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Gardner-Webb Professor Addresses Biblical Perspectives on Natural Disasters

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Office of University Communications

April 17, 2011

Belief Amidst the Shifting Sands

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Devastating natural disasters like the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan or last year’s earthquake in Haiti raise important and sometimes troubling questions about faith and belief. In an upcoming lecture, Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity’s Dr. Cal Robertson will examine ancient Israel’s beliefs about the spiritual significance of such disasters. As part of Gardner-Webb’s Joyce Compton Brown Lecture Series, Robertson’s lecture is free and open to the public, and will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27 in Ritch Banquet Hall.

A professor of Biblical Studies at Gardner-Webb, Robertson holds degrees from the College of Charleston, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Harvard University, and Drew University. His lecture, titled “Drought, Famine, Plague, and Pestilence: Ancient Israel’s Understandings of and Responses to Natural Catastrophes,” will examine ways that ancient peoples often understood natural catastrophes as divine punishment for human transgressions, and the ways other biblical Israelites reformulated those common assumptions.

This Lecture Series is named for its founder, Dr. Joyce Compton Brown, Professor Emerita of English at Gardner-Webb. Brown founded the lecture series as part of Gardner-Webb’s Life of the Scholar program, intended to expand students’ academic experience outside the boundaries of the classroom. Series Director Dr. Matt Theado, professor of English at Gardner-Webb, insists that the Series “gives students and community members a valuable opportunity to learn from scholars who are actively pursuing further reaches of truth in a variety of disciplines.”

Speaking specifically of Robertson’s lecture, Theado added, “the disasters we have witnessed in recent months add depth and urgency to Cal’s discussion. These questions are not buried in the long-ago past or the hypothetical realm. They are pressing for us today.”

For more information about the Lecture Series or Robertson’s lecture, contact Theado at (704) 406-3148 or mtheado@gardner-webb.edu.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University was founded in 1905 and is home to over 4,300 students from 37 states and 21 foreign countries. Gardner-Webb seeks a higher ground in higher education – one that embraces faith and intellectual freedom, balances

conviction with compassions, and inspires in students a love of learning, service, and leadership.

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Written by public relations intern Matt Leonard