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Communications

February 3, 2015

*Dr. Bill J. Leonard of Wake Forest University's School of Divinity
to Serve as Guest Speaker*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – The Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity will present a unique lecture as part of the annual C.O. and Eliza Greene Endowed Lectureship series, on Tuesday, March 3 beginning at 9 a.m. in Hamrick Hall's Blanton Auditorium. Dr. Bill Leonard, the James and Marilyn Dunn Professor of Baptist Studies and Professor of Church History at Wake Forest University School of Divinity, will serve as the keynote speaker for the event. Lunch will be held in Ritch Banquet Hall, and afternoon lectures will take place in Dover Chapel.

Leonard's research focuses on church history with particular attention to American religion, Baptist studies, and the Appalachian region. The morning lecture is titled, "Catholic Mystics, Puritan Preachers, and Appalachian Serpent Handlers." Later that afternoon, Leonard will present a second lecture, "Appalachian Preaching."

In addition to a wide range of articles in journals and monographs, Leonard has authored or edited more than 20 books including "Christianity in Appalachia" (1999), "Baptist Ways: A History" (2003), "The Challenge of Being Baptist" (2010), and "Can I Get a Witness? Essays, Sermons, and Reflections" (2013). His latest book, "A Sense of the Heart: Christian Religious Experience in the U.S.," was published by Abingdon Press last fall.

"Dr. Bill Leonard has kept his finger not just on the pulse of American religious life, and Baptist life in particular, but also on some of the lesser known voices that are being heard regularly in America's pulpits each Sunday," shared Dr. Robert Canoy, dean of the GWU School of Divinity. "He is a very passionate, personable, and engaging speaker who will both teach and inspire preachers and church members alike who will join us for this year's Greene Lectures."

Leonard earned a Bachelor of Arts from Texas Wesleyan University (Fort Worth, Texas), a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Fort Worth, Texas), and a PhD from Boston University (Boston, Mass.).

The C.O. and Eliza Greene Endowed Lectureship was established in 1993 in honor of the Reverend and Mrs. C.O. Greene of Lawndale, N.C. C.O. Greene served for 14 years as the director of missions for the Kings Mountain Baptist Association. Prior to that ministry, he served as pastor of six churches, four within Cleveland County and two others in North Carolina. The lectureship is administered by the GWU School of Divinity's Center for Congregational Enrichment and is funded by family members, friends, and members of churches where Greene served as pastor. Established to preserve the legacy of excellence that characterized Greene's ministry, the lectureship addresses various dimensions of pastoral ministry.

For additional information or to register for this upcoming event, contact Lisa Hollifield, GWU School of Divinity, at 704-406-3855.

The Pittman Center for Congregational Enrichment aims to offer educational and enrichment opportunities for both laity and clergy who are not enrolled as degree-seeking students in the Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity. The Center's goal is to be a full-service provider to the churches by delivering a full range of support services to congregations through classes, seminars, and conferences on the Gardner-Webb University campus.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 60 major and minor professional programs of study, a comprehensive academic experience that flows from our Christian commitment to intellectual freedom, service and leadership.