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GRADUATE PROGRAMS

International Author and Lecturer Trevor Hudson Discusses the Pastor's Identity

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON JANUARY 27, 2022



Endowed Funds Allow GWU Doctor of Ministry Students to Benefit from Engaged Interactions

Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) students at Gardner-Webb University were able to benefit recently from virtual lectures and discussions with spiritual formation personality, the Rev. Trevor Hudson, from Benoni, South Africa. The seminar class was made possible by endowed funds from the late Bonnie Price.

Students engaged with Hudson through Zoom, a unique arrangement for a doctoral seminar. Director of the GWU D.Min. program Dr. Danny West described the opportunity as a great privilege for the students. After meeting Hudson via Zoom, Dean of the School of Divinity Dr. Robert Canoy was impressed by the author and international lecturer's engaging personality.

Hudson addressed themes surrounding a pastor's identity from the angles of being a beloved, friend, partner, listener, and a servant of God. Lectures were Zoomed in, observing the seven-hour time zone difference. Students were "instructed, inspired, and energized for ministry with a biblically-based and theologically sound discourse," said hosting professor, Dr. Sophia Steibel.



She noted that Hudson modeled for them the very themes being taught. Published here in the United States, in South Africa, and the United Kingdom, Hudson shared his life journey as a professional and yet, as he framed it, as “an ‘amateur’ on matters of a life with God.”

Hudson’s pedigree includes spiritual direction from the late Gordon Causby, a Baptist pastor founder of the Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C., who was described by Elizabeth O’Connor in the 1968, “Journey Inward, Journey Outward.” Another mentor and spiritual director in his life was the late Dallas Willard who, alongside Quaker writer and lecturer Richard Foster, pioneered the ongoing movement of Christian spirituality through writings and the Renovaré (<https://renovare.org/>) group, which trains Christians globally through online classes and resources. In addition, one other formative influence in Hudson’s life was the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu. During Apartheid they spent time in prison together, along with many other ministers who likewise fought against oppression.

The issue of personal identity of the pastor permeated in all of Hudson’s lectures. “Throughout scriptures God calls us to remember who we are and to whom we belong,” shared Hudson, and knowing this “precedes vocation,” for there are many false narratives that interfere with a pastor’s healthy leadership. One highlight for the class was when Hudson shared how the members of his church at that time in South Africa did not accept his social justice involvement during Apartheid. This rejection took him on a journey of discovery for his own belovedness in Christ, and how this identity had the potential to sustain him as a Christian leader.

When elaborating on the pastor as God’s listener, Hudson said a pastor who hears God is also actively listening to others without letting his or her mind wander elsewhere. Early in his career, Hudson embraced a sentiment from D. Bonhoeffer’s “Life Together”—if pastors do not engage in pastoral listening they might not be hearing God at all.

The students embraced Hudson’s nurturing lectures and honest feedback, noting how this famous theologian spoke tenderly to the soul and seemed like a friend they had known for a long time. One student, Kadeem Ellis, summed up the impact of the lectures. “Having Trevor present has sparked transformation in myself to be aware of who I am, who God is to me, and the identities of the people I serve,” he observed.

Find more information about Trevor Hudson's books at Renovaré (<https://renovare.org/people/trevor-hudson/books>).

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina's recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.

