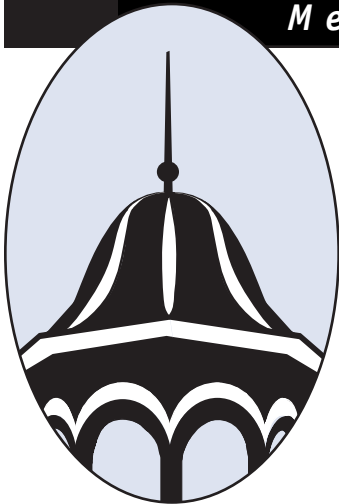


The Bridge

Memphis, Tennessee

Harding University Graduate School of Religion

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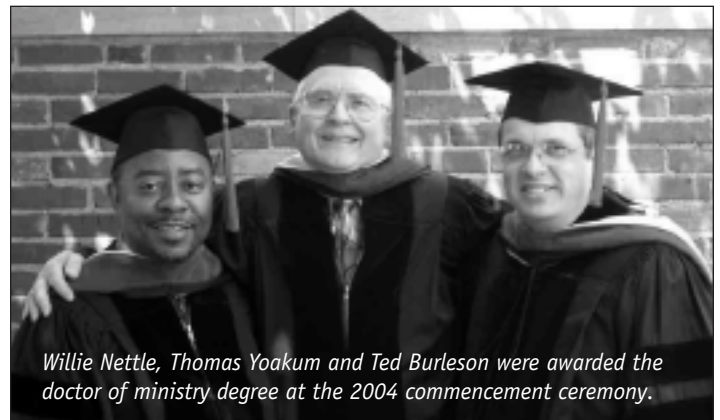
Milestones Highlight 2004 Graduation

by Mark Parker, assistant executive director

Every commencement represents significant achievement on the part of the graduates who have invested time, energy and money to equip themselves for ministry. Faculty, staff and donors can all be proud of the work these graduates have done and the ministries they lead around the world.

This year, however, two significant milestones highlighted commencement. The Graduate School of Religion awarded the first master of arts in Christian ministry degree. This degree, comprised of Bible and practical ministry courses, is designed to train students for a specific area of service. (This is also the degree of choice for distance-learning students through our *MinistryConnection* program.)

Amy Edwards and Ron Longwell were awarded this degree in May. Amy lives in Chesapeake, Va., and plans to



Willie Nettle, Thomas Yoakum and Ted Bureson were awarded the doctor of ministry degree at the 2004 commencement ceremony.

use her degree in the classroom as a teacher.

Ron has taken a position as pulpit minister for the Church of Christ in Somerset, Pa. He is a native of Pennsylvania, and he moved to the Graduate School in order to train for better service in his home state.

A second milestone is the awarding of the doctor of ministry degree to Willie Nettle. He is the first African-American to

receive a doctorate from Harding University and ministers in Vicksburg, Miss. He wrote his dissertation on his work mentoring the leaders in his congregation.

Our graduates work in various ministries, although the majority are in pulpit ministry:

Ministry	Number of Graduates
Minister (pulpit and evangelism)	12
Further academic work	5
Counselor	3
Youth Minister	3
Missionary	2
Chaplain	1

God continues to use Harding University Graduate School of Religion to bless congregations around the world with leaders who are trained in using the Scriptures and experienced in practical service.

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Ron Longwell and Amy Edwards are the first to receive the master of arts in Christian ministry degree.

Around & About

Paul and Allison **Glover** welcomed a daughter, Hailey Ruth, on April 26. Paul is an M.Div. student and preaches for the Pitman, N.J., Church of Christ. The Glovers live in Glassboro, N.J.

Michael and Patricia Bennett **Ashanti** announce the birth of a daughter, Noni Aisha, on April 29. Noni has three older brothers. Michael is a student in the counseling program. The Ashantis live in Helena, Ark.

Marc and Jessica **Walters** are the parents of a son, Caleb Brandon, born May 6. Marc is a student in the counseling program. They live in Memphis.

Timothy Ju Mok Cho and Me Suk Kim announce the birth of their son, Zachary, on June 3. Timothy is a student in the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry program. The Chos live on campus.

Kevin and Jenny **Jensen** (M.Div., '01) welcomed a daughter, Naomi Irene, on June 12. The Jensens live in Yakima, Wash., and work with the Summit View Church of Christ.

Les Maloney (M.Th., '86; M.A., '89) is an Army Reserve chaplain. He was promoted to major in 2002, then served for

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From the **Dean**



A Matter of Degree

Degrees are units of measure for temperature or latitude on the globe, for burns on the skin, for level of guilt in court, for angles in a triangle, and for completion of a program of study. "Degree" is one word we really need a context for if we plan to understand each other. If I say that something is a "matter of degree," I could be referring to any one of a number of very different things. The one thing that all of these references would have in common is **movement or progression from one point to another** — whether it is heat, damage to the skin, intentionality of a crime, width of an angle or level of education.

The Graduate School of Religion offers five different graduate degrees. Each degree has a different purpose and serves different needs. Their value is a "matter of degree" that is determined more by one's teachability and application than completion of a certain number of courses.

The master of arts in textual studies or doctrine equips a student for teaching the Word. The master of arts in Christian ministry equips one for various areas of ministry, like youth, missions and leadership. The master of arts in counseling leads to licensure in marriage and family therapy. The master of divinity provides the most depth and breadth of training in all areas of ministry. The doctor of ministry is specifically designed for the M.Div. graduates who have had full-time ministry experience and need to sharpen their skills in ministry.

Two statements I often hear are: "What will it take to complete this degree?" and "I really don't need the degree, I just want to learn." I must confess, I said the same thing when I worked on one of my three graduate degrees. Both statements reveal an assumption that the degree is a product more than a process. Now that I am on the other side of the process, I wish I had asked these questions differently.

But no one told me what to ask. So, maybe my insight can help just one person rethink the question.

I wish I had been less concerned with what it took to complete the degree and more concerned with what I really needed to be more effective in ministry and how the training would help me upgrade my service. No inventory of characteristics necessary for effective ministry and missions was available to me. The time and financial commitment required to complete a graduate degree forced me to get through with the minimum number of courses in the shortest amount of time.

No time seems good for the discipline of advanced education. It is so tempting to delay graduate study until the time is right. I know that the commitment just to take classes does not necessarily make one a good learner. Nor does the expressed desire to learn find fulfillment in simply taking the classes we want to take without a degree plan. Each academic degree has a purpose that the required courses support. My "just learning" posture seemed humble enough on the surface, but in reality it was a euphemism for "they can't make me take classes I don't want to take." It is so easy to convince myself that what I want is really what I need. I did not want to study a topic outside my interests. However, for most of us to take our ministry to another level of effectiveness, we need the discipline, structure and direction that a specific degree plan provides.

Long after he retired, I heard J.P. Sanders continue to pray, "Lord, broaden my interests and deepen my insight." Graduate education is less about degrees hanging on walls and more about transformation — movement from where I am now to a greater degree of effectiveness in the kingdom.

— *Everett W. Huffard (dean@hugsr.edu)*

*Fall Leadership Council Dinner
honoring Jane Tomlinson
for 40 years of service to
Harding University Graduate School of Religion
Saturday, September 25, 2004
6 p.m.
Holiday Inn – University of Memphis*



2004 Graduation



Class of 2004. Row 1: Dr. Steve McLeod, Leon Sanderson, Larry Arick, Don Meredith, Dr. Bill Flatt, Dr. Allen Black, Linda Oxford, Dr. Ed Gray, Dr. Carisse Berryhill, Dr. Evertt Huffard, Dr. David Burks, Dr. Harold Redd. Row 2: Ron Longwell, Amy Edwards, Phil McKinney, Jonathan Woodall, Dr. Phil McMillion, Sheila Owen, Dr. Rick Oster, Mark Powell, Dr. Dave Bland, Leanne Braddock, Elizabeth Cox. Row 3: Jesse Robertson, James Nored, Mack McFarland, Jeff Matthews, Bob Logsdon, Sun Lee, Eonyong Ko, Jeremy Hopkins, David Ellis, Nathan Daily, Leoncio Dominguez, Keith Fussell. Row 4: Floyd Williamson, Dan Rucker, Dr. Tom Yoakum, Dr. Willie Nettle, Dr. Ted Burluson.



Academic Awards. Nathan Daily: Highest GPA for Master of Arts, Hebrew Award; Leanne Braddock: Highest GPA for Master of Arts in Counseling; Dr. Evertt Huffard; Bob Logsdon: Jack P. Lewis Ministry of Study Award; and Dr. Tom Yoakum: Highest GPA for Doctor of Ministry. Not pictured: Ron Longwell: Highest GPA for Master of Arts in Christian Ministry; Jeff Cary: Highest GPA for Master of Divinity; and Steve Cloer: Velma R. West Greek Award.



A Family Affair. When Floyd Williamson (left) of Temple Hills, Md., graduated with his master of divinity degree in May, he left behind a legacy. His son, Carl (middle), is currently a student in the Master of Divinity program, and Carl's wife, Alicia (right), begins the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree program this fall. Carl and Alicia are on a church-planting team departing this year for New Jersey.

Return Service Requested

Good News from Harding Grad

God continues to work powerfully in the lives of the students at the Graduate School of Religion, and he continues to bless the congregations and people with whom they work.

During the summer session, we see firsthand how our students from around the nation come to Memphis for a time of intense work and spiritual refreshment. During one class this June, students came from Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Washington and even Canada. These are great students, committed to even greater service in the kingdom.

At one luncheon this summer, several students took a moment to explain how

Harding Graduate School of Religion had impacted their lives and ministries. Several commented on the way professors had mentored them through challenges in their ministries and how new knowledge opened new possibilities for them.

During the open time for comments, one student who ministers in rural Arkansas stood, paused and said simply, "I am a better man for having been a part of the Graduate School." Again a pause, then he sat down. Afterward, Annie May Lewis pointed toward him and asked, "Who wouldn't want to support a place like this?"

We asked readers of *The Bridge* the same question.

This summer we mailed a letter petitioning donors from around the nation to rise

up and support students this summer. Many of you responded with gifts to support these students as they are transformed into the image of Christ so they can lead the church more effectively.

The good news is, the summer scholarship need has been met. People from across the nation recognize the importance of providing excellent training for excellent ministers. Through you, God has blessed us and our students. Thank you.

For information about how you can continue supporting the vital work of Harding University Graduate School of Religion, please contact Larry Arick at (901) 761-1355 or e-mail larick@hugsr.edu.

Around & About *continued from page 2*

one year in Iraq with his Army Reserve Engineer Group (headquartered in Dallas). He returned from Iraq in May and now teaches at the Center for Christian Education in Irving, Texas. Les is also a Ph.D. candidate at Baylor University. While in Iraq, he wrote a series of three articles on "Faith on the Front" that appeared in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. (These articles are available

online at <http://library.ardemgaz.com>; search for "Faith on the Front.")

Rob Seesengood (M.Div., '96) successfully defended his doctoral dissertation (with distinction) at Drew University in New Jersey.

LCDR Bruce Mentzer (M.Th., '84) is a Navy chaplain now assigned to Naval Support Activity in Naples, Italy. His wife, Michelle, earned her Ed.D. in counseling

psychology from the University of Sarasota in 2003 and teaches for three universities in the Naples area. Their three daughters are Anna, Rivkah and Kirsten. Bruce was deployed to Africa and to Iraq for Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Nathan Swanson returned in April from a tour in Iraq. Nathan will continue his studies toward the M.Div.