



# the Bridge

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## Ministers Who Dream

In one of the most famous speeches in American history, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream."

Too often, we associate the word dream with nonreality. We say, "It's just a dream," and we forget or dismiss it. That is not the language of true leaders. In the face of 300 years of oppression and bigotry, King still had a dream. More than the marches and the legislation, more than the sit-ins and the boycotts, it was his dream that reformed our culture. It was his ability to craft a vision of a new America and to communicate that vision to others that brought about change in our nation. It may surprise many people in this world that dreams are more powerful than laws or armies or even history, but it should not surprise Christians.

As Christians, we serve a God who dreams. We see his dream at the creation, when he looked out on nothingness

and imagined a world of goodness and order. We see it when he hung the rainbow in the sky, and when he parted the Red Sea. We see it in the exile, when God sent prophets proclaiming hope and justice. We see his dream begin to come true in a stable in Bethlehem, when God



SANDLIN

When Christ proclaimed the kingdom, he spoke of ideals and refused to allow "the real world" to dictate the terms of his spiritual and ethical principles. His people were expecting a conqueror and a king, and when God sent them a dreamer, they dismissed him. And on a dark Friday 2,000 years ago, the cynics and doubters thought that they were right — that the dream was over.

But God still had a dream, and three days later Christ came out of that tomb and the kingdom was revealed as never before. Christ gave the

world a vision of how things could be and a promise that some day his dream would swallow up reality.

As Christians, we proclaim to a hopeless world that God still has a dream and that nothing and no one can stand in the face of it.

Too many ministers are paralyzed by cynicism, apathy and fear. We have forgotten that we serve a God who dreams impossible dreams and that he calls us to do the same thing. I am convinced that more than liberal change agents or conservative reactionaries, more than worship styles or doctrinal differences, it is that lack of vision that can kill our fellowship.

Let us rise up as ministers and echo King's powerful words, "Even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream," and let us, like Christ, give the last full measure of devotion to make that dream a reality.

▶ *Mac Sandlin is youth minister at Beebe, Ark., church of Christ and a master of divinity student at the Graduate School of Religion.*

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„training ministers „enriching faith „transforming leaders

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## Dean's Note

### The M.Div.

**T**each me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground (Psalm 143:10).

The forces of change that constantly challenge our core beliefs and values find allies in leaders with a superficial interest in the word, the church or ministry. It is a very good thing to rethink our beliefs and values. It is a very bad thing to do so without adequate resources or spiritual guidance. Paul warned Timothy of godliness without power in what Mounce called "religious dilettantes" (Pastoral Epistles 2000:549) who were "always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7).

Leadership in the churches of Christ in the 21st century cannot ignore the need to be equipped for the megashifts in the spiritual landscape. The cutting edge of the kingdom of God will always be the domain of the human will and heart. Unfortunately, this is the same domain that controls our self-discipline and desire to learn. Self-will and dull hearts lower the bar in preaching and teaching the word.

The impact of theological training at the Graduate School of Religion in the past 50 years makes me hopeful about the future. Although there are exceptions, profes-

sionally trained preachers and missionaries are more effective in ministry.

Historically the "gold standard" for training in ministry has been the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree. More than 30,000 people are enrolled in an M.Div. program in the United States and Canada. It is an 84-hour degree that would cost about \$42,000 at the Graduate School of Religion without financial assistance (which many generous donors help us

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supply). Does this take too long and cost too much? If you were to compare this to what it takes to become an airline captain on a 757 or an oncologist, it is a rather small price to pay for something so important to the church. While we recognize the importance of professional training for safe transportation or fighting cancer, can we also recognize its value in shaping our spiritual life and leading churches?

I see too many churches adrift because it is too late to suddenly train their leaders for the challenges they face today. One of the best gifts we can give the next generation of churches will be well-trained



HUFFARD

leaders. That training requires both the spiritual formation of a heart that truly wants to do God's will and the training of a mind to discern the truth in a world of constant change.

Spiritual formation requires active involvement in and love for the church along with training of the mind.

These two factors continue to define theological training at the Graduate School of Religion. The overwhelming majority of our students, faculty and staff are actively involved in ministry. More than 560 of our graduates have com-

pleted the M.Div. (earlier the M.Th.). Of the 176 students enrolled this spring, 80 are in the M.Div. program. Their training will include courses in Bible, theology, history and ministry, such as a year of Greek and Hebrew, advanced introductions to the Old and New Testaments, systematic theology, history of the church and of the Restoration Movement, preaching, urban ministry, missions, and supervised ministry experience. Join me in praying that the good Spirit that David prayed for will bless and lead all our students to do the Lord's will.

► Dr. Evertt W. Huffard  
(dean@hugsr.edu)

# West Virginia Apprenticeship Lays Foundation for Oregon Ministry

When Jason and Amanda Swick moved from Washington to West Virginia, they trusted that God would use them to reach students at West Virginia University. As they look back on their two-year apprenticeship, they are even more committed to sharing Christ on campus.

In fall 2006 the Swicks took positions as apprentices at the Mountaineers for Christ campus ministry in Morgantown. As they finish that apprenticeship, they are now preparing to move to the campus of Oregon State University,

where Jason will be the new campus minister.

Before going into ministry, Jason was an electrical engineer for the Navy near Seattle. As a graduate of the University of Wyoming, he had prepared for a job in the secular world and seemed to have all he needed — good job, nice truck and happy home.

But he wanted to make a spiritual difference in the lives of young people.

He started by simply taking a few distance courses at the Graduate School of

Religion, coming to Memphis for one-week intensive courses.

As he continued in his program, the Swicks realized that they wanted to take their ministry to the next level. That next level turned out to be in West Virginia working with Jason Locke in Morgantown. While there,

moving to West Virginia is evidence that the Swicks trust in God's provision, but balancing ministry and school is never easy. Jason says he will have to "trust that [God] will guide my thoughts and give me the words to share through the Spirit."

"I began to pray for God to reveal himself through the words of others as they encounter him," Jason says. "As I read some of Luther's writing on the doctrine of justification by faith, I found God asking me the question of faith. 'Do you trust me?'"

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through the Spirit."

As a new ministry opportunity awaits the Swicks in Oregon, Jason has real experience and real theological training upon which he can build his ministry. By combining his ministry and studies through his apprenticeship, he can envision a significant ministry at Oregon State.

Through his time in West Virginia, Jason has seen God's faithfulness. That is a great foundation for ministry on the Oregon Trail.



JASON, AMANDA AND JOSIAH SWICK

Jason worked as an apprentice, a combination of graduate student and minister. Combining more one-week courses in Memphis with online courses, Jason will continue working toward his master of arts degree in Christian ministry.

The combination of school and ministry has been a hard road for Jason and Amanda, a road that included the addition of Josiah to their family. Studying for graduate classes, campus Bible studies and church classes quickly leads to infor-

## Mission Team Members Graduating

Twenty-six students are scheduled to graduate May 3. Of these, three missions teams have representatives earning degrees:

- Greg McKinzie, Peru
- Aaron Roland, Mozambique
- Robert Meyer, Angola



The Angola Mission team of which May graduate Robert Meyer (back left) is a member.

# BRIEFS

## Doctor of Ministry Course Focuses Leaders

The March intensive seminar for doctor of ministry students, "Research in Ministry," led participants to develop the prospectus for the research project that will result in their dissertations. Doctor of ministry projects are designed to integrate theory and reflective practice as part of a real-world ministry.

These topics were developed during the course:

- ▶ Helping new members find a place in the congregation (Ryan Richardson, Holmes Road Church of Christ, Memphis)
- ▶ Mentoring other mentors (Ricky Burse, Linary Church of Christ, Crossville, Tenn.)
- ▶ Preaching in a multigenerational church (Steve Teel, Hendersonville, N.C.)
- ▶ Shaping holy minds through preaching (Mark Johnson, Olympia, Wash.)
- ▶ The spiritual formation of students at Harding Graduate School of Religion (Mark Parker, Memphis)
- ▶ Guiding a congregation's journey of transformation (Doug Vile, Mundelein, Ill.)
- ▶ Mentoring leaders for spiritual formation (Tim Gunnells, Athens, Tenn.)
- ▶ Spiritual transformation among Bible majors (G.K. Pennington, Vienna, W.V.)
- ▶ Developing spiritual leaders in a multicultural congregation (Cliff Holladay, Baltimore)
- ▶ Intentional mentoring in a local church (Dale Hartman, Midwest City, Okla.)

## Faculty

### Faculty and Staff Serving, Leading and Publishing

**DR. DAVE BLAND'S** latest co-editorial installment of the popular series on preaching will be released in May: *Preaching John's Gospel*.



Bland continues to serve as book review editor of the preaching journal *Homiletic*, and three reviews of his own were recently

published in other journals: "Review of Tremper Longman's commentary on Proverbs," *Stone Campbell Journal* (Fall, 2007); "Review of Richard Lischer's *The End of Words: The Language of Reconciliation in a Culture of Violence*," *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* (March, 2007); "Review of David Wells' *Above All Earthly Pow'rs*," *Restoration Quarterly* (2007).

In addition to editing and reviewing, Bland has spoken at the ACU and Harding lectureships and led a workshop for Bible class teachers on Ecclesiastes at the Sycamore View Church of Christ in Memphis.



**DR. MARK POWELL** contributed "Canonical Theism and the Challenge of Epistemic Certainty: Papal Infallibility as a Case Study" in *Canonical Theism: A Proposal For Theology and the Church*.

**BRENDA CURTIS**, administrative assistant to the vice president/dean, spoke on "Call of the World" at the Somerset, Pa., fall Ladies' Day.

## Gray Takes a Working Sabbatical

Dr. Ed Gray, professor of counseling, has taken advantage of his sabbatical during the spring semester to provide marriage workshops and training seminars for his highly successful mentoring programs.

Since the beginning of the year, Gray has spoken at these venues training church members to use his *Marriage Mentoring, International Mentoring* or *Senior Mentoring* materials:

- ▶ Union County and College Avenue Church of Christ, El Dorado, Ark.
- ▶ Highland View Church of Christ, Oak Ridge, Tenn.
- ▶ Tennessee Association for Marriage and Family Therapy annual conference

**DR. EVERTT W. HUFFARD** has recently served as a leadership or missions consultant for several congregations: Shiloh Road Church of Christ, Tyler, Texas; Highland Church of Christ, Memphis; Port Angeles, Wash., Church of Christ; Westside Church of Christ, Baltimore; and Angola Mission Team "Quest Weekend" with Missions Resource Network.

Additionally, Huffard has spoken at the following events: "Churches of Christ in the 21st Century," at the International Conference at Korea Christian University in honor of its 50th anniversary; "Effective Shepherding," Ohio Valley University Lectureship; and "Reclaiming the Honor of God," Pepperdine University Lectures.

Huffard is also leading a May 2008 tour to Israel and a mission to the church of Christ in Nazareth.

**DR. PHILIP MCMILLION** attended the Society of Biblical Literature National Meeting in San Diego in November and taught two classes at Sycamore View Church of Christ on "How We Got the Bible" in April.

In addition, he has three articles forthcoming: "Creation and Wisdom: Three Themes" in *Leaven*; "'Promise' in the Bible" as part of a word study to be translated into Portuguese for use in Brazil; and "Og King of Bashan" in *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*.

**MARK PARKER**, assistant vice president, facilitated an elders' retreat at Oxford, Miss., in January.

- ▶ Hendersonville Church of Christ, Henderson, N.C.
- ▶ Families in Global Transition Conference, Houston
- ▶ Alliance for Multicultural Community Services, Houston
- ▶ Ohio Valley University Lectureships
- ▶ Sugar Grove Church of Christ, Houston
- ▶ Wetzel Road Church of Christ, Liverpool, NY

In addition, Gray will present his materials at the Smart Marriages Conference in San Francisco July 2-5 and at the Spiritual Growth Workshop in Orlando, Fla., July 24-26.

## Someone Out There I Want to Thank

One of the highlights of our day at the Graduate School of Religion is our worship service in the chapel. The service is simple but powerful. We usually begin with announcements, prayer, singing, and some thoughts from the speaker. The speaker could be a student, faculty member, staff member or a guest. Each speaker shapes his thoughts around the theme of the year. Our theme this year is the Kingdom of God.

A few weeks ago, Paul Goddard, one of our graduates and an elder at Park Avenue Church of Christ, spoke in chapel. Paul's story was powerful. It began with the discouragement he felt his first semester at the Graduate School of Religion. Graduate work is expensive, and he was having difficulty finding work. In fact, he was working at a local church

washing windows for \$10 a week. He was ready to quit and made a visit to the business office to make arrangements to pay what he owed. When he arrived at the business office, Paul was told there was nothing to pay. Paul thought the manager misunderstood him and again explained that he would like to work out some way to pay his bill since he would not be able to stay in school. She explained again that he owed nothing. Paul was even more confused. He learned that a generous person anonymously paid his tuition in full. Paul finished his degree at the Graduate School of Religion, and now he wishes he could thank that anonymous person.

I sent Paul an e-mail thanking him for his presentation and told him I had a similar experience. I attended a Christian school, and for the four years I was there, my mother never received a bill.

Someone paid that for her. Being a single mom with three kids to raise, she was thankful for that special person whose generosity allowed my sister and me to attend a Christian school. There is someone out there I also want to thank.

We can never pay back all the blessings that we receive, but we can pass them on. My work at the Graduate School of Religion allows me to "pay back" by helping to raise scholarships for students training in ministry. We need to raise about \$50,000 more to cover the scholarships we have granted for summer school. You can help one of our students this summer by sending a gift in the enclosed envelope. Most of the students will never know who blessed them with this gift, but they will pass that blessing on to someone else through their ministry.

► *Larry Arick (larick@hugsr.edu)*

## Leadership Council to Honor Dr. John Simpson

Each year the Leadership Council of the Graduate School of Religion honors an individual for a lifetime of ministry. Those who were honored in the past each served more than 40 years in ministry. Past honorees include C.W. Bradley, Jimmy Moffett and Nokomis Yeldell.

On Sept. 20 the honoree will be Dr. John Simpson. Simpson is on staff at Bartlett

Woods Church of Christ in Bartlett, Tenn. His official title is "traveling evangelist."

When asked about the secrets for their length of service in ministry, the honorees would quickly say it was the Lord blessing their work and having a faithful wife at



SIMPSON

their side. We hope you can be a part of this special evening as we honor John and Dorothy Simpson for their work together in the Kingdom of God.

The dinner will be at the Holiday Inn on Central across from the University of Memphis. Please consider making a gift to the Graduate School honoring John and Dorothy's years of ministry.

## Lillard Named Volunteer of the Year

Randy Lillard has served as chairman of the Graduate School of Religion Golf Tournament planning team since 2004 and recently received the 2008 Jefferson Mid-South Award for his public and community service in Memphis. The staff of the Memphis Commercial Appeal presented Lillard with the award at an April 1 ceremony.

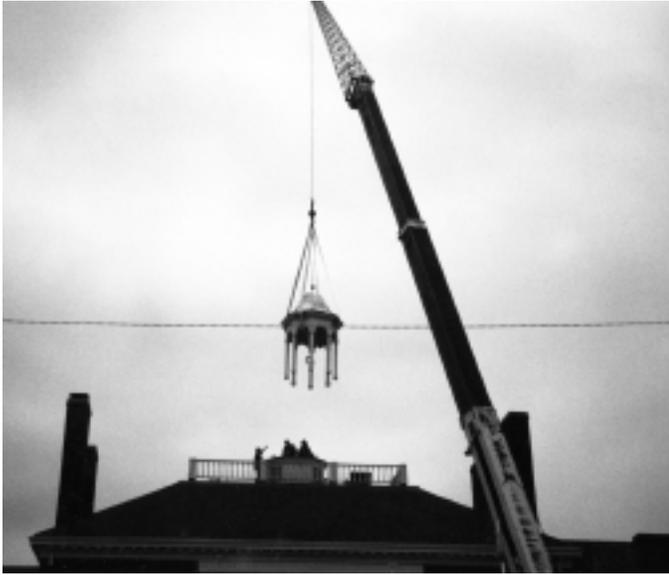


LILLARD

## Moffett dies April 11

The Graduate School of Religion community mourns the death of Peggy Moffett April 11. Wife of well-known Memphis preacher Jimmy, both were honored at the 2006 Leadership Council Dinner for their contributions to ministry leadership. Gifts can be made to the James and Peggy Moffett Endowed Scholarship Fund through the Advancement Office.

## Key Views from Campus



▲ The cupola is replaced on top of the Mansion after the 1993 fire.



This sign and Bible greeted visitors at the corner of Park Avenue and Cherry Road until 1998. ▼



▲ Damage to entry hall from the July 29, 1993, fire that burned the Ijams Administration Building (the Mansion). With the help of 49 churches of Christ, 25 businesses and foundations, and more than 150 individuals, the building was refurbished and rededicated April 2, 1995.

# A Heritage of Training Leaders

*One of the legacies of Harding University Graduate School of Religion is the teachers and professors at other schools who trained here.*



◀ Dr. Harold Hazelip speaks with Ken Neller at 1979 graduation. Neller now teaches at Harding University.

Student Association 1987: Willie Nettle, Steve McLeod, Tony Fischetto. Nettle now teaches at Magnolia Bible College in Kosciusko, Miss., McLeod serves as registrar at the Graduate School of Religion, and Fischetto is an author and practicing psychologist. ▼



Dr. W.B. West Jr. congratulates Paul Pollard at 1971 graduation. Pollard now teaches at Harding University. ▼



Randy Harris ('83) now teaches at Abilene Christian University. ▼



# Do You Dream?

A man had a dream that he was the engineer of a train, pulling a mile-long stretch of cars. This particular man had no idea what being a train engineer actually entailed, so in his dream he filled in the gaps. He could dictate the movement of the train with a remote control, just like the remote control cars that used to be so popular with boys (and their fathers). He could make the train go forward, backward, faster, slower and stop. It was one handy remote.

At one point there was some kind of problem with the train, so he got out to fix it. He walked the length of the train to fig-

ure out the problem and repaired it. He was now at the caboose, and with the problem fixed he did not want to take the time and effort to walk all the way to the front of the train. Since he still had his handy remote, he decided to save himself the trouble.

He entered the caboose and made himself comfortable. Then he got the train moving again. Things were going great as he sat back, watching the scenery pass. Everything was just fine until he came upon a curve. As he rounded the curve, he saw that the rail cars were falling off the track, one after the other. It had taken him so

long to reach the curve that the first responders were already there. Fire engines, ambulances, paramedics, police officers — every emergency vehicle in the area was at the scene.

The man felt overwhelmed with guilt, because he knew it was his fault. Then he awoke. As he woke up a thought came to him.

You cannot lead from the back of the train.

If you want to learn to lead, call us at 1-800-680-0809. We help train leaders.

► *Dr. Steve McLeod (D.Min., 2002, smcleod@hugsr.edu)*

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