

REACHING OUT

A bi-annual publication of the School of Religion
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2006 Theology Graduate Speaks at Ministerial Trainee Induction

Sabbath, January 25, saw a new cohort of students inducted into Southern's theology program as trainees. The weekend's services included Friday-night vespers in the Collegedale Church, at which time the trainees were introduced to the student body. Then, on Sabbath morning, services were held in Thatcher Hall Chapel at 9:30 and 11. At the conclusion of the second of these services, the students were presented again, and a prayer of dedication was offered for them by Dr. Greg King, dean of the School of Religion.

The speaker for all three services was Pastor Kessia Reyne Bennett, an alumna of Southern Adventist University's School of Religion. Bennett converted to the Christian faith as a teenager, at which time she joined a small Adventist church in Washington State. That little congregation nourished her, trained her up in the Lord, and sent her to Southern to study for the ministry. After her graduation in 2006, she spent an additional year at Southern as assistant chaplain before moving back to the Pacific Northwest to serve as a pastor in the Oregon Conference. Since that time, she has earned a Master of



Kessia Reyne Bennett

Divinity degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University and is now pursuing a Ph.D. in systematic theology at

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Power for Mind & Soul

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Ministerial Trainee Induction

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Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago.

Bennett's sermon on Friday evening, "Your Story, Yourself," was directed to the general audience and was received with tremendous enthusiasm by the assembled students. Her presentations on Sabbath morning, "The Message of the Minister" and "The Minister of the Message," were directed to the students preparing for pastoral ministry and chaplaincy.

North American Division have both contributed to this growth. In addition, the testimony and example of successful female ministers like Pastor Bennett give encouragement to other women who are now majoring in theology or pastoral care.

The 26 newly inducted trainees included 25 students majoring in theology, as well as one student majoring in pastoral care. (One of the theology students is also completing a second major in archaeology, and one has a second major in history.) This



Kessia Reyne Bennett visits with female religion majors.

In addition to these presentations, Bennett met for dinner on Friday evening with the women religion majors.

The number of women training for ministry at Southern Adventist University has increased significantly over the last two decades. In the early 1990s, there were fewer than five women enrolled in the School of Religion at any one time, and nearly all of that small number were majoring in religious education, with the intention of becoming Bible teachers in Adventist academies. At present that number has increased to approximately twenty-five. Some of these female students have been attracted to the new majors in religion that have been introduced in recent years, such as the major in pastoral care. Also, deliberate recruiting of female students on the part of the School of Religion and increased acceptance of women in ministry in the

induction marks a major step in their progress toward service as Seventh-day Adventist ministers. Approval as ministerial trainees is required before the students are allowed to participate in a two-year pastoral externship in one of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Chattanooga area. Theology majors will enroll in an evangelistic field school in which they will preach a full series of evangelistic sermons, and pastoral care students will complete a summer Clinical Pastoral Education practicum at a hospital.

The trainees now look forward to another year and a half of studies before they apply for the next level in the ministerial training program, ministerial candidacy. Candidacy, which will bring with it the opportunity to interview for employment with representatives of the various local conferences, is normally sought in the fall semester of the student's last year of studies.

Karl Haffner Addresses SOR Senior Consecration by Alan Parker

What does it mean to answer God's call? That question provided the backdrop to an exceptional senior consecration weekend, which gave a rousing send-off to the School of Religion graduates. The weekend began with a commitment program during vespers in the Collegedale Church. Karl Haffner, senior pastor of the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church, insightfully challenged the students to rethink God's calling in their lives. He spoke of the rich young ruler and his rejection of the call that was placed on his life. His message challenged everyone to rethink how he or she responds to God's call.

At the conclusion of the service, 80 student missionaries, more than 130 summer evangelists, and 34 senior religion majors came forward to be dedicated to service. Wall-to-wall they surrounded the sanctuary, holding flickering candle lights to represent the light they will take to the world. It was a profoundly moving and joyful experience for all those who attended.

This is the largest group of students that Southern has ever sent out, signaling a renewed dedication among Adventist youth to take the Gospel to the world. Carlos Martin, professor in the School of Religion, reminded the audience that nearly 25,000 people have been baptized over the last 12 years as a result of student-led evangelistic meetings and that there were 2,838 baptisms last year alone. That's nearly 3,000 baptisms—a reprise of Pentecost.

The senior consecration program continued on Sabbath morning in Thatcher Hall Chapel, with Haffner highlighting the story of Nehemiah. Nehemiah faced incredible challenges, but remained focused on the call that God had given him. The message called on followers to eschew a casual approach to ministry. Haffner's engaging style, personal stories, and profound insights captured the audience's attention.

As has become a tradition, the early morning message was followed by a question-and-answer time. Ministerial students were anxious to know how to prepare and preach insightful sermons like

they had just heard. The answer was clear: hard work and diligent study. Other questions involved how to survive in ministry, especially in the early years. Haffner was both practical and vulnerable in his response. He encouraged students to take care of their finances and start saving money right away, and he also admitted that he wasn't a "natural pastor" and had to learn to work within his own armor. Ultimately, he challenged everyone to follow God's call wherever it leads.

The final service focused on sharing God's call and the sacrificial commitment to people that it takes. With three compelling stories, Haffner described what it means to reach people where they are and to share the Gospel with them. At the end of the service, senior religion, pastoral care, and theology majors were invited to the front of the chapel, where they were commissioned by the School of Religion dean, Dr. Greg King. Professors from the School of Religion came forward and laid hands on each senior in a touching scene that was captured and communicated via Twitter and Facebook.

At lunch, students and their families had one last opportunity to interact with the speaker and their professors before special prayer was offered for the ministry of Haffner and the Kettering community where

he serves. Just one week later, the School of Religion seniors celebrated their graduation and headed out to a ministry field of their own. The prayers of the faculty and staff will follow them as they seek to be faithful to God's calling.



Karl Haffner

Friend of Gerhard Hasel Speaks for Hasel Lectureship

The School of Religion's 18th annual Gerhard F. Hasel Lectureship took place March 18-19, 2014. The guest lecturer for this year was Eugene H. Merrill, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Old Testament Studies (Emeritus) at Dallas Theological Seminary and Distinguished Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. His wife, Janet, accompanied him for this special occasion.

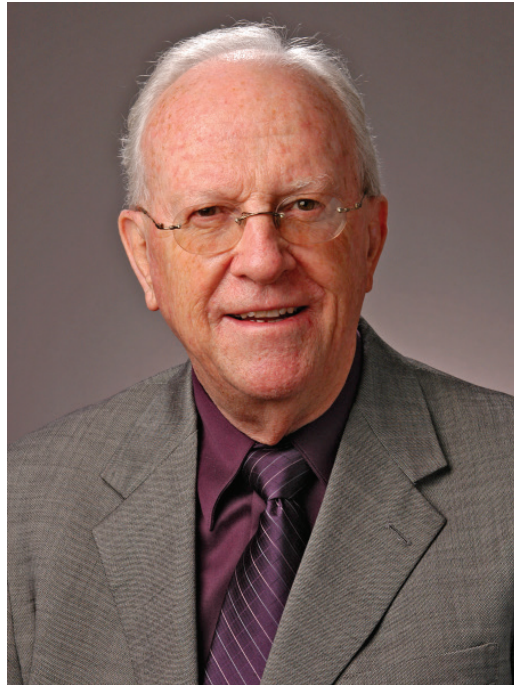
Merrill has had a long and storied career teaching Semitics and Old Testament, and has prolifically contributed articles to various scholarly periodicals, commentaries, Bible handbooks, dictionaries, and encyclopedias, as well as having authored, co-authored, or edited a number of scholarly works. Among the many major works he has authored, edited, or contributed to are *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel* (1987, 2008), *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (2006), *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (2011), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, *The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study*, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, and the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*. He has also written articles for the *Holman Bible Handbook*, *Bible Study Commentary*, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, *The Believer's Study Bible*, *New King James Study Bible*, *Living Bible* (revision), and the *New American Commentary*.

Merrill has also been active in archaeological studies, both in the field and in research and writing on the nexus between archaeology and biblical culture and history. His major focus has been to help establish the trustworthiness of the Word of God in order to more effectively proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. In addition, Merrill has pastored churches, served as president of the Evan-

gelical Theological Society, and received a number of awards, honors, and recognitions.

The lectureship events began with a banquet on Wednesday evening, March 18, attended by Southern administrators, deans and chairs, senior religion majors, School of Religion faculty, and other invited

guests. Following the banquet, Merrill presented a lecture entitled "The Old Testament and the Ancient Near East: Profits and Losses," followed by a short question-and-answer time. The main lecture to the University family took place at convocation on Thursday morning, March 19. It was entitled "Archaeology and Old Testament Biblical Theology: Their Interface and Mutual Informativeness." Merrill began by referring to his friendship with Dr. Gerhard F. Hasel and his appreciation for Hasel's respect for the Word of God and his sound biblical exegesis and theology. He then discussed how archaeology has informed biblical theology, particularly in



Eugene Merrill

regard to Old Testament theology, providing the confidence that the Scriptures reveal a true record of God's dealings with His covenant people in salvation history and thus contain a trustworthy theology that still faithfully serves God's people today.

Merrill also lectured on Thursday to two sections of Introduction to Biblical Exegesis class. His lecture was entitled "The Exodus: Its Inner-Biblical Importance and Theological Significance." He took questions from the class after the lecture.

The faculty and students were grateful for the chance to have been able to interact with Dr. Eugene Merrill and to benefit from his wealth of knowledge and experience. His humility and gracious spirit were much appreciated, and faculty and students resonated with the personal warmth and friendliness that both he and his wife brought to the campus. The School of Religion thanks them for their service to Southern Adventist University.

The Greatest Decision Ever Made

Life is full of decisions. We make them every day. What to eat and what to wear. When to get up and when to go to bed. These are routine decisions that we make on an ongoing basis.

Then there are decisions of greater consequence. What will our occupation be (or if we are a college student, which major will we take)? If we choose to marry, whom will we select for a spouse? And, of course, the most important decision for each of us is whether we will commit our lives to Jesus Christ.

But none of these is the greatest decision of all. The most important decision ever made is one that originated in the courts of heaven. It occurred when, in answer to the emergency created by the entrance of sin into the world, Jesus stepped forward and said, "I am not willing to let my children perish. It is not my desire for them to pass into oblivion. I will go to the earth. I will bear the penalty for sin. I will suffer the death that they should experience in order that they might live forever and enjoy fellowship with Me in heaven."

There are several noteworthy qualities of this very important decision. First, it was a humbling decision. Several years ago the King of Jordan disguised himself and left his palace in order to see what the average citizen was experiencing. People applauded this action, and rightfully so, because it gave him some understanding of what life was like for the common person. However, it was only for a day or two. Then he returned to his plush accommodations, his chauffeur-driven limousine, and his retinue of servants.

But it wasn't that way with Jesus. For His entire life of 33 years, He humbled Himself, trading heaven's streets of gold for the dusty streets of Galilee and Judea. He exchanged His royal crown for a crown of thorns. He was born in a filthy stable, and He died on a splintery cross. No wonder the Bible states that Jesus "made Himself nothing" or "emptied Himself" (Phil. 2:7). What a humbling decision!

Second, it was a risky decision. Yes,

Jesus' choice to come and live as our substitute involved an inherent risk.

We usually don't stop to think about the peril to which Jesus' decision exposed Him. We do not pause to consider that Jesus could have been eternally separated from the Father's presence. In fact, we may think of the Incarnation as something of a play that was all scripted in advance with a certain outcome. Perhaps we view it this way: Had Jesus fallen short of perfection, had He succumbed to temptation, He might have been disappointed, but He could have dusted Himself off and journeyed back to heaven, doubtless a bit disappointed, but with His own prerogatives and privileges intact.

But this was not the case. Had Jesus sinned while on this earth, He would have been forever shut out from His Father's presence, separated from the love and joy of the society of heaven throughout eternity. As *The Desire of Ages* expresses it, Jesus came to this earth "at the risk of failure and eternal loss" (p. 49).

Yet a third quality of Jesus' decision is that it was voluntary. People don't usually volunteer for dangerous endeavors, for assignments that will put their lives at grave risk. In order to procure enough manpower for the military, many nations have found it necessary to use conscription and require young people to serve in the army. Even so, some may have thought Jesus was drafted to come to the earth, live as a human, and suffer the consequences for our sins.

But as the Apostle Paul declares, though He was equal with God, Jesus voluntarily relinquished His equality with God and humbled Himself to the very lowest point (see Phil. 2:6-8). He came to be our Savior not out of coercion, but because He chose to. He came because of His infinite love—for you and for me. What a God we serve!



Greg King, Dean
School of Religion

Students Receive Annual Awards

Recipient	Honor, Award, or Scholarship
Bryan Baños	Outstanding Ministerial Candidate Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities
Ruth Bonet	Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities
Matthew Bronson	Top Achiever Scholarship
Chelsy Calumpiano	Excellence in Preaching; Excellence in Greek; Outstanding Scholastic Achievement (Ministerial); Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities
Ian Carney	Top Achiever Scholarship
Aron Crews	Top Achiever Scholarship
Andrew De Jesus	Top Achiever Scholarship
Thomas Flynn	Top Achiever Scholarship
Karen Glassford	Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities
Daniel Luke Gonzalez	Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities
Ruben Joseph	Excellence in Evangelism
Prescott Khair	Top Achiever Scholarship
Kaleb Leeper	Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities
Eric Louw	Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities
Ryan Neall	Top Achiever Scholarship
Cherie Lynn Olsen	Excellence in Archaeology
Rita Ordaz	Outstanding Scholastic Achievement (Religion)
Kurt Oseña	Excellence in Religious Education
Edward Pino	Top Achiever Scholarship
Stephanie Roberts	Excellence in Missions
Takuma Shinasue	Top Achiever Scholarship
Kaitlyn Verrill	Excellence in Hebrew

2014 Evangelistic Resource Center Mission Trips

The Evangelistic Resource Center sent out 98 student evangelists with seven sponsors to six countries in Central and South America for several weeks in May and June. Those six countries include Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. At the time of this writing, the students have not returned from their trips, but the word from the field is that God is manifesting Himself in mighty ways to the students and the local churches they are working with. As the students present 19 doctrinal sermons setting forth Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, new light of understanding is dawning not only for the guests

coming to the meetings, but for the student presenters as well.

The Colombian group leader wrote the following message during their first week of work: "Last night the team presented the 2300-day prophecy in their churches. Many were disappointed with their own presentations. We broke into small groups during the early afternoon, and with the assistance of the theology majors, each group broke down the prophecy. It was beautiful to see our students understand this urgent message for themselves. There is beauty in these trips. What a service and witness to our own young people, to learn and share these messages!"

Faculty News . . .

Stephen Bauer, Professor of Theology and Ethics, participated in the General Conference Theology of Ordination Study Committee and the Biblical Research Institute Ethics Committee. He preached a message for the Adventist Theological Society spring symposium entitled “The Significance of Adventist Eschatology.” He also preached for a weekend retreat for the Greenville, Tennessee, Seventh-day Adventist Church on the topic of righteousness by faith.



Michael Hasel, Professor of Near Eastern Studies and Archaeology, published “An Ending and a Beginning: Why We are Leaving Qeiyafa and Going to Lachish” in the *Biblical Archaeology Review* 39/6 (November-December 2013). He also wrote articles for the *Oxford Encyclopedia for the Bible and Archaeology* and *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*.



Carlos Martin, Professor of Evangelism and Missions, traveled to Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and El Salvador in preparation for the 2014 Summer Evangelism Abroad (SEA) program. He also offered two presentations on church growth to all pastors of the Jamaica Union Conference and offered a class during Spring Break to pastors in the Inter-American Division Field School of Evangelism in Mexico City. He presented a paper at Columbia International University entitled “Diaspora Missiology.” He also produced a new evangelistic series in English and Spanish which will be used in SEA 2014.



Judson Lake, Professor of Homiletics and Adventist Studies, spoke at the South Georgia Camp Meeting at Savannah, Georgia, on the legacy of Ellen G. White. His presentations were “Ellen White as a Person,” “Ellen White as a Prophet,” and “Ellen White and the Civil War.”



John Nixon, Professor of Theology and Spirituality, with his wife, Januwoina, conducted two marriage seminars, one for Impact Church and the other for the Ooltewah Seventh-day Adventist Church. On both occasions he also delivered the Sabbath morning sermon. He presented the plenary session devotional message each morning at the General Conference Summit on Scripture, Sexuality, and Society. The three-day gathering, which included delegates from all 13 divisions of the world church, was held in Cape Town, South Africa, in March. He later reported on the event to University Assembly.



Edwin Reynolds, Professor of New Testament Studies, presented a formal response to a paper by Dr. Reimar Vetne at the Adventist Theological Society spring symposium on Adventist heritage and eschatology. The paper is entitled “Jesus’ Understanding of Daniel as a Unifying Vision for ‘Conservative’ and ‘Progressive’ Adventists.”



Barry Tryon, Professor of Ministry and Spirituality, held a training event at the Ooltewah Seventh-day Adventist Church for church elders regarding their various responsibilities. He also conducted a training event in the Knoxville, Tennessee, area entitled “Community Bible Studies” for the Southern Union Conference Ministerial Department. This was one of the training events leading up to an area-wide evangelistic meeting this fall. Barry and his wife, Lilly, teamed up with Alan and Nicole Parker to hold a “Love for a Lifetime” weekend for engaged couples on campus. Fourteen couples attended in what is becoming an annual event each spring.





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REACHING OUT

Summer 2014 Graduate Courses

Tuition: \$1,755 (one 3-credit class) Audit: \$878 (one 3-credit class) Contact Edwin Reynolds: reynolds@southern.edu

May 6-25 Intensive

RELP 591 Evangelistic Preaching Practicum. Field School in Bolivia. (Professor: Carlos Martin)

one-on-one and small group evangelism. Practical experience is gained in laboratory exercises and in the field. (Professor: Alan Parker)

June 2-18 Intensive

RELB 555 Studies in Daniel. A study of the prophecies and symbolism of Daniel to discover their meaning and relevance for today. (Professor: Donn Leatherman)

RELP 570 World Mission. A broad introduction to Christian world missions covering aspects of the theology of mission, the history of missions, various philosophies of mission, and strategies for implementing missions in a variety of cultural settings. (Professor: Carlos Martin)

June 16-27 Intensives

RELT 546 Doctrine of Salvation. A study of the plan of salvation and righteousness by faith. The course focuses on building a biblically based understanding of salvation through the sanctuary and key soteriological books like Romans, Galatians, and the Gospel of John. Some time is also spent in examining and critiquing varying views of salvation from theologians such as Abelard, Calvin, Arminius, and Wesley. (Professor: Stephen Bauer)

June 30-July 11 Intensive

RELP 561 Preaching to the Secular Mind.

(Prerequisite: At least one introductory course in biblical preaching.) A study of how to communicate the character of God and the truths of Scripture to post-modern society through effective sermons. Course requirements include preparation, delivery, and evaluation of sermons in a peer-review setting. (Professor: Douglas Jacobs)

RELP 534 Personal Soul-Winning Skills. A study of the importance, principles, and methods of personal evangelism. The course focuses on the development of skills to help individuals make favorable decisions for Jesus Christ through

On-campus housing is available upon request.