



Harding University
Scholar Works at Harding

The Bridge

Harding School of Theology

Spring 2022

The Bridge Spring 2022 Vol. 62 No. 2

Harding School of Theology

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hst-bridge>



HARDING
UNIVERSITY

The
Bridge

VOLUME 62, NO. 2, SPRING 2022



FIND US



HST.edu



@hst_edu



Facebook.com/hst.edu



Place all your Amazon orders through hst.edu/books



Go Paperless
hst.edu/bridge

Subscribe to *The Bridge* electronic newsletter and have it delivered to your inbox.



HARDING
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY®

The Bridge

The Bridge is published by Harding School of Theology for alumni, students, prospective students, contributors, and friends.

Designer

Lisa Jo Perdue

Contributors

Garrett Best, Steve Cloer, Jim Martin, Greg Muse, Mark Powell

Photo Credits

Matt Carter, Lance Hawley, Rachel Hemphill, Jeff Montgomery, Donald Mooney

Harding School of Theology

1000 Cherry Road
Memphis, TN 38117

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 3

VP REFLECTIONS

Page 4

CAMPUS NEWS

Page 5

GCS STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Page 6

DMIN IN MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP

Page 7

OPEN LETTER TO HST ALUMNI

Page 8

2022 FALL DINNER

Cover

Harry Risinger and Ralph Richardson
at the HST Fall Dinner, 2017

Photo Credit:

Jeff Montgomery

Photo Credit: R. Hemphill



Greg Muse

Leon Sanderson Meets His Successor

By Greg Muse, HST Advancement Director

No one can remember when Dr. Leon Sanderson wasn't president of the HST Alumni Council, not even Leon Sanderson. He says, "I honestly don't know the year I began to serve in this role." HST graduates like Leon are just part of this school's fabric.

Dr. Garrett Best, 2014 MDiv graduate of HST, is assuming the role of HST Alumni Council President with Leon at his side as advisor. Garrett is the pulpit minister at Oliver Creek Church of Christ in Bartlett, Tennessee. He holds a Ph.D in Biblical Studies from Asbury Seminary.

Dr. Sanderson is no slouch in the degree department either. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Harding College in speech and Bible, a Master of Arts degree in music from the University of Memphis, and an MRE and DMin from Harding School of Theology.

Why has Leon served HST in this leadership capacity for so many years? "My family's involvement with Harding since 1924 leads me to support and encourage HST in every endeavor. I am grateful to be an HST alumnus and former president of the Alumni Council."

Leon adds, "I would like to thank each member of the council for the service they have rendered. I welcome Garrett Best to the council and am sure he will provide leadership in an even better way. May the Lord bless and keep each one involved in ministry across the world."

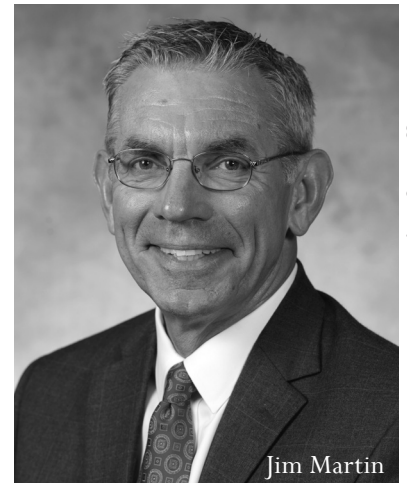
What is Garrett's take on his new role? "Leon Sanderson has been a blessing to HST for many years. He has modeled a humble, Christ-like spirit to students. I speak for alumni when expressing gratitude to Leon for his years of service."

In addition to Leon and Garrett, members of the HST Alumni Council are Gene Gilliland, Willie Nettle, Linda Oxford, HST Dean Mark Powell, and Vice President Jim Martin.



Photo Credit: Jeff Montgomery

Reflections FROM THE Vice President



Harry Risinger

By Jim Martin

I was new at Harding School of Theology. After preaching for almost four decades, I had come to the school in January 2014, to serve as vice president. My predecessor, Dr. Evertt W. Huffard, spent many hours orienting me to this new work. He told me about a Harding University board member, Harry Risinger, who lived in nearby Millington. Harry became a friend, encourager, and constant supporter. He served on the Harding University Board of Trustees for 32 years (1985-2017). Harry died on January 31, 2022.

Since beginning my work at Harding School of Theology, Harry Risinger has been an important presence in the life of the school. As a member of the Harding School of Theology Committee (a sub-committee of the Harding Board of Trustees), he took a very special interest in the school in Memphis.

Whenever I would see him, he would ask about HST and the students. He believed strongly in the school and its mission. He found great joy in the good the school was doing and in its graduates who served churches throughout the world. He would also ask about the overall health of the school, including issues related to enrollment and finance.

Typically, his interest would not stop there. He would ask how Charlotte and I were doing, as well as our adult children and

grandchildren. He also took a genuine interest in the staff and faculty.

Harry served as an elder at the Millington Church of Christ, an ethnically and economically diverse congregation. For several years, the church was without a full-time minister and I preached there many Sundays. This gave me the opportunity to be with Harry and Jan quite often. My respect for Harry Risinger only increased as I saw him function as one of the shepherds of this church.

On a number of occasions, various people in the congregation asked for prayer during the church assembly. Often, I saw Harry shed tears as he talked to the church about a particular person's need for prayer. I heard his tender remarks as he talked about the difficult challenges faced by a particular family. On a number of occasions, he would approach me after a sermon and tell me how much he needed that message and why.

Harry Risinger was a competent leader with numerous gifts. He had a keen mind for financial matters and understood the complexities of leading an organization like Harding School of Theology. At the same time, he had a heart for people and was truly a shepherd in the church at Millington.

As one of his sons mentioned during his funeral, he was a husband, father, businessman, and board member. However, he was first a disciple of Jesus. This is the legacy that he left Harding School of Theology. This, in turn, is the legacy we desire to pass on to our students and to live out as faculty, staff, and alumni. We may be church leaders, ministers, servants, church members, etc. However, we at HST are called first to be obedient disciples of Jesus. Thank you, Harry Risinger, for modeling this.



Bland Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Photo Credit: Jeff Montgomery



Dr. Dave Bland

Dr. Dave Bland, Professor Emeritus of Homiletics, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Homiletics at the 2021 annual conference. Only forty people have received this award, and Bland is the first recipient from Churches of Christ. Dr. Rob O'Lynn, an HST alumnus whose Doctor of Ministry dissertation was chaired by Bland, shared the following tribute.

When I think of Dave Bland, a number of words come to mind. However, one that rises above all the others is *consistent*. He is consistent in his character. He is consistent in his faith. He is consistent in his vocation. He has been a model of consistency.

How do you measure four decades of preaching, teaching and scholarship? Dave has produced 16 volumes—13 as editor or contributing editor and 3 as either the author or lead author. His list of articles and reviews is too long to mention except only in passing.

However, for me, Dave is more than a scholar that has influenced me. He is more than my doctoral advisor and main professor. He is even more than a colleague. Dave has been my mentor and friend—my Paul—and I, hopefully, a Timothy.

Dave Bland is not a name that many are familiar with. However, students are reading his work and being influenced by his deep love of scripture. Preaching in our tradition is better because of Dave's nearly three decades of teaching. And that influence will continue because of his quiet consistency. The Academy of Homiletics' Lifetime Achievement Award is a well-deserved accolade. Well done, good and faithful servant!

2021 Alumnus of the Year: Dr. Evertt W. Huffard



Dr. Evertt W. Huffard

Each year HST chooses an Alumnus of the Year whose life and ministry reflect our annual theme. The theme for 2020-2021 was "The Church in Mission," and few people in the world embody that theme as well as Dr. Evertt W. Huffard, Professor Emeritus of Missions and Leadership at HST.

The plaque given to Dr. Huffard reads:

HST ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
presents the 2021 Alumnus of the Year Award to
Dr. Evertt W. Huffard

For godly influence on countless Christians,
lifelong emphasis on church in mission,
spiritual wisdom and leadership,
and tireless support of HST over six decades
as student, teacher, dean, and friend.

Congratulations, Dr. Huffard!

HST Students Intern at Christ Community Health Services

This spring two HST students, Reid Stafford and Deonte Watkins, participated in a chaplaincy internship with Christ Community Health Services in Memphis. The internship focused on pastoral care, engaging in spiritual conversations, and grant writing. CCHS serves 60,000 people in underserved communities each year, and the internship was made possible by a grant from the Butterfield Memorial Foundation. Watkins shared, "Christ Community Health Services provided an avenue for me to see people the way Jesus sees people. I am thankful for the opportunities this internship has provided me to learn how to listen to people, to pray with people, show compassion, and ultimately reflect the love of Christ. This is the sort of healing our communities desperately need."



Deonte Watkins



Reid Stafford



Mark Powell

GCS Student Highlights

By Mark Powell

HST partners with Global Christian Studies to train Christian leaders outside of the U.S. HST currently has students in twelve other countries and territories. Two of these international students are Kizito Jasper in Nigeria and Vitaliy Samodin in Ukraine.

Kizito Jasper teaches Old Testament at West Nigeria Christian College and School of Biblical Studies in Abeokuta, Nigeria. After Jasper graduated from WNCC in 2014, he was encouraged to continue his studies by Dr. Biodun Owolabi, President of WNCC and an HST alumnus. WNCC currently has over 500 graduates and trains full-time ministers and others who want to grow as Christian leaders. Jasper's degree from HST will not only equip him to better train leaders in Nigeria, it will also help the school with government accreditation.



Kizito Jasper

Jasper says, "My classes at HST from day one have been really faith strengthening and academically worthwhile. My first course was Ethics and Character Formation. In hindsight, I think that class was a perfect start for me—shaping my ethical viewpoint and forming my character first as a Christian, then as a member of an academic community where I work with students with many character flaws. My Old Testament classes at HST have made me better equipped to teach Old Testament courses, as well as prepare me for doctoral studies in the Old Testament, which I desire to pursue immediately after graduation from HST."

Vitaliy Samodin is the minister for the Nivky Church of Christ and Executive Director of the Ukrainian Education Center, which offers free English classes using the Bible, in Kyiv, Ukraine. When Russia invaded Ukraine, he left for Slovakia along with his wife and four daughters. Now he and his family are working with a national church in Slovakia to provide humanitarian relief to refugees. In particular, they are able to communicate with Ukrainian refugees about their experiences and spiritual needs in their native language. After the war began, Vitaliy's project for his Spring course, "Congregational Leadership," shifted to focus on ministry to refugees.



Vitaliy Samodin

Vitaliy says, "Before I started studying at Harding School of Theology, I did not realize how much knowledge and wisdom there is available to missionaries and ministers like me. My understanding of the kingdom and the Bible has grown deeper, while my faith has increased and has been reinvigorated in the process. I am more confident in the work I am doing. My education is helping me have a deeper understanding of what is happening in the church and in the world, as well as to see my role in the world. I am truly grateful to be part of the HST family. I hope and pray that we will have a long-lasting impact on the people living during our times."

My understanding of the kingdom and the Bible has grown deeper, while my faith has increased and has been reinvigorated in the process.

– Vitaliy Samodin



Steve Cloer

DMin in Missional Leadership

By Steve Cloer

Robert Clinton, the leadership guru who taught at Fuller Seminary for many years, studied how leaders finish well. One truth he discovered is that many spiritual leaders, including several in Scripture, do not finish well. They drop out. They plateau. Or worse, they get disqualified. One of Clinton's findings was that for a leader to finish well, during the ages of 30-50 (the middle years of ministry), a leader needs to have significant moments of renewal.¹ The Doctor of Ministry program aims to be one of those key moments.

When I left my preaching ministry at Southside Church of Christ, the elders called me and my family up on stage, placed their hands on me, and charged me to multiply missional leaders. I see the Doctor of Ministry program as being a key vehicle for that effort. The church needs faithful missional leaders. The church needs servants whose hearts burn with passion for the Lord, who have eyes trained to look at the world like God does, and skills necessary to lead a church or ministry to join God in His mission in the world. The Doctor of Ministry program seeks to equip leaders for this purpose.

I loved my Doctor of Ministry program. It was good for me. It stretched me, introduced me to new resources, and gave me new mentors and colleagues in ministry. It helped our church. The projects in my courses assisted our church in understanding what was happening among our body and neighborhood in order to chart new directions for the future. It also was encouraging for my family. My family participated in my travels and we developed good memories from our time together. The Doctor of Ministry program desires to fulfill these three goals for other leaders today.

Over the past year, I have been revamping our DMin program, building on the solid foundation left by previous directors, to incorporate new practices and emphases. I am very excited about the future. The program will be a cohort model that utilizes team-teaching methods and is contextual to its core. Students will receive spiritual direction and coaching for missional renewal. Plus, they will walk through courses that provide a biblical-theological foundation coupled with key ministry

practices and skills. The program will conclude with a robust social-science research project where the student can deeply engage in a missional leadership practice. The ultimate outcome for all of this, we pray, will be a multiplication of missional leaders for the church.

I would invite you to be in prayer about this program. We live in a broken world and rapidly changing culture. Leadership in ministry is hard, but my goal is that through this program, HST will be able to walk alongside leaders providing mentoring, guidance, and encouragement so they can finish strong in their ministry. For more information, go to www.hst.edu/dmin.

We were able to celebrate this spring a new endowed scholarship related to the DMin degree, entitled the Joe D. Bullock Endowed Scholarship for Doctoral Studies. The scholarship is named in honor of an elder who was an encouragement to me in my ministry and assisted me in obtaining my DMin degree. The scholarship is a church match scholarship, which means the fund will match whatever a church contributes toward the education of their minister. This will encourage congregations to invest in the student's education, just like Joe did in mine. I am personally looking forward to teaching students who I know are present because of the influence of Joe Bullock through this scholarship. To give to this scholarship, go to www.hst.edu/make-a-gift and earmark the gift, "Joe Bullock Scholarship."



¹ Robert Clinton, "Listen Up, Leaders!" Barnabas Publishers Reprint (1990): 6.

AN Open Letter TO HST ALUMNI



Photo Credit: Jeff Montgomery

Garrett Best

Greetings, HST graduates!

The HST Alumni Council solicits your nomination for the 2022 Alumnus/ Alumna of the Year award. The candidate will be selected and announced this fall. As you consider Harding School of Theology graduates to nominate, you may wish to reflect on this year's HST spiritual theme, *Trusting a Sovereign God*. The theme verse is Matthew 6:10 – “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Candidate prerequisites:

- Degree from HST
- Christian service and influence
- Affinity and advocacy for HST
- Non-recipient of this award.
(previous nominees welcomed)

Your nomination should include written responses to the following criteria:

1. Alumnus/Alumna name
2. Length of acquaintance with the nominee
3. Length of the nominee's ministry
4. Nominee's relationship with
Harding School of Theology
5. Description and influence of nominee's ministry
6. How the nominee exemplifies the academic
theme of *Trusting a Sovereign God*

Please submit your written nominations by June 30, 2022. Correspondence may be mailed to:

HST Advancement Director
1000 Cherry Road
Memphis, TN 38117

Electronic correspondence may be emailed to HSTadvancement@hst.edu.

So many candidates to choose from! Go to scholarworks.harding.edu/hst-graduates/ to browse names and photos of HST graduates all the way back to '59. Thanks for your continued interest in HST.

For the Alumni Council,
Garrett Best

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is our last print issue of *The Bridge*. We will be sending out a regular HST newsletter by email. To receive the newsletter, please send your email address to dean@hst.edu



Hebrew Story Hour

Dr. Lance Hawley, Assistant Professor of Old Testament at HST, hosts the Hebrew Story Hour each Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. CDT on Zoom. Dr. Hawley welcomes all those with any – or zero – Hebrew experience to join in. He even wears a Mr.-Rogers-like sweater, since it's story time.

His invitation on Facebook: “Looking for a reentry point to the Hebrew Bible? Come and hear biblical Hebrew stories read and translated. Did you ever attend the library as a child for story hour or have someone read to you as you were learning to read? If so, you have the idea of what Hebrew Story Hour is all about.” Contact Dr. Hawley at lhawley2@harding.edu if you're interested in participating.



HARDING
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY®

**1000 Cherry Road
Memphis, TN 38117**

Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEARCY, AR
PERMIT #60

2022 Fall Dinner

Photo Credit: Jeff Montgomery



Harding School of Theology's Annual Fall Dinner will take place on November 12, 2022 at the Memphis University School, 6191 Park Avenue in Memphis. Our guest speaker this year will be the new president of Harding University, Dr. Mike Williams. For the last seven years, Dr. Williams has served as president of Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama. We look forward to this evening as we celebrate the work and ministry of Harding School of Theology. Please let us know as soon as possible of

your plans to attend by emailing sbuford@harding.edu or calling the HST Advancement Office at 901-432-7748.

While there is no cost to attend the HST Fall Dinner, we do ask that you consider sending a gift to support the work and ministry of HST. This dinner usually takes place in November of each year, which is typically when so many friends and donors to HST choose to give a gift. You may live in a location where it is not practical for you to attend this dinner. Whether you are an alumnus, a longtime donor, or a new friend of the school, your support is really appreciated.