

REACHING OUT

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The End of an Era



Photo by Janita Herod

Retiring professor, Donn Leatherman watches the students video tributes

The conclusion of the 2016-2017 school year marked the end of an era in the School of Religion with the retirement of Dr. Donn Leatherman. Professor Leatherman, who taught at Southern for the last 25 years, had seniority among the religion faculty and taught many of the classes in the curriculum at one time or other during his numerous years as an educator.

Leatherman arrived at Southern in the summer of 1992, having served as a pastor in Canada and as a missionary teacher in both Lebanon and Egypt. While in Lebanon, he had to be evacuated due to the civil unrest and violence that engulfed the country at that time. During his time in Egypt, he pioneered a ministerial education curriculum for training Egyptian pastors, showing an expertise in curriculum that would later prove helpful at Southern Adventist University.

Prior to coming to Southern, he completed his in-residence work toward a doctorate in Old Testament at McGill University in Montreal which he finished while teaching at Southern.

From his early years on campus, Leatherman established a reputation as a serious teacher with a great sense of humor—a scholar par excellence, who was the repository of a vast amount of knowledge on a variety of subjects, theological and otherwise. Although many students found him intimidating at first, once they became acquainted with him, they discovered that he cared deeply about them as individuals and about their education.

He was very intent on sharing with them the knowledge that they would need in order to pursue their career goals, whether in pastoral ministry or some other field.

After learning of his plans to retire, the students initiated a farewell party for their beloved professor. Gathering in a room in Hackman Hall shortly before the end of the semester, the assembled group enjoyed delicious food and watched a touching and funny video production in which many students expressed their appreciation for this influential teacher.

Additionally, the faculty and staff held their own goodbye celebration in honor of their esteemed colleague. In keeping with Professor Leatherman's future home country, the room was decorated and the table was set with a Canadian theme. The School of Religion team enjoyed a tasty meal followed by tributes to their retiring colleague, mingling notes of humor with expressions of heartfelt appreciation for his friendship and ministry among them.

Dean Greg King noted that Leatherman will be missed for his early arrival at Hackman Hall on school mornings (he was always the first to arrive), his encyclopedic knowledge about so many people and programs connected with the School of Religion in the last quarter-century, and his deep commitment to the vocation of teaching. "His retirement leaves an empty spot in our hallways, and, most of all, in our hearts," King commented.

Leatherman and his wife, Annette, have relocated to her native Canada and will be living in Bathurst, New Brunswick. He leaves an enduring legacy in the many Southern graduates whose education was enriched and whose lives were blessed by the privilege of having him as a teacher. To highlight the value of his manifold contributions to the School of Religion over the years and to ensure an ongoing connection with him, his faculty colleagues have already voted to recommend to the Board of Trustees that he be appointed a professor emeritus. He will surely be missed!

Adventist Review Editor Speaks for 2017 Senior Consecration

One of the most anticipated events of the school year took place the weekend prior to graduation, when Dr. Bill Knott, executive editor for *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World*, arrived on campus to speak for Senior Consecration Weekend. Knott, who is well known among Adventists around the world thanks to the far-flung distribution of the journals he edits, is widely appreciated for being both a persuasive writer and a powerful preacher. His ministry during Senior Consecration Weekend did not disappoint.

The first event of the weekend was a special Friday night dedication service for three groups of students who are committed to using their talents and abilities to advance the kingdom of God. These groups included the 33 students who graduated with a major from the School of Religion in 2017, the 63 students who will spend the next year of their lives serving as student missionaries in various places around the globe, and the 80 students who had agreed to join a team from the Evangelistic Resource Center to conduct a series of meetings in a foreign country at the conclusion of the 2016-2017 school year.

After the sermon, all of the students being dedicated were invited to come forward one by one as their names were called to receive a candle, symbolizing the light of God's love that they would carry to dispel darkness in the world. The students encircled the sanctuary of the Collegedale Church, holding their candles during a song of dedication and a prayer of consecration. It was a thrilling sight!

The inspiration continued on Sabbath morning in Thatcher Hall Chapel, with Knott sharing two more messages and engaging in a stimulating question-and-answer session with the gathered students. His first message, "The Cathedral in the Distance," encouraged the students to be faithful to God, whether they should be called to a major post of responsibility or to one that may seem insignificant. In fact, sometimes the person who makes the greatest difference for the cause of God is the one who serves faithfully in a seemingly minor position. The second message, "Church on Fire," exhorted everyone present to allow the Spirit to bring revival and reformation to their lives.

Following the second sermon, the seniors were called by name to the front and Greg King, School of Religion dean, shared a poem that Pastor H. M. S. Richards Sr. had written for a graduating class many years ago, challenging the students to help transform a world gone awry. The service concluded with a prayer of dedication from King, as the seniors knelt directly in front of the religion faculty.

Both students and faculty felt that the weekend brought the school year to a ringing climax. The superb preaching, the majestic music, and the wonderful fellowship all combined to put an exclamation mark on the educational career of the seniors, while providing an inspiring beginning to the ministry to which God has called them.



Photo credit Stephen Bauer
Bill Knott, editor of *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World*



Photo by Stephen Bauer

**“The Lord bless you
and keep you;
the Lord make his
face shine upon you
and be gracious
to you;
the Lord lift up
his countenance
upon you and
give you peace”
(Numbers 6:24-26,
ESV).**

Faculty News

Stephen Bauer, professor of Theology and Ethics, preached a series titled, “The Ten Commandments and the Character of God” at the Kootenay Camp Meeting, in Creston, British Columbia June 9-10. He was the speaker for the Summer Symposium on Preaching and Urban Ministry, held at Washington Adventist University June 15-16. On Sabbath, June 17, Bauer presented four sessions on Biblical Foundations for Preaching and Urban Ministry at the Sligo SDA Church.



Michael Hasel, professor of Archaeology and Biblical Languages, co-directed the final season of The Fourth Expedition to Lachish, June 15-July 21, 2017, an archeological dig in which Southern worked together with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and other consortium institutions. Nearly 100 staff and volunteers participated from countries all around the world. The team reached the 10th-century remains of the city after excavating five seasons. A report of the excavations was presented at Southern’s Lynn Wood Hall Chapel on October 2.



Jud Lake, professor of Homiletics and Adventist Studies, has written a new book, *A Nation in God’s Hands*, published by Pacific Press, which is now available in Adventist Book Centers and at Amazon.com. This 464-page volume is a theological interpretation of the American Civil War through the prophetic lens of Ellen White and examines her war visions in their historical context.



Carlos Martin, professor of Evangelism and Missions, was the main speaker for training events for the Northern California Conference in January and the Iowa-Missouri Conference in March. He conducted an evangelistic series in Rome, Georgia, in April and led a team of 21 preachers in the Urabá region of Colombia, in May. The Evangelistic Resource Center conducted two major training events (February and April) for the 76 students that were sent abroad in the summer to preach 16 evangelistic sermons each.



Alan Parker, professor of Evangelism and Missiology, was a presenter for the Carolina Conference Evangelism Impact Conference in Myrtle Beach January 20-22. He was the speaker for the Bogenhofen Seminary Week of Prayer in Austria from March 12 through 18. He is currently working on the largest research project ever done on Adventist personal and public evangelism, examining a database of more than 450 evangelistic meetings and over 100,000 names. He presented an initial report of the project on Southern’s Campus Research Day.



Philip Samaan, professor of Religion, Spirituality, and Adventist History, was the featured speaker at the Wyoming Conference Camp Meeting. He also presented on topic of making disciples to the pastors of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference. In addition, he conducted numerous seminars on spirituality, Adventist history, and eschatology in various locations.



Barry Tryon, professor of Church Ministry and Spirituality, gave two presentations at the Pennsylvania Conference Camp Meeting in Hamburg. The first presentation, “The Way We Were,” looked at five qualities of the early Adventist church that need to be evident in the church today. The second presentation, “The B-I-B-L-E,” looked at the history of the English Bible that we have today and the importance of its study in our lives.



Hasel Lectureship Focuses on Jeremiah

The guest lecturer for the Gerhard F. Hasel Lectureship for the past academic year was Dr. Duane A. Garrett, the John R. Sampey Professor of Old Testament at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Garrett is the author of a variety of commentaries on Old Testament books, including Exodus, Proverbs, the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Amos, Hosea, and Joel. He has also written a beginning Hebrew grammar and various monographs and scholarly articles, as well as educational literature for Southern Baptist churches. He and his wife, Patty, have served for 15 years as missionaries for theological education in South Korea and in Alberta, Canada, on behalf of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. Garrett holds his doctorate from Baylor University and has taught at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota; at Gordon-Conwell Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts; and now at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has also pastored a Korean-American church in Lexington, Kentucky.

Professor Garrett made his first presentation at a banquet held in his honor on Wednesday evening, March 22, to which were invited many guests from both on and off campus, including university administrators, deans and chairs, School of Religion faculty, and senior religion majors. In his presentation titled “The Composition History of Jeremiah and the Problem of the Septuagint,” he discussed the significant differences between the text of Jeremiah in the Septuagint and in the Masoretic Text. He also proposed a plausible solution to the problem, with Jeremiah’s scribe Baruch, who was heavily involved in the original writing and collection of the documents, playing a significant role



Photo credit Stephen Bauer
Duane Garrett is the John R. Sampey Professor of Old Testament at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

in editing and rearranging the text after Jeremiah’s death in Egypt. His proposal maintained a high view of Scripture while dealing with the challenges faced by the biblical scholar confronted by two very different texts.

In his lecture at convocation on March 23, titled “Rachel Weeping, A Woman Surrounding a Man, and the New Covenant,” Garrett used the text of Jeremiah once again to address how to deal with difficult textual issues. Afterwards, a number of interested persons gathered in the Presidential Banquet Room for an opportunity to discuss issues with Professor Garrett in person.

Ken Wetmore Speaks for Ministerial Induction



Photo credit Stephen Bauer
Ken Wetmore is Pastor of the Madison Campus Church in Tennessee.

The School of Religion celebrated its annual Trainee Induction Weekend January 27-28, 2017, during which 13 students were officially welcomed into the ministerial studies program. A trainee must be a theology or pastoral care major who has spent at least two semesters in residence and who has completed certain prerequisites.

This special weekend featured the presentations of Pastor Ken Wetmore, senior pastor at the Madison Campus Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tennessee. Wetmore graduated from Southern Adventist University and holds a master’s degree in organizational leadership from Gonzaga University. During the weekend he shared inspiring messages of practical Christianity to encourage the trainees.

On Friday night Wetmore’s sermon, “It Always Works Out,” was based on Jeremiah 29:11. For his first message on Sabbath morning, he spoke on Luke 20:9-14 to delve into the subject of being hurt and broken, as Jesus was. Yet he assured the audience that being wounded for Christ leads to humility, healing, and restoration. For the second presentation that morning, Wetmore preached on Mark 12:29-31, highlighting the crucial importance of relationship between God and us, which impact our relationships with others.

During the question-and-answer session, students asked insightful and challenging questions. Pastor Wetmore answered deftly and wisely, leaving all participants inspired to walk with Jesus more closely and to serve Him more faithfully.

Field School Abroad and ERC Trips

For many years, the School of Religion's Evangelistic Resource Center (ERC) offered a field school of evangelism, during the summer, in which students took a class from an experienced evangelist, observed him preaching an evangelistic series in the evenings, and served as Bible workers for the evangelistic campaign. The destination was usually a major city within the Southern Union Conference. In 2001 a new concept was implemented: learning by doing. Instead of learning by watching an evangelist, students now preach a series of meetings, supervised by an evangelist and/or a professor. In fact, preaching an evangelistic series has become a part of the graduation requirements for theology majors.

In connection with this, since 2003 theology students have been doing public evangelism in both the homeland and abroad.

However, the Pierson Institute of Evangelism and World Missions went even further. In 2005 a pilot project was launched in Madagascar, as five students from other academic departments on campus were included among the evangelists. Since then, most of the preachers that go abroad every summer are students from various academic departments at Southern Adventist University. So far more than 1,200 students have participated in these evangelistic projects.

Prior to the homeland field school held in Pensacola, Florida, in July and August of this year, in May the field school of evangelism abroad was held in the region of Uraba, Colombia. Twelve of the preachers in Colombia were senior theology majors, master's degree students, and other theology majors who were not yet required to do public evangelism. Nine other preachers volunteered from various departments, and fields of service including three spouses that also preached.



Photo contributed

Summer ERC evangelistic team served in Uraba, Colombia

Students were impressed by the warmth of their churches (spirituality, hospitality, and, yes, the intense tropical heat in unconditioned churches). A notable lesson students learned was that evangelism works when the church leaders focus on evangelism. For two weeks the three Colombian conference administrators lodged with the evangelistic team in their hotel, sharing the same food and visiting participating churches.

It was a joy to learn that 641 people were baptized in participating churches in Colombia during the evangelistic season, and there were intangible rewards as well. A female preacher from another academic department said, "The most important lesson I learned on the trip was the power of truly surrendering yourself to God and allowing the Holy Spirit to work through you." A theology student declared, "I discovered that I love evangelism!" Only God can measure the results of these experiences for eternity.

Lachish 2017

This summer, the Institute of Archaeology led a team of over 50 students and staff to excavate the site of Lachish in Israel. Co-directing the project with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Southern's team joined a larger group, composed of participants from all around the world. After Jerusalem, Lachish was the second-most-important city in ancient Judah as well as its financial capital. Over the course of its rich history, the city suffered many attacks, including the destructions by Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib, and Joshua that are referenced in the Bible. Southern's efforts at Lachish have focused on a search for evidence of the site's fortification and rebuilding during the early Iron Age by Solomon's son, Rehoboam, an event recorded in 2 Chronicles 11. Exploring the depths of the ancient city, this trip offered participants an opportunity to place their hands "into" the Bible as they helped excavate artifacts from numerous events depicted in it. During the week, the group worked hard to move dirt while carefully looking for clues to the history of Lachish. On the weekends, participants toured all over Israel and Jordan, visiting many renowned biblical places such as the Red Sea, Galilee, Hazor, Gezer, Ashkelon, and Jerusalem. As a special addition to the trip this year, students visited Wadi Rum to spend an evening at a Bedouin camp. There, they rode Jeeps and camels through the desert, getting an extraordinary look at the Jordanian wilderness. By providing students with the privilege to experience places they have often spent their whole lives studying, the trip gave participants fresh spiritual insight and the chance to connect with the Bible anew. This summer marked the culmination of the project, as the Institute of Archaeology's work on The Fourth Expedition to Lachish comes to a close after five years of excavating the site. During the next several years, the Institute will focus on publishing the rich discoveries from Lachish.

Gulf Coast Field School Changes Lives

What happened when nine theology majors led summer evangelistic series in Florida and Alabama churches on the Gulf Coast? Both the speakers and the listeners were transformed. In the words of the students: “It was an amazing experience”; “I learned so much”; and “It was really cool to baptize someone I had studied with.”

The 2017 School of Religion Field School began July 21 with students attending classes taught by Professor Douglas Jacobs, Gulf States ministerial director Peter Trizinski, and Southern Union evangelist Roger Hernandez. In the evenings the theology majors assisted Hernandez with a one-week series of meetings in the University Parkway Seventh-day Adventist Church in Pensacola, Florida. Pedro Gonzalez and Joe Pieretti provided simultaneous translation of Evangelist Hernandez’s messages for Spanish-speaking attendees.

The nine theology majors began their own meetings Thursday evening, July 27, and continued preaching Thursday through Sunday nights until August 19. In Fort Walton Beach, Florida, Andrew Caban and Rolf Jean-Louis alternated sermons and also team-preached some topics. Chris Sauvé preached in the Blue Angel Parkway SDA Church in Pensacola, Florida, and his wife, Rebecca, helped with music and visitation. The Fairhope SDA Church rented a historic hall in Silverhill, Alabama, for speakers Matthew and Nita Baker and Pedro Gonzalez. Pedro’s wife of two months, Mellie, was a greeter, attendance coordinator, and vocalist. In St. Elmo, Alabama, Scottie Deal and Yesenia Sosa shared the speaking roles. Joe Pieretti spoke at the Cody Road SDA Church in Mobile, Alabama. His wife, Jessica, a recent MBA graduate from Southern, kept the computerized attendance records up-to-date. In addition to the preaching and visitation work, students continued to attend classes in Pensacola on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Miracles took place in each church. Andrew and Rolf had spent eight weeks prior to the meetings working with Pastor André Weston at the Fort Walton Beach SDA Church, and they were able to baptize people they had studied with. Chris Sauvé, with the assistance of Blue Angel Parkway pastor Dan Thompson and Bible worker Karen Keaton, was able to see two baptized with at least five more preparing for baptism. The meetings conducted by Pedro Gonzalez and Matthew and Nita Baker in Silverhill and Fairhope resulted in several interests and a rebaptism. The meetings inspired the Fairhope members and their new pastor, Karl Leukert, to plan new ways to share the gospel in Baldwin county, one of the fastest-growing areas in Alabama.

Two Baptists, who were preparing to teach a class in Revelation at their church, began attending the St. Elmo meetings to see what Adventists taught about Revelation. Scottie Deal said that as he and Yesenia preached each night, he knew exactly which questions they would ask after every topic. “I went through the same experience as they are going through when I was a Baptist learning about the Sabbath, the state of



Gulf Coast Field School summer team

Photo contributed

the dead, and the Three Angel’s messages,” Scottie reported. His experience as a Baptist minister who now pastors an Adventist church in North Carolina while completing his religious studies degree helped him give Bible answers to their questions. Pastor Karl Leukert, who moved to the three-church district one day before the meetings started, will provide continued spiritual support to new members in St. Elmo.

Joe and Jessica Pieretti worked with Pastor Ted Struntz at the Cody Road SDA Church for eight weeks before the meetings started, and the pre-meeting preparation resulted in seven baptisms with at least eight others preparing for future baptism. Church members and visitors appreciated Joe’s clear messages inspired by his and his wife Jessica’s conversion experience just five years ago. Many of the individuals baptized at the Cody Road church were young adults, and the church is hoping to expand its outreach to young adults—including students at the nearby University of South Alabama.

The 2017 School of Religion Field School helped Southern Adventist University students grow in their ability to preach the gospel, work with congregations and bring people to a saving relationship with Jesus. The field school strengthened and unified host churches and also changed the lives of those who were baptized and those who continue to study for baptism. Perhaps most importantly, it demonstrated the passion and dedication today’s theology majors have to fulfill Jesus’ gospel commission.

**“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...”
(Matthew 28:19-20, ESV)**

THE DEAN'S PAGE

A Donation of Blood

Hebrews 9:22 declares, “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”* And 1 John 1:7 adds: “The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” “There’s power in the blood,” the old gospel song announces. In both sacred text and sacred song, it is clear that the shed blood of Jesus plays a key role in the process of salvation. In connection with this, I had a rather striking experience involving blood that illustrates and underscores several aspects of God’s plan to redeem fallen humans.

I had traveled to Guatemala to serve as the leader for a group of Southern Adventist University students who were devoting part of their summer break to conducting evangelistic campaigns. Every evening we would all go out from the modest hotel to our respective meeting sites and preach, attempting to share the truths of the Bible with as many as were willing to listen. Part of my responsibility as group leader was to ensure that all of the students arrived back at the hotel safely, had the opportunity to debrief what had taken place at their meetings that evening, and got settled in their rooms for some rest before facing another busy day.

Everything seemed routine until one particular night, after the preaching was done for that evening, when an unusual request was relayed to the members of our team. Would anyone be willing to donate blood? This request was due to the fact that the father of a lady attending one of the evangelistic campaigns was scheduled for a serious surgical procedure, and the hospital needed an ample supply of his type of blood on hand in case he should experience blood loss during surgery and require a transfusion.

At first I didn’t think too much about it. Surely a local person could supply this need, I thought. Feeling responsible for overseeing the students at our hotel, I wasn’t sure if it was wise for me to leave the premises for the evening. Also, the man facing surgery probably needed a different type of blood from the A positive which I had to offer, anyway. Additionally, I felt some nervousness about anyone from our group becoming a blood donor in a foreign country, due to concerns about clean needles and other issues related to hygiene.

However, I couldn’t escape the feeling that rendering this loving service was a way of reaching out to the lady attending our meetings. This feeling intensified when the type of blood that was needed was communicated to our group. You guessed it: A positive!

Before I knew it, I found myself in a car late at night, in company with one of the students who also had the right type of blood, traversing the streets of Guatemala City, heading to a local hospital. After our arrival, the hospital staff asked us to

fill out some forms, put us both on gurneys, and extracted from each of us a unit of the life-giving fluid that courses through our veins. Thankfully, clean needles were used and principles of good hygiene prevailed. Also, the family of the man seemed very grateful for this gift of life. Moreover, I could pat myself on the back as I headed back to the hotel in the wee hours of the morning, feeling good about my deed that had helped someone in need.

But as I reflected on what I had done and noted some similarities and contrasts with a much greater gift of donated blood, any feelings of spiritual smugness evaporated. Yes, it was true that I had left my cozy hotel room to proffer this gift. For that matter, I was several thousand miles from my home in the States. However, Jesus had come much farther than that, traveling the vast distance from heaven to earth to shed His blood.

Additionally, though I didn’t really know the family whose father would benefit from my gift of blood, they seemed nice enough and were quite appreciative of what I had done. By way of contrast, Jesus’ blood was spilled for those who mistreated and abused Him, a bunch of wretched ingrates. Even those who professed to love and follow Him fled from Jesus in His moment of extremity. Romans 5:8 doesn’t mince words on this point: “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

And while those extracting my blood took precautions to use a clean needle and ease any discomfort I might have during the process, no such kindness or courtesy was extended to Jesus. From the rusty spikes driven through His hands and feet to the splintery cross to which He was fastened, everything was designed to inflict the most excruciating pain and humiliation on our Lord.

Finally, when I returned to my hotel room that evening, though my volume of blood was depleted by one pint, I was none the worse for wear. But when the blood of Jesus was shed on Calvary, it was in the process of giving His very life for sinners like me.

As the Spirit of God spoke these truths to my heart, I was left with no feelings of self-congratulation, no shred of spiritual pride for what I had done. Just feelings of gratitude and wonder for Jesus’ act of love for me.

*Biblical quotes are from the English Standard Version.



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Summer SALT Doubles in Attendance

Over 120 people signed up for this year's Summer SALT (Soul-winning and Leadership Training) program, more than double that of any prior year! Summer SALT is an evangelism intensive designed for busy people who want to learn how to be effective evangelists in their local churches and communities.

The five-day session began with an inspirational message by John Bradshaw, the speaker-director of *It Is Written*, and included stirring presentations on a variety of evangelism topics by SALT staff. For the first time, day seminars were offered in health evangelism, biblical counseling, media ministry, and church revitalization. These proved to be very popular with attendees, who appreciated the variety of training that was available.

On Sabbath, participants attended the Bowman Hills SDA Church, which is the host for this year's full SALT program. In the afternoon, 27 Bible studies were generated in just 45 minutes, as members went door to door conducting surveys. "I've learned so much in such a short time," was a common refrain.

Plan now to join us for next year's Summer SALT, which will be held in Pastor Mark Finley's evangelism training center in Virginia.



Photo contributed by It Is Written
John Bradshaw, speaker-director of *It Is Written*, was the keynote speaker for the Summer SALT program, held July 12-16, 2017.