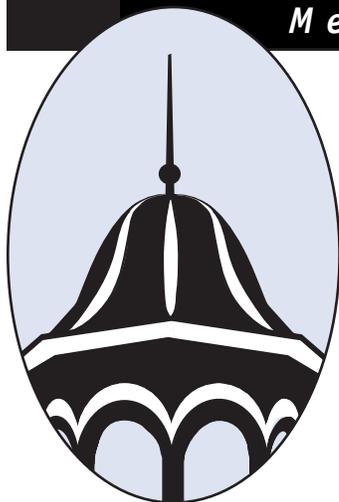


The Bridge

Memphis, Tennessee

Harding
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School of
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Ministry

MinCon Is an 'Overwhelming Success'

by Nathan Knappier, Student Association newsletter editor

"It was an overwhelming success!" cheered Mark Parker, admissions director, about the June launching of the Graduate School of Religion's Ministry-Connection program (MinCon). Students enrolled in this program can use the convenience of the Internet to decrease their number of visits to Memphis. In short, four years plus four visits equals one master of arts in Christian ministry degree.

There is more to the MinCon program, however, than meets the eye. One of the greatest assets of the Graduate School of Religion is peer learning. Parker and others have masterminded ways for MinCon students to experience community in their learning as well.

First, MinCon students are organized into "cohorts." That means that the same 14 students who comprise this year's group will be in the same classes for the remainder of their graduate experience. These cohorts are limited to 15 students, and a new one is formed each summer.

Second, during their first trip to campus, MinCon students participate in many community-shaping activities through "Connection Week." The activities include a faculty reception, a new student orientation luncheon, and a question-and-answer luncheon with the faculty.

The result is a wonderful



MinCon's First Cohort. Front Row, L-R: Dave Shaner, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Jesse Pettengill, Groton, Vt.; Stephanie Nolan, Birmingham, Ala.; Brad Palmore, Columbia, Md.; Lewis Short, Milan, Italy; Rick Beck, Stockport, Ohio. Second Row, L-R: Hamil Harris, Washington, D.C.; Brian Fuller, Cabot, Ark.; Bob Bliss, Vincetown, N.J.; Andrew Hill, Clarence Center, N.Y.; John Cook, Stafford, Va.; Jeff Smith, Searcy, Ark.; Nathan Wheeler, Titusville, Fla. Not pictured: Charles Adside, Chesterfield, Mich.

sense of camaraderie. Jesse Pettengill of Groton, Vt., wrote, "I appreciated the connection lunches and the close proximity of faculty and staff. I have never been in a learning environment where I felt closer to my teachers."

For many students, MinCon means that they can be involved in full-time ministry and earn a master's degree at the same time. Brad Palmore of Columbia, Md., said, "Connection Week made the intimidating process of changing from ministry and undergraduate work into graduate-level education almost effortless."

Not all of the MinCon students are involved in full-time ministry. Stephanie Nolan, MinCon's first female student, is

a registered dietician living with her husband and new baby in Birmingham, Ala. She decided to enroll because she enjoys teaching the Bible and wants to be more prepared to teach (since there have been occasions when she felt ill-equipped in the evangelistic Bible studies she has led). She expressed her gratitude for the Graduate School of Religion's efforts to accommodate people who cannot pack up and move to Memphis: "They really go out of their way to help you learn."

EDITOR'S NOTE: To take advantage of the Ministry-Connection program, call Mark Parker, director of admissions, at 1-800-680-0809, or e-mail him at mparker@hugsr.edu.

Dowell Flatt Dies

We express our sympathy to Dr. Bill Flatt in the death of his brother, Dr. Dowell Flatt. Flatt, 62, retired from the Bible faculty of Freed-Hardeman University in May. He died Aug. 4, and funeral services were Aug. 8 in Henderson, Tenn. Memorials may be made to the Flatt Family Scholarship Fund at Freed-Hardeman University.

Black Out!

Early on July 22, a severe storm literally blew through Memphis and Shelby County with straight line winds approaching 100 mph. Downed power lines kept most of the area in the dark for more than two weeks. At the Graduate School of Religion, all phone lines and electricity were out for a week. Power was restored to the mansion and library on July 29, but the campus housing was powerless for two more days. Other than the power outage and some fallen tree limbs, there was no damage to the campus. The Church of Christ at White Station did not lose power and graciously let us move our classes to their building.

Fall 2003 Calendar of Events

Aug. 24 – Coming Together
Aug. 25 – Classes begin; new student orientation
Sept. 8 – Convocation
Sept. 11 – Advancement Council dinner
Oct. 12-19 – Study Week
Nov. 13-14 – Dr. W.B. West Jr. Lectures
Nov. 23-30 – Thanksgiving recess
Dec. 15-19 – Final exams

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From the Dean



The Big Picture

How easy it is to lose the forest for the trees! We are so involved in our daily tasks or specific ministries that we lose the big picture. Preachers can be so overwhelmed by their own ministries that they fail to appreciate the value of fellowship with other preachers or outreach into the community. Teachers can be so focused on their own subjects that they fail to connect with other disciplines. Some students only want to take classes they are interested in, so we have a healthy core curriculum in the master of divinity degree to stretch them. The demands of ministry are too great to drill only one hole.

The tension between the urgent and the important or the immediate and the long term constantly seeks premature resolution. Although the urgent and immediate seem to win more often than we like, we all see continuing studies as an effective tool in keeping the important and the long term in focus.

So what helps me keep a focus on the big picture? I like reflecting on data that challenges me to see beyond my own immediate world. For example:

- It is estimated that 82 percent of Africa and 79 percent of Asia are unevangelized. An effective missions ministry will require a larger worldview.
- Between 1900 and 2000, the percentage of folk religionists in China declined from 80 percent to 28 percent, but the nonreligious increased from zero percent to 42 percent. Christian missions to China focused on rural areas, while communists sought the young adults in universities in the cities. The graduates became the leaders. So what can we expect in the United States in the next 100 years with so little focus on campus ministries? If only 1 in 10 of the high school graduates in our churches who go to college will attend a Christian college, do we really think youth ministries will adequately prepare our youth for the formative years in college? The majority of our own young adults, not to speak of their whole age cohort, will have little opportunity to grow spiritually without active churches and

campus ministries near the universities they attend.

- The estimated average annual growth rate of members of the churches of Christ in Nigeria is 9 percent, 11 percent in Zambia, and 20 percent in Kenya — but only 0.3 percent in the United States. Many reasons could be given for the striking contrast between the growth of the church in Africa and the United States. Two come to mind: Evangelists go to Africa but not to pulpits; African culture is still more spiritually oriented than American culture.
- The number of missionaries in Africa peaked in 1994 with 230; currently there may be 165. With 90 percent of the members of the churches of Christ in 10 of the 57 African nations, we need more missionaries and more partnership with mature African churches.
- The majority (80 percent) of the 1,200 mosques in the United States are in metropolitan areas. Only 7 percent of the mosques are attended by only one ethnic group. I would guess our churches would be the opposite, with at least 80 percent of them with only one ethnic group attending, and most trying to leave metropolitan areas. One survey reported that 93 percent of these mosques give cash assistance to needy families. Although 55 percent have no paid full-time staff, average attendance at the mosques increased 94 percent from 1994-2000. Something drastic may need to happen to broaden our worldview to include the nations that live in our cities within the body of Christ.
- If you are 65 years old today, living in the United States, you are expected to live 17 more years. The fastest growing age group in our society will be those over 85. The 3.8 million in this group doubles every 10 years. If someone wants a great future in ministry, I would point him or her to a full-time seniors ministry!

The big picture of ministry in Africa, in

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Faculty Comings and Goings for 2002-2003

Dr. Carisse Berryhill taught the Wednesday night ladies' Bible class and served on the adult education committee at the White Station Church of Christ. She chaired the American Theological Library Association nominating committee, spoke twice at the Pepperdine lectures on the ministry of writing, attended the Conference of Christian Librarians national meeting at Oklahoma Christian University, and headed the Restoration Archives committee's cooperative project with librarians from all branches of the Restoration Movement. Berryhill also spoke at the *Stone-Campbell Journal* conference in St. Louis, presenting "The Gospel of John in the Early Restoration Movement"; at the national ATLA meeting in Portland, Ore., on "Discovery at the Reference Desk"; and at the annual mother/daughter banquet at the Siloam Springs, Ark., Church of Christ. She also reviewed Casey and Foster's *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An International Religious Tradition* for the *Christian Chronicle*. Berryhill and Sheila Owen co-taught "Introduction to Graduate Study" in June.

Dr. Allen Black taught two new courses, "Teachings of Jesus" and "Family Issues in the New Testament." He also spoke at the Abilene Christian University lectures on "Matthew's Solutions to Modern Problems" and taped a video on the gospel of Mark for the Ministry of Theological Education. He continued serving as a middle adult minister for the Highland Street congregation.

Dr. Dave Bland published two books and two articles. His commentary in the Old Testament series by College Press on *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* was released in

December 2002. The fourth volume he is editing with David Fleer, titled *Preaching Hebrews*, was released in May 2003. One article, titled "Profiles of Ministry Issues & Settings: Profiles of Ministry at Harding University Graduate School of Religion," appeared in the *ATS Interpretation Newsletter*. A major book review of Richard Eslinger's new book *The Web of Preaching* will appear in a fall 2003 issue of *Leaven*. In addition to his preaching duties at White Station Church of Christ, Bland also spoke on biblical preaching at the preachers' workshop in York, Neb.; was the guest speaker at the 50th anniversary of the Eastside Church of Christ in Portland, Ore.; and preached in Homer, Alaska, in July. He attended professional meetings for the Academy of Homiletics in Boston and the Doctor of Ministry Directors meeting in Chicago.

Dr. Bill Flatt taught counseling courses at the Graduate School of Religion and attended various conferences. He teaches part time now.

Dr. Ed Gray attended the AAMFT, Tennessee AAMFT, and Smart Marriage conferences. He also taught seminars on parenting and marriage enrichment and hosted the PREPARE/ENRICH training seminar. Gray teaches Bible classes at Highland Street Church of Christ.

Dr. Evertt Huffard served as interim preacher for the year, taught a Sunday morning Bible class, and served as an elder at the White Station Church of Christ. He lectured on Islam at the Harding University lectures and for churches in Dallas and Irving, Texas; Portland, Ore.; and Toronto. Huffard also conducted leadership retreats or

consulted with churches in Tennessee, Virginia and Mississippi; spoke at a singles' retreat in Memphis; and spoke at a men's retreat in Oregon. He was a missions consultant for five mission teams (Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Papua New Guinea, Scotland and Mozambique). Other speaking engagements included the National Campus Ministry Conference, Medical Missions Seminar, Teachers of Missions Workshop, and the Pepperdine and Harding lectures. He also taught leadership for the church leaders in Scotland in February and Nazareth in June.

Dr. Jack P. Lewis is an elder at the White Station Church of Christ and teaches the auditorium Bible class each Sunday. He taught three classes on "How to Study the Role of Women" at the Harding lectures and taught three classes on "The Nature of Hebrew Poetry" at the Freed-Hardeman lectures. Other speaking engagements included preaching at White Station and speaking at the 100th anniversary celebration of the Midlothian, Texas, Church of Christ (where he grew up). Lewis continues his research and writing and published several articles in such church papers as *Firm Foundation* and *Gospel Advocate*. His most critically acclaimed article is "Jamnia Revisited," which appeared in *The Canon Debate*.

Dr. Phil McMillion taught adult Bible classes and preached at the Park Avenue Church of Christ, coached the Harding Academy Junior and Senior High Chess Club, and taught a series of beginning chess classes at Harding Academy Elementary. A native of Midlothian, Texas, McMillion spoke at the 100th anniversary celebration of the Midlothian

Church of Christ. He also published the abstract of Selva Rathinam, "Prophetism in the Hebrew Bible," in *Old Testament Abstracts* and wrote a review of Roland Murphy's *The Gift of the Psalms* to be published in *Restoration Quarterly*.

Don Meredith attended the Conference for Christian Librarians. He is a member of the Tennessee Theological Library Association, treasurer of the Memphis Area Library Council, and a board member of the Christian college librarians Restoration Serials Index. Meredith received his 35-year service pin. At the White Station Church of Christ he is an elder and is secretary of the elders' administration committee. Meredith spent nearly one month in the hospital recovering from severe pancreatitis and was not able to teach "Introduction to Graduate Study" in the June intensive course (the first time he has ever missed teaching this course).

Dr. Rick Oster received his 25-year service pin at the Graduate School of Religion. He presented a paper at the regional Society of Biblical Literature meeting in March on "Conditional Prophecy in the Book of Revelation." He also spoke to churches in Switzerland on the book of Deuteronomy in March and taught a class on the Holy Spirit at Pepperdine in June. A member of the Highland Street Church of Christ, Oster teaches Sunday and Wednesday classes and works with Youth Camp.

Sheila Owen taught the second- through fourth-grade Sunday school class, organized a "first-century village," and was a member of the neighborhood involvement ministry committee at the Park Avenue Church

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Return Service Requested

Investing in Ministry

by Larry Arick, director of advancement

Dr. W.B. West Jr. once said, “When you give money to the Graduate School, you will be preaching and teaching the gospel for the next 40 to 50 years through those you train.” Although the Graduate School had not existed long when West made that comment, he was confident that it would be true. We now know that West was correct because some of our graduates have been preaching and teaching for many years. Beginning with this issue of *The Bridge* and continuing for the next few issues, I will highlight the ministry of one of our graduates.

Dr. Herman Alexander graduated from Harding University in 1957, majoring in Bible with a minor in speech. He received a master of arts degree in 1978 and a doctor of ministry degree in 1989 from the

Graduate School of Religion. At the time of this article, Alexander had just returned from his ninth mission trip to Lithuania, where he trains church leaders. He also travels to New Zealand every other summer to teach and evangelize there. During his early career, he preached at local congregations in Arkansas and Texas for 14 years and was a missionary in Adelaide, Australia, for nine years. Alexander has been teaching at the Center for Christian Education, formerly the Preston Road School of Preaching, since 1980.

Asked if there was one individual who influenced him to enter ministry, Alexander said Tom Alexander, a distant relative and member of the local church where he grew up in Casa, Ark., encouraged him. He also

said that finances were a factor. West told him that if he would take a class, he would raise half of the scholarship money.

Alexander and his wife, Rosann, have been married for 46 years, and they have two sons, Tom and Tim, who both became preachers. Tim preaches for the Smith Springs congregation in Nashville, Tenn. Tom and his wife Jeannie moved with three other couples to Portland, Maine, after their graduation from Harding University to plant a church. Tom shared the preaching there for 17 years until his recent move to Memphis.

Jeannie is the new secretary in the Advancement Office. The office number is (901) 761-1355; her e-mail address is jalexan1@hugrs.edu.

Picture continued from page 2

Asia, in China, among university students, in metropolitan areas, and among seniors can overwhelm us. So what's the point in this global tour? As long as we work within

our own little world, we see little need for further training in ministry. Realizing how ill-equipped we are to serve God in these areas might be the first step in graduate edu-

cation. The second step will be a burden to serve God in the world God sees every day. The third step is calling our 800 number!

— *Everitt W. Huffard (dean@hugrs.edu)*

Faculty continued from page 3

of Christ. She participated in meetings of the Memphis Area Library Council, Tennessee Theological Library Association, Christian College Librarians, and American Theological Library Association. Owen also set up the circulation matrix for the library's online catalog, took a class in MicroSoft Access at the University of Memphis, and

co-taught “Introduction to Graduate Study” with Dr. Carisse Berryhill.

Mark Powell moved to Memphis in December 2002 with his wife, Debbie, and daughter, Audrey. The Powells welcomed a son, Mercer Edward, on March 18, 2003. Powell taught courses on systematic Christian doctrine, history of Christianity, Christian

ethics, and faith and reason. He published a book review in the *Christian Chronicle* and continues work on his Ph.D. dissertation on papal infallibility for Southern Methodist University. He is also part of the Canonical Theism workgroup at SMU.