



Fall 2017

The College of Bible and Ministry of Harding University seeks to lead all students to know, live and share God's Word and to understand, love and serve God's world through and beyond their chosen vocation.

Monte Cox, Dean
College of Bible & Ministry

Daniel Stockstill, Assoc. Dean
College of Bible & Ministry

Scott Adair, Director
Center for Family Ministry

Andrew Baker, Director
Mitchell Center for Leadership
and Ministry

Shawn Daggett, Director
Center for World Missions

Lew Moore, Chair
Marriage & Family Therapy

Devin Swindle, Director
Center for Preaching

Tim Westbrook, Director
Center for Distance Education
in Bible and Ministry

Randy Willingham, Director
Pure Heart Vision

Published by the Office for Church Relations

Dan Williams

Vice President for Church Relations

Alexander Jamerison

Director of Diversity

Teresa Castleman

Event Coordinator

Box 12280 Searcy, AR 72149-2280

501.279.4449

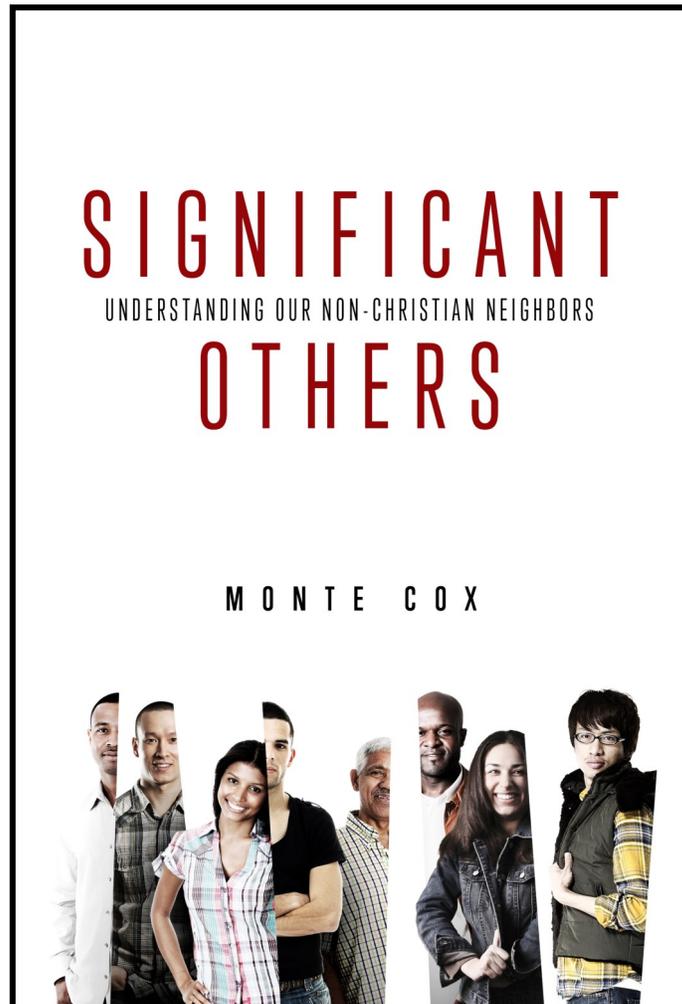
churchrelations@harding.edu

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Dr. Monte Cox, Dean of the College of Bible & Ministry, has authored a new book entitled *Significant Others: Understanding Our Non-Christian Neighbors* (Leafwood Publishers). As our culture becomes more pluralistic, Americans find themselves coming in contact with Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and other adherents of non-Christian religions. *Significant Others* seeks to familiarize Christians with these religions so that they can know how to engage their newest non-Christian neighbors in conversation.

The following is an excerpt from the book. A book signing will be held on Monday of Lectureship (September 25) at 3 p.m. in the Heritage Auditorium.

(continued on page 2)



Rachel fell in love with Ahman when they were in college in California. Ahman was from Pakistan; he was a good and moral man, committed to his family and to his faith, and outspoken against extremists he said did not represent true Islam. Rachel's parents referred to themselves as "lapsed Roman Catholics"; her own religious training as a child was minimal at best. Two years after meeting Ahman, she decided to convert to Islam, changed her name to Rashil (the Arabic equivalent of Rachel), then married Ahman. Together with their two children, their family invests much time and money at the Islamic Center near their home in Sacramento.

Aisha grew up in a Muslim home in Wichita, attended public schools, and in high school, as a statement of renewed commitment to her faith and without any pressure from her parents, decided to start wearing a hijab.[i] At first her friends were taken aback by her new look, but she felt they respected her for her commitment.

Gustavo found himself out of work and homeless in Atlanta when he wandered into a mosque downtown, not realizing it was a mosque. There he was fed and befriended. Eventually, a building contractor who regularly prayed at that mosque offered Gustavo a job. Impressed with the man's honesty, work ethic, and devotion—especially during the Ramadan fast—Gustavo began to study Islam. Later that same year, in front of a small audience of witnesses, he repeated the words in Arabic: "There is no God but Allah; Muhammad is his prophet." With that simple confession, Gustavo became a Muslim.

These composite sketches of American Muslims represent the faith of a worldwide community of 1.5 billion people. It may come as a surprise that only 20 percent of the world's Muslims are Arabs; the other 80 percent are non-Arabs. In fact the most populous Muslim nations are, in order, Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Egypt. Only in Egypt is there a large Arab population; even there the "Arab" identity in Egypt is a controversial subject.[ii] At last count there are at least fifty nations with Muslim majorities. In the United States an estimated 65-70 percent of Arab-Americans identify themselves as Christian.[iii]

Significant Points of Contact

The oneness and greatness of God. Christians agree with Muslims that God is one and he is great. Although some Muslims and Christians may find it objectionable, the Arabic word for God, "Allah," is the same word Arabic-speaking Christians use when they pray to the father of Jesus. I realize that some Christians reading this book react negatively to the notion that "Allah" is the same God to whom we Christians pray. Many have made the case that Allah is a totally different "god" because of the way he is portrayed in Islam. Likewise many Muslims will argue that Christians don't teach that God is one, but three. They would also object that we cannot say we believe God is great and at the same time call him "Father." That intimate, human label for the divine being amounts to bringing God down to our level. Paul on Mars Hill used the Greek term "Theos" as a point of contact to introduce his audience to the one true God who reveals himself in Christ. He was not depending on the term itself, but on his more complete descriptions of this God, contrasted with their common convictions about deities, to make the case. "Allah" is a similar point of contact for Christian witness as well.

The importance of revelation. At a debate with a comparative religion professor at a public university, I made the case that I (as a Christian believer) have more in common, in some ways, with my Muslim friends than I do with my secular colleagues. When one of my Muslim friends speaks about the Qur'an as if God himself spoke to Muhammad, at least some of my secular friends think that Muslim is crazy. As a Christian, I too believe that God has spoken.



Dr. Monte Cox

(continued from page 2)

No, I don't believe he has spoken in the Qur'an. But I do believe that God has revealed himself in history in the written word (and more). We share with our Muslim friends a commitment to faith based on revelation as well as the sense of obligation we both feel to obey what God has revealed.

The virtue of submission. The desire of faithful Muslims to submit to God is admirable. I know many Muslims whose submission is humble and unpretentious. We, too, are commanded "to obey everything" Jesus has commanded us (Matt. 28:20). "If you love me," Jesus said, "you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). It is also this spirit of submission and the commitment to obedience that can make conversations between Muslims and Christians (and anyone else) possible and productive.

Significant Points of Contrast

The attributes of God. The debate about whether or not "God" and "Allah" are the same Being gets some people riled up (on both sides). Polls show that 90 percent of Americans believe in God. But what sort of "God" do they believe in? For some, surely this "God" is a vague "higher power," "the personification of love," or "the energy that fills the universe." In that case, I am not comforted by the 90 percent figure. In other words, many Americans who say they believe in "God" are not referring to the One you and I worship, who reveals himself in Scripture and in the Word made flesh. In fact, this God we serve is too exclusive for many of our countrymen to warm up to him. So the term "God" itself is insufficient to communicate to non-Christians what we really mean when we speak that name. Instead, we rely on descriptions of God's nature and character—the attributes that distinguish him from anyone and everyone else in the universe. Meaningful discussions with Muslims focus on the commonalities and the differences in the way God is portrayed in Islam and in Christian faith. In Christ we believe we see the Father. We call him "Father" because Jesus told us we could. "This then is how you should pray," he said. "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" (Matthew 6:9).

The incarnation and crucifixion. The Christian conviction that Jesus is God is more than offensive to Muslims; it is idolatry. Given the greatness of God, as Muslims understand his greatness, he is far too exalted to have entered human flesh as we believe he did in Jesus. It is also impossible that God would have abandoned a great prophet (Jesus) to suffer a humiliating death, the death of a common criminal, on the cross. So, the Qur'an teaches, Jesus himself was not crucified, but only someone who looked like Jesus. In fact, Christ crucified is as much a "stumbling block" to Muslims as it was to Jews in Paul's day. Through the centuries Christians have struggled to explain the relationship between God the father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The term "Trinity," found nowhere in the Bible, became the shorthand for this complex theology. I'm not complaining about the term. But we Christians do better to focus on Jesus' claims of divinity and the miracles he performed before eyewitnesses that support those claims rather than try to explain through reason how the Godhead "makes sense."

I am following Jesus' own words when he said, "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves" (John 14:11). Jesus speaks of his own crucifixion in ways that focus on obedience. The night he was betrayed, Jesus told his disciples, "The world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my father has commanded me" (John 14:31). He predicted his own violent death, but also announced with confidence that it would be followed by his resurrection (Mark 8:31-36). Humble obedience inspired Jesus to accept the shame and pain of the cross (Philip. 2:5-11).

The nature of the Bible v. the Qur'an. Christians by and large reject the "dictation theory" of inspiration. I believe the Bible is the inspired word of God. But I recognize that God worked through human authors—their different languages, personalities, and contexts—to produce what most Christian teachers call a "divine-human book," a cooperative effort between the Spirit of God and those the Holy Spirit inspired to write it.

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

At the pinnacle of history, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” Jesus is the embodiment of what God wants to say to the world. The Old Testament foretells his coming, the Gospels offer eyewitness accounts of his birth, life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension. Acts of the Apostles gives us a sketch of what happened next as the gospel message spread around the Mediterranean world, the letters give us insight into what it meant to follow Christ as a group, in clusters of disciples known as churches, and Revelation offers a glimpse at the ultimate victory still to come. All of that means that the Bible we read is like a road map that points us to Jesus as the center of our faith, the ultimate Word of God. Jesus once said to Jews, to whom the Qur’an refers as “People of the Book” (along with Christians), “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life” (John 5:39-40). The bottom line is we do not follow a book; we follow this Word made flesh who is revealed in this divinely inspired book. That is why I do make notes in my Bible and underline passages; that is why my copy is worn and torn like a well-used road map. Jesus, not the Bible, is to me what the Qur’an is to Muslims—the final word of God.

The kingdom of God. Most (though not all) Muslim-majority nations find it hard to understand the American commitment to the so-called “separation of church and state.” Where there is little religious pluralism, theocracy makes sense. “Separation of church and state” sounds to Muslims like an excuse to not practice in public what we believe in private. From the beginning of the Islamic community (the beginning from a Christian point of view, when Muhammad and his followers first migrated from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD), society was ordered by Islamic law. Christianity, on the other hand, began as a tiny minority religion. The movement’s very survival was threatened by the Roman Empire that was hostile to its non-conformists ways. None of this came as a surprise to early Christ-followers. Jesus taught that his kingdom was not of this world and that his followers would be hated like he was (John 18:36; 15:18-19). They were “aliens and strangers in the world,” wrote Peter, and surely did not entertain the possibility that one day they would achieve political power in Rome (1 Peter 2:11). That all changed when Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity in 313 AD. In a relatively short time, Christianity became the predominant religion of the Empire. A much more cozy relationship between “church and state” was formed, one that endured in many Western countries for the next nineteen centuries. The pluralism that now makes the United States “the most religiously diverse nation on earth” many Christians find disorienting.[iv] Our Muslim friends are grateful for the freedom of religion they experience here. We, too, should be grateful. In another time and place, this conversation we hope to have between Muslims and Christians—a conversation that includes points of contact as well as points of contrast—would be virtually impossible.

-Used by permission. All rights reserved. *Significant Others: Understanding Our Non-Christian Neighbors* (Leafwood Publishers, 2017).

[i] A hijab is the modest head-covering that hides the hair but leaves the face exposed. The garment that covers the entire body and face, with an opening only for the eyes, is a kind of burqa or chadri. An abaya does not necessarily cover the face.

[ii] For example, Shahira Amin wrote an article on Egyptian self-identity in Daily News: Egypt, September 6, 2012, entitled, “Are Egyptians Arabs or Africans?” <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2012/09/06/are-egyptians-africans-or-arabs/>. Accessed on July 10, 2016.

[iii] According to Arab Americans: An Integral Part of American Society, Dearborn, MI: Arab American National Museum, n.d., 13.

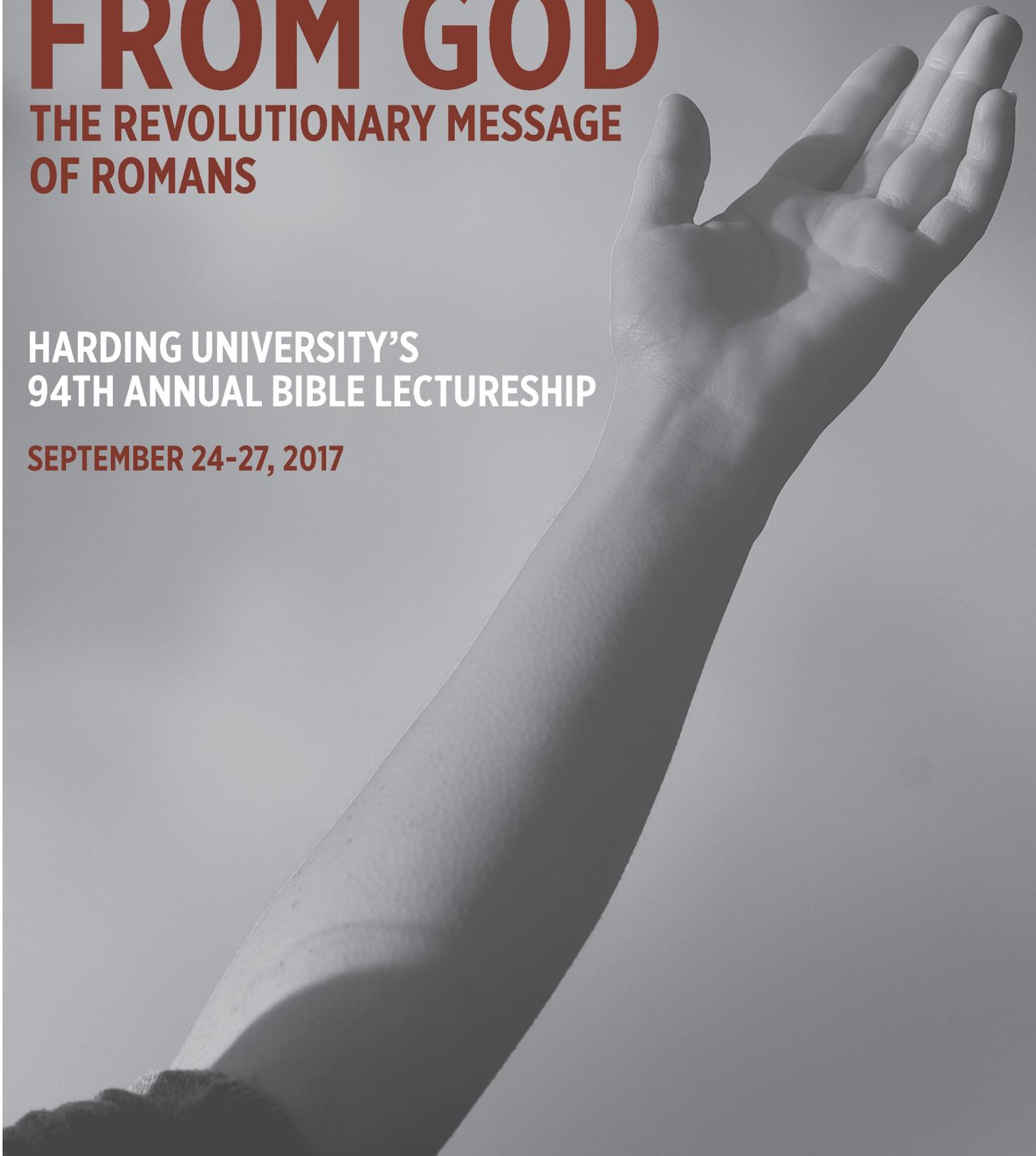
[iv] That is the subtitle of a book by Diana Eck, *The Pluralism Project: How a ‘Christian Country’ Has Become the World’s Most Religiously Diverse Nation*, San Francisco, CA: HarperSanfrancisco, 2001.

RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM GOD

THE REVOLUTIONARY MESSAGE
OF ROMANS

HARDING UNIVERSITY'S
94TH ANNUAL BIBLE LECTURESHIP

SEPTEMBER 24-27, 2017



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

SUNDAY

- 7 p.m. **I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel** (Romans 1:16)
Alan Robertson, *West Monroe, Louisiana*



Alan Robertson



Lamont Ross

MONDAY

- 9 a.m. **The Power of God** (Romans 1:16)
Jeff Jenkins, *Flower Mound, Texas*
- 4:30 p.m. **CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY DINNER**
Losing the Weight of Ministry
Dale Jenkins, *Spring Hill, Tennessee*
- 7 p.m. **Righteousness From God** (Romans 1:17)
Harold Shank, *Vienna, West Virginia*



Jeff Jenkins



Alexander Jamerison

TUESDAY

- 9 a.m. **Peace With God** (Romans 6:1-11)
Phil Brookman, *Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*
- 7 p.m. **Everyone Who Believes** (Romans 1:16)
Lamont Ross, *Sunnyvale, Texas*



Dale Jenkins



Bruce McLarty

WEDNESDAY

- 9 a.m. **More Than Conquerors** (Romans 8:28-39)
Alexander Jamerison, *Searcy, Arkansas*
- 7 p.m. **The Churches of Christ Salute You** (Romans 16:16)
Bruce McLarty, *Searcy, Arkansas*



Harold Shank



Deborah Houston

LADIES KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The Transformed Life (Romans 12)
Deborah Houston, *San Antonio, Texas*

GUEST WORSHIP LEADER

Rick Castleman, *Searcy, Arkansas*



Phil Brookman



Rick Castleman

HARDING UNIVERSITY BIBLE LECTURESHIP

September 24-27 • Searcy, Arkansas

www.harding.edu/lectureship • lectureship@harding.edu • 501-279-5123

CHANGE IN MASTER OF MINISTRY PROGRAM

In an ongoing effort to consolidate programs at Harding, students pursuing the Master of Ministry (MMIN) degree through the Searcy campus will now be redirected to the the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry (MACM) degree at Harding School of Theology (HST) in Memphis.

Under the direction of Dr. Bill Richardson for more than a decade, the MMIN program has helped further equip many students for ministry through distance education, making it possible for them to remain in place rather than pulling up stakes and relocating to Searcy. Meanwhile, HST has made significant changes so that most of their classes may be taken on-line.

(If you would like to know more, contact Matt Carter at mrcarter@harding.edu). Current Master of Ministry students who have earned 18 hours or more will be encouraged to complete the MMIN degree over the next two years. Those with less than 18 hours will be able to complete the MACM through the Memphis campus.

FACULTY NOTES

Our Bible faculty are serving the kingdom all over the world. Here are some examples:

-  Dr. Andrew & Amy Baker were selected as the Region 9 Foster Family of the Year by the Arkansas Department of Human Services.
-  Dr. Monte Cox led another "Deans Tour of Israel" with 57 travelers.
-  Dr. Shawn and Donna Daggett visited the Arequipa, Peru Team and then directed Gander Brook Christian Camp in Raymond, Maine for their 13th summer.
-  Alexander Jamerison, Director of Diversity for Church Relations, conducted a seminar entitled "At Your Service" for the Freeport, Bahamas Church of Christ on March 5-8. He also spoke on "Social Media, Sexting, and Cyberbullying" at the National Lectureship in Atlanta on June 6.
-  Dr. Dale W. Manor delivered a series of archaeology lectures during May at the Ina Road Church of Christ in Tucson, Arizona. In addition, he went on his annual excavation at Tel Beth-Shemesh in Israel during June and July. Manor is the Field Director of the project.

(continued on page 8)

(Faculty Notes, continued from page 7)



Dr. Daniel Oden and Dr. Kevin Youngblood organized and convened a generative session at the Thomas H. Olbricht Christian Scholar's Conference (Nashville, TN June 6-8): "Scripture (alone) and Schism: Is there a Better Way?: Sola scriptura et multa ecclesiarum ... Est melius?"



Dr. Philip Thompson taught a class on Advanced Homiletics for the Kerusso Experience at Camp Ne-o-Tez, DeSoto, MO, June 3-10, and at Harding University, July 1-8. The Kerusso Experience is a Preaching/Ministry camp for high school age young men, directed by Dr. Devin Swindle. Dr. Philip Thompson also participated in a conference on "Genetic and Reproductive Technologies," conducted by The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity at Trinity International University, Chicago, June 22-24. Thompson was joined by Harding faculty Dr. Dennis Matlock (Biochemistry), Mendy McClelland (PA), Dr. David Smith (Physician and Adjunct Bible), and by Harding student body president, Dakota Ellis.



Dr. Anessa Westbrook spoke at a regional women's retreat in Marysville, VIC, Australia on "Living Intentionally." She also taught at a session for women at Belmore Road Church of Christ in Melbourne, Australia on "How Jesus Views Women," and at the Landis Farne Church of Christ in Hobart, Tasmania on Christian womanhood. In addition, Dr. Westbrook spoke on two panels at the Christian Scholar's conference. In the "Women's Study Track," she was on the track "Women Beyond Ministry: Celebrating the Vocational Journeys of Women in Higher Education." In the "Higher Education Track: Crises and Opportunities," she spoke on the panel "Thinking Through the Freshman Seminar at the Christian University."



Dr. Tim Westbrook taught the graduate course "Advanced Bible Study Techniques" to 12 students in Melbourne, Australia, at the Belmore Road Church of Christ. He also taught a two hour seminar on hermeneutics to Melbourne area churches as well as to the Landis Farne Church of Christ in Hobart, Tasmania. In addition, Tim Westbrook, Morgan Miller, and Jordan McDonald presented "An Investigation into the Implications of Dewey's 'Learning Situation' for Online Education" at the Christian Scholars' Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.



Dr. Dan Williams was the Keynote Speaker for the annual Baxter Institute Lectureship in Tegucigalpa, Honduras on May 17-21. He spoke on "Restoring the Joy of Ministry" at the monthly Area-Wide Preachers Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee on June 5. Williams also made two presentations on small group ministry at the Church Growth conference at Harding University on July 20.



Dr. Kevin Youngblood completed and submitted revisions of his Jonah commentary for a second edition due to appear by the end of this year. He also conducted the adult portion of Highway Church of Christ's VBS on Judges and is in the middle of a series on grieving and lament based on the Book of Lamentations for the Sylvan Hills Church of Christ.