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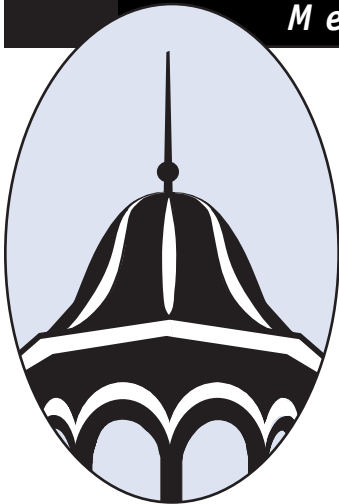
HARDING
UNIVERSITY

The Bridge

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Bridging the Gap: The Tension Between Vision and Faith

by Charles Kiser and Josh Patrick

Planning Ahead

“Planning ahead” has dominated the bulk of my activities for the last six years. From deciding upon a college major to ministry and graduate school, I constantly wrestle with discerning God’s plan for my future. “Where am I going?” rings repeatedly in my mind.



Charles Kiser

The ringing grew deafening in a recent decision to leave church work temporarily in order to pursue a master’s degree at Harding University Graduate School of Religion. In the middle of all this planning ahead, God has taught me a great deal about visionary living.

Vision, as I have discovered, is a trajectory or direction by which one is guided — whether in one’s job, relationships or spiritual formation. It is given from God. It is construed as a solution to a problem, a clear picture of what should be in light of present reality. And it is fueled by a burden to see that the way things should be

becomes the way things are.

God is visionary. His work of hope and reconciliation is the solution to the problem of humanity’s rebellion. Communion with his creatures, both now and one day in heaven, is the destination toward which he leads. Accordingly, God bestows specific vision to his people in service to his overarching vision. Moses sought the Promised Land. Solomon built the temple. Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. Jesus went to the cross.

We, too, must be led by vision. When we are, living in the present and planning for the future is as simple as sticking to the vision. Only when distracted from the vision do we live and plan poorly. Visionary living is saying “no” to such distractions, even when they appear in the form of good opportunities. The apostles in Acts 6:1-4, for instance, said “no” to waiting on tables in order to pray and preach the word. They said “no” to something good for the sake of something better. They followed the vision. And so must we.

— Charles Kiser

Trusting in God

There was once a time when I felt it necessary to plan out my

entire life. With my day-timer in one hand and a Bible in the other, I had everything under



Josh Patrick

control. So I thought. I had been given a vision from God, and it was my responsibility to flesh it out. When people asked me about my long-term plans, I gave them an earful of goals and dreams that were 10, 20 and 30 years away. What I did was a mere detail, a formality compared to what was to come. This philosophy of life presented a major problem in my walk with God.

Despite my good intention to plan out the next three decades, my constant deliberation over the future turned me into a worrier of immense proportions. I worried about anything that was uncertain or open-ended: money, school, work, family, health, etc. I spent many a sleepless night staring at the ceiling, wondering fearfully about what might or might not happen. This paralyzed me to the point that I was on the verge

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Spring 2004 Schedule Announced

Jan. 5-13	Intensive courses
Jan. 12	Regular classes begin; new student orientation
Feb. 5-6	W.B. West Jr. Lectures
March 8-13	Spring study break/intensive courses
March 14-21	Spring Break
April 8	Ministry Forum
May 1	Run for the Son
May 3-7	Final examinations
May 8	45th annual commencement

W.B. West Lectures Preview

Dr. Jack W. Cottrell will be the featured speaker at the W.B. West Jr. Lectures in February 2004. Cottrell is a professor of theological studies at Cincinnati Bible College. The next issue of *The Bridge* will give further details.

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From the Dean



Students Give More

For the past four months, the president and board of trustees of Harding University evaluated the graduate program in Memphis. At the end of the process, a vote affirming the work of the Graduate School in Memphis was unanimous. We have all learned more about the Graduate School of Religion in the process, and I would like to share some of that with you. If you belong to the extended family of the Graduate School of Religion (like students and donors) or have been thinking about becoming a part of this community, you will find these facts encouraging and challenging.

- About a third of our students are full time (taking a minimum of nine hours a semester).
 - Forty-five percent of all students are in the master of divinity program (84 semester-hours degree).
 - Circulation of the library averages 50 books per student per semester.
 - In the fall 2002 semester, 52 percent of our students lived in the metropolitan area of Memphis; 42 percent of them served on staff among the 70 churches in the area or ministries like child care and inner city.
 - Half of the area ministers are graduates of or are attending the Graduate School of Religion.
 - In the fall 2002 semester, 27 percent of our students lived east of Memphis.
 - The number of new students admitted this semester was up 9 percent from this time last year, and only 28 percent of them came directly from an undergraduate program. Half of our students are more than 34 years old.
 - In the fall of 2002, 42 percent of our students received more than 50 percent tuition scholarship, 23 percent received 50 percent, 15 percent received less than 50 percent, and 20 percent did not receive any financial assistance. The total amount of scholarships given for the 2002-2003 academic year was \$461,050.
 - Students give the most — 44 percent of the total revenue last year came from the tuition that students pay, 20 percent from Harding University, 16 percent from endowments, and 9 percent from gifts.
- Students study at a sacrifice because they are dedicated to a lifetime of service in the kingdom as preachers, teachers, missionaries, youth ministers, campus ministers and counselors. They are the ones who resisted the popular trend and cultural pressures to major in something that would provide a more “secure” financial future than full-time ministry. It seems to me that, when they make such a commitment, the church should provide them with the best possible training. While tuition has doubled in a decade, gifts have not. We plan to double our endowments and gifts. Share the dream. Please join us and support these dedicated students in ministry.
- Evertt W. Huffard (dean@hugsr.edu)

Student Association Officers Elected For 2003-2004

by Marcella Trevathan, editor

Each spring, the Graduate School students elect officers to the Student Association. The officers' role in student life includes planning group activities (Fall Fest, Christmas party, Spring Thing) and representing student needs to the administration. The SA also coordinates the annual W.B. West Jr. Lecture Series and arranges for presentation of plaques to academic award winners at commencement.

The students of Harding University Graduate School of Religion are pleased to introduce the 2003-2004 Student Association officers: Drew Custer, president; Rusty Campbell, vice president; Joshua Marcum, secretary/treasurer; Nathan Knappier, newsletter editor; Heath Amos, single students' representative; K.C. Winters, counseling students' representative; Luke Hartman, married off-campus representative; and Jason Whaley, married on-campus representative.

Drew Custer, president, graduated from Harding University and is a second-generation Graduate School of Religion student. He was elected to *Who's Who Among American Colleges and Universities* by the faculty. He and his wife, Jamie, plan to work as missionaries in South America and currently work with the Quince Road Church of Christ in Memphis. Drew chose the Graduate School of Religion at the suggestion of several trusted professors and expects to graduate with the master of divinity degree in May 2004.



Drew Custer



Rusty Campbell

Vice President Rusty Campbell attended Oklahoma

Christian University and Cascade College. He is pursuing the master of arts in Christian ministry, with plans to return overseas to do mission work. Having already served in Japan, Rusty and his wife, Laura, are considering Japan, China, Uganda or Australia. Rusty currently works with the Church of Christ in Thyatira, Miss.

Joshua Marcum, a graduate of York College, is serving his second term as secretary/treasurer. He has been named to the Dean's List twice and was also elected to *Who's Who*. Joshua and his wife, Julie, plan to be missionaries to South America, and both work with the Iglesia de Cristo in Memphis. They are currently looking for churches and teammates who share their vision for South America.



Joshua Marcum

Nathan Knappier serves as editor of



Nathan Knappier

Happenings, the SA newsletter. He is a master of divinity student concentrating in New Testament. Nathan married the former Carrie Jones last spring, and they plan to do long-term foreign mission work. Nathan has been named to the Dean's List.

Single students' representative Heath



Heath Amos

Amos is serving his second term. A native of Kentucky, Heath graduated from Harding University. His honors at the Graduate School of Religion include the Dean's List and *Who's Who*.

Heath plans to pursue full-time ministry in either foreign or domestic missions. He has completed an apprenticeship with Memphis Urban Ministry in Frayser.

K.C. Winters, who represents the counseling students, graduated from Ohio State



K.C. Winters

University. He is enrolled in the master of arts in counseling degree program and plans to work in ministry with Christian leaders in crisis and their families. He is also a capable teacher and chapel speaker. K.C. is single and lives on campus.

Luke Hartman represents the married



Luke Hartman

students who live off campus and is also a second-generation Graduate School of Religion student. He and his wife, Katie, have one son, George Marshall. A master of divinity student, Luke is a graduate of Oklahoma Christian, with plans to pursue local church work as a pulpit or associate minister. Luke has been named to the Dean's List.

Jason Whaley represents the married students who live in campus housing. He graduated from Oklahoma



Jason Whaley

Christian and is pursuing the master of divinity degree. Jason and his wife, Nicole, a native Australian, are pursuing a career in missions in Australia and Japan. They moved to Memphis following a two-year stint in Japan, teaching English to junior high school students.

The faculty, staff and students of Harding University Graduate School of Religion wish you a happy holiday season.

Return Service Requested

Investing in Ministry

by Larry Arick, director of advancement

Our students have special stories to tell about how they chose Harding University Graduate School of Religion for their graduate work. One such story is that of Jason and Nicole Whaley.

Jason and Nicole were teaching English to junior high students in Japan when they decided to serve God in a different capacity. Jason said, “We realized that we needed further equipment — both knowledge and spiritual growth — to become ministers of the gospel in Australia.” They decided to move back to Austin, Texas, and work with the Westover Hills Church of Christ. After that they “discussed the prospect of going to

the Graduate School, prayed about it and moved to Memphis.”

They both agree that they are becoming better equipped. They enjoy teaching classes and learning from the Christian leaders at the Graduate School and in Memphis. They especially like meeting at the dean’s house for a monthly fellowship, where they can network and learn about God-focused missions. Jason also preaches every other week at the Kirby Pines Retirement Community in Memphis.

Jason and Nicole have a dream for God’s mission to the people of Australia and Japan. Jason says, “We dream of giving a

lifetime to the people of Australia. Part of our ministry may include taking Australian Christians to Japan on short-term campaigns or hosting Japanese nationals in Christian homes.”

The Whaleys are a blessing to know and have on campus. Jason is a Student Association officer and works on campus. Nicole has held as many as three jobs at once to help with the financial needs of their family. Jason and Nicole both are grateful for the scholarship assistance he receives for his academic work.

Bridging the Gap *continued from page 1*

of having a nervous breakdown.

That is no way to live, let me tell you!

George Muller wrote, “The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.” Looking back, I recognize the striking truth of this statement. My struggle with worry was tearing down the wall of faith God was building in me. The vision he gave me could not be realized unless I was willing to put my faith in him. Living with a vision is nec-

essary, but it is not up to us to orchestrate the details of that vision in our lives. For God has promised: “The vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end — it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay,” (Habakkuk 2:3).

— *Josh Patrick*

Lord, teach us to live faithfully within the tension of planning ahead and trusting in you. Amen.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Charles Kiser is a second-year Lewis Scholar at the Graduate School. He and his wife, Julie, recently moved to Memphis from Little Rock, Ark., where he worked with the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ. Josh Patrick, a third-year student, is a preaching apprentice with the Highland Street Church of Christ in Memphis. He and his wife, Joni, live on campus.