

Course of Study 112
THEOLOGY IN THE WESLEYAN SPIRIT
January & February, 2010

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COS 112 - Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit - This course considers the role and responsibility of the pastor as an interpreter of the gospel, with emphasis on the Wesleyan heritage, and the student's own growing sense of theological identity. Basic terms, tasks, and methods of Christian theology are introduced, and representative classical themes are defined and illustrated.

Texts: (Required) -

The Book of Discipline - 2008
Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology (2nd edition) by Daniel Migliore; Eerdmans Press, Grand Rapids, MI; 2004
John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology - edited by Albert Outler and Richard Heitzenrater; Abingdon Press; 1991
How to Think Theologically - by Howard W. Stone & James O. Duke; Fortress Press, Minneapolis; 1996
UM Hymnal - current edition.

Texts: (Suggested)

The Art of Theological Reflection by Patrick O. Killen and John DeBeer; Crossroads Press, NY; 1998
Recapturing the Wesleyan Vision - by Paul Chilcote; Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL; 2004
John Wesley's Life and Ethics by Ronald Stone; Abingdon Press; 2001
John Wesley: a Theological Journey - by Ken Collins; Abingdon Press; 2003
Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church - ed. By Robin Maas and Gabriel O'Donnell, O.P.; Abingdon Press; 1990 (see section on Wesleyan Spirituality)
Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation by W. Stephen Gunter, et. al.; Abingdon Press; 1997
The Elusive Mr. Wesley (2nd edition) by Richard Heitzenrater; Abingdon Press; 2003

Reading Requirements:

For January - Read all of the Stone/Duke text;
Read the following JW sermons: "Free Grace"; "The Almost Christian"; "Christian Perfection"; "Caution Against Bigotry"; "Catholic Spirit"; "On Working Out Our Own Salvation"; "Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity".
Read Migliore's Preface 1 & 2; and Chapters 1, 2, & 3.

Reading Requirements (cont.):

For February - Read The Discipline (2008) Part II - Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological task.

Read Migliore's Chapters 7, 8, & 10. (You are also encouraged to peek at the nearby sections or chapters on 'The Finality of Christ', and worship and the sacraments.)

Read several Charles Wesley hymns from our Hymnal.

Written Assignments:

For January:

1. re: Stone/Duke. This text leads us into thinking about how we think theologically about our situations and experiences in life. Each of you has a church where you serve (as an assigned pastor, or as laity in your own church). After reading Stone/Duke, please write a 2 - 4 page reflection paper on what you believe your calling to be in your situation (e.g. - what God leads you to do). Drawing on the text, describe where you see your thinking to be embedded or deliberative theology; and what is being interpreted, correlated, and /or assessed. Please note your consciously chosen starting point(s).

2. re: Wesley's Sermons. Write a full one page summary of J. Wesley's thought in the seven assigned sermons. Say a sentence or three about his method. These will be a basis for class conversation.

For February:

1. re: Discipline Part II. Choose an issue in your congregation that you face, or an issue in our larger denomination. It may be a financial issue, a counseling issue, a program issue, a moral issue, a community relationship issue, or other. Using Wesley's Quadrilateral, define the issue theologically. Note if there are ambiguities or conflicts amongst the categories or content of the Quadrilateral. Note that the Stone/Duke text also provides interpretation of the Quadrilateral. Write as many pages as you think necessary to bring theological clarity to the issue.

2. re: Migliore text. Write a review of chapters 8 & 10 of Migliore. Be aware of the content and method portions of these chapters. Identify the main points of each chapter, and your sense of their agreement (or not) with John Wesley's and UMC views as expressed in the sermons and the Discipline. Note any points of applicability, concern, agreement, disagreement, or discovery pertinent to your current pastoral work, for your future thinking in theology. That is, what has been 'opened up' for you that you need to explore for your own understanding, and /or for your effectiveness in ministry.

3. Choose 3 - 5 hymns and briefly summarize them, describe their style and their value for the singer/listener.

Thought Questions for Class Conversation:

These are topics pertinent to our class theme. Give some thought to them. You may wish to make some notes. They are either "core issues" "lead ins" to them.

1. What do you think is meant by "theological identity"?
2. On p.99 of 'Sermons', Outler writes: "He [Wesley] had a clear enough view for himself of the Christian essentials but never ever tried to formulate them in an unrevisable statement." Why? Any evaluative comment?
3. Why is it important for you to be a self-conscious theologian?
4. Can an institutional Church reclaim its theological spirit?
5. Would Wesley's doctrine or perfection "fly" today?
6. What is meant by grace? And its adjectives: prevenient, justifying, & sanctifying?
7. What does Wesley mean by "perfection"?
8. What was Wesley's position of baptism? Communion?
9. Describe the elements & workings of the Quadrilateral? As a method for sorting out a set of authorities, what level or kind authority does it have?
10. What was the meaning of 'assurance' for Wesley? What does it mean today, if anything?
11. To whom do you turn for theological guidance? Whom do you avoid?
12. How do you define evangelism? How does it relate to grace and preached by JW? How does it relate to acts of social justice or mercy?
13. Define 'spirit', 'spiritual', & 'spirituality'?
14. Do JW's sermons appeal more to your mind or your emotions? Why? What is lost or gained by his approach(es)?

General Notes:

1. Papers from the January class will be returned at the February class. Papers from the February class will be returned by mail providing the student provides a self-addressed stamped envelope large enough to hold them.
2. Please make sure your name is on each paper. Papers should be typed and double-spaced. If you wish to write more than is required in order to say all you think is necessary, please do so.
3. I look forward to your thoughtful and prepared participation in class. We learn best when we all actively share in the learning and teaching.
4. Please bring all texts to class.

"Theology is a peculiarly beautiful discipline. Indeed, we can confidently say that it is the most beautiful of all disciplines. To find academic study distasteful is the mark of the Philistine. It is an extreme form of Philistinism to find, or to be able to find theology distasteful. The theologian who labors without joy is not a theologian at all. Sulky faces, morose thoughts and boring ways of speaking are intolerable in this field."
(Karl Barth)

"Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people." (Richard Foster)



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Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit
 Dr. Wayne Albertson
 Winter 2010

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Required Books				
_____	<i>The Book of Discipline of the U M C, 2008</i>	20.00	0%	20.00
_____	<i>Faith Seeking Understanding</i>	Migliore	31.50	20% 25.20
_____	<i>John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology</i>	Outler/Heitzenrater	26.50	20% 21.20
_____	<i>How to Think Theologically</i>	Stone/Duke	16.00	20% 12.80
_____	<i>United Methodist Hymnal</i>		18.50	0% 18.50
Suggested Texts				
_____	<i>The Art of Theological Reflection</i>	Killen/DeBeer	17.95	20% 14.36
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