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THE Bridge

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David and Michelle Allen stand in front of HST's Administration Building.

Renewal in Memphis

Superlatives. These are the type of words that come to mind when I reflect on my sabbatical at Harding School of Theology: excellent teachers, a warm and hospitable staff, and a student body that sets the bar high in both character and intelligence.

My family has been in Chiang Mai, Thailand, for the last 21 years serving as part of a church planting team. Our time there has been rich and fulfilling as well as chal-

lenging and exhausting. One of my mentors suggested that I step back from ministry to rest, reflect and learn from the Lord. When I heard about the Hogan-Cate Scholarship, intended for a minister to the Asian people to study at HST for a semester, I knew that this place would be a great destination to achieve my sabbatical goals.

The biggest surprise is how the Lord has exceeded my expectations for my time in Memphis! The classes

taught by Drs. Mark Powell and Carlus Gupton were so good that I felt a bit disappointed each day when it was time for class to end. I had the opportunity to spend quality time with Drs. Allen Black, Evertt Huffard, Jim Martin and Leon Sander-son. My heart has been filled by their encouraging words and delightful friendships.

One of my favorite memories is sitting under a maple tree on the beautiful grounds

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THE
Bridge

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DEAN'S NOTE

The Preacher as Theologian

Kevin Vanhoozer, a professor of systematic theology, tells the story of a seminary student who came to his office wrestling with whether to go on to do Ph.D. work in theology or to work in a church. The student had questions about his grades and said, "Please don't tell me I am only smart enough to be a pastor." Vanhoozer was justifiably disturbed by the implication "that pastors were somehow second-class intellectuals." He replied, "I'm afraid you may only be qualified to be an academic, not a pastor. Ministry is a lot harder than scholarship."

simply overshadow the necessity of the preacher's role as theologian — defined by Vanhoozer in the simple words "one who opens up the Scriptures to help people understand God, the world and themselves."

2015 saw the publication of two evangelical works seeking to redress this balance: *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision* by Kevin Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan and *The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision* by Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson. As the subtitles indicate, both books are seeking to "reclaim" or "res-

Working as the preacher for a local church is in fact an extraordinarily difficult task that calls for numerous competencies.

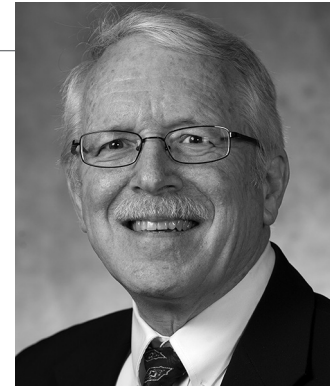
Working as the preacher for a local church is in fact an extraordinarily difficult task that calls for numerous competencies. Preachers need knowledge and skills, not only in biblical interpretation and theology, but also in leadership, organization, conflict management, counseling, public speaking, understanding contemporary culture and other areas. In many ways, academic scholarship does indeed require fewer competencies than ministry.

In the midst of the wide array of demands on the preacher, it is easy to put the cart before the horse. The significance of so many areas of competency may

urrect" a vision for preaching that has tended to get lost.

Hiestand and Wilson suggest a three-part typology for "pastor theologians": the local theologian (who provides theological leadership for a local church), the popular theologian (who provides "popular-level" theological leadership beyond the local church), and the ecclesial theologian (who focuses on constructing theology for others with theological training). Hiestand and Wilson's Center for Pastoral Theologians (see www.pastortheologians.com) focuses primarily on increasing the small numbers in the last category.

HST focuses primarily on the first category (although



Black

we are gratified to see some of our graduates involved in the other two). Our degrees, especially the Master of Divinity, reflect our commitment to Scripture and theology. At the same time they provide significant attention to the range of other competencies needed by today's preachers. The training HST provides is important not only to potential students considering preparation for ministry, but also to church members concerned about the preparation of their own local preacher and others.

We affirm the need to train preachers to be what Hiestand and Wilson call "local theologians." In fact, every preacher is a local theologian, whether that is what they intend or are adequately trained to be. The preacher steps into the pulpit every week and "opens up the Scriptures to help people understand God, the world and themselves." If the sermon is only tangentially or inadequately grounded in the word of God, the preacher fails to help people understand God, the world or themselves. Even if the preacher is outstanding in leadership, organizational skills, counseling, public speaking, etc., he must not fail in his central task.

Dr. Allen Black
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2015 Leadership Council Dinner in Retrospect

Last November, we honored Drs. Evertt and Ileene Huffard at Harding School of Theology's 2015 Leadership Council Dinner. The dinner was held at the Memphis University School (MUS) on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2015. More than 300 individuals came to support HST and honor the Huffards. The dinner's theme revolved around travel because of the central role it has played in both the Huffards' lives and ministry. This theme was reflected throughout the night with small details: a program printed like a passport, a variety of Middle Eastern food options for dinner, and large banners depicting several cities the Huffards have called home lining the entrance to the dining hall. In addition to songs performed by Kip Long and members of the Sycamore View Church of Christ praise team, a Huffard trivia game was played and a video honoring the Huffards was viewed. However, to many, the highlight of the evening was surrounding the Huffards at the end of the night

to sing one of their favorite songs, "It Is Well With My Soul," and pray over them. No doubt, Christian love, support and community permeated the room that night.

The line of guests wrapped around the parking lot outside of the building as Evertt and Ileene graciously greeted each guest as they entered the dining room. The Huffards' postponement of their meal in order to welcome guests was just another example of the selfless and tireless work and love that the two have poured into HST (and even more, into the people who make up the school). The impact that the Huffards have had on HST and the kingdom was evident by the diversity of people — from different churches, schools, professional backgrounds, cities and countries — who attended the dinner; donated gifts to HST; and sent letters, cards, and messages of appreciation and encouragement. A scholarship in honor of the Huffards, called the Huffard Family Endowment, was announced during the

dinner. The overall response to the call to honor the Huffards and support the work of HST was overwhelming and inspiring. The combined total raised for the annual fund and the Huffard Family Endowment during this event was \$167,392.73.

In some small way, the dinner successfully honored the Huffards, and more importantly, it honored the work to which they have dedicated their lives: furthering God's kingdom through Christian education. This is the work of Harding School of Theology. The impact of HST reaches across the globe and across gender, ethnic, racial and socioeconomic divides. The work of HST is incredibly important, and it is made possible only through the individuals who invest (in different ways) in the mission of the school and its work. This dinner was merely a glimpse of the vital work that has been and continues to be done through Harding School of Theology.

Rachel Denzin
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Dinner attendees surround the Huffards to sing "It Is Well With My Soul" at the 2015 Leadership Council Dinner Nov. 14.

BRIEFS

Faculty Notes

Dr. **Allen Black** attended the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Nov. 21-24, 2015, and the Association of Theological Schools' "School for New Deans" Dec. 14-16, 2015. He spoke at the Graymere Church of Christ's annual Preaching Workshop Feb. 22, 2016.

Dr. **Ed Gray** engaged in research during his sabbatical semester in fall 2015, investigating what helps leaders last well. Take a look at the free downloadable "Leaders Who Last" resource he created from his research at <http://www.12conversations.com/leaders-pdfs>. He also conducted four workshops involving marriage mentoring and premarital counseling certification in Tennessee and Mississippi.

Dr. **Steve McLeod** made a presentation, "Many Hats, One Head: How to Survive — and Even Thrive — When Pulled in Many Directions," at the Southern Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers annual conference in Oklahoma City February 2016. He also joined the SACRAO executive committee after serving as a program chairman for two years.

Dr. **Mark Powell** presented four lessons on "Preaching Christian Ethics" in January 2016 at the Northwest Expositor's Seminar at Camp Yamhill in Oregon. He also led a seminar Jan. 16-17, 2016, on "The Trinity and Why It Matters" at Olympia (Washington) Church of Christ and participated in interim preaching at Millington (Tennessee) Church of Christ and Lee Acres Church of Christ in Tupelo, Mississippi.

An article by **Lance Hawley**, "Linguistic Markers of Polar Interrogatives in Biblical Hebrew," was recently published in *Hebrew Studies*.

BRIEFS

Faculty Notes

More than 200 enthusiastic church leaders and spouses from at least eight states gathered Jan. 8-10, 2016, at the Shepherds Network Northwest, a partnership between HST and several churches in Montana and surrounding areas. Hosted by the Belgrade Church of Christ, HST presenters included Drs. **Carlus Gupton**, **Evertt Huffard** and **Ileene Huffard**.

Gupton presented a case study on missional effectiveness along with workshops on “Building and Maintaining Trust” and “Becoming a Peacemaker, not a Peacekeeper,” at the Shepherds Network Northwest Connection in Belgrade, Montana. He participated in a project on congregational assessment in collaboration with Hope Network Mentoring Partners and Siburt Institute for Church Ministry. He also continued as interim minister/consultant at Lee Acres Church of Christ in Tupelo, Mississippi; preached for Millington (Tennessee) Church of Christ; preached for the Church of Christ at White Station in Memphis, Tennessee; and consulted with church leaders in Hendersonville, North Carolina.

HST Girls’ Night Out

Once a month, the women of HST meet to eat, talk and laugh together. In the 2015 fall semester, Charlotte Martin and Nancy Black began organizing this girls’ night out to aid both female students and wives of male students in forming friendships on campus. It has been a rousing success.

The usual location is a popular Mexican restaurant in Memphis, Las Delicias, not far from campus. Many times there are 15 to 20 of us crowded around a table, sharing stories and eating chips, salsa, and the restaurant’s famous guacamole (which we devour at a frankly *alarming* rate). Because the group represents so many different ages, occupations and stages in life, the conversation is always changing. Sometimes we catch up

on each other’s lives; other times we are telling funny stories; at other times we talk about events that we are looking forward to on campus. Regardless of what direction the conversation takes, we form real friendships around that table.

This girls’ night out is more than simply an opportunity to get out of the house (although it is certainly that). It is also an opportunity to spend time with other Christian women and be blessed by their lives and their stories. As we eat and talk, we also learn from each other. Often, we do not realize the blessing of spending time in conversation with Christians who are different from us — someone who is older than I am or working a different kind of job or raising children (unlike myself). There is something valuable about learning from

Christians who are living as faithful followers of Christ in a different situation than the one in which I find myself. Girls’ night out gives us the opportunity to do just that. Friendships form naturally in the process.

This is an event that the women on campus look forward to, and it has been a blessing to many of us. Personally, I have deepened friendships and been blessed by my interactions with the other women who participate. As a first-year M.Div. student, it is a special time for me. However, I know I am not the only one who appreciates Nancy and Charlotte for making it happen each month. I hope that the HST girls’ night out is a regular event on our campus for a long time to come.

Macy Johnson
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Renewal in Memphis *continued from Page 1*

of HST. The rich fall colors are something I haven’t seen in 21 years. I enjoyed reading course material and reflecting upon the characteristics of God or thinking about a specific challenge in ministry. I felt God’s presence as he heard my prayers.

The time has not only been a great blessing to me but also to my family. My 16-year-old daughter, Brielle, was born in Thailand and has never attended school in America. She was quite apprehensive about moving into a new school at Harding Academy of Memphis her junior year, knowing that other friendships would already be established and she might have a hard time fitting in.

Yet from day one Brielle was greeted with great warmth and open arms. The students reached out to her and made her one of their own. The administration, starting with President Trent Williamson as well as each teacher, helped her make the difficult transition so that she not only survived but also thrived.

My wife, Michelle, made new friends both on campus and at church. Even though we are just a “few” years older than the average student, we were invited into their apartments and out to eat. Encouraging devotionals and fun game nights were a weekly part of our fellowship with the other students. We placed membership with the

Church of Christ at White Station and found a wonderful place to worship. Michelle enjoyed friendships with ladies in a weekly Bible study as well as in an exercise group.

This experience at HST has revitalized me for the work to which God has called me. I was not looking to leave the mission field; I just needed a safe place to have Sabbath rest, reflect upon the journey, and learn from godly men and women that I might be more prepared to move forward in his kingdom mission. God has answered my many prayers through this exceptional school in Memphis. I am forever indebted.

David Allen
(david@allenmission.com)

2015 Society of Biblical Literature Conference Held

Before attending the annual Society of Biblical Literature and the American Academy of Religion (SBL-AAR) meeting in Atlanta this past November, one of my peers described the event as a “Star Trek” convention for religious and biblical scholars. While the social unseemliness of some of the attendees was perhaps a good parallel, the excitement and giddiness over topics many would consider too tedious were very much also a part of the experience.

One of my peers described the event as a “Star Trek” convention for religious and biblical scholars.

The conference is in many ways a student’s dream. This annual meeting attracts around 10,000 attendees to feature the latest research in the field, to foster networking, and to discuss issues concerning the future of the field. During the three and a half day event, numerous sessions are offered on an incredible number of topics — enough so that the program book is indeed a book — normally during three time slots a day.

SBL, the oldest and largest international and interdisciplinary organization devoted to the study of the Bible, offered sessions ranging from “Historical Jesus” to “Philology in Hebrew Studies,” from “Early Jewish-Christian Relations” to “Homiletics and Biblical Studies,” with everything in between, including ses-

sions on nearly each book/section of the Bible. There were more than 150 topics in all. AAR is an organization devoted to religious studies more broadly, especially in terms of world religions and their theologies. They offered sessions on topics concerning all major world religions, science and faith dialogue, ethical responses to social issues such as terrorism and the current concern over police brutality, numerous sub-topics in systematic theology, histori-

cal theology, ethnotheology and more. These two organizations typically hold their annual meetings together so that members of one may attend events from either.

On our first night we heard N. T. Wright and two other scholars discuss the need for scholars with faith commitments to forge a new paradigm for studying biblical history since modern scholarship normally assumes a naturalistic view of history in which God is eliminated from the picture. It was remarkable to see such great minds refining each other in front of a crowd of at least several hundred, and it inspired us in our own studies, reminding us of the importance of our learning.

We heard HST’s very own Lance Hawley present a fresh interpretation of Job 30:1-8. One of my peers heard

Jürgen Moltmann, one of the 20th century’s greatest theologians (who is now nearly 90 years old!), speak in a session. Indeed, the annual meeting is the place to find the world’s top scholars in the field — the archaeologists who dig and discover, the scholars who have translated the Bible into English for us, and those who write the textbooks we use for our classes at HST. It was an amazing experience to sit in sessions with other scholars and learn from some of the best.

The annual meeting was a great time to network with other students and professors. I met students from Asbury Theological Seminary, Yale University, Johns Hopkins University, University of Aberdeen (Scotland) and more. Another high point of the event was Sunday morning worship with attendees from the churches of Christ who currently teach at or attend various programs across the country. It was encouraging to see old mentors and peers and to meet new ones. It was also encouraging to see the great number of those in my own religious tradition who are committed both to faith and to the highest level of scholarship.

For any student wishing to attend in the future, here’s some advice: register, book hotels and (if necessary) buy plane tickets early as you can save several hundred dollars this way. For more information, visit sbl-site.org.

Ryan Repogle
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Harding School of Theology challenges Christian leaders to develop deeper faith in God and higher standards of ministry and scholarship.

HST Online

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- Locate Memphis-area churches: hst.edu/directory
- Find a ministry job: hst.edu/ministry-jobs
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New Certificate Begun in Church-Based Counseling

“I wish I knew more about helping people in difficult life situations.” This is a comment I often hear from ministers and church leaders. Many church leaders, because of their ministry position, shoulder the responsibility for reaching out to hurting people. Other mature Christians help others based on their natural gifts of listening and caring.

The study of counseling can help us understand people better: personality traits, life experiences, family backgrounds and patterns, spirituality, and culture. Understanding these things can help us minister to them in more effective ways as we follow in the footsteps of Je-

sus as he cared for the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of people.

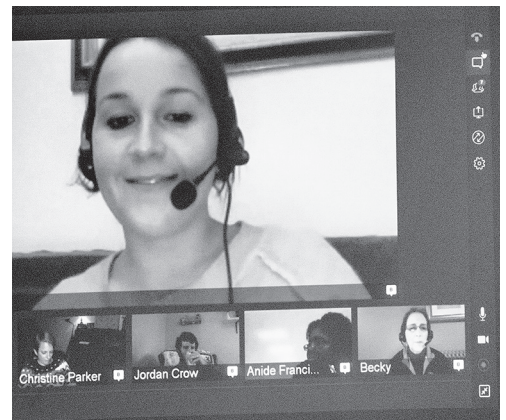
Our most important gift in serving people is our presence with them as an extension of God’s comfort. Paul describes God as the father of compassion, who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others with that same comfort (2 Cor. 1:3-4). Bringing God’s grace to people in difficult situations is a high calling.

We are responding to this calling by offering a new Certificate in Church-based Counseling (CCC) for church leaders who recognize the need for further training in their people-helping skills. The CCC incorporates seven

of our core counseling classes that would be helpful to church leaders in their ministries. These courses involve learning specific counseling skills; understanding parenting and family issues; serving in marriage and family counseling situations; engaging in conflict management; and intervening in addiction, grief and crisis counseling issues.

The entire certificate can be completed as a distance student through our new streaming live interactive classroom. If you are interested in growing your counseling talents, contact Matt Carter, admissions director, at 901-432-7744.

Dr. Ed Gray
(egray@hst.edu)



New Streaming Live Interactive Classroom for HST

For years, HST has worked to provide quality graduate education for students across the country and around the world. For decades, HST operated extension sites in places like Detroit, Chicago and Atlanta. We have offered (and still do) one-week intensive courses and one-weekend-per-month courses. We were one of the first schools among churches of Christ to offer classes online.

Beginning January 2016, HST is offering counseling courses in a streaming live interactive classroom (SLIC) and making the Master of Arts in Counseling (M.A.C.) available to distance students. These distance students will attend weekly classes remotely along with our local students. They will participate in live, synchronous class discussions along with students in the physical classroom.

With this streaming format, students will appear on a screen at the front of the class. When the professor calls on one of them, they will be enlarged on the screen, and the camera is situated so that the local students will be facing the one who is speaking. This allows for more nuanced communication as both the speaker and listeners can see facial expressions and other body language. Responding to a professor's questions and illustrations or asking your own questions about the material being taught is essen-

tially like being in the room.

In the orientation session, students attended from Arkansas to Albania with multiple locations in

feedback from both peers and the professor.

HST is excited to offer our M.A. in Counseling and our new Certificate in

HST is excited to offer our M.A. in Counseling and our new Certificate in Church-based Counseling to distance students through this live classroom experience.

between. The potential for distance students is tremendous. This live-streaming, interactive format allows us to include students in our classroom that cannot come to our campus weekly yet want to participate in a real-time classroom setting. These distance students will also be able to participate in classroom leadership. In many counseling courses, for example, students research a topic and present their findings in the classroom. Our distance students will be able to present slides and videos to the class just as the local students will do. They will also receive immediate

Church-based Counseling to distance students through this live classroom experience. Depending on one's goals, a person may take these courses for graduate credit or audit. If taken for graduate credit, these courses can also be applied to other HST degree programs. Classes meet for a three-hour block of time each week on our regular HST schedule. For more information about these programs, visit hst.edu/counseling. For admissions information, connect with Matt Carter, admissions director, at mrcarter@hst.edu or 901-432-7744.

Matt Carter
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BRIEFS

Alumni Awards and Honors

David Clint Burnett (M.Div., 2012) was awarded the Biblical Archaeology Society (BAS) Dig Scholarship in summer 2015. He participated in an excavation in Huqoq, an ancient village located in Lower Galilee, along with other archaeologists, students and volunteers through the scholarship. BAS offers scholarships of \$1,500 every year to a select number of people who would otherwise not be able to participate in an archaeological excavation. Burnett was one of 19 recipients of the 2015 BAS scholarship. (See *Across The Bridge* for a link to Burnett's essay describing his experience.)

Correction: A few facts were omitted or misprinted about Michael Summers in the "Alumni Awards and Honors" column on page 7 of Vol. 56, No. 2, the fall 2015 issue of *The Bridge*. Michael Summers (M.Th., 1982; D.Min. program) has been promoted to the rank of colonel (not chaplain colonel). Additionally, Summers has not recently retired (as previously reported), but he has moved to Leavenworth, Kansas, with his wife, Morrisa, to serve as the minister in the Leavenworth Church of Christ.

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See related story on Page 1.

FINAL WORD

Learn More

Want to learn more about a topic mentioned in *The Bridge*? Check out the following resources:

American Academy of Religion. www.aaarweb.org

Gray, Edward A. "Leaders Who Last: 12 Conversations," *12 Conversations*. www.12conversations.com/leaders-pdfs/

Hawley, Lance. "Linguistic Markers of Polar Interrogatives in Biblical Hebrew," *Hebrew Studies*, 56 (2015): 7-22.

Hiestand, Gerald and Todd A. Wilson.

The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

Moltmann, Jurgen. *Sun of Righteousness, Arise! God's Future for Humanity and the Earth*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010.

Society of Biblical Literature. www.sbl-site.org

Vanhoozer, Kevin J., and Owen Strachan. *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision*. Grand Rapids,

MI: Baker Academic, 2015.

Wright, N.T. *Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did, and Why It Matters*. New York: HarperOne, 2011.

For help in accessing, borrowing, purchasing or using any of these resources, feel free to contact us at the HST Library at 901-761-1354.

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