



THE Bridge

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Integrity, Intentionality and Incarnation

Rarely do university presidents enjoy tenure half as long as Dr. David B. Burks. This year, having served as Harding University's chief adminis-



Burks

trator for 26 years, Burks officially retires from that role and assumes the title of chancellor. I was blessed to be his assistant for six years while he encouraged my pursuit of an M.Div. from HST. In honor of his retirement, I'd like to share three character traits I witnessed in Dr. Burks that embody the aim of true theological education.

As a businessman, teacher, mentor, elder, community leader, fundraiser and university administrator, he knows how to get things done without compromising integrity. I've known few people as consistent and worthy of trust as Dr. Burks. "Small" compromises in ministry have split churches and

imperiled many young Christians' faith. True theological education, though, trains us to be worthy of trust from those in our church and in our community. In so doing, we walk in the steps of Jesus (1 Peter 2:22).

Watching Dr. Burks continually update and communicate his vision for Harding, I gained an appreciation for the value and difficulty of intentionality. He is a man of few words and decisive action: the results of a determined, focused purpose and careful, studious consideration. Regardless of his location or activity, this president is constantly thinking, dreaming, praying and planning for Harding's future. In the same way, true theological education drives us into a deeper love and concern for the Lord's church and gives us tools to constantly and intentionally move forward with the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 11:28).

Dr. Burks shows the same concern for freshmen as he does for board members and generous donors. Serving as the chairman of the North Central Association

of Colleges and Schools, he operated within the highest levels of academia. During our weekly home Bible studies, I've watched him gently share life and faith with students just beginning the college process. Likewise, in training to represent Christ, ministers learn to humbly



Cherry

become utterly present and vulnerable (John 1:14) to a wide range of people with a plethora of concerns and on varying levels of spiritual maturity — to become all things to all people (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

My prayer for those associated with HST is that we endeavor to serve with integrity, intentionality and incarnation. May you additionally be blessed with such a mentor and friend who embodies the example of Christian ministry as Dr. David B. Burks.

Daniel Cherry





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THE Bridge

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DEAN'S NOTE

Higher Standards

Our mission statement calls us to "higher standards of ministry and scholarship." Higher than what, some might ask? As the cost for theological education rises and the interest in ministry as a vocation declines, who will be intentional in recruiting, training and placement in ministry? The relatively low number of students majoring in Bible or ministry in all our Christian schools could indicate that we are at a tipping point. I hope we are not too late because the growing complexity of ministry in the 21st century requires more training to effectively proclaim the gospel and lead churches.

Reading books by Robert Webber and Fritz Kling will introduce you to a future that holds great opportunities and challenges — both require training beyond personal experiences. Just the rise of issues of justice, continued global migration and increasing polarization will require new skills for believers to be a blessing among the nations — especially our own. With no church structures beyond the local congregation, the responsibility for training future leaders ideally falls on the leaders of the local church. If they do not have the time, interest or resources to do the task, one would think they would seek a partnership with schools like us with the same intensity with which we seek ministry opportunities for our students. Such collaboration could encourage more young adults to make lifetime commitments to ministry. Too often the initiative for

any training falls on the individual student with minimal encouragement or support from the local church.

HST has always been intentional about training in ministry at a level beyond the local church. In the minutes of the Sept. 16, 1965, faculty meeting, E.H. Ijams affirmed a comment by Dr. Cliff Ganus Jr. that the school needed to be relevant to the needs of our times and students needed to be "fired up to be workers with God." The same faculty meeting noted steps to take to complete North Central accreditation. So the call for higher standards of ministry and scholarship echoes through the decades.

Daniel Aleshire, president of the Association of Theological Schools, described it this way — a school like HST is a hybrid with part of its identity deeply rooted in the church and the other part in higher education. A student will enjoy a level of fellowship and spiritual formation that he has not experienced at church but will suddenly know that they are in school when the grades come out. The student who has fled to school for refuge in the ideal is forced to face his fears in the reality of a required field experience (a M.A.C.M. and M.Div. requirement) in a church or ministry context.

Back to the question — higher than what? Imagine developing a strategy for our fellowship where the standards were raised in all three training models identified in *The Mentoring Handbook*:

1. **Formal training** in universities and Bible col-



Huffard

leges offers a developed curriculum leading to a degree with a teacher-focused delivery system that takes years to complete. It is costly, intense and requires evidence of progress through testing and competencies. New standards require a shift to more learner-focused experiences. Spiritual formation raises the bar for the student who only wanted a degree. With 69 percent of our students in the M.A.C.M. and M.Div. programs, which require mentored ministry experiences, we raise the standards beyond knowledge acquisition. Professors offer their own rich ministry experience with advanced degrees in their areas.

2. **Non-formal training** in workshops, seminars and lectureships in churches and schools offer speaker-focused, random, decentralized training with very low accountability or evaluation. HST organizes the Shepherds Network to empower experienced church leaders, to encourage and equip church leaders to develop more leaders and to respond to the challenges of ministry.
3. **Informal training** includes on-the-job experience, short internships or two-year apprenticeships in a learner-focused context

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Chili, Pie Dinner Held

Associated Women for Harding is an auxiliary fundraising group for Harding School of Theology. One of their most enjoyable fundraising events is the annual pie auction and chili dinner. This year the event

was held Feb. 2. Volunteers brought their best recipes of soup and chili, and entertainment was provided by Monika Grundy, a former student of Harding Academy. Volunteers also brought their best pie or cake for Dr. John Kennedy

and Bob Turner to auction. Bidding for the pies was fast and furious; one Karo pecan pie went for \$1,000! Thanks to AWH and many volunteers for more than \$13,000 raised for scholarships to equip and train leaders for ministry.

Bland Wins Run for the Son

The 13th annual Run for the Son 5K Run and one mile fun walk took place March 23. Dr. Jack Lewis, professor emeritus, acted as our first-ever grand marshal, riding in a pace car loaned and driven by Greg Muse, a member of the HST Leadership Council. The overall winner of the

race was Dr. Justin Bland, a professor at Harding University and son of Dr. Dave Bland, HST's professor of homiletics. Dave received the masters' award for the best time among men more than 40 years old. This year the faculty/staff trophy was presented to the student team. The winner of this

trophy is determined by the combined times of the five runners on each team adjusted by the amount of money each team raises. Dollars raised add minutes to the other team's totals. We had a record number of participants this year and almost \$14,000 was raised.

Plunket Alumnus of Year

The Harding School of Theology auditorium was filled to capacity April 18 at the annual Advancement/Leadership Council luncheon. We introduced the HST graduating class of 2013 and honored Dr. Rodney Plunket as Alumnus of the Year. Ten of this year's graduates will work in church ministry; five in missions; five in counseling; one each in prison ministry, chaplaincy, and church plant-

ing; and one will continue study for a Ph.D. Please pray for these men and women as they continue the ministry God has planned for them.

Plunket is a second-generation graduate of HST. His father, Lamar Plunket, graduated in 1963. Dr. Leon Sanderson congratulated Plunket on behalf of the ministers at the Church of Christ at White Station, and Earl Manning, a former elder, spoke on behalf of the elders

and the congregation. Plunket's wife, Margaret, read remarks from their daughter Callie Plunket-Brewton, who reflected on being a "third-generation student" at HST, using the library resources in writing her thesis. A special part of the program was a video of congratulations from elders of the Broadway Church in Lubbock, Texas, in a tribute to Plunket.

Distinguished guests included Dr. David B. Burks, president of Harding University; Dr. Bruce McLarty, president-elect; and former alumni of the year Leon Sanderson, Phil Slate, Matt Carter, Dwight Albright, Don Meredith and Ed Short, as well as the first alumnus of the year, Jim Moffett.

Larry Arick
(larick@hst.edu)



Dr. Huffard presents the award to Dr. Plunket as Jim Moffett, Larry Arick and Leon Sanderson look on.

BRIEFS



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on Would you like to receive occasional emails from HST with information of interest to our friends? <http://hst.edu/alumni>

What's in It for Me?

Why should a minister or future minister come to HST? The top five benefits of theological education at HST are:

1. **Be equipped.** Gain the skills, knowledge and insight to serve more effectively in God's kingdom.
2. **Dig deeper.** The HST library provides you with the resources you need for serious theological research whether you live on campus or on the other side of the globe.
3. **Learn from the best.** The HST faculty are ministers as well as top notch scholars. No matter how deep the subject matter, it all comes back to better equipping you to serve the church.
4. **Get connected.** The network of ministry friends that you'll develop will support you through a lifetime of ministry.
5. **Keep your job.** You may complete the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry or the Master of Divinity as a part-time, distance student allowing you to stay in your current position.

Matt Carter
(mrcarter@hst.edu)

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Meredith Given Teacher Award

HST Head Librarian **Don Meredith** received the Teacher Achievement Award from Harding University April 19. Meredith has offered 5990, *Advanced Theological Research*, nearly every semester since 1983.



In Sympathy

The HST community extends our prayers and sympathy to the family and friends of **Cliff Holladay** (D.Min., 2012), who preached for Westside Church of Christ in Baltimore, Md., since 2000. Cliff passed away April 13, 2013, after an eight-month struggle with injuries from a surfing accident.

Harding School of Theology challenges Christian leaders to develop deeper faith in God and higher standards of ministry and scholarship.

School of Theology at Pepperdine Lectures

HST FACULTY ON THE PROGRAM

- Dr. **Rick Oster** spoke May 2 and May 3 on “Congregations Caught in a Vise” (Revelation 1-3)
- Dr. **Ed Gray** spoke May 1 on “Working With Senior Adults”
- Dr. **Evertt W. Huffard** spoke May 1 on “Leading Churches With More Q Than A”

HST ALUMNI, STUDENTS AND FAMILY ON THE PROGRAM

(Our apologies to anyone we missed!)

- Jimmy Adcox
- Chris Altrock
- John Barton
- Bruce Bates
- David Black
- Caleb Borchers
- Fran Borchers
- Rex Butts
- Chris Buxton
- Ross Cochran
- Mike Cope
- Gayle Crowe
- Matt Dabbs
- Anthony Fischetto
- Cheryl Fischetto
- Stan Granberg
- Randy Harris
- Ron Highfield
- Dave Hogan
- Mark Hooper
- Keith Huey
- Larry James
- Jared King
- Charles Kiser
- Jim Martin
- Matt Miller
- Brandon Moore
- Mark Moore
- Yukikazu Obata
- Kevin Owen
- Steve Puckett
- Jon Reed
- Sam Shewmaker
- Chris Smith
- Barry Stephens
- Greg Stevenson
- Greg Taylor
- Jason Thompson
- Bobby Valentine
- James Walters
- John Wilson
- Tim Woodroof

Faculty News and Notes

Dr. **Dave Bland** delivered a series of lectures in February at Southwind Church of Christ on the Psalms and presented a paper titled “When Creation Groans: A Biblical and Secular Perspective on the Relationship Between Humans and Creation” at the Kearley Conference for Biblical Scholarship at Faulkner University in May.

Bland will participate in three panels at the Christian Scholars’ Conference in Nashville, Tenn., June 6-8. Topics include “Finding Practical Theology’s Location,” “What’s the Future of the Sermon?” and “Doctor of Ministry Research Presentations: Reflective Praxis for Congregations.”

In June, Bland will speak at a retreat center in Kenosee Lake, Saskatchewan, Canada,

on “Shaping Character During Life’s Difficult Times.”

Dr. **Ed Gray** announces the publication of a new 12 conversations program for grief and loss, available at www.12SeniorConversations.com.

In April Gray led a Prepare / Enrich Certification workshop on the HST campus; in May a men’s retreat in Montana. He and his wife, Rhonda, led marriage enrichment weekends and marriage mentor training at Pearl Harbor Church of Christ during January and participated in the Strong Marriages/ Successful Ministries Training at The Boone Center for the Family May 30-June 1.

In February, Dr. **Steve McLeod** made a presentation at a regional conference for registrars (SACRAO) held this year in San Antonio. It was

entitled, “Many Hats, One Head: How to Survive When Pulled in Many Directions.”

Dr. **Jack Lewis** spoke at the Faulkner Lectureship March 6 and presented a paper for the Furman Kearley scholars program at Faulkner in May.

Dr. **Mark Powell’s** article “The ‘Patient and Fraternal Dialogue’ on Papal Infallibility: Contributions of a Free-Church Theologian” was published in the March 2013 issue of *Theological Studies*. Replies to the article are given by John T. Ford (professor of theology and religious studies, The Catholic University of America) and Gerard Kelly (president, Catholic Institute of Sydney and chair, Faith and Unity Commission for the National Council of Churches).

Q/A *If you're a minister, how has graduate theological education changed your life and ministry?*

MATT CARTER: The value of my graduate training was in preparing me to minister in unforeseen circumstances. No one could have told me in advance what to preach the Sunday after 9/11 or how to minister to a particular group of college students who witnessed a fellow student commit suicide. Because I am equipped to approach Scripture in a contextual way, I am able to study and apply Scripture to the daily needs of my ministry setting.

STEVEN HOVATER: The church desperately needs voices of critical reflection as it lives within the world, voices that can read the scriptures and the times with discernment. HST was a great space for me to become more skilled in both pulling back to critically perceive what I experience in the text, as well as engaging with the challenges of the church and our community. It helped me learn the discipline of diving down and engaging the layers of life that exist beneath the surface of the scriptures, people, and communities. In those sub-surface layers, there is enough tension, hope, love and frustration to spend more than a lifetime discovering and engaging.

MATTHEW MORINE: The beauty of a graduate educa-

tion is the ability to process complexity in ministry. Graduate school does not provide the answers but a process to discover the answers. Often ministry is thinking through various situations and acting with wisdom. Graduate school prepares you for this reality.

GARRETT BEST: My theological education at Harding School of Theology has changed my life. For the first time, I feel that I can open the Bible with confidence. Confidence not that I will understand everything perfectly but that I have the tools and resources to investigate and understand. I think my congregation has benefited equally from my education at HST. With every passing semester, my teaching and preaching improve exponentially. There is not a single class that I have not thoroughly enjoyed. Sometimes it's hard for me to fathom how much I have matured through my education at HST. All of this is due to the wonderful faculty and staff and the educational experience I am receiving in the HST community. To God be the glory!

JIM MAXWELL: It made possible my entry into the Army chaplaincy. That education makes for rich discussion among my peers and pre-

pared me for the diversity of people I serve in the Army.

RANDY HOHF: I began [my degree program] via distance learning in 2006 and am now nearly finished with the M.A.C.M. My friend Mark Wilson, who recruited me to HST, told me that HST would change me. That is an understatement. I had been preaching full time since 1988, but HST opened up a whole new universe of learning and scholarship of which I was barely aware. My view and understanding of the Bible has changed dramatically, both in breadth and depth. But more than that, HST directly and indirectly changed my view and practice of ministry. I have since moved into a church planting adventure, which has expanded my comfort zones beyond what I ever could have imagined. I have become a different person. I feel I am living a missional lifestyle for the first time in my life. I am deeply grateful for my HST experience, not only for the knowledge it has given me, but also for the transformation in my relationship with and service to Christ. I hope to continue to audit courses after I'm finished, for who knows what new vistas will open up with each new course.

For more responses to our question, check out HST.edu.

Higher Standards *continued from Page 2*

of ministry. We constantly ask churches to develop apprenticeships to provide this training.

We seek higher standards

in all three areas. We believe that our service in the kingdom demands the best and know that we cannot do it alone. We are indebted to the

churches that have been faithful partners in the process.

*Dr. Evertt W. Huffard
(dean@hst.edu)*

BRIEFS

McMillion's Legacy

As Dr. Phil McMillion's time as professor of Old Testament comes to an end, he leaves a legacy that I am blessed to have been a part of, even if for a short time. I have had the privilege to take several classes with Dr. McMillion, including an archaeology class in Greece and Israel May 2011. I distinctly remember one of his favorite phrases, which he would repeat in every class from behind that ever-present mustache of his: "The Old Testament still has much to say to us today."

One must look no further than his teaching and his life to know that he, without a doubt, believes this to be true. Dr. McMillion strives to make known the inestimable value and richness of the Old Testament, which still speaks today with illumination and power to the Christian life and community of faith. More than that, he lives it. If the heart of the Old Testament presents a God who engages and relentlessly pursues his creation and his people with the character described in Psalm 86:5 (to name one of several occurrences), then Dr. McMillion certainly is "a man after God's own heart." His commitment to biblical scholarship, his teaching excellence, and his gentle and compassionate spirit will be sorely missed. It has been an honor to learn under him and to follow the example of a man who reflects the words of Psalm 1:

"Blessed is the man whose pleasure lies in YHWH's law and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which produces its fruit in season, and its leaves do not wither — he makes everything that he does thrive."

Nathan Myers

BRIEFS

What's in It for Me?

Why should a counselor or future counselor come to HST? The top five benefits of counselor training at HST are:

1. **Turn your compassion into a profession** through a career as a professional counselor with a Master of Arts in Counseling taught from a biblical perspective.
2. **Twice as nice!** The HST M.A. in Counseling meets the educational requirements for licensure in the state of Tennessee for both the Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) and the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).*
3. **Sharpen your skills** studying with practicing counselors. Our counseling professors are all working counselors and teach in their areas of specialization.
4. **Pace yourself.** Students in the M.A. in Counseling program at HST may study full or part time.
5. **Specialize through field education.** Memphis offers a variety of settings for field education experiences. Pick one that matches your passion.

*In addition to earning the degree, counselors must pass a state licensure exam and complete supervised counseling hours before being licensed. Requirements vary by state.

Matt Carter
(mrcarter@hst.edu)

Conversations: Sally Gary Conference

Editor's note: *In February HST hosted Sally Gary, executive director of CenterPeace, a ministry that seeks to provide safe places for men and women who experience same-sex attraction. Here are excerpts from the responses of two HST students to Gary's presentations [reprinted with permission from Under the Bridge, a publication of the HST Student Association, Spring 2013].*

As a counselor in training, I approached the talk on same-sex attraction with Sally Gary from an academic and professional standpoint. I did not expect to leave the conference thinking about how my own personal journey would affect my counseling practice.

Though I always knew it was in no way realistic to expect to identify with every life situation my future clients would find themselves in, I realized that I had fit homosexuality into a box in my mind of "things I'll never understand." Listening to Sally Gary and others at the conference led me to realize that though I may not understand what it feels

Sin isolates people, no matter what sin it is, and I hope that God gives me the words to journey with my clients on their road to healing.

like to struggle with homosexuality, I do know what it feels like to feel guilt, shame and fear: emotions that Sally Gary talked a lot about that weekend. I cannot run from a sin that makes me feel uncomfortable.

Sally Gary's talk forced me to think about what I would do when faced with a client struggling with homosexuality. Right now in my journey as a Christian and as a counselor in training, I profess ignorance about a lot of topics, especially this one, but I do hope that I can be a "safe place" for someone struggling with homosexuality. Sin isolates people, no matter what sin it is, and I hope that God gives me the words to journey with my clients on their road to healing. I hope that they realize that they are never alone.

Same-sex attraction is a topic that has long been a taboo in our churches. As homosexuality has gained more acceptance in our culture, our churches have largely failed to address it in any constructive way. Sally Gary confronts this shortcoming and shines a light on the true nature of same-sex attraction and on its existence within members of our fellowship. Sally's personal story serves as a crash course in what is behind same-sex attraction. While certain life circumstances may be instrumental in forming same-sex attraction, Sally is quick to point out that this is no excuse to live a life that is contrary to God's instruction.

This testimony provides us with an invaluable perspective on same-sex attraction. Sally's story opens the door for practical application in our lives of ministry. Each of us is able to understand the influence of temptation within our own lives; unfortunately, we seem to place some sins in special categories that do little but teach others to be ashamed and hide their struggles. For Sally, hope for freedom from this shame was found when God provided a person who was willing to openly listen to and share in her struggle with same-sex attraction. That is an example we can all take with us in our lives as Christians and ministers. We may never be able to understand the specific temptation of same-sex attraction or the biological and psychological factors in it. However, we can all learn how to provide a safe place for those who are hurting and fighting temptation. Though our current lives on Earth will never be free from temptation, we can provide for each other rest. We can provide safety for the weary and by doing so, reflect a forgiving God who seeks to reconcile all his creation to him.

Leah White

Jonathan Cooke

Intensive Courses: A Veteran Perspective

My first course at the Harding University Graduate School of Religion was an intensive course (we called them “short courses” in 2001). My first doctoral course was the last course — intensive and official — offered at HUGSR. Although the name of the school has changed, the value, importance and benefit of intensive courses has not. Two elements define my experience with intensive courses. First, there is the “deep calls to deep” (Psalm 42:7) element. I am a full-time minister and a full-time ministry professor. Teaching classes, preaching, offering pastoral care, supervising students, and keeping all of the other plates spinning can be exhausting. Intensive courses provide me an opportunity to recharge in an environment that promotes

both spiritual and intellectual growth, and are just as solid as weekly courses, especially in the doctoral program. To add to the great classes, you can get lost in one of the finest theological libraries in the country. Developing Sunday’s sermon, working on a research project or engaging in some personal study and development, intensive courses provide us that opportunity to “be still and know ... God” (Psalm 46:10).

Second, there is the “we always pray for you” (2 Thessalonians 1:11) element. Whenever I return to campus it feels like I never left. I have gotten to know several of the resident students, those who live on campus and are ministering in and around Memphis, and I look forward to catching up with them when I am here. This is also true of the faculty

and staff who intentionally invest themselves in building sustainable relationships with all of HST’s students. On the other hand, there are the distance students, those like myself who travel in for courses. It is comforting to know that there are HST students all over this country laboring in the same ministry, lifting me up in prayer as I lift them up. Since starting the doctoral program, I have forged friendships with ministers from California to Washington, D.C., and have been instructed by ministers and professors not only from Memphis but also Waco and Knoxville. This networking with both current fellow-laborers and the next generation of ministers and scholars is one of the reasons why I decided to return to HST to complete my education.

Rob O’Lynn

Intensive Week: A Rookie’s Perspective

My first intensive course was definitely a unique experience. As an undergraduate I used to say I would rather take one course at a time so I could focus more intentionally on a single subject instead of having to split my attention between five or six; taking an intensive course allowed me to do just that. These courses are challenging: you are expected to absorb an entire semester’s worth of lectures in a single week, and at graduate level no less; but they are worth

the effort and offer a convenient option for distance students like myself.

One of the best things about my intensive week was the amount of practical ideas and theology I was able to apply directly to my ministry. Transformational Teaching with Dr. Cochran had an impact that was immediately noticeable not only to me, but to those on staff with me and to the congregation as well.

Another highlight from the week was getting to hear the thoughts and perspectives of the other students in the class.

We come from very different backgrounds, so our unique views and experiences added to the discussion. With everything from preachers to youth ministers to a college minister and a missionary, there was a wealth of experience and wisdom to be shared.

Although I am only beginning my time at HST, it is exciting to consider the ways I will grow as a person and as a minister through my time here, and I know the intensive courses will play a huge role in my education.

Rob Randolph

BRIEFS

Adjuncts Tackle Intensive Courses

This week with preachers from around the country was formative. Besides the opportunity to read and reflect on significant resources, we got to learn from the varied preaching experiences represented around the table.

*Chris Altrock
(D.Min., 2005)*

I thoroughly enjoyed being on the campus of Harding School of Theology to co-teach a D.Min. seminar with Dr. Chris Altrock. I came away from the experience both encouraged and uplifted. I was so impressed with the spirit of the HST campus. Outside of class, I overheard students not only talking about their courses but their ministries as well. I finished my D.Min. at the school in the 80s. What I have observed, years later, gives me encouragement and hope for the future.

*Jim Martin
(D.Min., 1988)*

This is my second time to teach 1-2 Chronicles to theology students at Harding. As before it was a delightful time for me (their course assessments will reveal whether it was as delightful for them). I enjoyed the engagement with men and women committed to the study of Scripture and lives of ministry, and, as we worked through texts together, I was never disappointed by their insights and questions. I was especially interested in some of their paper topics this time since several chose to use methodologies or topics other than what one regularly finds in the literature on Chronicles. I hope that this course will nurture their further study and teaching in the church.

M. Patrick Graham



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FINAL WORD

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Aleshire, Daniel O. *Earthen Vessels: Hopeful Reflections on the Work and Future of Theological Schools*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008, p.5.

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CenterPeace: www.centerpeace.net

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