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JOEL A. SHAFFER

CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

- MA Grand Rapid Theological Seminary**, Intercultural Studies, 2006
Thesis: “An Uneasy Missional Relationship: Helping Resolve the Tension Between Evangelism and Social Responsibility by Rooting Mission within the Doctrine of Creation.”
Advisors: Dr. David A. Livermore, Dr. Michael E. Wittmer
- BS Grand Rapids Baptist College/Cornerstone University**, Music, 1991
Minor in Missions

PUBLICATIONS

(2014, July 10) “Was the War on Poverty Too Ambitious?” {Web Log Post}
Retrieved October 1st, 2019, from
<https://sharperiron.org/article/was-war-poverty-too-ambitious>

“Social Involvement without the Social Gospel: Compassionate Ministries with a Gospel Motivation.” *Baptist Bulletin*, May/June, 2011, 12-15

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Grand Rapids Neighborhood Associations Annual Crime Prevention Award, 1994. Worked with GR Vice to shut down three crack houses while leading neighborhood youth and rec. programs in the Belknap-Lookout community of Grand Rapids.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Spring, 2007
Cornerstone
University Grand
Rapids, MI

Adjunct Faculty

- Taught *Urban Ministries: Poverty and the City* (CMI-222) to thirty CU college students from a Biblical and historical perspective the issue of urban ministry and the church were discussed. The course explored the challenges of poverty, justice, racism, prejudice, health, and education with a view to developing strategies for social justice, evangelism, discipleship and church planting in the cities of the world.

J-Term and Spring,
2005
Cornerstone
University
Grand Rapids, MI

Adjunct Faculty

- Taught *Current Issues/Critical Concerns: Urban Ministry* (CMI-480) to thirteen CU college students. Developed a Biblical, historical, and socio-cultural foundation for urban ministry in the city while engaging different strategies for effective urban evangelism, discipleship, youth ministry church planting, and Christian community development.
- Accompanied and mentored eight CU students on a CU sponsored trip to

inner-city LA.

J-Term, 2020
Northpointe
Christian High
School
Grand Rapids, MI

J-Term Instructor

- Taught *Intro to Justice and Mission* to fifteen high schoolers. This course developed a Biblical framework for doing justice among the poor and oppressed locally and around the world. Students analyzed justice issues through the lens of the image mandate (Gen 1&2), the mission mandate (Matt. 28:18-20), and the love mandate (Matthew 22:37-40), while incorporating hands-on practical training for transformational ministry in the world today.

J-Term, 2018
Northpointe
Christian High
School
Grand Rapids, MI

- Taught *Intro to Justice and Mission* to twenty-six 11th and 12th grade high schoolers. This course developed a Biblical framework for doing justice among the poor and oppressed locally and around the world. Students analyzed justice issues through the lens of the image mandate (Gen 1&2), the mission mandate (Matt. 28:18-20), and the love mandate (Matthew 22:37-40), while incorporating hands-on practical training for transformational ministry in the world today.

PROFESSIONAL
PRESENTATIONS

March 5th, 2022
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI

- Taught *Getting Clarity About CRT (Critical Race Theory)*. 53 participants learned the basic tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT) along with basic tools to analyze CRT from a Biblical Perspective. Also provided practical ways to be “salt and light” amidst the culture war between the secular hyper-collectivists and secular hyper-individualists that are fighting the culture war over CRT.

March 4th, 2022
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI

- Taught *Social Justice Apologetics*. 50 participants learned a Biblical foundation for social justice, how to do social justice without mission drift and compromise, and practical ways that churches can practice Social Justice.

March 7th, 2020
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI

- Taught *Social Justice, Secular Sociological Ideologies, and the Gospel*. Thirty participants learned about Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality, evaluating them from a biblical worldview that is centered on the gospel, while advocating a biblical social justice that does not distract the church from its mission to make disciples.

March 7th, 2020
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI

- Co-Taught *Do Something: Applying the Gospel to Social Problems in Your Community* with Rev. David Drake. Thirty participants took part in a discussion on how to apply the gospel to different social problems in order to make a substantial difference in their broken communities through discipleship that is fueled by loving your neighbor.

March 10, 2018
Church Ministries
Conference

- Facilitated panel discussion *Can We Talk? a Candid Conversation about Race Relations and the Church*, emphasizing the transforming work of the cross to heal racial divisions with a panel group of Church leaders from

- Grand Rapids MI
- different ethnic backgrounds that have committed themselves to pain-staking work of racial reconciliation. Thirty-five participants were challenged towards healthy and honest race relations for the purpose of unity in the church.
- March 10, 2018
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI
- Co-Taught *Empowering People out of Poverty within your Benevolence Ministry* with Davien Fizer. Thirty-one participants learned how UTM, local churches, & business people work together to help those in need & are empowered out of poverty. They were given practical tools, ideas, & connections to life-skill & employment resources such as Sharehouse Goods, Jobs for Life, & ManUP that strengthen their benevolence ministry.
- March 11, 2017
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI
- Taught workshop *Rethinking Benevolence Ministry: How Churches can help alleviate poverty in their community without straying from their mission to make disciples*. Thirty participants were challenged to reform their benevolence ministry by pursuing practices that do not create dependency, but rather lead to ending the poverty cycle without distracting their church from making disciples.
- March 11, 2017
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI
- Co-Taught *Overcoming Racial Divides through the Gospel* with Davien Fizer. Twenty-three participants actively engaged in an honest and messy discussion about race and the transforming work of the cross to heal racial divisions.
- March, 12, 2016
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI
- Taught workshop *Healing the Wounds of Racism through Jesus and the Church* with Ivory Smith, illustrating from the Bible and through experiences to twenty-five participants how the gospel of Jesus breaks through racial barriers, brings unity in the church, and demonstrates the power of the gospel in the world to transform lives.
- March 12, 2016
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI
- Taught workshop *Mentoring Fatherless Men to be Godly Fathers and Leaders*. Eighteen participants learned how the church can help break the fatherless cycle through mentoring fatherless men to become the Godly fathers and leaders that they were meant to be in Christ.
- October 29, 2012
MARBC 70th
Annual
Conference
- Taught workshop, *Social Involvement without the Social Gospel*. The discussion with twenty-four pastors and laypersons from churches all over Michigan included how to safeguard their church from succumbing to the social gospel while teaching them how to do social justice ministries without distracting from its mission to make disciples.
- October 29, 2012
MARBC 70th
Annual
Conference
- Taught workshop, *Launching a Compassionate Ministry in Your Community*. The discussion with twenty-one pastors and laypersons from churches all over Michigan provided a proven step-by-step guide to starting a compassionate ministry in their communities.
- June 22, 2012
Life Matters
- Taught workshop, *Crossing Cultural Barriers*. The discussion with twenty-two pregnancy care center directors, board members, and volunteers

- Worldwide Summit helped them to understand, love, and reach people from other ethnic groups through their PCC ministry
- June 22, 2012 Life Matters Worldwide Summit
- Taught workshop, *Pro-life ministry as an extension of the local church*. The discussion with over twenty pregnancy care center directors, board members, and volunteers primarily focused on how to integrate their pro-life ministry as a disciple-making arm of the local church.
- February 23, 2012 LINC Academy for Social Transformation
- Taught workshop, *Community Conflict Management*. The discussion with over twenty inner-city community leaders from organizations and neighborhoods in Grand Rapids included identifying intercultural conflict styles with their strengths and weaknesses while interacting with real-life case studies, and presenting healthy conflict responses.
- March 13, 2010 Church Ministries Conference Grand Rapids MI
- Taught workshop, *Beyond Bling and Rap Music*. The discussion with over fifty youth pastors, youth leaders and lay persons from churches all over Michigan included a brief history of hip-hop culture, the influence of hip-hop within today's culture, hip-hop culture's worldview and values, and how the church can effectively minister to youth and adults who are part of hip-hop culture.
- March 13 2010 Church Ministries Conference Grand Rapids MI
- Taught workshop, *The Poor Will Be With You Always*. The discussion with forty-one pastors and lay persons from churches all over Michigan included a Biblical basis for helping the poor and offered tangible solutions that can end the cycle of poverty in the lives of people.
- March 10, 2007 Church Ministries Conference Grand Rapids MI
- Taught workshop, *Beyond Bling and Rap Music*. The discussion with approximately fifty youth pastors, youth leaders and lay persons from churches all over Michigan included a brief history of hip-hop culture, the influence of hip-hop within today's culture, hip-hop culture's worldview and values, and how the church can effectively minister to youth and adults who are part of hip-hop culture.
- March 10, 2007 Church Ministries Conference Grand Rapids MI
- Taught workshop, *The Poor Will Be With You Always*. The discussion with approximately forty pastors and lay persons from churches all over Michigan included a Biblical basis for helping the poor and offered tangible solutions that can end the cycle of poverty in the lives of people.
- March 10, 2007 Church Ministries Conference Grand Rapids MI
- Taught workshop, *Getting the Ball Rolling*. The discussion with approximately sixty-five participants from churches all over Michigan included how to naturally share the gospel within the context of loving your neighbor.
- Sept. 29, 2006 Annual CCDA Conference Philadelphia PA
- Taught workshop, *The Doctrine of Creation as the Foundation for Redeeming our Communities* to over forty urban ministry and community development practitioners from all over the United States. The discussion included: exposing fallacies of Modernism, developing a doctrine of

creation, including God's good Creation and Imago Dei, and relating Imago Dei to the eight principles of Christian Community Development.

March 13, 2004
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI

- Taught workshop, *Mentoring At-Risk Youth into Godly Christian Leaders*. The discussion with thirty participants from all over Michigan included mentoring myths, mentoring essentials, the process of mentoring and its end goal.

March 13, 2004
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI

- Taught workshop, *Maintaining Accountability within Mentoring relationships*. The discussion with approximately twenty-five pastors, youth pastors, and lay persons from all over Michigan included: an accountability/mentoring case study, accountability/mentoring myths, and different accountability/mentoring principles.

March 7, 2003
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI

- Taught workshop, *How to Home-Grow Missionaries within Your Church* to nine participants from all over Michigan, which included a flexible four step process that will identify the aspiring missionary and thoroughly equip him/her for cross-cultural ministry.

March 7, 2003
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI

- Taught workshop, *Developing Leaders from those who are not just like you*. Thirty-one participants from all over Michigan discussed (servant) leadership and empowerment, while identifying different leadership principles that aid in the development of leaders who are different from oneself.

March 10, 2001
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI

- Taught workshop, *Reaching Out Cross-Culturally to At-Risk Youth* to twenty-four participants from all over Michigan. The discussion included discovering a different culture's worldview, cross-cultural communication skills, and a flexible strategy for outreach that embraces at-risk youth.

March 10, 2001
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids MI

- Taught workshop, *Youth Ministry Outside the Box* to forty participants from all over Michigan. The discussion included identifying the youth ministry box and creating an environment that embraces at-risk youth

March 13, 1999
Church Ministries
Conference
Grand Rapids, MI

- Taught workshop, *Reaching Out Cross-Culturally to At-Risk Youth* to approximately 30 youth pastors and lay persons from all over Michigan. The discussion included discovering a different culture's worldview, cross-cultural communication skills, and a flexible strategy for outreach that embraces at-risk youth.

March 13, 1998
Church Ministries
Conference Grand
Rapids MI

- Co-taught workshop, *Reaching At-Risk Children with the Gospel* with Jeff Czyzyk to approximately 20 children's ministry workers from churches all over Michigan. The discussion included different evangelism and discipleship strategies built on the foundation of relationships.

PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS

- The Relationship between the Gospel and Social Justice
- The Connection between Creation Mandates and the Decalogue in Old Testament Ethics
- Holistic Mission of the Church
- Multi-Ethnic Church Planting
- Racial Justice and Reconciliation

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2004-Present
Urban Transformation Ministries (UTM)
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Executive Director

- Started, organized and maintained a non-profit ministry to one hundred twenty-five disadvantaged urban youth and young adults
- Recruited, trained, and placed over one hundred volunteers in UTM programs
- Raised funds from churches, individuals, businesses, and foundations to sustain UTM programs
- Discipled and developed Christian leaders among disadvantaged youth (gang-members, drug-dealers, teen moms, etc...) who are now adults and oversee UTM programs and mentor at-risk youth
- Maintained basketball outreach for at-risk teenage boys, including an organized league, 3-on-3 tournaments, and other events
- Taught large group, small group and one-on-one Bible studies with inner-city children, teens, and adults
- Developed partnership with New City Church, a multi-ethnic church plant within inner-city neighborhood for the purpose of long- term discipleship.
- Developed partnership with Crosswinds Church, a multi-ethnic urban neighborhood church movement in the area of discipleship and entrepreneurship.
- Served as volunteer staff within Berean Baptist Church's youth ministry with the purpose of racial and socio-economic integration of neighborhood children and youth
- Maintained long-term partnership with Berean Baptist Church, a metropolitan church in inner-city Grand Rapids, helping connect neighborhood inner-city youth to the church for the purpose of long- term discipleship
- Developed and contextualized Bible study curriculum for urban children, teens and adults

2010-Present
New City Church
Grand Rapids
Michigan

Assistant Church Planter, Elder/Pastor, Deacon-New City Church

- Developed vision for a church plant (New City Church) within the NE urban community of Grand Rapids
- Taught discussion-oriented Bible Studies on the book of I Samuel
- Led NorthEast "City Group" for two years
- Recruited lead church planter/pastor for New City Church
- Trained lead church planter/lead pastor for New City Church in incarnational urban ministry
- Assimilated over twenty teens and young urban adults from UTM

into New City Church

- Developed and established church benevolence ministry
- Helped equip congregation to minister through evangelism, discipleship, teaching, cross-cultural service, social justice and compassion
- Assisted lead church planter/lead pastor oversee vision, implementation of mission, as well as the spiritual needs of the congregation

1995-2003
Servants Center
Grand Rapids,
Michigan

Urban Youth Missionary

- Raised funds from churches and individuals
- Discipled and developed Christian leadership among at-risk youth and adults
- Taught large group, small group and one-on-one Bible Studies with inner-city children, teens, and adults
- Launched basketball outreach for at-risk teenage boys
- Developed and contextualized Bible study curriculum for urban children, teens and adults
- Accompanied high school students (both urban and suburban) on a missions trip to Esanada, Mexico mentoring twelve students in cross-cultural ministry
- Trained missionary interns in aspects of cross-cultural urban ministry, some of whom are currently serving Christ in North America and around the world
- Built long-term partnership with Berean Baptist Church
- Served as volunteer staff within Berean Baptist Church
- Developed partnerships with local organizations including local schools, neighborhood associations, and like-minded churches
- Launched after-school enrichment programs and summer day camp programs in partnership with Grand Rapids Public Schools and CampFire U.S.A. that included tutoring, recreation, and the arts

1993-1995
Servants Center
Grand Rapids,
Michigan

Manager, Transitional Homeless Shelter

- Managed seven to nine formerly homeless men with a dual diagnosis of mental illness and substance abuse in a supervised home
- Helped residents with personal goal-setting, life skill development, problem-solving, and financial budgeting
- Assisted residents with job-readiness training, employment-searching, referrals, and job-coaching
- Led small group and one-on-one Bible Studies with resident homeless men
- Discipled men with substance abuse problems through one-on-one Bible studies, home-visits, personal goal-setting, and life-skills development

Grand Rapids
Parks and

Recreation Leader, Recreation-to-Reduce-Risk GR Parks and Recreation

- Organized and supervised recreational and other group activities for

Recreation,
1992-1994

forty to ninety participants (youth and young adults) depending on the program or activity.

- Maintained logs of observed behaviors and participation for each program.
- Responded to crisis situations with appropriate conflict mediation and intervention techniques to maintain the safety and security of recreation program.

PROFESSIONAL
TRAINING

- 2002, Certificate in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement

Hobbies

- Coaching Youth Sports (Football and Track)
- Camping with Family
- Playing Keyboards/Piano in Worship and Rock Bands

References

- Rev. John-Thomas Richards, Lead Pastor New City Church
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616.334.0370
jtr@newcitychurch.org
- Rev. Chris Weeks, Sr. Pastor Kent City Baptist Church
106 N. Main St. Kent City MI 49330
616.678.5773
chris44weeks@gmail.com
- Dr. Michael E. Wittmer, Professor of Systematic and Historical
Theology, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary
1001 East Beltline Avenue NE Grand Rapids, MI 49525
616.222.1513
michael.wittmer@cornerstone.edu