

# COSSO Newsletter

*Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO)*

2010

Winter

## From the Director's Desk

*Rev. Diane Turner-Sharazz*



Greetings in this New Year of 2010! I pray that you enjoyed a wonderful holiday season, and that, in the midst of your celebration, you remembered the reason for the season – JESUS.

Believe it or not, we are ready for our winter COS session, with six classes being held on the MTSO campus. We are anticipating over 100 students, so we will have a full house. Let's pray for safe travel and for good weather -- no blizzards or strange weather phenomena.

There are a couple of schedule changes to announce – Fall, 2010 dates are September 17-18 and October 15-16. We also changed the 100-level course for the fall. **It is now 113**, not 111. We hope that this does not inconvenience anyone.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

*Diane*



### MUSINGS FROM THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

— by Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples

Remember the butterfly?

Remember the sun that warmed our backs as we walked up the hill to the Dining Hall? The weather was so warm we didn't need all these sweaters and coats, and gloves and scarves. Remember when we sat next to each other in class, and someone said something that made us want to laugh out loud? Remember the time we met in chapel and sat listening to Margaret practice with tears running down our faces? She didn't see us but we saw each other and that's all that mattered. Remember?

We all know that nothing lasts forever. It's the nature of life and death, and yet, we must take some things for granted, like love and grace.

As we battle the long cold days of winter, thank God for memories, of holy moments with loved ones and fellow students, when the crocuses appear and the finches return. Spring will come again, but for today, as the sun sparkles on the snow, and you wrap yourselves in your warm winter clothing, remember the butterfly that is transformed from its cocoon and the promise of new life when we too will shed this mortal shell.

Above: A butterfly in a botanical garden in Kansas. Photo courtesy of Rebeka Maples



## MORE THAN PRAYER: Spiritual Formation- From Rev. Rebeka Maples, Ph.D., Director of Spiritual Formation



*On the passing of COS students...  
"I have let you see it with your eyes,  
but you shall not go over there."  
(Deuteronomy 34:9)*

In his book of *Sermons*, Peter Gomes writes, "It is unfair." Moses completed all the course requirements but God won't let him graduate. At least that's what it sounds like in the last chapter of Deuteronomy. Climbing up from the lowlands of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the peak of Pisgah, the Lord showed Moses the promised land. There it was, the future laid out before him, as far as the eye could see, but the view from Pisgah was all that he would get. God said, "I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." It seems so unfair.

I remember the first time I went to the Grand Canyon. I did not know what to expect. We arrived at sunset on the North Rim just as the sun was going down. There were other people standing there, but no one was saying anything, just staring across the canyon. And when someone did talk, it was in soft whispers. It was like being in a worship service, the reverence was as humbling as the beauty of the scene that unfolded; as the shadows of the sun descended on the walls of the canyon, magnificent layers of pink, orange and purple were revealed. I wonder if that was the kind of beauty that Moses saw or that any of our loved ones see when they look out from the mountaintop before they die. The view from Pisgah reminds us that what you see is not always what you get, but what you get prepares you for a future beyond your imagination.

Moses was at peace not because he was seeking a place for himself in the Burning Bush Hall of Fame or Who's Who in Wilderness Crossings; he was at peace because he had helped make a way for others to have a future he would never know. And what about those we love but see no more? Those who were not trying to make a name for themselves, but were trying to prepare others for a future built on God's name. They are with us one day, and gone the next. It's not fair, but that's life.

Few of us can plan how our lives will end, and most of us will leave this earth with incomplete plans, and unachieved dreams. We may not be able to plan the end but we, at the very least, can make a beginning. I am reflecting on the recent news we received about the passing of Course of Study students **Bob Fenner**, **James Breithaupt**, and **James Bowen**. I am sure they too leave behind finished and unfinished ministry, completed projects and plans for more, dreams that were never spoken and care that was always there. I think of the many updates that Bob sent by email to let us all know of his condition and of the encouragement he offered in his messages. What view did he see, what great peace did he experience, what grace did he know that he would minister to us as his body waged war against its invader? It doesn't seem fair.

**See *Transformation* on Pg. 8**

## FACULTY FOR 2010 WINTER SESSION



Wayne Albertson

Wayne Albertson-  
Teaching 112

M.Div., Methodist  
Theological School In  
Ohio, Ph.D., Princeton  
Theological Seminary;  
112 – Theology in the  
Wesleyan Spirit.



Diane Turner Sharazz

Diane Turner-Sharazz-  
Teaching 214

M.Div., Methodist Theo-  
logical School In Ohio,  
Ph.D. studies, Vanderbilt  
University; University;  
Elder, West Ohio; 214 –  
Practice of Preaching.



David Watson

David Watson -  
Teaching 311

M.Div., Southern Meth-  
odist University, Ph.D.,  
Southern Methodist Uni-  
versity. Faculty at United  
Theological Seminary.  
311 – New Testament I.



Paul Kim

Paul Kim -  
Teaching 411

Ph.D., Claremont;  
Associate Professor of  
Hebrew Bible at MTSO;  
Presbyterian elder,  
411 – Hebrew Bible II.



Ervin Smith

Ervin Smith -  
Teaching 414

Ph.D., Garrett Evangeli-  
cal Theological Seminary/  
Northwestern; retired Pro-  
fessor of Christian Ethics,  
MTSO; elder, West Ohio  
AC; 414 – Personal and  
Social Ethics.



Paul Schrodt

Paul Schrodt  
Teaching 512

Dr. Theology, University  
of Munich; MLS, Syracuse  
University. Retired  
Research Professor of  
Historical Theology,  
MTSO. 512 –  
Contemporary Theology.

FALL 2009



Above: Georgette Gaston gives a witness while singing. COS students always fill worship with a joyful noise.



Above: Spiritual Director, Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples invites us all to the feast in remembrance of Lord Jesus.



Above: Laying on of hands of the Fall 2009 Course of Study School Of Ohio graduates: Cherrie Andres, Randy Costolo, Gary Ginter, Jon Gougeon, and Roger Emerson, and Left: Rev. Tom Snyder delivers the message and tells a story of a man and his coat. of MTSOS



These and more photos of 2009 Fall at <http://www.courseofstudyschoolofohio.com/photos/>  
Above photos for 2009 Fall are courtesy of Dr. Randy Litchfield, Academic Dean, MTSO

# Words Words Words

From Margaret VanSickle, Writing Coach



## HOW DO I WRITE A REFLECTION PAPER?

All right, you have your syllabus for your next Course of Study class; you have your textbooks read—well, almost read. You have a pre-class assignment of writing a reflection paper on two of the textbooks required for the course.

But—you may have some questions. First of all, what is a reflection paper? According to information that I found from Lynchburg College in Virginia, a reflection paper is basically a two- or three-page composition in which a student discusses personal reactions and thoughts about material that he/she has read and studied for the class. One thing that a reflection paper is not: It is not a book report. Your instructor has read the material that he/she has assigned to you and your classmates; so it will not be helpful—or correct—to re-invent the book report form that you used in earlier years of schooling.

Hopefully, as you read the textbooks you are assigned to “reflect” on, you will find ideas that are new, exactly what you have always thought, controversial, confusing, and (sometimes) even bizarre. I would strongly recommend that you highlight or mark or write notes about ideas in your text(s) as you are reading. One of my greatest frustrations in writing is knowing that there was an idea that I wanted to include in my paper; but, when the time comes to do the actual writing, I cannot locate the information in the textbook.

As you read, make a list of the ideas which the author has presented which make the greatest impact on your thinking. The list may contain two items, or it may expand to a list of ten or twelve concepts. Obviously, you cannot reflect on every idea from a book in a two- or three-page paper; but I have found that it is usually an easier job to reduce the number of ideas from ten or twelve to three or four than it is to try to find one or two more topics to incorporate into your paper. The result of “stretching” your writing to the required length often leads to a paper that seems to be disorganized and randomly put together.

Do not agree with everything you read. If you are reading a book on “growing” a church by visitation and community programs, you, as a local pastor, will already know from your own experience that some things may not work as well in your small church rural setting as the author of the book may think. If you find concepts with which you do not agree, do not be afraid to include them in your reflection.

Just be sure that you can offer valid reasons for your lack of enthusiasm about the ideas the author presents.

Be sure to use the best grammar you can in writing your reflection paper. Use words precisely and accurately to express the meaning you want to convey.

Happy reflecting!

**The 2009-2010  
Course of Study  
Handbook**  
is now online  
at:  
<http://www.courseofstudyschoolofohio.com/handbook.pdf>  
Please  
give special  
attention to the  
updated attendance,  
cancellation, and  
withdrawal policies

## Student Life

From Robin Wells, COSSO Assistant



Dear Friends,

I am always blessed when I receive a phone call in the COS office, and sometimes those calls are not COS related. There was the time a seminary student called about his financial aid; the time a school trustee called and wanted to leave a message for MTSO president, Jay Rundell; and just today, I got a call from one of our maintenance people in the Centrum asking me how the room should be set up for Chapel tomorrow. While I may not have a clue as to the answer the person on the other end of the phone may be seeking, I do my best to point the person in a better direction. The reason I am blessed when I get such a call, is that it reminds me that sometimes the best answer is: "I don't know." And with every "I don't know," there is the opportunity to add to that: "but let's find out together!"

I have learned so much about the Course of Study program by asking the same questions others ask. Most recently, I asked a question others had been wondering about: Virginia Bell, HOW ARE YOU? Virginia graduated from COS in Summer of 2009. Below is her email response after the earthquake in Haiti:

*Robin*

Hello Robin and all of the Course of Study folks,

We are safe and well here in Les Cayes on the southwest coast of Haiti about 100 miles from Port au Prince where the epicenter was. We had an initial big shock and then a series of a dozen or so aftershocks during the evening and night with a few more in the following days.

We continue to have food, water, electricity, and now phone service and e-mail service which was out until this past Saturday. So we have decided to stay put for now and not tax the air travel system by trying to leave. There is so much unrest in PaP due to the slowness of getting aid through, that I would not really feel safe trying to get to the airport or the Embassy. Perhaps in a few weeks when systems are in place and people are not so desperate we will try to return to the States.

Our major work here is to evaluate needs and communicate with people to bring in teams to respond. We have a Guest House where people can stay while doing that. But, no activity now so things are very quiet for us.

One big need is for medical personnel - especially in the orthopedic field due to all of the damaged bodies from debris - and those skilled in grief counseling. I am sure we could assist with getting people in with those skills. Other than that - give through the church to the Advance number. Also, I believe there is a need for the basic hygiene kits that go out of The Mid-west Distribution Center in Chatam, IL and the Sager-Brown Depot in LA. I am sure there will be a need for those for many months.

I appreciate your concern and continue to covet prayers for all of the people of Haiti and the relief workers who are coming in.

Continuing to serve, Virginia and Jack Bell

# Views from the Coordinator

By Karen Gee



Greetings COS Students!!

I wish you God's Blessings for the New Year.

As we return to the office after the holidays, there are many projects that need to be completed and many e-mails that need to be answered. I have been checking e-mail messages over the holidays and I hope I was able to answer most of your questions/requests.

Here's an update on COS policies:

**Registration:** You can find the COS registration form on our website; there is a separate registration form for MTSO and for UTS. Please be sure to check our website for registration deadlines. **Effective January 1, 2010 we will not be able to offer any registration extensions.** Be sure to start the registration process early because some of the classes fill up quickly. The registration limit for all of the classes is 30 students; the exception to this is COS 214 – Practice of Preaching, which is limited to 20 students.

Please note the following information re: COS courses:

- \* All 100 level courses must be taken before any others
- \* 200-400 level courses may be taken in any order \*
- \* All 100-400 level courses must be taken prior to 500 level courses

(\*must pass COS 211 before taking COS 411 & must pass COS 311 before taking COS 511 )

**If you are planning to graduate from the program within the next year, please let us know!**

**The Syllabus for COS courses** will be posted on our website approximately 3 months before the start of each term.

**Signatures on the Registration Form:** When you complete the Registration Form, please note that all three signatures must be present before we can register you for a course. The signatures are at the bottom of the form:

- Student
- District Superintendent
- Local Pastor Registrar.

If we receive a registration form that is missing any of the signatures and the \$30.00 registration fee is not enclosed, the form will be returned to the student. If this happens there's a good possibility that you will not get registered for the class/term you are requesting.

**We are a community of Praying Partners**  
Let's partner up for prayer.

Each weekend you will be asked to get together with 1-2 other people and pray! Something to help us stay connected to God and each other while you go through Course of Study. Learn more at the next Opening Gathering and get ready to pray your way through COS.

We have added another line of information on the registration form regarding on-campus meals and housing:

**See *Policies* on Pg. 8**

**MEALS and HOUSING**

- YES  NO I will require meals for weekend sessions indicated above. (dietary restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_)
- YES  NO I will have off campus housing during Summer Intensive & an optional \$55 fee for weekday breakfasts and lunches is enclosed.
- YES  NO I would like on-campus housing, if available, **CHECK WEBSITE FOR AVAILABILITY —**

**POSTED ON HOMEPAGE**

**Weekend sessions: \$84/2 nights, deposit: \$40; Summer Intensive: \$370/12 nights, deposit: \$80. Housing deposit must be submitted to reserve a room. Please enclose a separate check for housing. Rooms are assigned on a “First Paid/First Reserved” basis. On-campus housing fees subject to change. Registration form on website will include rates for current year.**

If you are not staying on campus during the summer intensive term, you are still eligible for meals in the dining hall. The cost is \$55.00 for weekday breakfasts and lunches.

If you are staying on-campus during summer intensive term and/or the weekend terms, breakfast and lunch are included in your tuition. Friday night dinner during the weekend term is also included in your tuition.

**On-campus housing:** If you would like on-campus housing in the dorms, please indicate on the registration form that you want housing and enclose a separate housing deposit check. There’s information on the registration form re: the amount of the housing deposits. We are not able to hold housing for anyone unless we receive the housing deposit at the same time we receive the registration form. We have less dorm rooms available this year as some of the MTSO students are staying on campus during the weekends. For each term, if we have any dorm rooms that become available, I have a COS waiting list, and will contact the person(s) on the list. We also have a list of hotels in the area; please let me know if you would like a copy of the list. It would be a good idea to make your hotel reservation ASAP as they tend to fill up quickly.

If you need a copy of your COS Transcript you will need to contact Lynn Daye at the General Board of Higher Education & Ministry in Nashville, TN. Her e-mail address is [LDaye@GBHEM.org](mailto:LDaye@GBHEM.org).

If you are unable to find answers to your questions on our website, please feel free to contact me at [kgee@mtso.edu](mailto:kgee@mtso.edu) or 740-362-3120. We’re looking forward to seeing everyone very soon!!

The nature of life is that we live in the “not yet” and the incomplete, and it is not fair. Each day each of us has the opportunity to reflect on our journey and begin again, to use the time we have been given to build a world we may not see. This is part of our calling, to leave the world a better place than we found it, so when we look out from the mountaintop, we too will be at peace, held in the arms of a grace-giving God who led us to where we are and who walks with us into a future that we have not yet seen.

**Transformation continued from pg. 2**

With the dreams and visions of those who have gone before us, may we too make new beginnings and dream new dreams, as we serve the God who called us to lead God’s people into a future not yet seen but full of grace.

*Reference from Peter J. Gomes, Sermons: Biblical Wisdom for Daily Living, (NY: HarperCollins, 1998).*

<b>Contact information for the families of:</b>		
<b>James Bowen</b>	<b>James Breithaupt</b>	<b>Bob Fenner</b>
Barbara Bowen 9387 Oakley Rd. St. Charles, MI 48655	Kathleen Breithaupt 5951 30th Ave. Sears, MI 49679-8077	Jan Fenner P.O. Box 439 7405 Hughes Rd Houston, OH 45333-