From the Dean

A Window Into Who We Are

The School of Religion has always tried to do its work with open windows. There is nothing that energizes those in search of present truth as much as peering through an open window. Whether it is the Bible, a theological issue, archaeological discovery, ethical imperative, or preaching opportunity—drawing back the curtains, opening the panes, looking intently for what is out there carries with it a rise in pulse, satisfying a 'holy curiosity.' Windows are like that.

With this new venture—the start of a regular newsletter—we hope to open yet another window, a portal on who we are and what we are doing. We want you to know us better, and to stay in touch. We value transparency. We hope that, to the degree that a window allows us to look out, it will allow you to look in. Furthermore, we want to have wide open windows, to allow in the fresh air from every quarter. For how else can we be sure to always remain receptive to the breezes of the Spirit and the true Light of the world?

To shift the metaphor, like most computer users today, we have multiple open windows on our desktops. In our School we are open to the word and work of God: in Scripture, in the church, and in the wider world. In the window on the word, we constantly try to read aright, not missing the Word for the words. In the window on the church, we seek a panoramic view; to truly understand where we have come from, where we now are, and where we are called to go. In the window on the world, we try to peer through the smog, to open our eyes and our hearts to the suffering and the joys of those all around us, as we look for the dawning light of the coming day.

In this first issue you will find: information on our new graduate programs and what they offer to our constituency; a report on the formation of our School of Religion Student Forum, and some of the recent events they have organized; good news with regard to our quest for Association of Theological Schools accreditation for all our graduate programs; news from our centers (Stahl, Hancock, Richards, Woman’s Resource Center, and from our archaeologists); reports on recent SR lectures and other events; a heads-up on published, on-going and upcoming faculty research; our special summer course in Seventh-day Adventist church polity (which included, at no extra cost, attendance at the General Conference Session in Atlanta); a brief profile of each of the 21 students making up our 2010 graduating class; pieces from two alumni, one recent (a pastor), the other a senior faculty member; and last, but not least, news about our newly appointed faculty!

Let me also mention the special column we are entitling “Skylight”. We hope to include this as a regular feature in each issue, in which different members of our faculty will share substantive insights drawn from their discipline or experience, that will serve to remind us all of the opening from above, and to above, without which all our work will be in vain. Since I am starting things off, I have chosen to share a passage from my own discipline of systematic theology. It comes from reflections on the role of prayer in theological work by one of the most influential theologians of our time, delivered in the final lectures of his academic career. These words seem particularly appropriate as they speak of our need for, not only open windows, but above all a “skylight”—a Sabbath-day experience to regularly interrupt our days of work, study, and service.

John Webster
“Proper and useful theological work is distinguished by the fact that it takes place in a realm which not only has open windows (which in themselves are admittedly good and necessary) facing the surrounding life of the Church and world, but also and above all has a skylight.

That is to say, theological work is opened by heaven and God’s work and word, but it is also open toward heaven and God’s work and word. It cannot possibly be taken for granted that this work is performed in this open realm, open toward the object of theology, its source and goal, and in this way open toward its great menace and the still greater hope which is founded upon its object.

If theological work should attempt to hide itself from danger and hope, it would soon find itself locked in a closed, barred, stuffy, and unlit room. In itself, the realm of theology is no larger and better than the realm of human questions and answers, human inquiry, thought and speech. What theologian is there who is not continually surprised to find, even when one endeavors wholly and perhaps very seriously to press forward to relatively true and important insights and statements, that one is moving about in a human, all too human, circle like a squirrel in a cage? He or she may be listening more and more attentively to the witness of the Bible, and understanding more and more lucidly the confessions of faith, the voices of the Church fathers and of contemporaries, all the time combining these with the required openness to the world.

As one lingers here and there on different occasions, one may, no doubt, come upon problems that are certainly interesting, or perceptions that are thought provoking or even exciting. The only flaw is that the whole subject (and, as a result, each particular topic as well) does not begin to shed light or to take on contours and constant features. In that case it makes no difference whether the theologian is totally devoted to the cause or whether the windows are opened as wide as possible on all sides; the whole subject, nevertheless, refuses to display its unity, necessity, helpfulness and beauty.

What then, is lacking? The flaw is that however industriously one labors at one’s work or however widely and broadly it may be extended, the theologian exists basically alone in all this work. The work takes place in an area that unfortunately is vertically sealed off; it neither receives nor beholds light from above. It opens no skylight toward heaven. What can and must happen to remedy this predicament?

A special measure must obviously be taken; the circular movement must be interrupted; a Sabbath day must be inserted and celebrated. The purpose of the Sabbath is not to eliminate the working days or to divest them of their proper tasks, but rather to obtain for them precisely the light from above which they lack. How can this happen? What can and should happen is that the theologian for a moment should turn away from all this effort in the performance of the intellectus fidei [understanding the faith]. At such a moment the theologian can and should turn exclusively toward the object of theology . . . to God. But what else is such a turning to God than the turning of prayer? . . .”

New Programs in the School of Religion

The faculty of the School of Religion care about quality pastoral training. This commitment has been significantly strengthened by recent additions and other changes to our graduate professional-track offerings. Students now have:

- enhanced entry and exit options en route to the M.Div. degree;
- the opportunity to build focused concentrations and specializations into their programs;
- a clear, step-by-step route to upgrading their qualifications.

The net result will be greater flexibility in serving the needs of our constituencies, and a better product for pastoral leadership in the local congregation.

The School of Religion has long been committed to providing professional training for pastoral ministry at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels. The M.A. degree was first offered in the 1960s, with the M.Div. added during this last decade. At its May 2009 meeting the La Sierra University Board of Trustees voted to authorize the addition of a Master of Ministry degree. This one-year (48 quarter units) degree program provides 20 units of practices in addition to solid preparation in the traditional biblical and theological disciplines. For those with an undergraduate preparation, it amounts to the first third of the full M.Div. degree, and provides the core essentials for pastors who wish to upgrade to the M.Div. but do not currently have the time or financial resources to do it all at once. It is also the ideal program for providing advanced professional ministry training for international students. The first M.Min. student completed the degree requirements last summer.

In addition, we have also introduced a new graduate certificate program in ministry (C.Min.) that is ideal for lay people who desire to play greater leadership roles in their local churches, as well as for those who feel called to pastoral ministry later in life, but who struggle with the seriousness of a mid-life career change. It is a way of taking things one step at a time. The C.Min. program is designed for those without any religion/ theology undergraduate background, and can stand alone, or the student can request to have the appropriate units apply to the M.Min., M.P.S., or even the M.Div. degree, if so desired.

Along with these changes we have now provided an opportunity for graduate professional-track students to enhance their programs (ideally the M.P.S. and M.Div.) with one or more concentrations in an aspect of pastoral ministry, such as: Youth Ministry; Family Ministry; Cross-cultural and Urban Ministries; Preaching; Ministry in a Post-modern Context; Cross-cultural Missions; Creative Evangelism; Relief and Development; Community Service; and Social Justice. Or they can even elect to do an interdisciplinary concentration or specialization in collaboration with other schools and graduate entities at LSU, such as in: Pastoral Counseling; Chaplaincy; Ministry and the Arts; Religious Education; Pastoral Leadership & Management; Christian Philanthropy; Worship and Music; etc. Students can elect to do an emphasis (16-20 units; i.e. 4-5 courses), or a specialization (24-28, or more, units; i.e. 6-7 courses), which will be so indicated on their transcripts.

We believe that the opportunity to add concentrations to our professional degree programs provides a significant increase in value for the student, the church and the wider community.

We are excited about the new programs and opportunities to better serve our constituency.

John Webster
Douglas Clark
“This I Believe”

I believe that women should be fully ordained to the gospel ministry. Admittedly, I’m biased. After all, I have been meaningfully pastored by women, and women professors have directly shaped my faith development and theology.

So, when I read the Bible, I read it—as we all do—with a personal bias. Here’s mine.

A few weeks ago, I was moved nearly to tears (the good kind) by a sermon on Jesus’ parable of the seed that grows without the farmer knowing how (Mark 4). It was a sermon for pastors, and through it God spoke needed words of encouragement into my soul. It was a masterful sermon—practical, profound, and poetic. The preacher was a professor of preaching, an ordained Presbyterian minister, and a woman.

Years ago, in the process of my college education, I had come to the conclusion that the Bible was sacred and inspired, but also rather static and predictable. To be honest, I had kind of lost interest. Then a New Testament course flipped that view on its head. Diving into the world of biblical studies, I found myself immersed in the art of Scripture and its interpretation, where my head was challenged and my heart transformed time and time again. That Bible course and subsequent ones from the same professor have inestimably enriched my own spiritual life, my preaching, and my resources for pastoral care. The professor was insightful, challenging, pastoral, and a woman. And though she has been ordained by a congregation to whom she ministered, the Adventist church does not officially recognize that clear divine call.

I could go on. Ethics and history classes, wisdom and encouragement from a conference administrator, colleagues who inspire me with their competence and mentor me with their wisdom, and a wife who guides me in God’s love. All women with authority and leadership. All women whom God has used to bless my life. How could I not be biased?

I believe Paul himself saw the Spirit of God at work in the women that labored with him in the Gospel and that he really intended practical, social results when he said there are no longer Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female divisions. I believe Joel and Peter were serious when they spoke of God’s Spirit being poured out on all God’s people. I believe Jesus felt in his heart the call of the prophets to do justly when he preached release to the captives and healed the woman whom Satan had bound all those long years (Luke 13).

And I believe that fully ordaining Adventist women is a just act of healing and unbinding that recognizes what God is already doing in and through called women, encourages and empowers them to use that gift for the sake of the Gospel and the Church, and sets us all free from the captivity that has bound us these long years.

by Vaughn Nelson

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by Vaughn Nelson

Vaughn Nelson graduated with a Religious Studies/Pre-seminary degree in 2004. Currently he is pastor of Bonita Valley Church in National City, CA and a Master of Divinity student at LSU.
“This I Believe”

by Fritz Guy

I believe that as an Adventist theologian and teacher I am called to participate in the continuation of the historic Adventist pursuit of “present truth,” so that Adventism will be credible, relevant, and persuasive to future generations.

I believe, along with our Adventist prophet, that “there is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error”;

that “the fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people is not a proof that our ideas are infallible”;

that “age will not make error into truth”;

that “truth can afford to be fair”;

and that “no true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.”

I believe that I, along with other Adventists, have “many lessons to learn and many, many to unlearn” regarding the message and meaning of Scripture, and the nature of physical reality.

I believe that I need not deny increasing knowledge in order to maintain and live my religious beliefs; that I can be fully informed, intellectually honest, and authentically Adventist at the same time; and that I need not be afraid of new discoveries, challenging questions, or differing perspectives.

I believe that we Adventists “have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and his teaching in our past history”—teaching that has taken us past the “shut door” (160 years ago), out of salvation by good works (120 years ago), and away from racial segregation (about 50 years ago).

I believe that an essential part of my Adventist educational vocation is to teach students (and others) to be “thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thought”—including my own thought as well as traditional Christian and Adventist thought. In the end, it is to the truth that we must be true.

I believe that I must always be willing to listen and respond to genuine questions from true conversation partners. While I need not be intimidated by self-appointed theological police, I can never claim to have spoken the last word on truth.

Fritz Guy is Research Professor of Philosophical Theology at the La Sierra University School of Religion.


5 Arthur F. Holmes, All Truth Is God’s Truth (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1983).
School of Religion Student Named 2010 Graduate Student of Year

Jared Wright received La Sierra University’s 2010 President’s Award for Outstanding Graduate Student. He was awarded a Master of Pastoral Studies from La Sierra University’s School of Religion during commencement weekend in June.

Wright’s educational journey has taken him from home-schooled classes in Rwanda, Africa, to Redlands, Loma Linda, and Mesa Grande Academies in Southern California. He did undergraduate study at Southwestern Adventist University, and received his bachelors degree from Southern Adventist University (SAU).

Of his experience at La Sierra, Wright says: "My education at La Sierra has been for me the breath of air that my religious experience needed. I have found new ways and new reasons to couple faith and reason. I have had my faith challenged, only to find in the process of studying and questioning that my faith in other ways has been tremendously bolstered. I have appreciated an environment that entertains difficult questions . . . "

During his undergraduate program, Wright served as a student missionary to Honduras. Following graduation from SAU, Wright and his wife, Jodi, served at an Adventist school in Thailand. As he completed his La Sierra program, Wright was serving as a teacher’s assistant in the School of Religion, as creator and leader of the Calimesa Seventh-day Adventist church’s collegiate ministry, and as president of the School of Religion Student Forum. He also serves as a section editor for Spectrum magazine.

School of Religion faculty view Wright as one who brings a unique balance of pastoral passion and intellectual curiosity to his calling in ministry. He brings multiple gifts to his pastoral ministry, including editorial and writing, creative preaching, and unusual leadership skills. Wright joined the pastoral team at the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists following graduation. His first assignment took him to the Arlington church in Riverside.

News from the La Sierra Board of Trustees

At its May 2010 meeting, the La Sierra University Board of Trustees took several actions affecting the School of Religion. First, they reappointed John Webster as Dean and Douglas Clark as Associate Dean for the standard four-year appointment.

Second, the Trustees approved the appointments for two faculty positions in the School. Dr. Maury Jackson, with a Masters degree in Philosophy from California State University, Los Angeles, and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Claremont School of Theology, was invited to serve as Assistant Professor of Practical Theology. Dr. Jackson has been on campus for one and one half years teaching classes in practical theology and ministry.

The other position, Assistant Professor of Archaeology and the History of Antiquity, has been filled by Dr. Kent Bramlett, who has a Masters degree in ancient languages from Andrews University and a Ph.D. in ancient Near Eastern archaeology from the University of Toronto. Dr. Bramlett’s classes include biblical languages, archaeology and ancient history. He will also serve as curator of the La Sierra University archaeology collection.

Although not a part of the Board discussions this time, Trustees and the School of Religion continue to plan toward an endowed senior-level position in Pastoral Ministry.
Theology in Practice: New School of Religion Journal

A group of LSU religion students gathered over the summer of 2009 to make plans for starting a new student organization called The School of Religion Student Forum. These leaders developed a mission statement that reads:

“The student body of the La Sierra University School of Religion, having agreed that theological and religious studies are accomplished best in community; that the practical goal of a theological curriculum is ministry to a sick and broken world; that the faculty in the School of Religion enhance the student learning by modeling how academic rigor is lived out in devotional ritual; the students enrolled in a major or minor degree program of graduate and undergraduate study in the School of Religion have decided to provide opportunities for building such a community in an organization: The School of Religion Student Forum.”

One of the many positive outcomes that emerged from this vision was the founding of a new academic journal entitled Theology In Practice. This journal is not only new in the sense that it has its origin in the founding of this association. But it is also new in the sense that it reflects challenges with traditional academic categories and sets out in a new direction. The founding editor, Matthew Burdette (who along with Jared Wright spearheaded the student leaders to create the Forum), solicited and received many articles. He writes in his editorial page:

“As we gathered submissions, it became apparent that very few of the papers fit neatly into such categories as “Biblical Studies” or “Practical Theology.” While we might have perceived this fact as an obstacle, we instead found an opportunity to disclose an important fact about religious and theological studies...The discipline of theology is changing. The world is changing.”

The first edition features a total of 16 articles that range from sermons, religious history, biblical studies, ministry, and theology to philosophy of religion. It also features one article from a student from Washington Adventist University and one from a student from Southern Adventist University. The first edition of the Journal has been dedicated to Dr. Fritz Guy, whose years of service to the School, the University, the Church, the world and the kingdom of God we celebrate.

Maury Jackson
During the summer of 2010, the School of Religion sponsored a course for its majors and graduate students centered around the 59th General Conference Session held in Atlanta, Georgia. This class was unique in several ways: 1) it was the first study tour to a General Conference Session in the school’s history (and indeed, the first of its kind in Adventism), 2) it was planned and executed in less than three months, and 3) it approached Adventist Church polity through the lenses of religious history, theology and management, social justice issues and women in ministry all in the frenzied context of a world church gathering in a global city.

Class participants were diverse. A husband-and-wife undergraduate couple registered for the RELP 397 Professional Seminar in Ministerial Studies course. Five students registered for the RELP 695 Topics in Professional Studies graduate course. The graduates included two pastors from the Southeastern California Conference; one attended the class with her daughter, who is currently studying for the ministry at LSU. Another participant, an international student, recently completed La Sierra’s MBA program.

As part of the course requirements, students visited the various exhibits from around the world, attended lots of sessions, and listened to private lectures by former General Conference vice presidents and current General Conference archivist Bert Haloviak. They attended the SONscreen Film Festival where cutting-edge documentaries by young Adventist filmmakers were shown. They let their faith commitments inform their art and their art inform the church, as the church seeks to lead the world. Taneshia Farquharson wrote on the brochure “This was my favorite thing.” Perhaps more than any other experience, SONscreen demonstrated big-tent Adventism. It revealed the diversity of ideas and depth of vision in the church.

Because of La Sierra University’s commitment to study tours, students were able to participate in the course (including travel, lodging, food, and instructional expenses) for the cost of tuition. Robert Roth, graduate student in the School who came up with the idea for this class, arranged lodging at Georgia Cumberland Academy. The class got to know GCA’s spacious campus well. GCA had decided not to open the dorms for General Conference accommodations, but Principal Greg Gerard made an exception for the class. He believed that ours was a worthy cause. This helped us to significantly reduce our expenses. One morning, boy’s dormitory dean Doug Nesmith and his family graciously hosted a breakfast for our group.

The class spent a good amount of time volunteering at La Sierra’s exhibit hall booth. The booth was designed to embody the university’s theme of openness. It literally enabled people to pass through the open booth as they walked the exhibit halls. Class members took turns staffing the booth, sharing the task of receiving and greeting those who stopped by. They were ambassadors of La Sierra University’s spirit of grace and openness, putting into practice compassion and justice. Students handed out musical CDs entitled Grace Notes and shared information about the university with interested conference attendees, proudly sporting clothing displaying the La Sierra University logo. This silently trumpeted to everyone we met that at La Sierra University we are proudly Adventist and passionately excellent.

Probably the most striking impression of the General Conference experience was
the realization that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is indeed a big-tent. Mana Leituala wrote how impressed he was to see how “the Dome became a melting pot of diversity through nationality, age, race, gender, character, and creed.” Christine Wallington correlated course readings and her experiences when she wrote, “In King’s book, Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?, he draws attention to a novel about a family, estranged from one another, who are given a big house with the stipulation that they must live together and get along. We are that family and we have been given a house, this world, which we must live in together.”

Students were changed by the experience in different ways. Christine Joy Leituala remarks about her decision to don a pin handed to her affirming women’s ordination. In her daily reflection, she writes, “Now, I am a supporter of women’s ordination.” Christine’s husband, Mana, wrote that “the trip was a memorable experience where I was able to grow spiritually, in my marriage, and mentally, and was able to develop a deeper relationship with students and the instructor.” Taneshia Farquharson was impressed by the “amazing technological advancement that allowed me to simultaneously share the experience with my family and friends in Jamaica, as we commented on various things via instant messenger.” Having lost her father, Taneshia often questioned God’s wisdom in taking him at this point in her life. She writes, “I was suspended between a past I was struggling to let go and a future I would never share with my dad.” After returning to California, Nancy Chadwick wrote, “It’s good to be home. Or am I home? What am I to do with my eyes opened wider? I crawl up into the arms of my Jesus and know that He refuses to be put into any box, any kingdom of this world.”
By Douglas Clark, Director of the Tall al-
‘Umayri excavations of the Madaba Plains
Project.

Note: Doug Clark posted this information on his blog about his recent summer in
Jordan (www.mppumayri.org).

The last guffa has been packed away,
the final crate stored, the windows and door
to the third-floor storage room at the Am-
man Training College sealed shut. At 12:02
PM on Friday 30 July, the 2010 season of
excavations officially closed down its opera-
tions with the ceremonial locking of the
storeroom door. No witnesses that I could
see, no celebration, but still official.

With the close of the season come
memories, memories of friendships forged,
Spartan living conditions endured, hard
work accomplished, dust inhaled, wa-
termelon consumed, locus sheets filled
in, dirt-crested guffas hauled, new tastes
experienced.

The summer was also very productive.
With 40 team members on site; four fields
in operation, each with several 5X5-meter
squares undergoing excavation; and four
young and rustless, next-generation field su-
pervisors and chief archaeologist, we made
intriguing discoveries and cleared from the
earth layers important architectural struc-
tures, mostly from 1200-1100 BC, the time of
the biblical judges.

We hope by means of our research to
contribute not only to the growing body of
information about Jordan’s considerable
cultural heritage, but to the cross-cultural
engagement of people from various nations
converging in one place to learn about and
appreciate each other for reasons of mutual
understanding and peace in this region of
the Middle East.

We want to acknowledge the kind
support of La Sierra University and the
project’s institutional consortium mem-
bers—Andrews University (School of
Architecture), Canadian University College,
Mount Royal University, Pacific Union
College, Walla Walla University—as well
as the Versafund Foundation, numerous
extremely generous private donors, the
Department of Antiquities of Jordan, the
American Center of Oriental Research in
Amman, the Amman Training College and
land owners Dr. Raouf Abujaber and Mr.
Jebril Abu Aisha.

Please feel free to surf through illus-
trated weekly reports from last summer and
previous seasons at http://www.mppumay-
ri.org/weekly-reports.htm?y=2010.
School of Religion Calendar of Events

October 16–9:00 am-3:30 pm
Second Annual School of Religion Retreat–California Citrus State Historic Park

November 13-14
Second Annual Archaeology Discover Weekend at LSU with major lectures on Mesopotamia (Iraq and Nineveh), site reports on several excavations in Jordan, hands-on workshops with pottery, textiles, stones–LSU

November 17-18
Adventist Philosophical Society Conference–Atlanta (LSU faculty and students involved)

November 17-20
American Schools of Oriental Research Annual Meeting–Atlanta (LSU faculty involved)

November 18-20
Adventist Society for Religious Studies Conference–Atlanta (LSU faculty involved)

November 19-23
Society of Biblical Literature–Atlanta (LSU faculty involved)

February 2011
Paul J. Landa Memorial Lecture–LSU

April/May 2011
H.M.S. Richards, Jr. Lecture–LSU

May 21, 2011
School of Religion Consecration Service for graduates–LSU
SCHOOL OF RELIGION

REGULAR FACULTY

John W. Webster, Dean  
Ph.D. Princeton  
Theology, history, ethics

Douglas R. Clark, Associate Dean  
Ph.D. Vanderbilt  
OT, archaeology

Kent V. Bramlett  
Ph.D. Toronto  
Archaeology, ancient languages

Lawrence T. Geraty  
Ph.D. Harvard  
OT, archaeology

V. Bailey Gillespie  
Ph.D. Claremont  
Youth/Family ministry

Fritz Guy  
Ph.D. Chicago  
Theology, philosophy

Kendra Haloviak Valentine  
Ph.D. Graduate Theological Union  
New Testament

Ginger Hanks Harwood  
Ph.D. Iliff  
Ethics, SDA history

Maury D. Jackson  
D.Min. Claremont  
Pastoral ministry

John R. Jones  
Ph.D. Vanderbilt  
NT, world religions

Wonil Kim  
Ph.D. Claremont  
OT theology

Charles Teel, Jr.  
Ph.D. Boston University  
Ethics

Warren C. Trenchard  
Ph.D. Chicago  
New Testament

Randal R. Wisbey  
D.Min. Wesley Theological Seminary  
Youth/Pastoral ministry

Suzy Kaspereen  
Administrative Assistant

Contact Info:  
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religion@lasierra.edu  
www.lasierra.edu/religion

ADJUNCT FACULTY (not pictured)

John C. Brunt  
Ph.D. Emory University  
Homiletics

Gary Chartier  
J.D. University of California, Los Angeles  
Ph.D. University of Cambridge  
Theology and ethics

Gerard Kiemeneey  
D.Min. Fuller Theological Seminary  
Ministry

David Larson  
Ph.D. Claremont Graduate University  
D.Min. Claremont School of Theology  
Ethics

Samuel Leonor  
M.Div. Andrews University  
Introduction to Adventist beliefs

William Loveless  
Ed.D. University of Maryland  
Ministry & pastoral counseling

Julius Nam  
Ph.D. Andrews University  
Theological and historical studies

Katherine Parsons  
M.A. University of Cambridge  
History of Christianity

Hector Ramal  
D.Min. Andrews University  
Preaching & ministry fieldwork

Richard Rice  
Ph.D. University of Chicago  
Systematic and philosophical theology

Siegfried Roeske  
Ph.D. Andrews University  
Christian beliefs

Bernard Taylor  
Ph.D. Hebrew Union College  
Biblical languages, Old Testament theology

Calvin Thomsen  
Ph.D. Loma Linda University  
D.Min. Fuller Theological Seminary  
Pastoral counseling and ministry

Tony I. Zbaraschuk  
M.L.S. Indiana University  
LSU Special Collections Librarian
The Graduates – 2010

Bachelor of Arts in Religion
Matthew Evan Burdett
Religious Studies
Mark Steven Cleveland
Pre-Seminary/Religious Studies
Kyle Edward Dever
Pre-Seminary/Religious Studies
Dorin Lataeanu
Pre-Seminary/Religious Studies
Brandon Kaipo Moningka
Pre-Seminary/Religious Studies
Emily Jane Peterson
Psychology/Religious Studies (2009)
Deirdre Nyree Raymond
Pre-Seminary/Religious Studies
Taylor Michelle Trent
Pre-Seminary/Religious Studies
Arvy Wuysang
Pre-Medicine/Religious Studies
Dannielle Christine Yanez
Pre-Medicine/Religious Studies
Jin Gyu Yang
Pre-Medicine/Religious Studies
Nina Nerissa Ybardolaza
Global Studies/Religious Studies
Adam Thomas Hicks
Biblical Studies
B.A., La Sierra University/CA, 2007
Kevin Rikio Kakazu
Biblical Studies
B.A., Walla Walla University/WA, 1999
Master of Ministry
Taneshia Renate Farquharson
Ministry
B.A., University of West Indies/Jamaica, 2002 M.B.A. (Marketing), La Sierra University/CA, 2010
Master of Pastoral Studies
Jared Daniel Wright
Pastoral Studies
B.A., Southern Adventist University/TN, 2005
Youming Zhou
Pastoral Studies
B.A., Nanjing Forestry University/China, 1982
Master of Divinity
Oscar Pereda
Divinity
B.de., Universidad de Montemorelos/Mexico, 1999

Summary of Awards & Presentation of Honors at Graduation

Undergraduate
Matthew Burdette
Vice President School of Religion Student Forum 09-10
Founding Editor, School of Religion Student Forum Theological Journal Theology in Practice
Mark Cleveland  Cum Laude
School of Religion Alumni Award 2010; TAK* 2010

Graduate
Daniel Blair
TAK 2010
Marcos Carvalho
V. Norskov Olsen Scholarship 09-10
Cynthia Clark
TAK 2005, 2010
School of Religion Alumni Award 2005
Women in Ministry Scholarship 07-08
Dean’s Academic Honor List: F 03-04, S 03-04

Adam Hicks
TAK 2007, 2010
Dean’s Letter of Recognition: F 03-04, S 03-04, F 05-06, S 06-07

Kevin Kakazu
TAK 2010
Graduate Religion Scholarship 08-09

Jared Wright
TAK 2010
La Sierra University President’s Award 2010
Lavina Northrup Scholarship 08-09
Edward Heppenstall Scholarship 09-10
President, School of Religion Student Forum 09-10

Oscar Pereda
Lavina Northrup Scholarship 06-07

*Theta Alpha Kappa, national honor society in the field of religious studies.

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Major Step in Accreditation Process

The School of Religion has recently entered a new phase in its quest for full membership in the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, the professional accrediting body for seminaries, divinity schools, and other graduate programs in theology and religion. Having enjoyed Associate membership for several years, the SR completed a 50-page internal readiness report, accompanied by two large bound volumes of appendices, in early June 2009.

The next step involved a site visit by the director of accreditation and institutional assessment on 3 December during which she met with several campus entities. A letter from the accrediting commission in February announced successful completion of this step. In two years a more comprehensive self-study is due in conjunction with a site visit by peers in theological education, setting the School up for full accreditation.

This is an important process for the School of Religion. Other than the Andrews University Theological Seminary, La Sierra University’s School of Religion is the only North American Adventist institution at this stage in the ATS accreditation process. The SR graduate programs stand to gain stature in the world of advanced theological education and training and to benefit from additional funding opportunities available to us. Students will find their degrees worth more in the marketplace of ministerial placement. And the university will find itself more strongly positioned in the arena of ministerial program offerings among Adventists and students of other faiths.

School of Religion Faculty Contributions 2009-2010

Church leadership positions held by SR faculty are many and varied. So are the numerous sermons, seminars and other kinds of presentations in which they are engaged throughout the year.

Conferences attended by the faculty in the SR during the 2010 academic year, with some of the faculty members identified who presented or presided this year, include:

**E.G. White Conference—October 2009**
- Kendra Haloviak Valentine
- Ginger Hanks-Harwood

**American Academy of Religion (AAR)—November**
- Robert Bates
- Douglas Clark
- Larry Geraty

**American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR)—November**
- John Jones
- Kendra Haloviak Valentine
- Ginger Hanks Harwood
- John Webster

**Adventist Society for Religious Studies (ASRS)—November**
- Douglas Clark
- Maury Jackson
- John Webster

**Society of Biblical Literature (SBL)—November**

**Regional AAR/ASOR/SBL--March 2010**

**West Coast Religion Teachers (WCRTC)—April**
- Douglas Clark
- Maury Jackson
- John Webster

Research, publications and presentations given by the SR faculty encompass the entire range of disciplines in the study of religion. The SR faculty travel widely throughout the world making presentations in the areas of their expertise. Recent countries visited for presentations and research include Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, China, South Korea, Jordan, Egypt, Israel, Greece, Turkey, Norway, Germany, Scotland, Italy, England, Peru. Various locations in the United States and Canada are also on the list.

Research and publication among SR faculty include Adventist history, the contributions of early leaders, especially women, in the SDA church, biblical studies being published in print and online, missions, archaeology, theological themes for the 21st century, church and ministry studies.
Fritz Guy – Lecture at the John Polkinghorne Conference at Oxford

Dr. Guy was invited to present a paper at Oxford University during the summer for a conference honoring John Polkinghorne, whose seminal work in issues of religion and science are widely read and respected. The paper — “The Temporality of God: A Recommendation to John Polkinghorne” — was presented July 9, 2010, at the conference “God and Physics” in celebration of the 80th birthday of John Polkinghorne, sponsored by the Society for Science and Religion, the Ian Ramsey Center, and the University of Oxford. In addition, Dr. Guy has also published “The Six Creation Days: Prologue to God’s Rest,” with Brian Bull, in Spectrum, 38/3 (summer 2010): 48-53. It was adapted from the forthcoming book Understanding Genesis 1: Why It Is So Hard for Us to Hear Now What the Ancient Hebrews Heard Then.

Doug Clark and Kent Bramlett – Madaba Plains Project-‘Umayri excavations this past summer

Dr. Clark (director) and Dr. Bramlett (chief archaeologist) of La Sierra University’s Madaba Plains Project excavations at Tall al-‘Umayri, Jordan, spent the summer doing archaeological research in central Jordan. One can see online reports about this project at www.mppumayri.org.

John Jones – Online Textbook

Dr. Jones is well along in his production of an electronic textbook designed for undergraduate Introduction to Religious Studies courses. Combining easy-to-read yet thorough treatments of religious phenomena with pictures of religious practice drawn from many faiths, it is suited to on-line self-study or as the primary textbook for on-campus courses. Leading topics: religion, symbolism, myth, ritual, varieties of religious experience, culture, sacred community, sacred text, deliverance/salvation, divinity in relation to humanity, theodicy, time and history — and more.

Bailey Gillespie – ValueGenesis III

Dr. Gillespie has received church funding for the third round of surveys in 20 years with the goal of determining spiritual maturity among Adventist young people. He is currently heavily engaged in distributing questionnaires and will be analyzing the results in the coming months.

Ginger Hanks-Harwood – continued research on early Adventism and the role of women

Dr. Hanks-Harwood has for several years, including this past summer, been working with colleagues on other campuses to understand the dynamic role of women in early Adventist history. Parts of her research have already been published.

Maury Jackson – Presentation for Academy of Homiletics at SBL

Dr. Jackson has been preparing a paper for presentation to the Academy of Homiletics, a program unit of the annual conference of the Society of Biblical Literature to meet in Atlanta, Georgia in November.

John Webster – Development of two new classes

Dr. Webster has been preparing for and teaching two new graduate courses in the School of Religion, one on Seventh-day Adventist Theology and the other, team-taught with Dr. Jones, on “The Theology of the Sabbath.”

Kendra Haloviak Valentine – Australian adventure

Dr. Haloviak spent most of the summer in Australia and New Zealand, finalizing arrangements for her and her new husband, Dr. Gil Valentine, to move to Riverside so that both will now be on the faculty of La Sierra University.

Charles Teel – New Collection for the Stahl Center

Dr. Teel has received and, with Inelda Christianson, is curating a new collection of invaluable artifacts from the Bruce Halstead family which come from mission appointments in Asia, South America, and Africa.

Open Windows is sponsored by the School of Religion at La Sierra University. It’s published twice a year.

Student Editors: Jared Wright and Felisa Meier
Editor: Douglas Clark
Layout and Design: Larry Becker
Photographers: Douglas Clark, John McDowell, Robert Roth, Natan Vigna

For more information, contact the School of Religion by phone at 951-785-2041, by email at religion@lasierra.edu, or on the internet at www.lasierra.edu/religion
The 2009-2010 school year marked the creation of the School of Religion Student Forum. Recognized by the La Sierra Office of Student Activities as an official student organization, the Forum was created to build community among students enrolled in the School of Religion by organizing gatherings for worship, lectures, discussion group meetings and the publication of an annual journal.

Maury Jackson, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology, serves the Forum as faculty advisor. The group grew out of Jackson’s vision of a student-led organization that would combine academic rigor and devotional ritual, and comes with the full support of the dean’s office.

In cooperation with the School of Religion, the Forum began the school year by hosting a retreat at Riverside’s California Citrus State Historical Park. The Saturday service combined liturgy and song with a celebration of the Eucharist and a panel discussion. Members of the Forum offered homilies, music, prayers, and readings from Scripture. To celebrate the Eucharist, Forum members presented breads representative of their native cultures—tortillas from Latin America, sweet breads from the Pacific Islands and mochi from Japan. The breads not only symbolized world cultures, but also the lives and struggles of the peoples of those cultures. The afternoon provided time for conversation as the School of Religion faculty members offered responses to the morning’s service. Both students and faculty gave strong affirmations of the sense of camaraderie and community the retreat provided.

During La Sierra’s winter quarter, the Forum screened a student documentary by Adrian James, a senior psychology/philosophy major at La Sierra University and Albert Sabaté, who is pursuing a master’s degree in broadcast journalism at USC. Their film, “The Last Generation,” followed the story of young Adventist leaders of Finish the Work Ministries, an organization that the film defined as fundamentalist. The film offered an insightful look at important issues: the place of women in the church, the role and uses of Scripture in Adventist belief, and the place of science and faith in academia. Following the film, Maury Jackson led a panel discussion with the film’s creators, fielding questions from the audience, some 200 strong.

The Student Forum closed the school year with a consecration ceremony for graduating School of Religion students (above). Southeastern California Conference executive secretary Sandra Roberts (left) offered the consecration’s homily, and Gerald Penick and Larry Caviness, presidents of Southeastern and Southern California Conferences, respectively, presided over communion to accompany the service.

Over the summer, the Forum published the first edition of its journal, *Theology in Practice*. The peer-reviewed publication will appear annually, and exhibits the work of student authors from La Sierra and other universities. The journal’s diverse subject matter includes articles from historical theology to gender issues, from treatises on ethics to sermons and poetry. Artwork from students in La Sierra’s Fine Art Department also graces the journal. The Journal was first distributed at the annual School of Religion retreat held in Riverside in mid-October.

*Jared Wright*