



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Professor and pastor teach course bridging gap between Old and New Testaments

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS) - While students at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary study a wide variety of topics that prepare them for roles in ministry and church leadership, gaining that knowledge is only part of their experience. Learning how to apply that knowledge and how to engage others with it is equally important.

To help students understand the pastoral relevancy of what they are learning, Steven Schweitzer, assistant professor of Old Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, has invited his own pastor, David Hendricks, from Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren in South Bend, Ind., to help teach his summer course, "From Daniel to Jesus: Early Judaism in the Second Temple Period."

The course will study the time period between the Old and New Testaments, challenging students to consider the political, cultural and theological context in which Jesus began his teaching.

This will not be the first time Schweitzer and Hendricks have worked together, as the two have developed a unique teaching relationship in the Sunday school class they both attend at Prince of Peace. While Schweitzer leads the teaching and discussion in the class, Hendricks often adds his pastoral perspective on certain topics, a combination that has proved popular with the other class members, and which they hope to replicate in this summer's course.

Along with material being studied, which will cover topics such as Jesus' view of the role of women and the apocalyptic view of the New Testament, "students will learn why pastors and other church leaders would want to know about the topic, and how to incorporate what they learn into other areas such as Sunday school and preaching," Schweitzer said.

While Hendricks will be involved with every class session, he is the first to admit that he's not a scholar. Preparing for the class has forced him to "go into an area that I hadn't gone into when I was in seminary," he said.

That preparation has Hendricks excited about the course because a lot of the resources that Schweitzer will use have become available only in the past several years, such as more accessible translations of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Pseudepigrapha. As Hendricks put it, "There is a bunch of ripe material."

Schweitzer is also confident that after taking the course, students will see the New Testament in a different light, and will better appreciate the writings of Paul and other leaders from the early church. "Knowing [what will be taught in the course] will make you ask different questions," Schweitzer said.

This collaboration between professor and pastor is part of the AMBS Engaging Pastors program. Engaging Pastors, funded by a five-year grant from Lilly Endowment, includes ten different kinds of projects that bring together AMBS professors and pastors so each can learn from the other and the AMBS curriculum can be strengthened. Schweitzer and Hendricks are collaborating is the project in which professors solicit the help of pastors for course revisions.

"From Daniel to Jesus: Early Judaism in the Second Temple Period" will run Monday through Friday mornings. from July 9 to 20, with registration open for the course through July 3. Registration is available online at www.ambs.edu/academics/courses/summer.

For more information or help with registering contact Denise McOwen in the registrar's office, dmcowen@ambs.edu, (574) 296-6268 or toll free 1 + 800 964-2627.



Steve Schweitzer (center), assistant professor of Old Testament, and David Hendricks (right), pastor of Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren in South Bend, Ind., visit with congregational member Don Eberly following a Sunday morning worship service. Steve and David are collaborating on teaching a summer course at AMBS, "From Daniel to Jesus: Early Judaism in the Second Temple Period."

Photo by Mary E. Klassen