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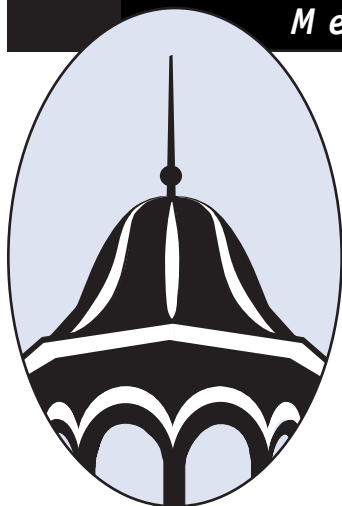
**HARDING**  
UNIVERSITY

# The Bridge

Memphis, Tennessee

Harding  
University  
Graduate  
School of  
Religion

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## Doing One Thing Well

by Marcella Trevathan, editor

The quest for excellence: We pursue it as King Arthur and his knights pursued the Holy Grail. Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman Jr. explored businesses that had excelled and the principles they followed.<sup>1</sup> Stephen R. Covey detailed habits that successful people use in their lives.<sup>2</sup> Children are asked early and often, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” When they decide, they seek out the college or training school that will best equip them for their careers.

Still, many people and some institutions follow the “jack of all trades, master of none” pattern. They try job after job, looking for the one that will fulfill them. Businesses start and fail, as consumer needs change. However, for 50 years, Harding University Graduate School of Religion has done one thing — and done it well. The Graduate School of Religion simply trains men and women for service in the kingdom.

The Graduate School of Religion offers a unique atmosphere. Lewis Scholar Nathan Bills says, “I realized quickly the scholarly emphasis in my first class. They mean business . . . The kingdom of God defines

‘business’ here.”

At all levels, the focus is ministry and the training that accompanies it. Nathan adds, “I thank God for a faculty who insists that ministry become a recognizable and motivating force throughout the educative process.”

The Graduate School of Religion faculty combine academics with ministry. Each is a qualified academician; each has multiple degrees; and each has published articles, books or commentaries. Each devotes hours to research and class preparation to stimulate both intellectual and spiritual growth. In addition, each professor is a ministry practitioner. All are active in local church work, whether teaching Bible classes, serving as ministry staff or shepherding the flock. Their example on both counts fuels the students’ desire to learn and to serve.

The training received is more than mere academic bookwork. Students receive practical training through local churches. Heath Amos is an apprentice with Memphis Urban Ministry where he applies missions principles. “Learn the language and culture, earn the right to speak,

plant indigenous churches, and know up front that you don’t have all the answers,” he says. Youth minister Jason Ashlock finds that critical thinking about the works of C.S. Lewis and Thomas Aquinas has equipped him to “model a faith that is sure, not of itself, but of its object” to the teens at Ross Road Church of Christ. Faculty, staff and students understand that “training . . . does not guarantee success.” The skills learned, however, prove to be valuable resources in various ministry contexts.

Only Harding University Graduate School of Religion offers this kind of focused education. Alumnus Harold Shank says, “There is nothing quite like being at a school that does just one thing: It trains ministers in graduate education . . . Just men and women preparing for ministry.” The Graduate School of Religion does just one thing. And does it extremely well.

1 Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman Jr., *In Search of Excellence* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982).

2 Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990).

Ministry Forum Preview

The theme of the 2004 Ministry Forum is "Hope and Reconciliation," which coincides with the Graduate School of Religion's theme for the academic year. The forum, to be held on campus April 8, will focus on what the New Testament says about reconciliation, our rescue by God. People will share experiences of racial and ethnic reconciliation and principles of congregational reconciliation toward unity. The forum will also demonstrate how to share this message through preaching.

Topics and speakers will be announced in the March 2004 issue.

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From the Dean



The Status of Preaching

The message of reconciliation and hope calls for an army of messengers. As our military constantly recruits and trains to maintain a state of preparedness, the church also must constantly recruit and train — and take good care of those who serve.

During the Harding University Lectureship in September 2002, Dr. Flaviel Yeakley, director of the Center of Church Growth Studies at Harding, presented the results of a survey of preachers in churches of Christ and in schools training preachers. He reported:

- In all of our schools in the fall 2000 term, 3,000 students were training for some kind of ministry. Another 1,000 were preparing for vocational ministry.
- The total number of full-time ministry positions available would be about 5,500 (777 of these in churches of more than 300, and 1,050 for ministry positions other than pulpit ministry).
- The average expected loan balance for single students was \$40,000; it was \$60,000 for married students.
- Most churches use ministers, but have never produced any. Very few churches provide any financial support for students who are preparing for ministry.
- The average annual household income in 2000 of the 348 pulpit ministers responding to a survey was \$37,418; the mean annual household income for those with a high school education was \$24,222; preacher training school, \$35,393; four-year Christian college, \$36,270; master of arts degree, \$42,011; and master of divinity degree, \$51,748.
- In only 11 percent of the cases did

churches contribute anything toward a retirement program, and only 15 percent contributed toward medical insurance.

- The top two reasons preachers left their ministries were: (1) dissatisfaction with the way elders and other church leaders treat ministers, and (2) financial problems.

Early in December, Dr. David Burks, president of Harding University, commissioned a special committee of 20 preachers, elders and educators to study ways to increase the number of Bible majors in our schools and to encourage more students to preach. We were asked to study this report by Dr. Yeakley and work on this challenge for at least a year. (If you have an insight on the status of preaching that would be useful for this committee, please send it to me.)

As a new year begins, I would make a plea to church leaders to do all you can to treat a preacher as a partner in ministry, adequately support him, and help with any additional training he might seek — as well as invest in training other ministers who serve in congregations that are too small to share the financial load of training. Raising the status of preachers might be a great step in raising the number of preachers, church planters and missionaries.

— Evertt W. Huffard (dean@hugsr.edu)

## Dr. Cottrell to Speak at West Lectures

by Drew Custer, Student Association president

The Student Association is pleased to announce that Dr. Jack W. Cottrell will speak at the annual W.B. West Jr. Lectures on Feb. 5-6. Dr. Cottrell has been professor of theology at Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary since 1967.

He earned the bachelor of arts and bachelor of theology degrees from Cincinnati, a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Cincinnati, the master of divinity degree from Westminster Theological Seminary, and the Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary. He is a renowned scholar who has published many notable

works, including *Romans* in the College Press NIV Commentary Series, *Baptism: A Biblical Study*, and *Faith's Fundamentals: Seven Essentials of Christian Belief*. Another significant academic contribution is his *What the Bible Says* series, which includes *What the Bible Says about God the Ruler*, *What the Bible Says about God the Creator*, and *What the Bible Says about God the Redeemer*. His most recent work is *The Faith Once For All*.

This year, chapel speakers have reflected on the theme of hope and reconciliation. We have been blessed to hear students, faculty and local ministers share their perspectives on

these rich biblical concepts. Dr. Cottrell will further expound upon this theme at the West Lectures.

On Thursday, Feb. 5, the public is invited to hear Dr. Cottrell for two sessions, from 7-8:05 p.m. and 8:20-9:30 p.m. in the West Center Auditorium. Each session will include lecture, with a time at the end for questions and answers. A question-and-answer session with Dr. Cottrell will be held for Graduate School of Religion faculty and students on Friday, Feb. 6, from 9:30-10:45 a.m. He will also speak at 11 a.m. in Pittman Chapel in the Old Mansion.

College Press writes, "*The Faith Once for All* by Dr. Jack



Cottrell is a powerful and dynamic study of Bible doctrine. If you long for a better understanding of who

God is, and how you can relate to Him, this book is a valuable asset that will serve as the cornerstone of your biblical reference library." It is available from College Press Publishing Company (632 pages, hardback, \$34.99).

## Library Receives NEH Grant

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded a \$3,800 grant to the L.M. Graves Library. The money will be used to engage an archivist consultant who will conduct a preservation assessment and help draft a long-range preservation plan for the library's archival collections. It will also fund the initial purchase of preservation supplies. The library's collection includes many rare volumes related to the Restoration Movement. In addition, the library has collect-

ed numerous missionary reports, personal papers, etc. The archivist will consult with library staff in planning how to preserve and store these documents so that they will be readily available to students and scholars. This grant will further enhance the library's expansion.

Plans are being made for the consultant to arrive in late January or early February and to spend three days assessing the library's operations and materials. Recommendations should be implemented by April 30.

## Remember Our Chaplains

The May 2003 issue of *The Bridge* featured a photo of U.S. Army Chaplain Gary Payne (M.Div., '90) on the front page. Payne's unit in Iraq was recently attacked by a suicide bomber. One of the men was killed, but Chaplain Payne was unhurt. Also, Jim Maxwell (MAC, '96) is in the reserves and has just

been activated. He will likely be sent to the Middle East.

Of the 82 active military chaplains, 28 (34 percent) hold degrees from Harding University Graduate School of Religion. An additional four attended classes here.

Please continue to pray for all of our service men and women.

## Parker Named Assistant Executive Director

In December, Dr. Evertt W. Huffard announced that Mark Parker has been promoted to assistant executive director. Parker has been admissions director since May 2001. As of Jan. 1, Parker will oversee admissions and advancement.

Parker was a missionary in Croatia for five years and was involvement minister at the Ross Road Church of Christ in Memphis for two years. He is now serving as interim pulpit minister for the church of Christ in Oxford, Miss. His educational background includes degrees in English and literature,



and he is working toward the master of divinity degree at the Graduate School of Religion.

Parker and his wife, Christine, have two sons, Aaron and Noah.

Mark Parker is shown with his wife, Christine, who recently earned her master of arts degree in counseling from the Graduate School of Religion.

## Investing in Ministry

*by Larry Arick, director of advancement*

In his book, *Before Any Were Willing: The Story of George S. Benson*, John C. Stevens tells how the Harding University Graduate School of Religion began in Memphis, Tenn.

According to Stevens, the board of directors of Memphis Christian School called Dr. Benson for assistance with some financial difficulties they faced operating the school and purchasing the property where the school was located. Stevens says Benson saw that “the property would accommodate, in an admirable way, the Harding Graduate School of Bible and Religion.” As a result, the Graduate School moved to Memphis in 1955, and Memphis Christian School became Memphis Harding Academy.

A second reason for the move to Memphis was the ministry opportunities among area churches, opportunities that continue to provide students with hands-on training. There are also other job opportunities in the Memphis metropolitan area. This

is a necessity since most of the students’ spouses work to support their families. Josh and Julie Marcum take advantage of both opportunities.

Josh and Julie are both missionary kids



*Josh and Julie Marcum*

who desire to return to the foreign mission field. Julie’s parents, Larry and Diane Stephens, spent 23 years in Kenya, where Julie was born and raised. Julie works as a teacher. Josh spent his junior and senior high school years in Quito, Ecuador, where his parents, Kent and Sharla Marcum, continue to work. Julie and Josh met at York College in Nebraska and were married in 2000.

I asked Josh why they chose to come to the Graduate School of Religion after completing their undergraduate education. He said, “I entered the master of divinity program because I knew that I needed the best education and training possible for the demanding task of missionary work. The Graduate School of Religion offers the best comprehensive degree, and it worked with several churches to provide simultaneous training.” For the last two and one-half years, Josh and Julie have worked part time with an urban Hispanic church that was planted by the Church of Christ at White Station.

We are thankful for Dr. George Benson’s vision to offer an opportunity for students like Josh to equip themselves for ministry.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** To contribute to the scholarship fund or to endow a scholarship, contact Larry Arick, (901) 761-1355 or [larrick@hugsr.edu](mailto:larrick@hugsr.edu).