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# The Bridge

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*The Lord of the Lord  
is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.*  
— Psalm 19:7





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## The Bridge

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LESSONS LEARNED



Gregory H. Muse

Rachel Hemphill

# The Church's Partnership

BY GREGORY H. MUSE, DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

The Apostle Paul is a role model for evangelism and our prototype for godly church leadership. No one, including Paul, saw it coming. He had to overcome a notorious pre-conversion past. His powerful personality must have been overwhelming in small church settings. Still, no one in the first century church seriously challenged Paul's credentials to speak. Why is that?

Paul identifies himself in Acts 22:3 as a student of Gamaliel, a famous and celebrated teacher among the Jews. Paul's critics and defenders started from the assumption that he was well-educated. Surely, Paul's

knowledge was a critical factor in his selection by the Lord for ministry to the early church.

HST endeavors to educate the next generation of church ministers, teachers and leaders. With Paul as our example, we strive to provide the scriptural foundation on which students build a lifetime of service to the church and God's kingdom. The church is a partner in our mission by supporting students and HST financially.

Your church can be a partner, too. Please contact us at [hstadvancement@hst.edu](mailto:hstadvancement@hst.edu) for giving options, or call us at 901-432-7727 to ask how your church can help educate this century's Paul.

# Reflections FROM THE Dean

BY DR. ALLEN BLACK, DEAN

Harding School of Theology’s mission is to “challenge Christian leaders to develop deeper faith in God and higher standards of ministry and scholarship.” HST exists to serve Christ and his church. We have provided local churches throughout the U.S. and the world with preachers, associate ministers, youth ministers, missionaries, counselors, education ministers and other servants. We have also enhanced the preparation of many who do not have a salaried role but serve churches in leadership, teaching and other responsibilities.

Two recent graduates serve as outstanding examples of those whom HST has sent out as preachers.



Stephanie A. Davis

Jerrard Davis

Jerrard Davis (M.Div., 2010) is from Ohio but did his undergraduate work at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Having majored in religion and philosophical studies, he came to HST in 2003 with plans to prepare for a Ph.D. in philosophy and a teaching career. When he got to Memphis, he found a church home at the Midtown Church of Christ where alumnus and board member Dr. Harold Redd (M.Th., 1985) preaches.

In 2004 Davis felt called to preach and began to assist Redd at Midtown in youth ministry, teaching and preaching, and developing as a ministry leader. He also began receiving a special scholarship for African-American students, a scholarship raised by Redd in honor of his predecessor in preaching, M. A. Hull. As a part of that program, Redd mentored Davis on a weekly basis.

Davis dated and went on to marry Stephanie Brown (M.A.C., 2017) around this time, and Stephanie began pursuing an M.A. in Counseling at HST. She did office work for Midtown while she and Davis finished their degrees and afterward as Davis continued ministering at Midtown and Raleigh Springs.

Beginning in fall 2004, Davis served various ministry roles under Redd’s tutelage throughout his work at HST and beyond. Although he was a full-time student his first year at HST, he slowed down his classwork for ministry work and graduated in 2010.

After serving at Midtown and Raleigh Springs for seven more years, he and Stephanie moved to Spencer, Oklahoma, in July of last year. Davis is the preacher at the Spencer Church of Christ. Redd was instrumental in linking Davis with the preaching role at Spencer. Many years before, Dr. Clyde Muse Sr., a former preacher at Spencer, had been instrumental in Redd’s move to the Memphis area.

It is wonderful to look back and see the providential guidance of God in Davis’ life from fall 2003 when he came to HST. We are pleased



Jeff Montgomery

Dr. Allen Black

to have been a part of his development as a preacher — both for his many years at Midtown with Redd and for his new work in Oklahoma.

Frank Bolling (M.Div., 2017) was raised in Georgia. In 2006 he went to Harding in Searcy. Frank had known he wanted to preach since he was 11. He double-majored in Bible and business, which took five years. While in Searcy, Bolling met Megan Youngblood and stayed an extra year in Searcy to marry Megan when she finished there in 2012.

Bolling enrolled in HST’s Master of Divinity program in fall 2012. At that time the Highland Church of Christ, where I attend, was looking for an intern in the areas of preaching and adult Bible school. We were looking for an incoming HST student who could intern for a few years working with our preachers, Chris Altrock (D.Min., 2001; M.Div., 1994) and Eric Gentry, and in the Bible School area with me.

From my first meeting with Bolling, I saw he was a great candidate for Highland’s internship. We immediately pursued him. Over the next three years, he attended the ministry staff meetings and elders/staff meetings regularly, taught many Bible classes, preached periodically, met with Chris and Eric weekly for mentoring, and performed many behind-the-scenes services for the church. He demonstrated many gifts in ministry and did everything with the heart of a servant.

Bolling also participated heavily in the life of the school, including serving in 2014-15 as president of the Student Association.

After three years of full-time schoolwork and interning at Highland, Bolling was hired in August 2015 to preach for the Park Avenue Church of Christ in Memphis. He reduced his classwork to one course per semester for the next two years and graduated in spring 2017. Bolling and Megan now have two sons, Micah and Riley. I continue to hear commendations of Bolling’s work at Park Avenue and hope he will be in Memphis for many years to come.

Davis and Bolling are great representatives of HST’s relationship with churches. Both have felt a call to preach — one for years before he came here, the other after being in our program for a while. Both received mentoring and experience in preaching and other aspects of ministry while they were here in Memphis. Both did this in Memphis churches with strong relationships to HST — Midtown and Highland. Both have graduated and are now preaching and serving in exemplary ways in other churches.

The faculty and staff are grateful to have been part of the preparation of both of these fine young preachers. We look forward to what they will do in the kingdom for years to come.



Rachel Hemphill

Frank Bolling

# Preaching in Social Chaos

BY STEVEN T. GAINES (M.DIV., 2015)

So much of what I learned at HST strengthened my involvement in ministry. I am especially grateful Dave Bland taught me about prophetic preaching, which I now define as speaking from Scripture to call for change.

To help us communicate faithfully in this time of social chaos, I offer this brief analysis of a prophetic sermon preached by John Scott, who taught at HST and served with the Church of Christ at White Station in Memphis. That April 1968 sermon, “The Mind of Christ,” responded to Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination and called the congregation to repentance. The sermon, the text of which is on the congregation’s website, can teach us about ministry. Before we get to that, let’s consider the historical context.

Memphian sanitation workers in the late 1960s were mostly black, labored long hours in filthy and unsafe situations with flawed equipment and inadequate pay, weren’t allowed in the office building to drink water or to wash their hands, and complained about the conditions for about five years but were ignored by city officials. After a defective garbage compacting truck killed two workers, more than a thousand of their colleagues went on strike. King traveled to Memphis in 1968 to assist the striking sanitation workers, and there he died April 4.

The city experienced chaos after King’s death. Riots rocked the city. Properties were damaged and destroyed. Interracial relations became even more tense than they previously had been. Accusations flew in multiple directions, and many Memphians were confused about what had happened and what would happen next.

The confusion and chaos tried Scott’s soul through a bewildering combination of obligation and hesitancy to speak — a dilemma with biblical roots. He grounded his words in the tradition of prophets and apostles, and he said refusing to speak was infeasible. He could not resist a call to preach prophetically.

Scott claimed Jesus was a servant to all people; he was a person of compassion; and he served marginalized, despised outcasts. Three hindrances, according to Scott, threatened Christians’ willingness to follow Jesus in caring for people whom the establishment despised.

First was pride and its close relative, self-righteousness. In response to those sins, Scott prescribed self-denial, citing Matthew 16:24. Then he quoted Luke 1:52 and referenced Luke 20:46-47 condemning rich people who enjoyed luxuries at the expense of people suffering poverty.

The second hindrance was hypocrisy. After quoting Luke 3:11, Scott said, “Oh it’s an easy matter to rationalize and give excuses, and say ... ‘We don’t like to face up to pride, and hypocrisy, or we don’t like to have to deny ourselves in certain ways.’” He spurred his listeners to admit the reign of the rich in their city.

The third hindrance to compassion was one social group’s supremacy over another. Scott quoted Matthew 25:35-36 and said, “people fail to see Christ in the lowliest and so seek out a rationale in resisting the gospel saying, ‘Lord, this doesn’t apply to me.’ ... Pick out the least in society then, and we’ll see ... where we’ve been

passing over an obligation and a responsibility.”

Scott equated refusal to care for those considered low with resistance to the gospel. He quoted Luke 6:24 and indicated listeners tended not to perceive themselves as rich. Scott countered that tendency and was careful not to condemn his congregation without condemning himself. Revealing the economic animosity between races in Memphis, he cited Luke 6:25 and Matthew 5:44 and pushed the congregation to localize their ethics of love.

Instead of presenting an abstract love or a universalized compassion, he localized the topic, not allowing his listeners to ignore the challenge as inapplicable to them. He led them to acknowledge their participation in the Memphian discord and their responsibility to respond as agents of mercy. He clarified mercy was an ideal not yet achieved by the preacher or the congregation; he called the congregation, including himself, to live out their biblical commitments.

Scott said three times “something is wrong” with a form of Christianity unable to foster peace in a culture of conflict and violence. He continued, “The power is in the gospel. The power is in Jesus Christ, but it gets watered down ... There is something dreadfully wrong with our policemen still having to wear their riot hats in the streets even after the upheaval is all over. It means that it isn’t all over.”

It still isn’t over. Fifty years after King’s assassination, social chaos still plagues his nation. Public demonstrations protest systemic inequalities, and opponents of such cries deny social problems and condemn activists’ strategies.

In this time of social chaos, preachers in congregational ministry choose from four communicative options: to avoid controversial topics; to contribute to social injustice; to challenge the status quo regardless of any threat to congregational peace or job stability; or to speak prophetically while also practicing pastoral sensitivity, hoping to spark valuable conversations that may result in changes of perspective, conviction and action.

Scott chose the fourth option. He spoke boldly but not strongly enough to rip apart his congregation, even though a few members left. Scott knew his people, their concerns, and what they had been discussing. He spoke as a member of the congregation, not as someone above the people. When he challenged the congregation, he challenged himself as well.

His task was not easy. The prophetic-pastoral ratio was and is difficult; the most faithful and effective ratio is different for every congregation, context and communicator and demands prayerful discernment.

*Steven T. Gaines is a graduate of HST, preaches with Cordova Community Church of Christ in Memphis and has finished coursework for a Ph.D. at the University of Memphis, where his adviser is prophetic rhetoric scholar Andre Johnson. Gaines is available to speak on the topic of ministry and race and may be reached at [steven.gaines@gmail.com](mailto:steven.gaines@gmail.com). You may access the text of John Scott’s sermon at [cocws.org/real-faith/john-scott-sermon](http://cocws.org/real-faith/john-scott-sermon).*





Ralph Richardson, Ananias Moses and Kay Richardson stand in front of Holmes Road Church of Christ on Sunday, March 18.

Rachel Hemphill

# Congregational Connections

BY RALPH RICHARDSON, HST ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

In 1969 my family and I moved to Memphis for my employment with an engineering firm and became members of the Holmes Road Church of Christ. My first relationship with someone who was a student of then Harding Graduate School of Religion was with a young man from Texas, Ron Robbins (M.A., 1972), when he placed membership with the congregation. Ron was very serious about his studies while he prepared himself in pursuit of his goal of sharing the good news of Jesus in India. While immersed in his demanding studies, he also was service-oriented and became instrumental in helping Holmes Road establish the West Shelby Drive congregation, known today as Boulevard Church of Christ. Ron was the first of many young men and women who over the years served side by side with our members while pursuing their graduate studies.

My son Ryan (D.Min., 2013; M.Div., 1997) was fortunate to study and graduate with a Doctor of Ministry degree while serving as a youth minister with Holmes Road, a campus minister at Purdue University, and a member of our ministry staff for 10 years. I got to observe first hand his positive relationship with the faculty as well as the demands of his course work while serving the Holmes Road congregation.

Dave Hogan (M.Th., 1987) and Bubba Cook (M.Div., 2000) established their relationship with the congregation while students and are two of our current missionaries to Singapore and Romania. Two of our current members, Andrew Taylor (M.Div., 2017), who just recently completed his degree, and Ananias Moses (M.Div.), who will receive his degree this spring, are planning within the year to go to serve in Uganda and Botswana respectively.

Because our congregation helps provide financial support to HST, our members have been eligible to audit courses for a

nominal fee. I, as well as several others of our congregation, have taken advantage of this opportunity to further our knowledge of the scriptures and broaden our service skills for very little cost.

Holmes Road has nine members who are students working toward a degree at HST. I estimate that over the years more than 50 have served with the congregation while pursuing their graduate studies. I think you can readily see that the congregation has been richly blessed by their service with us. In addition, these students' presence has helped provide the congregation vitality, ministry skills and fellowship opportunities with those from different parts of our country and the world. Holmes Road has certainly been blessed by our relationship with HST.



Mary Ellen White

Andrew and Lydia Taylor pose with their children Josiah, 4, and Zoe, 3, at Holmes Road Church of Christ on Sunday, March 25.



*“HST challenges Christian leaders to develop deeper faith in God and higher standards of ministry and scholarship.”*



## Ministry

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Faculty** **Dr. Carlus Gupton** continued interim preaching and consulting at Oxford (Mississippi) Church of Christ. He presented a training in “Conflict Skills and Strategies” at Southwest Church of Christ in Jonesboro, Arkansas, on Feb. 16-17. Additionally, he conducted consultation on empowerment to the leadership team at Goodman Oaks Church of Christ in Southaven, Mississippi, on March 23-24.

**Dr. Lance Hawley** presented a lecture on the Psalms titled “They Hymned Their King in Strains Divine” at the Jack P. Lewis Christian Studies Seminar for the Church of Christ at White Station in Memphis on Jan. 20.

**Dr. Everett Huffard** conducted a leadership workshop in Melbourne, Australia, on March 24 and spoke for the Easter Retreat for the Brisbane church March 30-31. He spoke for Mission Sunday on Feb. 4 at Sylvan Hills Church of Christ in Little Rock, Arkansas. He also consulted for churches in Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky and Montana from January through April. Additionally, he preached at Millington Church of Christ on Feb. 11, March 18 and April 29.

**Dr. Mark Powell** taught a six-week series, “Living Spirit,” for the Practical Matters Class at Highland Church of Christ in Memphis from January through February. He also preached at the Keizer Church of Christ in Oregon in February.

**Students** **Cana Moore** (M.Div.) was featured in the article “No Matter How Broken We May Be” by Erik Tryggstad in the *Christian Chronicle* on Feb. 28. The article is part of a series highlighting responses to a survey conducted by the publication, “A Closer Look at Churches of Christ in the U.S.”

## Scholarship

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Alumni** **Dr. Christopher Shrock** (M.A., 2007) published an article, “Mere Christianity and the Moral Argument for the Existence of God,” in *Sehnsucht: The C.S. Lewis Journal*, Vol. 11. This article was developed from his M.A. research at Harding School of Theology.

**Dr. Eric Suddeath** (M.A.C., 2015) graduated from the University of Mississippi with a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision on May 12.

**Faculty** **Drs. Allen Black, Lance Hawley and Mark Powell** attended the annual meeting of Society of Biblical Literature/American Academy of Religion in Boston in November 2017.

**Dr. Carlus Gupton** attended the resident portion of coach training with Creative Results Management in Seattle on Feb. 26-March 2. This training is a part of accreditation with the International Coach Federation.

**Dr. Everett Huffard** spoke at the Teachers of Missions Workshop in Dallas, Texas, on Feb. 23. He also spoke at an APEDS conference in Brisbane, Australia, on March 27-29. He attended a conference in Malta on missions in the East on March 2-5. Additionally, he presented the lecture “Is Allah God?” at the 17th Annual Stone Campbell Journal Conference in Johnson City, Tennessee, on April 6.

**Dr. Mark Powell** presented four lectures on “Deep Things of God: The Mystery of the Trinity and the Christian Life” for the Lifelong Learning Seminar at the Campbell Institute for Theological Education in Keizer, Oregon, in February.

# Notes from a Novice

BY JACKSON HOUSE, M.DIV. STUDENT

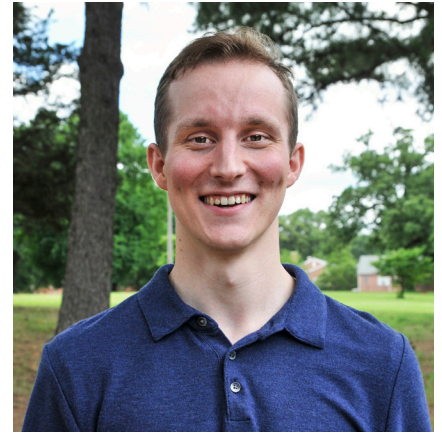
During my time as a student at HST, I have always looked for ways to bridge the gap between the local congregation and the academic world. For my two-year apprenticeship, I worked with the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ in Little Rock, Arkansas. My main task at this congregation was to teach rigorous Bible classes that helped people to engage the text on a deep level. In every class I taught, I looked for ways to integrate what I was learning in my classes at HST into the life of the congregation.

For whatever reason, I never felt like my ministry was affecting my classroom experience as much as my HST experience was affecting my ministry. This all changed when I was given the opportunity to go to Athens, Greece, in summer 2017. I went as part of a group from Pleasant Valley to work with the Omonia Church of Christ in the center of Athens. This church has a thriving refugee ministry, and we did everything from teaching English during the day to having home Bible studies with refugees at night. This trip not only completely transformed my vision of what ministry might look like for me in the future but also changed my final year as an HST student.

When I returned to Memphis, I felt like I never quite settled back in to the rhythm of normal campus life again. I quickly began making preparations to return to Athens, so only five months after I initially went to Greece, I returned to Athens, and I have not looked back.

My work with the Omonia church now is much different than my work with the Pleasant Valley church. Teaching rigorous Bible classes becomes more difficult when there is a language gap. Preaching sermons that really connect to daily life is difficult when there is a culture gap. But it is precisely these challenges that enrich my life as a graduate student. I am no longer teaching Bible classes to people who have grown up in the church; I am interacting with people who are meeting Christians for the first time. Working with refugees in Greece has changed how I view the relationship between the church and the academic world, but one thing which remains constant is the way that the last four years as a student at HST has influenced my day to day ministry.

I am in my final two classes of my M.Div. program. This semester I am taking Hebrew Poetry and Ministry Roles and Relationships. The relevance of both of these courses to my ministry is equal in my mind and the mindset I bring each week to these courses is radically shaped by my ministry. I am grateful I had the opportunity to experience ministry first within the framework of the apprenticeship at HST that gave me categories to interpret and process my experiences. I have no doubt that the things I learned in the classroom for the last four years will be invaluable to ministry whether it is in Little Rock, Arkansas or Athens, Greece.



Heather Gould

Jackson House

## News & Events



60th Annual Commencement  
May 12



Intensive Course Week  
June 4-9



Intensive Course Week  
July 9-14

HST Fund Art Sale  
June 1-2

Intensive Course Week  
June 11-16



Jackson House stands with his friend Mohammed at Ritsona Refugee Camp in Athens, Greece in January.

## DEGREE PROGRAMS

- M.A. Master of Arts
- M.A.C.M. Master of Arts in Christian Ministry
- M.Div. Master of Divinity
- D.Min. Doctor of Ministry
- C.S.L. Certificate in Spiritual Leadership



# Lessons Learned



BY CATHERINE GREEN, HST COURSE AUDITOR

For several years, I heard of HST's church audit program through announcements from pulpits and church bulletins. I came to respect HST's professors in congregational Bible class programs, and my interest in the audit classes grew. My schedule, however, as first a graduate student and as then a faculty member kept me from signing up for the classes.

Growing up in the Harding University community I was accustomed to Bible teaching in academic settings and in the church. The teachers of my campus Bible classes were preachers and teachers whom I heard from the pulpit at the congregation I attended.

With a change in my work schedule, I can now participate in audit classes.

Dr. Mark Powell taught the history of Christianity class, the first class I attended. Larry, my husband, was in this

class, and we attended the continuation of this class. Understanding the effect of culture, history, politics and leaders on Christianity added to our understanding of the church today. The class on the Trinity taught us to think more about the relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The class on ethics and character formation was useful to me because my teaching assignments included ethics as a topic for class discussion. Ethics from a Christian viewpoint added to my understanding.

Dr. Richard Oster taught the class on Galatians and Romans; Larry joined me for classes in Acts, New Testament Theology and Revelation. As members of Oster's Sunday Bible class at the Church of Christ at White Station, we appreciated his ability to incorporate his knowledge and scholarship. The Revelation class this spring is our fourth iteration of it with him, and we have

even more to learn from his capable scholarship on this book.

Dr. Allen Black taught the book of John. We continue to use his teaching as we interact with friends and neighbors.

My respect for HST has grown as I learned from professors and watched as they interact with their students. It is encouraging to get to know HST's students and see their dedication.

Thank you, HST, for providing these audit classes which have blessed my life and added to my ability to work in the Memphis community.

*Catherine Green previously taught Business Communications at Southwest Tennessee Community College and the University of Memphis. She currently teaches Business Communications online for Freed-Hardeman University as well as Managing People and Organizations for Harding's online MBA program.*