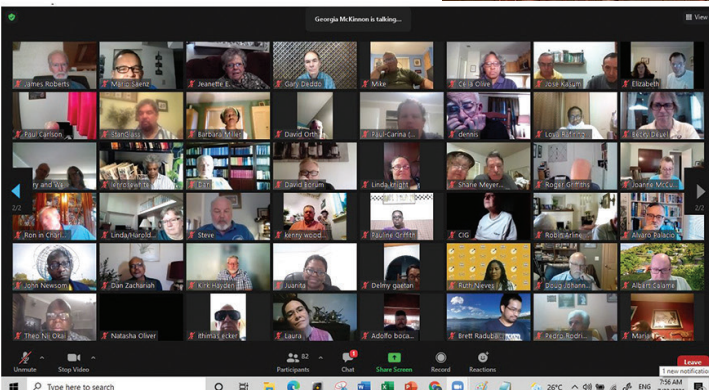
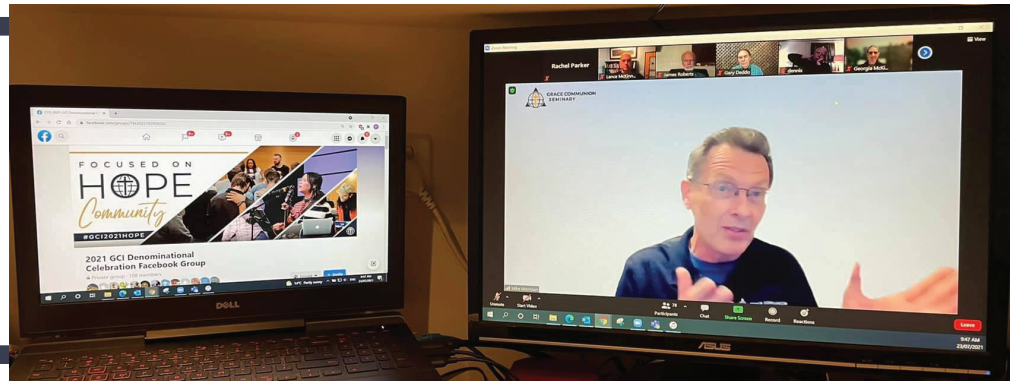
- You may want to do this for previous courses you have taken at GCS.

- If your instructor makes comments on your papers, you'll want to preserve that version.



GCS Information Meeting at the GCI Virtual Celebration

Thanks to all who participated.



From the Registrar



We have a great lineup of classes this fall (see next page), including the first offering of a new class, BI540 Using Biblical Greek Study Tools. This course uses an inductive approach to learning New Testament Greek, as students study the book of 1 John.

Let me take a minute to remind you that all alumni are invited to audit any class for the reduced rate of \$165.

We are happy to announce a new opportunity for our students. If you have taken a class for credit, you are able to audit the same class at a rate of \$50 per class if you want a refresher. This only applies to classes you have previously taken for credit. If you

have any questions about this, or if you would like to take advantage of this offer, please contact me for more details.

It is our hope and prayer that the classes you take at GCS are a blessing to you personally and to your ministry. If I can be of assistance to you, please let me know.

— *Georgia McKinnon, Registrar*

Free Resources from GCI and GCS

As students do research for papers, sermons, or other needs, they sometimes want to know “What has GCI said about this?”

The GCI website

Articles are found on several locations on the gci.org website. Equipper articles are at equipper.gci.org, Update articles are at update.gci.org, articles about old doctrines are at archive.gci.org, and other resources are at resources.gci.org. The good news is that the “search” feature on the website searches all of these sites at the same time.

On www.gci.org, there are three bars in the extreme upper left. This is an icon for “menu.” If you click on it, a menu will drop down; the first option is search. Type your topic into the box and press enter; you will get search results from several locations on our website. If your search word is in the article title, it will usually be one of the first listed. (The search function is in slightly different places on archive, research, equipper, and update – sometimes a magnifying glass icon, sometimes the three bars menu icon, sometimes the word “search.”)

The search results will be more manageable if you pick a distinctive word, or use quotation marks around an exact phrase, such as “kingdom

of God” (which gets more than a thousand results, but at least the articles with this exact phrase in the title are listed at the top).

To see a computer-generated alphabetized list of all titles on the archive site, go to <https://bit.ly/GCI-Article-Index>. For a list of articles organized by subject, go to <http://bit.ly/GCI-Articles>. These are very long pages, so you may want to use the search function of your browser by pressing the Ctrl key and the f key at the same time. That will open a search box and you can search for a specific word or phrase on that page.

Many articles on GCI have been compiled into books; this can also be a useful way to search. Go to <http://bit.ly/GCIbooks> and you’ll see a Google drive page that contains these books. You can search within individual books on that page or download the books to your own computer. Books are easier to cite in a research paper because they have publication dates and page numbers.

The GCS website

The GCS website has many free resources, including many of the more academic articles that used to be on the GCI website. For access, go to www.gcs.edu/resources. This includes the You’re Included interviews,

articles by GCS faculty, numerous Bible studies and other articles.



Schedule of Courses 2021-2022

All schedules are tentative

Fall 2021: Registration begins Aug. 23. The first lecture will be posted on Tuesday, Sept. 7. Subsequent lectures will be posted on Mondays, Sept. 13 to Nov. 8. All work is to be completed by Dec. 5.

BI501	Biblical Interpretation (Hermeneutics)	Mike Morrison
BI540	Using Biblical Greek Study Tools	Mike Morrison
CH501	Church History: The First Millennium	Neil Earle
CM507	Experiencing the Trinity	Larry Hinkle
CM510	Polity of Grace Communion International	Greg Williams
FE501	Field Education 1	Randy Bloom
FE503	Field Education 3	Randy Bloom
TH501	Nature of God and Jesus Christ	R. Duke & L. McKinnon
TH508	Christology of T.F. Torrance	Gary Deddo

Spring 2022: Registration begins Jan. 4. The first lecture will be posted on Tuesday, January 18. Other lectures will be posted on Mondays, January 25 through March 21. All work is to be completed by April 11. Easter is April 17.

BI522	The Gospels	Mike Morrison
CH502	Church History: The Second Millennium	Neil Earle
CM504	Practice of Ministry	Ted Johnston
CM508	Church Planting & Development	Randy Bloom
CM512	Small Group Bible Study Leadership	Cathy & Gary Deddo
FE502	Field Education 2	Randy Bloom
TH505	Doctrine of the Trinity	Gary Deddo

Summer 2022: Registration begins April 25. Lectures will be posted Mondays, May 9 to July 18. No work is posted for the week of July 4-10. All coursework is to be done by August 7.

BI512	The Prophets	Tim Finlay
BI520	New Testament Survey	Mike Morrison
CM501	Pastoral Leadership	To Be Announced
CM503	Christian Counseling	Ted Johnston
CM511	Homiletics	Dan Rogers
TH503	The Holy Spirit, the Church and Last Things	Gary Deddo

If fewer than five students register for a course, it may be cancelled, at the discretion of the instructor. When Monday is a holiday in the U.S., lectures may be posted on Tuesday. **Capstone courses for the master's degrees are offered in all semesters.**

NEW PROGRAM FOR AVENUE CHAMPIONS

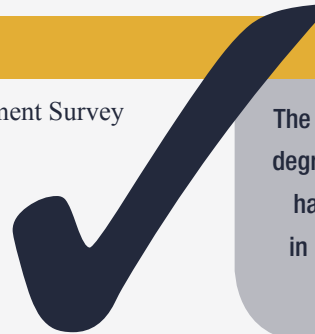
DIPLOMA OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY (DCM) FOCUS ON WORSHIP, DISCIPLESHIP, OR WITNESS



These academic achievement awards are designed for lay leaders within Grace Communion International, although students of any denomination are welcome to take this group of courses. They are focused on Christian ministry courses.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Either BI501 Biblical Interpretation or BI520 New Testament Survey
2. CM504 Practice of Ministry
3. CM508 Church Planting and Development
4. CM510 Polity of Grace Communion International
5. TH503 The Holy Spirit, the Church and Eschatology
6. Either a second Bible course or a second theology course
7. An elective appropriate to the area of focus
 1. For the worship focus, either CM506 Trinitarian Youth Ministry or another applicable future elective
 2. For the discipleship focus, CM506 Trinitarian Youth Ministry, or CM512 Small Group Bible Study Leadership
 3. For the witness focus, either CM501 Pastoral Leadership or another applicable future elective
8. Complete at least 21 units. Six units may come from credit transferred in from another accredited institution, or through documented experiential learning.
9. Maintain a GPA of at least 2.5



The Diploma of Christian Ministry is not a degree, but a recognition that the student has achieved a noteworthy milestone in ministry training. See our Academic Catalog for more details.



PARTNERS WITH GCS

Financial support from alumni and friends like you has a profound impact on the seminary's mission of "Equipping the Saints for Pastoral 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.

Donations to Grace Communion Seminary can be mailed to
3120 Whitehall Park Drive, Charlotte, NC 28273
or donate online at <https://gcs.edu/donate>.