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For Immediate Release - Rev. Robert Clark Gregg

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--A Stanford University professor with a taste for Indiana Jones'-like archaeological research and a pioneer in studying what ancient religions thought about death will give three lectures at Illinois Wesleyan University next month.

The Very Rev. Robert Clark Gregg, dean of the Chapel and professor of classics at Stanford University, will deliver lectures at IWU Nov. 6-7. Two of his presentations will focus on relationships among Jews, Hellenes (Pagans), and Christians in Late Antiquity and will be based, in part, on his original study of Greek inscriptions found in ancient villages on Israel's Golan Heights.

Gregg is the author, co-author, or editor of five scholarly books on early Christianity and the Graeco-Roman world, including one with Dennis Groh, IWU's chaplain and a 1961 IWU graduate.

Gregg's lecture schedule is:

- Nov. 6, 11 a.m., "Evelyn at Eleven" Chapel Series, Evelyn Chapel, 1301 N. Park St., Bloomington; Topic: "Getting a Spiritual Clue and Punching out Demon Fear."
- Nov. 6, 7 p.m., Room 218 School of Art Building, 302 E. Graham St., Bloomington; Topic: "Jews, Pagans, and Christians in the Ancient Golan Heights--What Kinds of Interactions?"
- Nov. 7, 7 p.m., Room 218 School of Art Building, 302 E. Graham St., Bloomington; Topic: "Religious Competition in the Late Roman World: Shouts, Skirmishes, and Spiritual Showdowns."

Gregg's presentations are open to the public, free-of-charge.

Gregg's latest book, "Jews, Pagans, and Christians in the Golan Heights: Greek and Other Inscriptions of the Roman and Byzantine Periods," co-authored with Dan Urman, will be published next month by Scholars Press, as part of the University of South Florida's series, Studies in the History of Judaism.

Groh pointed out that Gregg's lecture on "Jews, Pagans, and Christians in the Golan Heights" will feature much new information contained in his yet-to-be published book about conflicting religious traditions in late antiquity.

"I've been waiting for this material for 20 years," Groh said. "Bob has handled every inscription he's published, he's made his own inspections of them, he's photographed them.

"After years of text scholarship," Groh added, "Bob went out into the field. He studied stone tablets and grave stones in the Golan Heights. As a result, we have a much better understanding of village life in its grief and dedicatory aspects--information we didn't have before."

For example, Gregg was able to pinpoint for the first time settlement patterns in Golan

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Gregg's Visit to IWU/2

Heights villages in the 4th-6th centuries A.D., identifying which were Jewish, Christian, or of mixed heritage. He accomplished this, in part, by studying symbols and religious icons passed across traditions and generations. Gregg's work offers insights into how people with firm but opposite religious traditions coexisted.

Gregg's lectures, Groh points out, will benefit IWU students and others in many ways.

"They will have a chance to see someone who's exciting," Groh said, "someone who has been the first to make discoveries, or rather recoveries, of the past for the peoples of Israel. Nothing is more exciting than discovery."

Groh, who has been involved in Middle East archaeology for more than 30 years, adds, "I'm still thrilled when a ring is uncovered and people haven't seen it for 1,000 or 2,000 years. In archeology, you're present at least at the recreation--if not the creation of a person's life, of a community's life."

Gregg and Groh worked closely together for about seven years, co-authoring a book and some articles. The book, "Early Arianism: A View of Salvation," was published in 1981 and was a finalist in the Phillip Schaff Prize competition for the best book written about church history in 1981-82.

"Working with Bob," Groh said, "I learned what a deep sensitivity he has for people and his absolute sense of fairness. He is a real historian. He sees his job as helping people refind their voices from the past without the heavy polemic overlays of history."

Groh describes Gregg as a "brilliant and dazzling teacher," who has had many outstanding graduate students.

Gregg is the author of numerous articles and has presented scholarly papers at regional, national, and international meetings. He also has given more than 20 invited lectures. Gregg has received fellowships and grant support from many groups including Harvard University and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He serves on the editorial and society boards of four organizations.

Gregg also has translated 20 Greek inscriptions from the late Roman and early Byzantine periods, which were discovered on the Golan Heights, for the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums and the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem. He also has translated 11 Greek inscriptions from the same period for the Golan Archaeological Museum in Kazrin, Israel.

Gregg has been at Stanford University in California since 1987. Before joining the Stanford faculty, he was an assistant professor of Patristics (the study of early Christian authors in the 2nd-7th centuries) and Medieval Church History and an associate professor of Early Christianity at Duke

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