

A Biblical Theology of Christian Education Online CE 711Z

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Credit: *Three credit hours.*

**Please be sure to read and familiarize yourself with ALL content in this syllabus
and in the online classroom.**

Welcome to the course, **A Biblical Theology of Christian Education**. Although I can't give you a personal welcome, as I might do in my on-campus course, I do want to welcome you warmly to this vital learning experience. I want this course to be a significant and vital part of your seminary education. You are one of many students taking advantage of the alternative delivery of high quality theological education through our EDEN distance learning enterprise. I am available when you need me because we aren't limited by office hours or distance. You can also access course materials and other pertinent information through the EDEN web site located on the seminary web page. I look forward to getting to know you better as we progress through the course materials. Anytime you experience difficulty or have a question about course content or course requirements, please use one of the communication means identified above to reach me. I pray God's wisdom as you expose yourself to the study of his Word.

Dr. Steve Lowe

Mission Statement

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church.

Course Description

The praxis of Christian Education must be grounded in a well-defined Biblical theology that seeks to justify the educational task of the Church. This course is designed to expose students to the Biblical model of "witness" grounded in a Reformed understanding of the Biblical covenants and offered as a comprehensive Biblical rationale for the praxis of Christian education. Students gain a new appreciation for the harmony that exists between the Testaments as well as a new understanding of the educational implications of theological

concepts. Application of the model of “witness” to the praxis of Christian education and the central role of the Christian family in spiritual formation are examined.

Course Purpose

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with a comprehensive Biblical framework or paradigm that guides our understanding of the Biblical principles of religious education as contained in the Hebrew Old Testament and the Christian New Testament.

Course Objectives

1. To introduce students to the Biblical theology of “witness” as a comprehensive framework from which to practice Christian Education
2. To lay a Biblical-theological foundation upon which students can erect a scaffolding of Christian Education ministry.
3. To expose students to the literature of the field of Biblical theology across a wide spectrum of theological persuasion and viewpoints.
4. To help students analyze proposed Biblical theologies of Christian Education.
5. To provide students an opportunity to formulate their own Biblical theology of Christian Education using the model of “witness” and others discovered in their exposure to the literature of the field.
6. To challenge students to appraise and evaluate their own Biblical theology of Christian Education as well as those that have been propounded in the field.

Course Textbooks

You may use [Erskine Seminary's Virtual Bookstore](#) to order your textbooks for this course.

- *You Are My Witnesses: A Mission-Based Theology of Christian Education*, Stephen D. Lowe, unpublished manuscript, 2005. Available in online classroom.
- *The Creative Word*, Walter Brueggemann (Fortress Press, 1982).
- *Education That is Christian*, Lois LeBar (Victor Books, 1989).

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Fifth edition.

- A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)
- *Theological Approaches to Christian Education*, Jack L. Seymour and Donald E. Miller (Abingdon Press, 1990).
- *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (Section A), Ralph D. Winter (William Carey Library, 1992).
- *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, George C. Peters (Moody Press, 1972).
- *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*, Walter Brueggemann (Fortress Press, 1997).
- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology online
<http://www.biblestudytools.net/Dictionaries/BakersEvangelicalDictionary/>

Course FAQs

1. All assignments must be submitted via e-mail attachment (unless otherwise notified).
2. Please use Microsoft Word when submitting assignments electronically.
3. All assignments should be clearly marked on the e-mail subject line with the student's last name and assignment number.

COURSE PLATFORM

Erskine Seminary is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). According to the ATS Standard 10.3.4.3, "Institutions shall ensure that distance education programs provide appropriate opportunity for collaboration, personal development, interaction among peers within a community of learning, and supervised field or internship opportunities when appropriate to the degree program." It is with this stipulation that EDEN has implemented a web-based learning platform which will serve to provide a number of collaborative learning experiences. The learning platform is Moodle and according to their website, "Moodle is a course management system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses . . . and create effective online learning communities." You will be provided with additional information concerning Moodle tutorials, site information, and the peer mentoring program. In order to meet the online discussion component of this course, you will need:

- A computer (or access to a computer)
- High-speed access to the Internet

Course Grading Criteria and Scale

Students always need to know what the professor expects of them in any course. This is especially true in distance learning courses.

The following grading scale, from the Seminary catalog, is used to assign a numeric value to each lesson submitted. All scores are weighted equally. Your final grade is the average of each grade received. A letter grade will be computed on the basis of your average raw score using the following grade scale:

The following grading criteria will be used to evaluate your course submissions:

- A Level Work = Exemplary ability to differentiate constituent parts; assess and critique theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts, proposals, and relevant literature; and the ability to reason in a logical and compelling manner.
- B Level Work = Reflects above average grasp of the subject matter; displays a superior ability to use new knowledge in a creative manner; and can demonstrate an above average ability to discriminate among alternative viewpoints.
- C Level Work = Adequate but not exceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; sufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and a satisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.
- D Level Work = Inadequate mastery of basic facts and information presented in the course; insufficient or inappropriate use of common terms and language indicating an inadequate grasp of the material; and an inferior ability to analyze and judge proposals, ideas or concepts.

A	95-100	C+	84-85
A-	93-94	C	80-83
		C-	78-79
B+	91-92	D+	76-77
B	88-90	D	72-75
B-	86-87	D-	70-71
	F	0-69	

Courses taken through Erskine's Distance Education Network are self-directed and self-paced within the parameters of the semester in which you enroll for the course. The time constraints of this course are self-imposed to a large degree. However, keep in mind that if you are working toward degree completion you may be bound by a time frame imposed by Seminary policy. Consult your catalog for specific time frames in your degree program. Some variation in time required to complete an assignment is to be expected due to a variety of factors, not the least of which is your own self-discipline.

Course Components

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through three learning components:

1. **Lecture Component:** Mastery of course content will be accomplished through the student's active listening and reaction to course content and questions covering the content of those lectures.

2. **Reading Component:** Exposure to the literature of the field relevant to the topic of this course will be accomplished through required readings as specified in this course syllabus.
3. **Reflection Component:** Students are expected to think critically and deeply about the subject matter of this course intellectually (theory) and pragmatically (practice). This is encouraged through a variety of writing assignments from which the student may choose. The student is expected to integrate in the writing requirements the various components of the course including e- lectures, required readings, and other unplanned learning encounters with the professor or other members of the class.

These components will provide a well-rounded learning experience for the thoughtful and diligent student producing a time commitment of approximately 120 contact hours to complete the course.

Please Note: Successful completion of this distance learning course will require that you set your own schedule and discipline yourself to stay on schedule. If you are taking this course in Summer Term you will need to adjust the due dates to conform to the beginning and ending dates for Summer Term set by the seminary catalog.

Course Schedule

The following overview is a syllabus management system that will help guide you in the completion of course assignments:

Week	Lecture Component	Assignments Due
1	Audio lecture 1 - 2 Video lecture 1 Manuscript chapters 1 - 2 (Choose ONE of the above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with course content for mastery. • Begin working on reaction paper. • Begin reading <i>The Creative Word</i>
2	Audio lecture 3 - 4 Video lecture 2 Manuscript chapters 3 - 4 (Choose ONE of the above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with course content for mastery. • Continue working on reaction paper. • Continue reading <i>The Creative Word</i>
3	Audio lecture 5 - 6 Video lecture 3 Manuscript chapter 5 (Choose ONE of the above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with course content for mastery. • Continue working on reaction paper. • Continue reading <i>The Creative Word</i>

4	Audio lecture 7 - 8 Video lecture 4 Manuscript chapter 6 (Choose ONE of the above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with course content for mastery. • Reaction paper due. • Begin Assignment 3 • Creative Word “Memo to Myself” due
5	Read <i>Education That is Christian.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take notes • Continue Assignment 3
6	Read <i>Education That is Christian.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take notes • Continue Assignment 3
7	Read <i>Education That is Christian.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Memo to Myself” due • Continue Assignment 3
8	Read <i>Education That is Christian.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education that is Christian “Memo to Myself” due • Assignment 3 due

Course Assignments

Assignment One – Lecture Component

Master the content of course concepts by choosing **ONE** of the following:

- § listen actively to all audio lectures
- § view all videos
- § read the manuscript, *You Are My Witnesses: A Mission-Based Theology of Christian Education*

When you are finished with the course content, write a brief one to two page single-spaced critical reaction and response.

Assignment Two – Reading Component

Read and react to all required texts for the course.

1. *The Creative Word*
2. *Education That is Christian*

While you read keep a notepad (hard copy or electronic) handy to write down thoughts or ideas that come to your mind, comments or reactions, questions that are raised while reading, areas of confusion or insights that strike you as significant. When you are finished reading each required text, use your notations to write a one page, single-spaced “Memo to Myself” for each of the two texts. Identify one key thought, concept, issue or question. Expound upon and explore that one thought or issue in depth. You may find that important concepts learned from course lectures and reading other required materials has triggered an insight or connection not previously made in your thinking. In this case, you may wish to use the Memo as an opportunity to engage in integrative thinking by identifying points of similarity in which two divergent thoughts or concepts from

two different sources have created a new “third of comparison” in your mind. The two criteria for grading will be how cogently and succinctly you can react to what you have read. Some recommended starter phrases for your Memo are:

- After I’ve had more time to think about it . . .
- Now that I’ve read this book, it seems to me that . . .
- What strikes me about this issue is that . . .
- As I understand it . . .

A sample Memo from a previous student is provided at the end of this syllabus for your consideration. Upload the Memo to the online classroom.

*Steps to upload your assignment:

1. Find the “Memo Depot” discussion forum in the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find assignment listed there.
3. Click on “Add a new discussion topic” and this will take you to the upload area
4. Type in your name and reaction paper title (i.e. Joe Smith’s Assessing CE Ministry paper) in the subject line.
5. Type a BRIEF explanation in the message section (i.e. Memo)
6. Click on the “browse” feature at the bottom of that paper and find your paper.
7. Double-click on your document and select “post to forum” shown at the bottom of the screen.

Steps to download (or read) others’ assignment:

1. Find the “Memo Depot” discussion forum in the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find student postings listed there.
3. Click on the title of the student posting listed under Discussion.
4. Click on the Word document in that posting.
5. Select “open” to read the document instantly or “save” to save the document to your desktop folder.
6. Post your comments related to the paper by hitting “reply” on the discussion board. Enter your comments in message section. Hit “post to forum” when finished.

Assignment Three – Reflection Component

Select **one** assignment from the options listed below. Or, if you wish, you may propose your own assignment to me. It is suggested that you base your choice of assignment upon the following considerations:

- (1) your own learning style
- (2) your own need for knowledge in a given area
- (3) your own ministry or vocational situation (you can kill two birds with one stone!).

Option # 1

Prepare a set of course materials for a church seminar designed to help lay teachers think more clearly about developing a Biblical foundation for Christian Education ministry. The materials should be written to cover a four session program of sixty minutes each. The materials should include an outline of your teaching notes, proposed teaching strategies, teaching materials or handouts to be used in the class sessions, and any other items that would

explain how the sessions will be conducted and what will be taught.

Option # 2

Prepare a strategic plan for your church or Christian school that seeks to implement the witnessing model presented in this course. Generally, the plan should seek to specify concrete ways for putting flesh to the bones of the witnessing model. It should be church-wide and comprehensive in scope being sure to give place to the balance between external witness (proclamation, evangelism) to those outside the community of faith and internal witness (instruction, edification) to those who are a part of the community of faith. The strategic plan should include narrative sections as well as charts and diagrams that explicate how the witnessing model will be implemented.

Option # 3

Write a 10 - 15 page Biblical Theology of Christian Education. The student is strongly encouraged to explore the Scriptures as well as relevant literature to find a model or structure that will guide in the praxis of Christian Education ministry. The "witness" model presented in this course can be used as a guide but should not be reproduced in the student's paper. Do your own thinking and study on this subject and come up with a Biblical theology that reflects your own thinking and study. The paper should be double-spaced, attentively edited for typographical errors, punctuation, grammar, etc., and written in either Turabian (footnotes) or American Psychological Association (in-text citation) style. Please keep in mind that most Christian Education writing uses the APA style whereas most theological writing uses Turabian. If your major is Christian Education, I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with the APA style.

Option # 4

Conduct a literature review and construct an annotated bibliography limited to a search of books, articles and other resources that address the topic of a Biblical theology of Christian Education or the relationship between theology and Christian Education. A one paragraph review of the contents of each entry should be included. A minimum of twenty entries should be reviewed by the student.

Relevant Institutional and Class Policies

(Please read carefully)

Conduct in Theological Discussions

- 1. Language about God and Humanity:** Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").
- 2. Registration:** Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a "drop/add" form and secure the appropriate signatures. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student's receiving a grade of "F" for the course, and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.
- 3. Late or Incomplete Work:** Any work not submitted by the due date will be assessed a late penalty. The final deadline for submitting all late work is noon on the Monday after the end of exam week. Any work not received by this deadline will be given a grade of "0," unless the student has made **prior** arrangements to take an incomplete for the course. Incomplete (I) marks will be handled in accordance with policy statements in the Catalog. In particular, one should note that the student does not automatically have the privilege of taking an incomplete. Rather, it is the professor's prerogative to give an incomplete, and only when the student has completed most of the work for the course and has been providentially hindered from completing the remainder. Note that there is a processing fee associated with "Incompletes," and that "Incompletes" must be completed by the stated deadline or they automatically become an "F." Only the Dean may approve extensions of deadlines for "Incompletes." **For further details, please read the current Seminary Catalog. The Seminary imposes a fee for Incomplete grades.**
- 4.** My normal office hours are posted on my office door for each semester. However, there are times when I will not be in my office during those posted hours. If you need to see me or speak with me, please send me an email (slowe@erskine.edu) or leave me a voice mail on my office phone (864.379.8748).
- 5.** Typically theologians prefer the Turabian or footnote style of citation. Educators as well as others in the social sciences prefer the American Psychological Association (APA) in-text citation style. The Seminary allows

either at the graduate level. I allow students who use either style in my classes. My only requirement is that you do not mix the two citation styles. Choose either APA (my preference) or Turabian (the Seminary's preference).

6. Plagiarism, defined as the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, is a clear violation of the Erskine Seminary Honor Code as set forth in the *Student Handbook* and *Seminary Catalog*. It is also a clear violation of the will of God in regard to taking something that belongs to someone else without his/her permission. The penalty for an infraction of the plagiarism policy is severe and may potentially result in the permanent dismissal of a student from the seminary. If you have any questions concerning the appropriate use of referenced sources, please contact me prior to submitting your work for grading.

WRITING THEOLOGICAL PAPERS

The seminary has produced a *Writing Theological Papers* document that guides a student through the process of producing a high quality theological paper. It is included as part of the materials for this course located in the online classroom and is part of your Student Handbook provided by the seminary.

Please edit your paper for typographical errors, misspelled words, stylistic miscues, and grammatical mistakes. The paper should be double-spaced and constitute original work written for this course only and cannot include material previously used in another course or for another purpose. Please read over the notation regarding the seminary policy on plagiarism included at the end of this syllabus. Your use of the work or thoughts of another without proper citation and acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism. **Content found at an Internet web site is construed to be copyrighted material written and produced by another person.** Undocumented wholesale use of words from an Internet web site passed off as the student's own work in a research paper of this sort constitutes plagiarism and will be considered a violation of the seminary plagiarism policy. Students who are determined to have violated the seminary's policy on plagiarism will receive a grade of zero for the paper, will not be allowed to re-submit another paper, and will have a written record of the violation added to their permanent student record. Further violations of the seminary's plagiarism policy could result in temporary or permanent dismissal from the seminary.

Please visit these websites for more information about plagiarism:

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html

<http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html>

Sample Memo to Myself

Memo to Myself: You Are My Witnesses

On the road to Emmaus—and elsewhere during his earthly ministry—Jesus taught of himself from the Old Testament Scriptures. “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me.’ And he opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (Lk. 24:44-45). Those he taught did likewise, Peter and Paul and others preaching of Christ consistently from the Law and the Prophets (e.g., Acts 2:14ff.; Rom. 1:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:3,4). Jesus affirmed the integrity of the Scriptures: “the Scripture,” he says in the singular, “cannot be broken” (Jn. 10:35). And this is the affirmation, of the unity and integrity of the whole Bible, that I find most pointedly underscored in You Are My Witnesses.

Early in our study we noted the importance of teaching both GOD’s Word and his world, of integrating faith and learning, of teaching the whole counsel of GOD, even the parts we might not particularly care for or understand. This text highlights for me the historic significance of that mandate; that is, it has always been GOD’s plan to integrate, to relate rather than to separate. The first part of the text shows clearly how GOD fully intended for Israel to know him and to make him known to all of creation—one Creator, who is one, for all that he has made. The very concept of covenant is relational and integrative, and this has been GOD’s idea from the first.

From the first, too, GOD has unfolded his revelation through a vital dynamic, a witness at once internal to his chosen people and external through them to “all the nations.” You Are My Witnesses makes especially clear the ongoing nature of such a dynamic—between old Israel and new, between witness to GOD’s words and deeds, between verbal and visual witness. I particularly appreciate the sharp distinction drawn in the New Testament sections between preaching and teaching for conversion to the faith and the more extended teaching task of “nurturing the churches.” The text’s greatest strength may be the depth and breadth of its lexical grounding, especially rich and revealing in these sections.

The chapter on Acts closes with a ringing call to strike a crucial balance between all sorts of opposites that challenge the contemporary church (121-22). A striking portrait of just such balance is Luke’s project in the Book of Acts. Witnesses offers a compelling reading of Luke/Acts, one which may prove fruitful for today’s imbalanced church. In my judgment, the church’s struggle in contemporary America reflects only a broader culture of disproportions. My take on American culture at large is that it is rooted in tensions which are not necessarily contradictory. If we were to rub out all of those tensions (which will never happen), America would cease to exist. The trick has always been to hold those competing ideals and values in creative, balanced tension; and that’s how I see this reading of the witness model in Scripture.

One of my favorite voices on the topic of integrating faith and learning is Steve Garber, whose book, The Fabric of Faithfulness, posits an image of Christian faithfulness which I also associate with You Are My Witnesses. Tracing the witnessing mandate and advancing it as a model for biblically-based Christian education, this text powerfully discloses the perfect integrity of the Bible, like the finest fabric flawlessly

conceived and woven strand by strand to constitute a beautiful, unified, sufficient whole; and thus it is itself a compelling witness to the GOD who is its perfect subject.

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