

For Immediate Release

June 24, 2011

FWBBC Professor, Leroy Forlines, Passes Systematic Theology Torch

NASHVILLE, TN—Reverend Leroy Forlines, Systematic Theology professor at Free Will Baptist Bible College for almost six decades, informed the administration that effective fall 2011 he believes the time is right to pass responsibility for teaching the denomination-shaping course to others. A theological icon among Free Will Baptists and the broader community of Christian scholars, Reverend Forlines has taught Systematic Theology at FWBBC since 1954, except two years when he pursued graduate studies and one semester while on a mission in Russia.

Dr. Kevin Hester, a 1993 FWBBC graduate who chairs the Theological Studies Department, will teach the fall semester of Systematic Theology. The spring semester will be taught by Reverend Matthew McAfee, Biblical and Theological Studies coordinator and a 1999 FWBBC graduate completing doctoral studies at the University of Chicago. Both men are former students of Professor Forlines.

Provost Greg Kettelman said, “Brother Forlines has devoted his life to teaching theology and helping others understand it as he does. Here at FWBBC, we are well aware of what he has accomplished in the field of theology and the weight of this responsibility he is passing to younger men. The same passion that drives him to teach Free Will Baptist theology is evident in the lives of Dr. Hester and Mr. McAfee.”

Forlines will continue as Professor Emeritus at FWBBC, teach Eschatology, and serve as occasional guest lecturer in Systematic Theology. His major goal this year is to complete a book manuscript on secularism in America.

“I feel confident knowing that Systematic Theology at FWBBC will be in good hands,” Forlines said. “I think the course will be enriched by this transfer of responsibilities to Dr. Hester and Mr. McAfee. Both understand my approach to theology, plus they both furthered their education in other

theological institutions. I hope their names will be mentioned with favor as theology instructors in the Free Will Baptist denomination.”

In addition to teaching at FWBBC, Forlines has been a member of the denomination’s Commission for Theological Integrity since 1962, serving as chairman most of that time. He has written six books, including the highly regarded theological works *The Quest for Truth* and *Classical Arminianism*, as well as *Romans*, the first volume in the Randall House Bible Commentary, and *Biblical Ethics*.

Dr. Kevin Hester reflected, “It was as I sat in Brother Forlines’ Systematics courses in 1992 that my love for theology blossomed. He is primarily responsible for my continued interest in the subject. As I consider the daunting task of teaching a section of his Systematics class, I am comforted to know that his door is always open, and he remains my teacher, my mentor, and my friend.”

FWBBC named its premier theological emphasis the “Forlines Lecture Series,” a tribute to the man who taught Systematic Theology for more than half a century and was designated “Professor Emeritus” by the Board of Trustees in 1992.

Reverend Matthew McAfee said, “I am deeply appreciative for the theological heritage Brother Forlines worked so hard to establish, and I consider it one of life’s greatest honors as this important transition takes place. This remarkable man is handing over a sacred trust rooted in the distant past of our movement and grounded in the scriptures. Whatever I do will be greatly influenced by what he has already done.”

Leroy Forlines, 84-year-old systematic theology architect, began life on an eastern North Carolina tobacco farm outside Winterville. He was converted during a revival in October 1944, answered the call to preach in 1946, and graduated from FWBBC in 1952.

President Matt Pinson considers Forlines his mentor and friend: “I never wanted this day to arrive—when Brother Forlines would lay aside his incredible legacy as Systematic Theology professor at FWBBC. But we are here in God’s timing and in His will. This man’s teachings and writings shaped the

denomination I love. He influenced me as an FWBBC student and as president. Brother Forlines has a number of important projects to complete, and we wish him well. And like him, I can't think of two better successors than Kevin Hester and Matthew McAfee."