

Youth Theological Initiative 2008 Summer Academy

An Ecumenical Exploration of Theology and Public Issues
for 2007-2008 High School Juniors

July 5—July 26, 2008

EMORY UNIVERSITY
Atlanta, Georgia



Youth Theological Initiative
Exploring Questions that Shape Us

Funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc.

sponsored by



EMORY

CANDLER
SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY



Youth Theological Initiative
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October 2007

Dear High School Junior,

Attached you will find application materials for the 2008 Summer Academy of the Youth Theological Initiative, July 5 through July 26 at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. This will be the sixteenth summer for YTI, and we are delighted by your interest in the program!

At YTI, we believe that *young people need theology* — the study of God and God’s relationship with the world — as one of the resources to draw upon as they explore their place in the world. And we believe that the *world needs young people* to contribute their theological perspectives and their energy in order to promote social justice and the common good. We gather approximately forty-eight rising high school seniors from across the country for the Academy, a three-week ecumenical experience in justice-seeking Christian theological education. Our goal is to help you explore theological questions and perspectives in a supportive, mentoring community where your views, talents, and insights are respected and encouraged.

So what does this look like? Kind of chaotic, actually, as we live out our commitment to practicing theology in the concrete situations of every day life. We’ll make it possible for you to engage in academic exploration, service-learning, and community-building with a diverse group of “scholars” (as we call the participants) and staff. You might take an *exploratory course* that focuses on a theological issue or topic (for instance, “Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People: The Problem of Theodicy”), ethics (“Nonviolence, Christianity, and Social Justice”), the Bible (“The Liberating Word: Reading the Bible around the World”) or world religions (“Faith and Dialogue: Exploration of World Religions”). You’ll engage in *service activities* with a justice-oriented organization in Atlanta, which might include working with homeless people, refugees from countries torn apart by violence, or those who are mentally or physically disabled. Because we bring together youth from diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and denominational or religious backgrounds, you’ll learn about other people, and *learn how to engage honestly and respectfully with people* whose experiences, commitments, and perspectives are different from yours. You’ll have opportunities to worship, both within the YTI community and with other faith communities around Atlanta. And there will be time for relaxation and play, in activities like choir, our improv group, yoga, creative writing, and ultimate Frisbee.

Because the program is so busy, and because we emphasize the importance of building a community as part of our work together, we require that **all YTI participants must be present for the entire program, arriving on July 5 and departing on July 26**. It’s not possible for you to participate in other programs (e.g., music or sports camp, mission trips, etc.) during the three weeks of the Summer Academy. There will be one Saturday when you may leave campus with family or friends in the Atlanta area, but you will be required to be on campus at all other times during the program.

We know that this kind of commitment limits other options for summer study or employment. We believe so strongly in YTI that we make the program available to you at a fee far lower than it costs to host the program — **participants pay only the subsidized rate of \$500** [and a \$75 non-refundable security deposit] for the 3-week program. Thanks to generous funding from the Lilly Endowment, a private philanthropic foundation based in Indianapolis, IN, and the sponsorship of Emory University’s Candler School of Theology, YTI has been able to provide this outstanding opportunity to more than 800 young persons over the last fourteen years. **Scholarships are available. Please do not let the cost of YTI deter you from applying. YTI will work with you, your family, home congregation, or hometown to provide financial support to make it possible for you to attend.**

309 Bishops Hall
Atlanta, Georgia 30322

Candler School of Theology
Telephone 404.712.9160

Emory University
Email: yti@emory.edu

Enclosed are the following application materials for the Youth Theological Initiative Summer Academy:

- an Application Form for you to complete, which includes four essay questions;
- two Recommendation Forms to be completed by adults who know you well, but are not related to you;
- an Academic Record Form for your high school guidance counselor to complete. The counselor will need to enclose a copy of your high school transcript, including your grades from the fall term of 2007-2008, and your test scores (if available) from the PSAT, SAT, or ACT.

We'd prefer to receive all of your application materials in one package. Your recommenders and the guidance counselor should return the forms to you in sealed envelopes for you to send to us with your completed application form and essays. However, if school policy requires the counselor to send your transcript directly to us, that's fine too.

We need to RECEIVE ALL MATERIALS NO LATER THAN MARCH 14, 2008. Please note that it is your responsibility to make sure that all of your application materials arrive here on time, so you may want to give a friendly reminder to your recommenders and guidance counselor as the deadline draws near. Be forewarned: the Emory post office can be quite slow about handling mail, so we would advise you that if you are sending your application by first-class mail, you should allow at least six business days for it to reach our office. We'd be happy to receive the application any time before March 14th — as soon as your Fall 2007 grades are available to be included on the transcript.

If you send your application by U.S. mail, please use this address:

Youth Theological Initiative
Candler School of Theology
Emory University
Atlanta, GA 30322

If you send your application by an express mail service, please use our street address:

Youth Theological Initiative
500 Kilgo Circle
Bishops Hall Rm. 309
Emory University
Atlanta, GA 30322

Our admissions committee will notify you of your admissions status no later than April 4, 2008. If admitted, you will have until Friday, April 25, 2008 to confirm in writing your intention to participate in the program, and to send the \$75.00 admission deposit (which will serve as a non-refundable security deposit for the Academy). If you later choose not to attend the Academy, the deposit cannot be refunded. Your full payment of \$500 will be due June 1, 2008.

If you have any questions about the Youth Theological Initiative or the application process, please contact Brenda Bennefield, YTI Program Coordinator, either by phone (404.712.9160) or email (yti@emory.edu). In any case, we hope that the application process itself is a rewarding experience for you.

Blessings,



Elizabeth Corrie
Interim Director, Youth Theological Initiative



Youth Theological Initiative
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2008 Summer Academy Application

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Name _____
last first middle preferred

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (____) _____ Email Address _____

Gender ___female ___male Soc. Sec. # _____ Are you a U.S. citizen? _____

Date of birth _____ Place of Birth _____
city state (country, if not US)

Religious Affiliation _____
church/local religious community denomination

Mailing Address _____

From what part(s) of the world do you trace your *predominant* ethnic heritage?

___ Africa ___ Asia ___ Caribbean Islands ___ Central or South America
___ Europe ___ Middle East ___ North America (American Indian or Alaska Native **only**)
___ Pacific Islands Other (please specify) _____

Name(s) of parent(s) or legal guardian(s) _____

School Name _____

School Address _____
street address city, state, zip code

School Phone (____) _____ Name of school guidance counselor _____

Hobbies or special interests: _____

How did you hear about the YTI Summer Academy (e.g., minister, teacher, YTI alum, Candler alum, brochure in mail)?

Is there someone we should be sure to add to our mailing list for the future? If so, please tell us their name and address: _____

RECOMMENDATIONS: *Two* letters of recommendation are required as part of your application. Choose adults who know you well and who are NOT members of your family. At least one of your recommenders should be able to comment on your academic abilities or interests. Please list below the names, phone numbers and addresses of the persons who will complete the recommendation forms.

Name: _____ Phone (____) _____

Address: _____
street address city, state, zip code

Name: _____ Phone (____) _____

Address: _____
street address city, state, zip code

ESSAYS: The YTI Admissions Committee members are interested in learning more about you. Grades and scores tell us many things about your academic performance, but they tell us little about the questions that intrigue you or the way you think about them. Therefore, we would like you to write a brief essay in response to **each of the first three questions** below, **and one of the two questions listed under #4**. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, so please just try to answer honestly and thoughtfully.

Each response should be 250-300 words (at least half a page, single-spaced). Please type or computer-print your responses, and be sure to put your name on each page.

1. Identify someone whom you admire who has made a difference in this world. How has this person influenced your life — your perspectives, commitments, or actions?
2. What interests you most about a summer theological academy, and why do you want to attend? What kinds of questions about God, God’s involvement in the world, or faith would you like to explore at the YTI Summer Academy?
3. What have you done in the past year that you really care about, and why is it important to you?
4. **CHOOSE ONE:**
 - A. What do you consider to be important about yourself that others might miss (e.g., convictions, qualities, feelings, spiritual or religious feelings)?
 - B. How have your experiences of God, or your thought about God, informed or shaped your commitments or your understanding of the world?

I certify that all of the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge, and that the enclosed essays are my work alone. In order to participate in the YTI 2008 Summer Academy, I understand that I must successfully complete my junior year of high school and plan to enter my senior year in the fall of 2008. If I am accepted as a YTI scholar and choose to attend, I agree to participate for the full duration of the program and to abide by the rules and regulations of the Youth Theological Initiative.

Signature of applicant: _____ Date _____

I certify that I give permission for my son/daughter to attend the YTI 2008 Summer Academy.

Signature of parent or guardian: _____ Date _____

Your complete application must be received by Friday, March 14, 2008.

CHECKLIST: _____ Completed Application Form with applicant and parent/guardian signatures
_____ 4 essays _____ 2 recommendations _____ Academic Record Form & Transcript
Admissions decisions are made separately from financial aid decisions. Email yti@emory.edu to request a financial aid form (if applicable). Financial aid forms are due no later than April 11, 2008; applicants will be informed no later than April 25th of their financial aid award.



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Name of Applicant: _____
Last First MI

2008 Summer Academy Recommendation Form

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

TO THE APPLICANT: Complete the top portion and give this form to an adult who knows you well and is not a family member. Once the adult has completed the remainder and returned the form to you in a sealed envelope, return the form with your application package no later than March 14, 2008.

APPLICANT'S WAIVER OF RIGHT OF ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL STATEMENT: I hereby freely and voluntarily waive my rights of access to any information contained on this recommendation form or attachments, and agree that the statement shall remain confidential.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

TO THE RECOMMENDER: The person named above is being considered for admission to the Summer Academy of the Youth Theological Initiative at Emory University. During this three-week residential program, intellectually talented and theologically curious teenagers and skilled adult teachers will explore Christian theology in an ecumenical context and imagine new possibilities for the public good. The intense nature of the YTI Summer Academy requires emotional stability and a well-integrated personality. Please make your comments both candid and substantively significant. You may attach additional pages if necessary. If you have any questions about the program, please contact Brenda Bennefield, Program Coordinator, at yti@emory.edu or 404-712-9160. **Please return the completed form to the applicant in a sealed envelope, after signing the envelope across the seal.** We appreciate your assistance. Please print or type.

1. How long and under what circumstances have you known the applicant?

2. Describe the applicant's involvement in his/her church, community, or school, paying particular attention to her/his interest in religious, theological or social issues, and the maturity of his/her spiritual development.



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Name of Applicant: _____
Last First MI

2008 Summer Academy Recommendation Form

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1. How long and under what circumstances have you known the applicant?

2. Describe the applicant's involvement in his/her church, community, or school, paying particular attention to her/his interest in religious, theological or social issues, and the maturity of his/her spiritual development.



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Name of Applicant: _____
 Last First MI

2008 Summer Academy Academic Record Form

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

TO THE APPLICANT: Complete the top portion and give this form to your guidance counselor at school. After the adult has completed the remainder and returned the form to you in a sealed envelope, return the form with your application package no later than March 14, 2008. If necessary, the counselor may send this form and your transcript directly to us.

APPLICANT'S PERMISSION STATEMENT: I hereby freely grant permission for my academic record to be released by high school officials for confidential use by the Youth Theological Initiative of Emory University.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

TO THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR: The person named above is being considered for admission to the Summer Academy of the Youth Theological Initiative at Emory University. During this three-week residential program, intellectually talented and theologically curious teenagers and skilled adult teachers will explore Christian theology in an ecumenical context and imagine new possibilities for the public good. The intense nature of the YTI Summer Academy requires emotional stability and a well-integrated personality. Please make your comments both candid and substantively significant. You may attach additional pages if necessary. If you have any questions about the program, please contact Brenda Bennefield, Program Coordinator, at yti@emory.edu or 404-712-9160. **Please return the completed form to the applicant in a sealed envelope, after signing the envelope across the seal.** We appreciate your assistance.

Please print or type.

- Please enclose with this form **an official copy of the student's high school transcript**, including
 - grades for the Fall Term of 2007
 - the student's most recent test scores (if available) for one or more of the following: PSAT, SAT, ACT.
- Please return the form and transcript to the student in a sealed envelope. If school policy requires you to send this material directly to us, please mail it so that we receive it no later than March 14, 2008, to:

Youth Theological Initiative
 500 Kilgo Circle
 Bishops Hall Rm. 309
 Emory University
 Atlanta, GA 30322

Counselor Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____
 street address city, state, zip code

Student's rank in class (if available) _____ of _____ Grade point average: _____

Comments:

I certify that this student is a high school junior in 2007-2008.

Signature: _____ Date _____



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309 Bishops Hall
Emory University
Atlanta, GA 30322
yti@emory.edu
404-712-9160

MISSION STATEMENT

The Youth Theological Initiative is a center for research and the theological education of youth funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc., and sponsored by Candler School of Theology, Emory University. YTI works to help youth become strong leaders and contributors to their communities by bringing thoughtful theological perspectives to bear on community issues and concerns.

YTI pursues this goal in several ways:

- The **Summer Academy**, a residential experience of theological education for rising high school seniors. At the Summer Academy, we create a “safe” space in which youth are encouraged to ask complex questions and explore important issues within the context of theology, religion, the public good, and God, so that they can work within their home communities for a more just society.
- **Research** which assesses the impact of the Summer Academy upon participants, explores the theological perspectives and practices of youth, and analyzes the practices and perspectives of youth ministers. Through our of this research, we are able to promote recognition of the theological abilities and insights of youth.
- **Youth Ministry Education**, through courses at Candler School of Theology and through partnerships with denominational judicatories, which focuses upon helping adults who work with young people to gain the skills and insights needed for forms of ministry with youth where the emphasis is upon developing a habit of critical theological reflection and theologically-informed action among young persons.
- **Ensuring YTI’s future** through work with individuals, foundations, and corporate donors. The generosity of our donors enables YTI to provide a charitable subsidized rate for all Summer Academy participants, to sponsor training for lay youth leaders, and to disseminate broadly the results of our research and analysis.

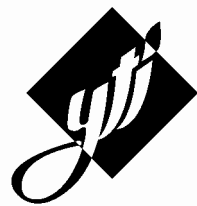
For further information on the Youth Theological Initiative, please contact us.

Dr. Elizabeth Corrie, Interim Director
Rev. Drew Johnson, Summer Academy Dean
Mr. Paul Rasmussen, Director of Development
Ms. Brenda Bronson Bennefield, Program Coordinator



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