

OHIO VALLEY COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL
METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO

PCOS 111: Pastor as Interpreter of the Bible
Summer Weekend 2010
June 25-26, and August 6-7, 2010

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Welcome to this introductory course in biblical interpretation where we have the pleasure of spending time together studying the Word of God. Our purpose is to become more effective preachers, teachers, and interpreters of the Bible in our congregations.

Some questions for thought. Is it the Bible we are interpreting?
Is it the world in which we live we are interpreting?
Or could it be the worlds of Eve, Abraham, Hosea, Jesus, Mark or Paul we interpret?
Does the Bible cause us to look backward or forward?

To explore these questions, the course will give attention to how the Bible was put together. We will discuss what the Bible's primary authority is now and was then. We will discover how the Bible and its message is a witness to life and faith in ancient Israel and early Christianity. We will also uncover ways for the Bible and its message to remain a witness to life and faith in the new millennium in which we live and serve. Our study begins with a survey of Genesis, Hosea, Amos, Mark and Philippians.

EXPECTATIONS

- Bring Bibles to each class
- Class attendance and participation. You cannot miss more than 20% of this course and receive credit.
- All assignments are to be typed using 12 point font, 1" margins, and double-spaced.
- Please number and put your name on each page. Put COS 111 and the date on the first page.
- Keep a copy of everything you turn in for yourself. Papers do get misplaced, so keep a backup just in case.

- Send your papers to me to arrive two weeks before the class begins. That would be June 11, 2010. Set a mental date of June 4th to get them in the mail to me.
- **No extensions will be granted for assignments.**

TEXTBOOKS

1. Holy Bible, the standard text is the NRSV. Other translations may be used for comparison and enrichment. Bring to class each time.
2. Four volumes from the Basic Bible Commentary (BBC): Vol. 1, Genesis, vol. 15, Hosea, Amos, et. al., vol. 18 Mark and vol. 25, Philippians, et. al. or
3. The New Interpreter's Study Bible (NRSV with the Apocrypha); (Nashville: Abingdon Press), 2003 Volumes I and VIII.
4. Harper Collins Bible Dictionary (Revised edition); (Harper San Francisco), 1996.
5. The Bible Makes Sense Brueggemann, Walter. (Westminster Press), 1993

OTHER RESOURCES

I recommend that sometime during your COS time that you purchase the New Interpreter's Bible (NIB). This is a 12 volume set and each volume costs around \$50, so don't run out and buy the whole set now. Borrow them from other pastors or from the library or see if your church can help with them. We may refer to volumes 1 and 8 in this course so you could purchase volume 1 or 8 to start. An alternative to the 12 volume set would be the Interpreter's One Volume Commentary on the Bible (IOVC). The IOVC is a good one volume reference book. While it may be listed as out of print, it might be found on Amazon. Your written work will be much improved by use of articles on ancient history, the canon, interpretation and background found in the NIB and/or IOVC. There are many other good books you can reference as well.

ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Please bring to the first class session a short statement introducing yourself to the class. Include the name and place of your appointment, size of the church or charge, setting (rural, town & country, urban, suburban), and a general statement regarding how your congregants read and understand the Bible. (This is to be shared in class and turned in to the instructor.)
- B. Please prepare thoughtful answers to the following questions:
 1. **Due to be received by the instructor by June 11, 2010, prior to the first class session on June 25, 2010.**
 - a. What Bible did Jesus use? What books were probably in his Bible? How and when did his Bible get put together? What "Measure" or "Standard" did they use to determine if something was "Scripture" in those days? (2 pages. NIB Vol. 1 and/or IOVC would be helpful in this assignment.)
 - b. List in sequence the order of creation as presented by Genesis 1-Genesis 2:4a. By what means does God create in this account? List in sequence the order of creation in Genesis 2:4b-25. By

- what means does God create in this story? What image of God do we see in these 2 examples? (up to 3 pages maximum)
- c. What is the Bible? Here are some questions that should be addressed in this response: Why are there 66 books in our Bible? Who were the people who put the 66 book Bible together? When was this done? What books almost didn't make it into our Bible? Why? Which current version of the Bible is most like the original? Do all of the 66 books of the Bible have the same basic story, message or theme? If so, what is that theme to you? Please give some examples. (2-3 pages. Be sure to use all four of the BBC commentaries in answering this.)
 - d. Interpret II Timothy 3:16. What does it say? What did it mean to the folks who first read this passage? What does it mean today? Define: scripture, inspired, revelation. (1 page)
- 2. Due before the first class session on August 6, 2010. (These are to be turned in the first day of class on June 25, 2010.)**
- a. Philippians 2:6-11 says a lot of important things about Jesus. Interpret: What does it say? What did it mean to the first readers? What does it mean today? (1 page)
 - b. Jesus' custom was to go to the synagogue regularly. He probably had a rabbi who was his teacher and pastor. What do you think Jesus learned about God, that is, about what God is really like, when he and his class first studied Genesis chapters 1, 2 & 3? (2-3 pages. Take the time to really deal with what God was like according to these early chapters. Go beyond saying that God is omnipotent, omnipresent, all-powerful, etc.)
 - c. Write a brief review of Brueggemann's The Bible Makes Sense. Does this help your understanding of the Bible? How would your congregation react to this work? (3 pages, maximum)
 - d. On page 8 of Vol. 18 of the BBC is says, "In a sense Mark represents the initial effort towards the formation of a canon..." What does this mean? (1 page)

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Among the expectations that I have for this class are the following: I want to see evidence that you have engaged your heart and mind with the good news at a continually deepening level. Therefore, I expect you to prayerfully respond to the Word and faithfully respond to the words of the text. I expect you to bring the gospel to bear on contemporary life. I expect you to read all of Genesis, Hosea, Amos, Mark and Philippians before attempting to write your papers. I expect you to consult with the broader Christian community through in-class conversation, by reading and using commentaries (BBC, IOVC, and Vols. 1 & 8 of NIB, etc.), and reflection with your congregation and colleagues. I expect thoughtful work turned in on time. I hope you enjoy and learn from the assignments. Please make them fun to write and fun to read.

I will use the standard A, B, C, D, & F system in grading your papers. The lowest grades of D and F designate work that shows no enthusiasm or energy and sounds repetitive. Mostly it shows no use of textbooks or references. A and B papers show their authors have read the books and know how to use them in writing their papers. They reflect an engagement with the Bible, the real life experience of ministry and the passion of call.

SOME TIPS

Make your written work useful by preaching on your assignments. Notice the summaries at the end of each chapter in the BBC make great sermon outlines. Try one.

Pray for each other in this class.

You have been called to preach in the new millennium, this is an awesome call. It requires far more than casual or careless preparation. The objective of the assignments is to get you to read your Bible and your books so they become helpful and useful friends of yours before we meet in class, and to get some of your thoughts organized on paper – all in preparation for our time together.
Call or e-mail me for information.

In Christ's Service, ***Roger L. Grace***



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 COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO

COS 111

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Rev. Roger L. Grace
Summer Weekends 2010

		Retail Price	Disc.		Clergy Price
Required Books					
_____	<i>The Bible Makes Sense</i>	Brueggemann	10.95	20%	8.76
_____	<i>Harper Collins Bible Dictionary (Revised edition)</i>	Achtemeier	47.95	20%	38.36
_____	<i>Basic Bible Commentary, Vol 1, Genesis</i>	Hinton	7.00	20%	5.60
_____	<i>Basic Bible Commentary, Vol 15, Hosea...</i>	Sargent	7.00	20%	5.60
_____	<i>Basic Bible Commentary, Vol 18, Mark</i>	Weaver	7.00	20%	5.60
_____	<i>Basic Bible Commentary, Vol 25, Philipians...</i>	Blair	7.00	20%	5.60
Other Resources					
_____	<i>New Interpreter's Bible, Volume I</i>		74.00	40% *	44.40
_____	<i>New Interpreter's Bible, Volume VIII</i>		64.00	40% *	38.40
_____	<i>New Interpreter's Bible, 12 Volume Set with Index</i>		799.00	40% *	479.40
_____	<i>New Interpreter's Bible, 12 Volume Set on CDRom</i>		799.00	40% *	479.40
_____	<i>New Interpreter's Bible, 12 Vol. Set with Index & CDRom</i>		1095.00	40% *	657.00
_____	<i>New Interpreter's One Volume Commentary on the Bible</i>		75.00	40% *	45.00
_____	<i>New Interpreter's Study Bible</i>	Hard bound	48.00	40% *	28.80
_____	<i>New Interpreter's Study Bible</i>	Leather Bound	94.00	40% *	56.40
_____	<i>New Interpreter's Study Bible</i>	CDRom	48.00	40% *	28.80

* **All Resources from the *New Innterpreter's* line are on sale at 40% off through April 30, 2010**

Contact us about other volumes of the New Interpreter's Bible or the Basic Bible Commentary

ORDERING INFORMATION

_____ American Express	Account # _____
_____ Visa	Expiration _____
_____ MasterCard	CVV2 Number <i>(found on back of card)</i> _____
_____ Discover	
_____ Personal Cokesbury Account	<i>Church Name and Address if on Church Account</i>
_____ Church Cokesbury Account	
_____ Check or Money Order	

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 Address _____

 City _____
 Phone _____ *include area code*
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 Discount price is a professional courtesy for clergy and does not apply on church accounts.
 Prices and discount status are always subject to change.