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Harding School of Theology

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Spring 2006

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Harding School of Theology

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# the Bridge

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*Holiness*



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## Yahweh, Creation and the Way of Holiness

**W**e cannot contemplate the holiness of God apart from an equally serious contemplation of our response to such holiness. Thus, we affirm a fundamental aspect of holiness — it manifests itself from the divine side in a relational way, and thereby requires of humankind an equally relational response.

As we contemplate the holiness of God, we are pursuing obedience to a relationally based mandate from Yahweh to the people of God in every generation: “Be holy, for I Yahweh your God am holy!”

The experience of Yahweh’s “holiness” draws us as His people to respond, both in worship and in our moral walk. But how shall we understand such “holiness”? Even more, how can we respond in obedience to this mandate?

The contexts for the attestations of the word *holiness* in the Semitic world outside of Israel are always ritual or cultic rather than ethical or moral. Israel uniquely con-

tributed to a reshaping of the concept of “holiness” by blending three things: (1) the phenomena which accompanied her encounter with the splendor of Yahweh’s transcendence, (2) the requirements of the cultic and ritual sphere which made an encounter with the Transcendent possible and survivable, and (3) a profound ethical dimension of the “holy” and of “holiness” which from the very beginning of Israel’s public life was defined by the relational nature and character of Yahweh expressed on her behalf.

This unique blending was informed by Israel’s creation faith which was predicated first upon her theological convictions about the nature and character of Yahweh, who alone was her God, and upon a view of the structure of the cosmos and of the basis of human knowledge which was grounded in an ethic derived from Yahweh’s character. Thus, there developed in Israel, as nowhere else in the ancient Near East, a well-defined vision of “holiness”

which circumscribed all of life (worship and morality) to be lived in the Presence of Yahweh whose relational character and nature provided an unambiguous agenda for this life-way.

Ancient Israel affirmed that the cosmos brims with divine Presence which reveals a Divine Word and provides for humankind a medium in which we “live and



move, and have our very being.” Israel further affirmed that as transcendent as Yahweh is, His immanence is nevertheless constantly at work in the world and in man-made cultures to reveal something of His Glory, His person, His superlative character, and His will — i.e., His holiness. Thus, *Torah* for Moses, “the Knowledge of God” for Hosea and Jeremiah, and the “Fear of the Lord” for the sages were each a function of and reflex of the “holiness” of God.

*continued on Page 3*

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## Dean's Note Kingdom Vistas

I do not remember a semester as packed (some might say over-extended!) as the past semester. One blessing of so much activity is seeing many places where God is working. Here are some encouraging vistas of the kingdom I had from places where I have preached or lectured.

- ▶ **Local churches make a difference.** While teaching the adults at the Highway Church in Judsonia, Ark., during their VBS, I was impressed with all their work in creating different places in the world for children to visit each night and creating a world vision in their children. In a leadership workshop for the church in Fredericksburg, Va., I saw a church that has been a spiritual home for many Christians on assignment in the Washington, D.C., area. Any visitor to Westover Hills Church in Austin, Texas, would be encouraged by the global map in their reception area. It reports 63,557 advanced World Bible School lessons sent to 148 nations with 1,951 requests for baptisms. The Levy Church in North Little Rock, Ark., set a goal of \$85,000 for their annual missions ministry, but raised more than \$100,000.
- ▶ **God is building some great mission teams.** Two graduates, Drew Custer and Josh Marcum, are on a five-family mission team to Bolivia, all sponsored by a church in Brownwood, Texas. Six months prior to their departure, they developed a rigorous schedule of

training and ministry at their sending church. I have also been meeting with two mission teams at the Graduate School of Religion that are in the formation stages to go to Australia and Italy.

- ▶ **The next generation has a passion for missions.** Harding University hosted the World Mission Workshop this year, which involved 1,600 students with more than 300 signing commitment cards to do mission work. Monte Cox took his "World Religions" class at Harding University on a field trip to Chicago to interact with the religions of the world. I volunteered as a van driver and saw in these students a renewed appreciation for their life in Christ and compassion for the lost.
- ▶ **Churches of Christ are proactive in serving children and families.** The annual Christian Child and Family Services Conference, hosted by AGAPE in Memphis, invited me to speak on "Partnering With God." I saw a group of qualified, trained professionals committed to serving those in need to the glory of God.
- ▶ **The revival of church planting and local missions is on the horizon.** *Kairos*, led by Stan Granberg, hosted summits in St. Louis and Memphis on church planting. I saw a growing willingness to accept the challenge of planting new churches with a strategy that builds on the experiences of the past and faithfulness to the Word. A meeting in



HUFFARD

Minneapolis of leaders and educators within the churches of Christ convinced me that more churches are becoming "missional" within their own neighborhood.

- ▶ **Campus ministries are reaching students and transforming lives.** I enjoyed participating in the joint retreat of the campus ministries from Oregon State University and Boise State University. The spiritual leadership of the campus ministers and the transformation of these students are making a difference in the kingdom.
- ▶ **The "center of gravity" of Christianity has shifted to the southern hemisphere.** I spoke for the annual *Restoration Quarterly* breakfast at the SBL meeting in Philadelphia on "Biblical Scholarship and Global Trends." From the global vista, the typical member of the church of Christ is no longer a white southerner but an African. Churches from the global south are sending missionaries to the United States. Christianity is growing by 23,000 Christians a day (of any kind) in Africa, while North American churches lose 6,000 a day. I am encouraged and challenged by these vistas of the kingdom. I can't imagine what God really sees every day.

▶ Evertt W. Huffard  
(dean@hugsr.edu)

# Conference Dovetails with Graduate School Course

Through a cooperative arrangement with the National Conference for Youth Ministry and the Graduate School of Religion, conference participants for the past two years have been able to take a graduate course during their time at the conference.

Arriving Jan. 2 before the conference began and staying after its close, the students this year studied “The Gospel of Mark” with Dr. Allen Black.

“This is a great way for us to come to the conference we would already be at, but include a three-hour course,” said Steven Hovater, Graduate School of Religion student enrolled in the

course. Hovater is youth minister at the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ in Little Rock, Ark.

“This type of cooperative agreement is a win-win situation for the conference and for the Graduate School of Religion,” reports Mark Parker, assistant executive



HOVATER

director of the school. “The Graduate School is better able to serve its constituents, and NCYM is able to offer resources to youth ministers in a unique format.

Ultimately, churches win when their youth ministers

drink deeply from scripture in courses such as these.”

Rick O’Dell of Littleton, Colo., served as president of the NCYM and helped coordinate the graduate course. “The graduate course fits perfectly with the aims of the conference: information, inspiration and relationships,” he explains. “There is synergy between the graduate course and the conference; both are blessed in the association.”

One key to the success of this course is the participation by congregational leaders. Elders and ministers have taken the lead in providing the resources — time off and travel funds — for youth ministers to take graduate courses.

## Yahweh *continued from Page 1*

Israel, then, did not view the cosmos as though it were a value-neutral object. Rather, the ordered world and everything in it holds the potential for communicating value — value(s) which reflect the nature and character of the creator. Such a value-laden creation reflecting the creator’s values was the basis for Israel’s unique development not only of her law, worship, prophecy, wisdom, apocalyptic and ethics but also for the New Testament’s understanding of the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth (cf. Proverbs 8:22-31, John 1:1-18).

As was true of her understanding of the created order, so Israel believed that her *ethos* or her identity as the “holy people of Yahweh” — His personal possession — was indelibly shaped by His

creative fingerprints and by His superlative public actions on her behalf through which He revealed the distinctiveness of His relational nature on the world scene. Thus, at its very core, the people of God “become holy” when they live extraordinary and superlative lives — lives removed as far as possible from the vulgarity of common and profane values, priorities and practices. The standard for superlativeness is no less than the relational nature of Yahweh Himself. Thus, the values which are to manifest themselves in the lives of God’s people are to coincide with the values which God has placed within the created order, for they are also within the reach and scope of the human heart created by God (Deuteronomy 30:11-14).

For the Christian, con-

templation of God’s holiness is not merely a theological exercise. Since God’s holiness (i.e., His superlative nature) is woven into the very fabric of the universe, His people are called to live superlative and distinctive moral lives that reflect the relational values of Yahweh and of His creation. Thus, God’s people may become what Yahweh always demonstrates Himself to be in and for the world. It is in this way that we can understand and attempt to obey the mandate to “be holy, even as Yahweh your God is holy” (Leviticus 19:2).

▶ Dr. John Fortner, professor of Bible at Harding University ([jdfortner@harding.edu](mailto:jdfortner@harding.edu)) delivered the West Lectures Nov. 3, 2005, from which this essay is excerpted. Audio files of the lectures may be accessed from the news story under “Info” at [www.hugsr.edu](http://www.hugsr.edu).

## Harris and Hazelip to Speak at Ministry Forum

The annual Ministry Forum will be held April 6 on the Graduate School of Religion campus. Speakers will be Randy Harris (M.Th., 1983) of Abilene, Texas, and Dr. Harold Hazelip of Nashville, Tenn. The program this year has shifted to the evening, allowing more church leaders to participate. It will run from 3:30-9 p.m. and includes the alumni dinner.

## Research Center Dedication Slated

The new Oliver and Norma Rogers Research Center will be dedicated in a ceremony at 1:30 p.m. April 6. Friends of the Graduate School are invited to attend.

## More Youth Ministry Resources

For more youth ministry resources, see “Youth Ministry” under “Ministry” at [www.hugsr.edu](http://www.hugsr.edu).

# BRIEFS

## Faculty Publish in Festschrift

Dr. Jack Lewis, professor emeritus; Dr. John Mark Hicks, adjunct professor; and Don Meredith (M.Th., 1967), head librarian, published articles in a recent festschrift honoring Don Haymes. Lewis' article is titled "Yahweh: The God of Israel." Hicks' article is titled "Theodicy in Early Stone-Campbell Perspectives." Meredith's article is titled "Theological Doctoral Studies by Members of Churches of Christ 1904-2004." Warren Lewis and Hans Rollmann edited the festschrift.



Dr. Mike O'Neal, Oklahoma Christian University president, presents Dr. Evertt W. Huffard the Christian Servant Award.

## Huffard Receives Service Award

Dr. Evertt W. Huffard (M.Th., 1976), dean/executive director, received the Christian Servant Award from Oklahoma Christian University Jan. 23 at the university's annual lectureship.

## Faculty/Staff

# Marriage Mentoring Grows into DVD and Military Programs

**T**he "Marriage Mentoring: Twelve Conversations" program developed by Dr. Ed Gray

(M.Th., 1978), professor of counseling, gives congregations a vital resource to strengthen marriages proactively.



GRAY

By training mentoring couples through the "Marriage Mentoring: Twelve Conversations" program, congregations develop a core of healthy mentors helping support other couples, particularly ones younger than themselves.

Recently, Gray released a video training series so that congregations can implement the program on an on-going

basis. Although Gray does offer training weekends, through the DVD series, more congregations have access to the material.

In addition, Gray and Leanne Braddock (MAC, 2004) have developed "Military Marriage Mentoring," targeting the unique needs of military families. The program is similar to the original one, but is designed for a military sched-



ule and deals with issues such as staying connected when a spouse is deployed, reconnecting after re-entry, and spiritual support during times of separation.

In December, Gray and Braddock traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet



BRADDOCK

with top Army, Army National Guard, Navy and Marine chaplains to present the program.

Gray and Braddock plan to incorporate Graduate School of Religion alumni serving as chaplains into a pilot program for field-testing.

Gray may be reached at [egray@hugr.edu](mailto:egray@hugr.edu). Braddock ([cero5@midsouth.rr.com](mailto:cero5@midsouth.rr.com)) is a retired Navy commander who was stationed with the family services department during her studies at the Graduate School of Religion.

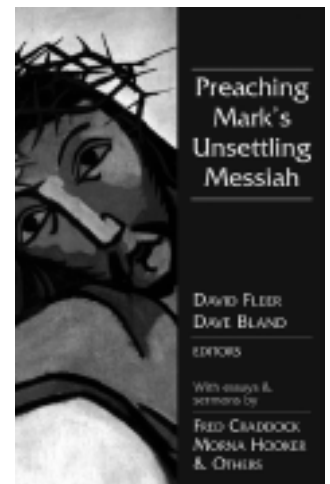
# Bland's Preaching Series Gets Next Installment

**D**r. Dave Bland, professor of homiletics, and David Flee of Rochester College have published the next installment in their series of books on the art of preaching. Chalice Press will release *Preaching Mark's Unsettling*

*Messiah* in March.

This work, as with all the works in the series, includes diverse essays and example sermons illustrating the concepts discussed in the chapters.

*Preaching Mark's Unsettling Messiah* features contributions by Fred Craddock and Morna Hooker.





# Priests Influence Generations to Come

**T**wenty-two days before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Earl and Willene Priest were married, and Earl found himself called to serve in World War II. This young couple, swept up in the story of their new life together and America's involvement in the



EARL PRIEST

war, could not have known the impact their lives would have for generations to come.

Years before, Earl attended Harding in Searcy as an undergraduate and studied Bible under J.N. Armstrong. "I learned more Bible in three semesters at Harding than I had my entire life growing up," he recalls.

His education at Harding was possible only because of the generosity of donors to the scholarship program. "I didn't have any money," he explains. "It was during the Depression, and my father was a farmer." Little did he know that the scholarships he received in the 1930s would prefigure his own contributions to future students in the 21st century.

During the Korean War, Priest was called back to active duty and was stationed in Providence, R.I. The preacher at his church was Jack Lewis, a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard University. Later, both Priest and Lewis would find themselves in Memphis. Both have

been deeply involved in the work of the Graduate School of Religion and served together as elders at the White Station congregation.

When their only child was killed in an automobile accident on his way to college, the Priests began an endowed pre-med scholarship at Harding in their son's memory. They established the fund in 1969, and each year a student meeting the criteria they set receives a scholarship from the fund.

In 1946 the Priests moved to Memphis, where Earl worked for an advertising agency. Later he served as vice president for St. Francis Hospital. While in Memphis the Priests came to know the work of the Graduate School of Religion and its mission to provide advanced training for ministry.

"We need more qualified teachers and preachers," Earl says. "Harding University



WILLENE PRIEST

Graduate School of Religion does an outstanding job of training them. I

know this," he adds, "because I know the people leading the school. All of the deans have been friends of mine."

Earl has a unique place in the role of donors to the Graduate School of Religion since he gives in four distinct ways. He is a member of the Leadership Council, the group providing at least

\$1,200 per year to the annual scholarship fund.

In 2004 Earl set up an endowed scholarship in honor of Willene after she died. The endowed fund will provide scholarships for future ministers until the Lord comes again. Who knows how many generations will be blessed by this endowed gift?

"I want Willene's name to be remembered," Earl says. "And an endowment allows me to provide lasting scholarships."

The endowment was established with a charitable gift annuity, which means that Earl's gift to the school will ensure him a consistent income as long as he lives. Charitable gift annuities allow donors to give an important gift, enjoy significant tax benefits, and receive guaranteed income at a rate that typically beats bank CD rates.

The final way Earl will give to the school is through an estate bequest. By leaving the Graduate School of Religion in his will, he has the ability to bless future teachers and preachers more than he might be able to otherwise.

Through annual scholarships, endowment gifts, charitable gift annuities and bequests, the Priests will support innumerable ministers. In turn, each minister will impact congregations around the world.

That young couple who married in 1941 had no idea that their lives would have such a significant, lasting impact.

## Ways to Support Students

- ▶ *Annual Scholarship Gifts* – meet the most immediate needs
- ▶ *Endowed Gifts* – provide perpetual scholarships
- ▶ *Charitable gift annuities* – give donors guaranteed income typically better than bank CDs
- ▶ *Estate Bequests* – wills and life insurance policies let donors leave a significant legacy

For information about how you can support generations of ministers, contact Larry Arick (larick@hugsr.edu).

# BRIEFS

## Powell Defends Dissertation

Mark Powell, assistant professor of systematic theology, successfully defended his doctoral dissertation *Papal Infallibility as Religious Epistemology: Manning, Newman, Dulle and Küng* at Perkins School of Theology on Nov. 29, 2005.



POWELL

## Annie May Alston Lewis Enters Hospital

The day after Thanksgiving, Annie May Alston Lewis (M.A., 1967), librarian emerita, entered St. Francis Hospital and later was transferred to the St. Francis skilled nursing facility. She remains in the nursing facility at press time. Before her hospitalization, a mail solicitation for scholarship funds had begun, featuring a letter from Annie May, although letters would have been received after she entered the hospital. Annie May gives many thanks to those who have given to this effort, which to date has raised \$14,296.

## Courses

# Summer Courses Offer Accessibility and Variety

One-week intensive courses in the summer are an oasis for ministers to gain skills and focus their continuing spiritual formation. Providing intellectual challenges and warm camaraderie, these courses give ministers from around the globe an opportunity to take advantage of the world-class learning environment at Harding University Graduate

School of Religion.

Two professors are making their summer course debut in



CRENSHAW

2006. Scot Crenshaw (M.Div., 1992) will teach "Biblical Preaching" in June. He

combines academic training with decades of experience in the pulpit.

Edward Robinson (M.Div., 1993) gives a reprise of his history course "American



ROBINSON

Restoration Movement" which he first offered in spring 2006. He brings a rich understanding of the Restoration Movement itself with the subtleties of a respected historian.

May 29-June 3	Archaeology of the Bible (in Athens, Greece)	Huffard, McMillion, Oster
June 1-8	Theology in Ministry (D.Min. only)	Hicks
June 5-10	Christian Ethics	Powell
	Biblical Preaching	Crenshaw
June 12-17	Church Planting	Granberg
	Group Counseling	Gray
June 19-24	Family Life Ministry	Fussell
	Congregational Ministry	Gupton
	Basic New Testament Exegesis	Black
July 10-15	Paul's Prison Letters	Oster
	Advanced Theological Research	Meredith
	The Gospel and Islam	Huffard
July 17-22	American Restoration Movement	Robinson
	Advanced Intro to the New Testament	Black
July 24-29	Counseling Skills (MinCon 2004)	Gray
	The Christian Faith (MinCon 2005)	Powell
	Psalms	McMillion

*Please enroll for summer courses two months before the course begins.*

## Stats Show International Appeal

During the 2005 calendar year, students at Harding University Graduate School of Religion took courses while living in these places:

U.S. states: 30 (from California to Delaware, Washington to Florida)

Canadian provinces: 2 (Manitoba and Saskatchewan)

Other countries: 4 (Cambodia, China, Japan, Korea)

# A Guest at Hotel Rwanda

Most people dream of vacationing at the beach or in the mountains.

Last summer, Heath Amos (M.Div., 2005, hlamos33@hotmail.com) chose Rwanda as his destination. Not to vacation, however, but to survey the possibility of living there long term as a missionary.

“We went to Gisenyi to work at an orphanage of about 120 kids,” Heath explains. “They were orphaned in the genocide of 1994.”

Churches of Christ have never had a missionary presence in Rwanda, at least long term, according to Heath. “The first full-time missionaries went over the same summer we went,” he says. “There has been talk for years about missionaries going, but now the dream is becoming a reality. This trip was followed by a host of others, all people interested in long-term work in Rwanda.”

The children were a large focus of the trip, occupying most of their time. “We put on puppet shows, had Bible classes, and played with the children.” The heart of the trip, however, was to see if Rwanda is the right place for Heath to serve as a missionary. “The main reason we were there was to experience the country and its unique culture. We wanted to understand Rwanda as best we could in six weeks.”

Even though the trip was

overwhelmingly positive for Heath, a shadow hung over his time there — the shadow of the 1994 genocide. “We saw that this would be a hard country to live and work in since the effects of the genocide are still prevalent today. People face something about the war of 1994 on a daily basis.”

Being a foreigner exacerbated the shadow remaining from the genocide. “We didn’t know the language or culture or experience the heartache that the Rwandans had faced. We could sympathize but in no way empathize with them.” The stories of killing were heartbreaking, Heath reports. “You would hear a story and think it couldn’t get any worse. Then you would hear another that made the first one seem trite.”

Far from discouraging Heath from returning to Rwanda, the experience helped clarify the needs of that country. “We felt very good about our trip, and it just whetted our appetite to know more.”

Heath did not go to Rwanda ill prepared. He had experience in Africa before, and had focused his time while at the Graduate School of Religion serving in the inner city. While a student in Memphis, Heath served as an apprentice with the Frayser Mission Church, so he took with him to Rwanda both cross-cultural understanding and experience with the underprivileged.

“Many people asked ques-

tions about our beliefs and thoughts,” Heath says. “The Graduate School of Religion helped me have a better theological frame of mind when it came to observing the African churches already there, and helped me think theologically about churches that might be there one day.”

Heath expected to serve and survey on his trip, but he found even more than that. He found Rebecca Dahlstrom, a member of the same survey team, and now the two are making plans for ministry in Africa together as husband and wife.

Rebecca sent out a mass e-mail last year about her upcoming trip to Rwanda. Heath received the e-mail and thought, “Hey, I’d like to go to Rwanda, too!” That started an e-mail exchange that grew to phone conversations, and culminated with a shared mission in Africa. “We didn’t know of the other’s interests until we arrived in Africa,” Heath says. “She lived there for two-and-a-half years so we shared that interest.” They also share interest in backpacking, science and athletics.

“Rebecca and I hope to serve long-term in Africa as missionaries,” Heath adds. After adjusting to married life, they hope to be part of a team with other families planting churches and developing local leaders. “How Rwanda fits into the mix, we are not yet sure. We are open to whatever God would lead us to do.”

## Scholarship Applications Due for 2006-07

Scholarship applications are due March 1. Any student wishing to apply for a scholarship for fall 2006, spring 2007 or summer 2007 should submit an application by March 1, 2006. Applications may be downloaded from the admissions link at [www.hugsr.edu](http://www.hugsr.edu). Complete forms may be faxed to (901) 761-1358 or mailed to 1000 Cherry Road, Memphis, TN 38117.



Heath (right) with Frederic, whose arms were cut off below the elbow when he refused to participate in the 1994 genocide. Fitted with prosthetic arms, Frederic is an artisan helping others with handicaps support themselves by learning a craft.



Heath and Rebecca after their trip to Rwanda



# Harding Graduate School of Religion Holiness

**W**e are exploring the holiness of God as this year's theme at Harding University Graduate School of Religion. We ask about God's holiness, and we ask about our own holiness. We even ask what it means for Christians, as a body, to be holy. But I am wrestling with one specific question in this vein: What does the call to holiness mean for a graduate school of religion?

John Fortner, in his address to the school and in the excerpt included in this edition of *The Bridge*, suggests that holiness connotes *distinction*. So, as a school, what does it mean for us to be distinctive? Perhaps these three ideas can move us toward an answer.

▶ **Distinctive mission**

Seeing one's self in commonplace terms

cannot be distinctive. Our mission at the Graduate School of Religion is clear: transforming leaders. Leaders can study without being transformed into the image of Christ. And those who are not leaders can be transformed. But our focus is on those who are (or will be) leaders in churches and ministries, helping them see God in his glory, submit to his holiness, and boldly communicate who he is to the world.

▶ **Distinctive standards**

Distinctive leadership cannot be achieved by leaders who expect mediocrity. That's why the Graduate School of Religion seeks to set the bar high academically and spiritually. When students need support, they have it, and when they need coaching to the next level, they have that, too.

▶ **Distinctive fruit**

The acid test for our distinctiveness, our holiness, is our graduates. Are our alumni leading holy ministries? The more I visit our alumni, the more impressed I am with who they are as leaders. They work hard, stay focused on big picture issues rather than chasing fads, and they make a significant impact on the communities they serve.

No one and no school is perfect. But the biblical call is clear to strive for holiness. The faculty, staff and students of the Graduate School of Religion pray and labor for this to be a distinctive place. Put simply, we want to be *holy*.

▶ *Mark Parker*  
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