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# the Bridge

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## The Family of God

Scripture portrays Christian relationships as both vertical and horizontal. Of primary concern is the vertical aspect where believers are in a unique relationship with God. This bond is made possible only because of God's saving work through Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5; John 1:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12).

However, because of the God-to-human connection, horizontal (person-to-person) relationships gain significance.

The Bible emphasizes this with frequent use of household terminology.

- ▶ In general terms, the church is the "household of God" (Ephesians 2:19; 1 Peter 4:17) and the "household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).
- ▶ More specifically, Christians are the "children of God" (1 John 3:1, 2, 10; Romans 8:16, 21; 9:8; Philippians 2:15), are children of the apostles (1 John 2:1, 28; Galatians 4:19; 1 Corinthians 4:14), and refer to one another as "beloved" (1 John 4:1,7).

- ▶ Believers are "adopted" into the family of God and made "joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:5-7; Ephesians 1:5).
- ▶ "Brother" and "sister," common words of association in the ancient world, were infused with fresh meaning in the Christian



RANDOLPH

- setting (Galatians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Thessalonians 4:1; 1 John 3:15; Romans 16:1; Philemon 2; James 2:15; 2 John 13).
- ▶ The community of believers is a "brotherhood" (1 Peter 2:17; 5:9) whose commitment is demonstrated and whose cohesion is maintained through the practice of "brotherly love" (Romans 12:10; Hebrews 13:1; 1 Peter 1:22).
- ▶ The personal greetings found in Romans 16:13-16 contain a variety of intimate terms, such as "relative" (16:7, 11), expression of love (16:8), and one person is even

given "mother" status (16:13). In the same breath, Paul could compare his ministry to that of a wet-nurse or mother (1 Thessalonians 2:7) and a father (1 Thessalonians 2:11).

Add to this list the less intimate categories of the ancient household, like "slave" (2 Corinthians 4:5; Romans 1:1; Ephesians 6:6), "servant" (1 Corinthians 4:1), and "steward" (1 Corinthians 4:1-2; Titus 1:7), as well as concrete expressions of concern and encouragement generously peppered throughout the New Testament. The foundation for this is sacrificial love (Philemon 2:4-5; John 13:34-35), gentleness (1 Thessalonians 2:7), and "genuine interest for your welfare" (Philippians 2:20). This creates an atmosphere of mutual concern as the norm in a local church (Rom. 14:1-15:13). Obedience to the truth results in "sincere love for your brothers" (1 Peter 1:22). Harmony, sympathy, love, compassion, and humility were required toward one

*continued on Page 6*

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»»training *ministers*

»»enriching *faith*

»»transforming *leaders*

## Dean's Note

# Refreshing Hearts

It takes a lot of work to build Christian community, but without it, we dry up spiritually.

Growing up in the home of a preacher and missionary, I remember attending a lot of events that brought Christians together to study, sing and pray — like gospel meetings, lecture-ships, annual area-wide fellowships, and monthly Sunday afternoon singings. Other than a lectureship at your favorite Christian college (for white churches) or the National/State Lectureship (for African-American churches), appreciation for the larger fellowship of believers in the churches of Christ grows weaker all the time. I am encouraged by efforts in Los

Angeles, Oklahoma City and Detroit to bring church leaders and Christians together in an area to reclaim a vision for the lost, to affirm fellowship and to encourage one another. Bible camps, relief aid, and various parachurch ministries bring believers together from many congregations to work together. It refreshes our spirits when we discover that we belong to something bigger than our own local congregation — and it is good.

With all the change around us some things need not change, like the strength of the community of faith. It can grow stronger if:

▶ Leaders overcome the temptation to silo their churches. Our rejection of an over-riding hierarchical

denominational structure should not be a license to isolate ourselves from each other. Together we can do much more than we can alone, which has been illustrated countless times in cooperating to send mission teams, caring for orphans, creating Christian schools, and responding to national disasters. I have noticed that small churches can isolate themselves over some issue while large churches isolate themselves with their self-sufficiency.

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- ▶ The formation of our faith includes a love and need for the larger body of believers.
- ▶ Leaders care for churches in the whole region, not just their own. We all mourn the loss of a sister congregation or rejoice in the planting of a new church. Stronger churches share resources with struggling churches.

In *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, Peter Block raises challenging questions for people who want to build community. He suggests that two primary questions that point to our future are what do we want to create together that would make the difference and what can we create together that we



HUFFARD

cannot create alone?

I find it interesting that Paul, Peter and John shared a concern for the larger body of Christ. Their view of the kingdom compelled them to care about churches everywhere with the expectation that we would all share their spiritual worldview. Paul wrote, "Do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Galatians 6:10).

He also applauded Philemon's "love for all the saints" and credited him for "refreshing the hearts of the saints" (4, 7). Spiritual formation for Peter included a "sincere love for your

brothers" and a love for "the brotherhood of believers" (1 Peter 1:22; 2:17). "If we walk in the light," John assumes we have fellowship with one another (1 John 1:7; 4:21). I also find it interesting that the letter that makes the strongest plea to love all saints is the one where Paul is seeking to persuade Philemon to love one particular saint — his (new?) brother Onesimus. We "refresh the hearts of the saints" when we meet and work together. No one needs to be alone or to conclude that they are so unique that no one could help them.

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

# Maloney Supports Families After Fort Hood Tragedy

**O**n Nov. 5, 2009, shots rang out on Fort Hood, Texas, and in just minutes 12 people were dead and 31 injured. Another victim died later.

At approximately the same time the shooting occurred, Lt. Col. Les Maloney (M.Th. 1986, [leslie.maloney@us.army.mil](mailto:leslie.maloney@us.army.mil)) was on the base at the weekly chaplains' staff meeting. Within minutes the chaplains were assigned duties to minister to the victims, their families and Fort Hood personnel.

Maloney was assigned to the emergency room and ICU at the base hospital.

"I had the opportunity to pray with four soldiers in ICU who had come out of emergency surgery and pulled through — and to pray for one soldier who did not," Maloney says. "I also had the opportunity in ICU to support a young chaplain, a young captain, who was there to minister to several of his soldiers who were victims of the shooting and to help him know what he needed to do when his soldier passed away in the ICU ward."

Over the next few days Maloney was able to minister to the families of victims as they came to visit in the ICU. He also staffed the Spiritual Fitness Center on the base, a 24-hour center for those seeking spiritual support.

Maloney was selected to escort and minister to one of the 13 families of those victims who had died as they attended the memorial ceremony November 10, 2009. "A few hours before the memorial ceremony, the families were taken up to the headquarters building at Fort Hood where President and Mrs. Obama spent 12-15 minutes privately visiting with each family," he says. "I introduced the president to the family I was escorting and also spoke to him briefly a couple of times during the session with the families."

What does a chaplain do in crisis times like these? Maloney prayed for the victims, their survival and families. He prayed silently throughout the ICU. And he prayed with the family he was escorting.

He also prayed for himself, for mental, emotional, physical strength, stamina, and empathy. "I wanted to be able to be alert, even though I was very fatigued, so that I would not miss an opportunity to share God's love and strength with those around me."

This is not Maloney's first taste of ministry to victims of extreme situations. He has spent time over the past few years in the burn unit at San Antonio's Brooke Army Medical Center. "This experience, along with visiting and ministering to badly disfigured burn patients and amputees at Brooke gave me some strength in dealing with shooting victims. I also had the experience of working through and mitigating some initial waves of emotion presented in such crisis situations."

Maloney ministers not only to the soldiers on his base but also to the chaplains under him. "I check on the battalion and brigade chaplains who work for me to make sure they are doing okay and to make sure they have someone to talk to and some personal plan for resiliency and stress management." And he is part of a network of senior chaplains who support each other.

The Fort Hood community is healing well, Maloney reports. Chaplain staff and others have been called to assess needs and seek intervention when necessary. The base commanders have assigned staff to care for those affected — even indirectly — by the incident.

Maloney was called to serve in a situation no minister wants to experience. His advice for those who do find themselves called upon to serve in a crisis: "Lean on your brothers and sisters in Christ. The night after the shooting, when I was working at the Spiritual Fitness Center, one of my fellow Christian chaplains came over in the middle of the morning to talk. We talked for a couple of hours. It was very cathartic."

He also encourages ministers to gain experience before crisis strikes. "Expose yourself to vulnerability in several set-



MALONEY

tings: hospital ministry, nursing home ministry, volunteer work as a fire department or police department chaplain, clinical pastoral education experience, or volunteer at a suicide prevention hotline."

Undergirding Maloney's pastoral skills is a robust theology of God's providence, a theology he says he developed at Harding Graduate School. He further developed his theology by doing a Ph.D. at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. His dissertation, *A Word Fitly Spoken: Poetic Artistry in the First Four Acrostics of the Hebrew Psalter*, was recently published by Peter Lang Publishing.

"I learned a lot about the sovereignty of God and that he is able to bring new life out of death and can cause 'all things to work together for good.' It is not that all things that happen are good; but he, armed with resurrection power, can cause all things to work together for good. [At Harding Graduate School] I learned the power of God's word and his Holy Spirit to touch and heal broken hearts," he says. "That lesson was again brought home during and after this crisis event."

## Faculty Notes

Dr. **Dave Bland**, professor of homiletics, continues to serve as a section editor for the journal *Homiletic*. He also co-edited *An Honest Cry* published by Leafwood Press in honor of Prentice Meador. Six of his articles on the Psalms were included in the volume *Feasting on the Word, Year B*, which was recently named the 2009 Book of the Year by the Association of Theological Booksellers. He conducted 2010's Expositor's Seminar for preachers in the Northwest in Portland, Ore., in February.

Dr. **Phillip McMillion**, professor of Old Testament, recently participated in an ongoing project with the Digital Image Archive of Pitts Theology Library at Emory University. This collection contains over 28,000 images of woodcuts used to illustrate Bibles and related books from the 15th to the 19th centuries. The collection is free to the public with proper citation and may be used to illustrate lessons, sermons and related materials. McMillion worked on images from the book of Judges, editing the labels and titles of the illustrations. The images may be accessed by going to <http://www.pitts.emory.edu> and clicking on the red Luther rose on the right of the page. The images may be searched according to call number, scripture reference or subject.

From January through April, Dr. **Ed Gray**, professor of counseling, spoke on a broad range of topics in Texas and throughout Tennessee. His seminars included "Overcoming Depression," "Marriage Enrichment Workshop," "Life After 60 Workshop," "Caring for Marriages Through Mentoring," "Prepare/Enrich Premarital Training Workshop," and "Marriage Mentor Training." In addition, he presented a training workshop for counseling supervisors at the 2010 conference of Tennessee Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

## Faculty

# Kennedy Moves to Full-Time Faculty

**H**aving served as a part-time faculty member since 2007, John Kennedy moves into full-time capacity this fall as instructor of counseling. The move coincides with the expected completion of his Ph.D. from Regent University.

Kennedy brings experience as a licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed professional counselor-- and national certified counselor. His doctoral work, focusing on distance learning methods, has prepared him to play a vital role in the school's future distance-learning offerings.

"Currently our counseling degree requires residency," explains Dr. Evertt W. Huffard, vice president and dean. "John brings a vital new dimension to our counseling program as we make plans to expand it."

The perspective Kennedy brings is as important as his credentials. After a successful career as a CPA in Lebanon,

Tenn., Kennedy came to the Graduate School as a student with his wife, Rose, and three teenage children.

"Moving to Memphis was an act of faith on my part and the part of my family," Kennedy recalls. "I remember Rose and I calculating how much school would cost. That day I got a scholarship letter in the mail, and it was the exact amount we would need to make the move!"



KENNEDY

Now he brings his faith into his teaching. "John came to HUGSR as a second career student with a passion for ministry," Huffard says. "Over the past few years, that passion has created the kind of tension I like to see in our faculty members, a desire to be in ministry and a desire to teach. John intentionally integrates spiritual formation into all he does."

Courses Kennedy will

teach include Foundations of Counseling, Multicultural Counseling, Career Counseling, and several marital and family therapy courses.

As a part-time faculty member, Kennedy established himself as a competent, caring professor and counseling supervisor. LaVida Harrold-Giggers is supervised by Kennedy in her counseling practice. "He is able to relate to his supervisees extremely well and collaborates with me to ensure I gain as much from his teaching as possible."

Kennedy joins Dr. Ed Gray in the counseling department. This will be the first time Harding Graduate School has had two full-time professors of counseling.

"As the interest and demand for counseling increases," Huffard notes, "having a second faculty member will position us to grow in an area that makes a difference for families in crisis and churches seeking qualified, trained Christian counselors."

## What Are Faculty Reading?

**Phil McMillion:** *Divine Presence Amid Violence: Contextualizing the Book of Joshua*, Walter Brueggemann

**Richard Oster:** *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision*, N.T. Wright

**Allen Black:** *The Lost Letters of Pergamum: A Story From the New Testament World*, Bruce W. Longenecker; A fictional story based on true information about the New Testament world.

**Ed Gray:** *Soul Searching: Why Psychotherapy Must Promote Moral Responsibility*, William J. Doherty

**Dave Bland:** *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the*

*Opening of the American West*, Stephen E. Ambrose; *Home Economics*, Wendell Berry

**Steve McLeod:** *Sticky Church*, Larry Osborne; It takes principles of retaining people and applies them to small group ministry, focusing on "sermon-based" small groups.

**Mark Powell:** *A More Profound Alleluia: Theology and Worship in Harmony*, Leanne Van Dyk; A nice collection of essays on how theology can be brought to worship and vice-versa. Written from a "high church" perspective. *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer; A classic work on our theme for the year, "Christian community."



## Leadership Council Dinner to Honor Chaplains

The annual Leadership Council Dinner will be held Sept. 11, 2010, at 6 p.m. on the grounds of the Memphis Botanic Garden, reports Larry Arick (larick@hugsr.edu), director of advancement.

The annual event recognizes those whose gifts secure the stability of the Graduate School, but the dinner also allows the school to recognize those who have made a sig-

nificant contribution to the work in God's kingdom.

This year the dinner will bring together and honor chaplains.

The day will begin with a seminar for chaplains designed to build a network for those serving in this capacity, and to allow them to earn continuing education credits.

Chaplains serve in the military, hospitals, college campuses and other organizations where the spiritual needs of constituents need to

be addressed.

Since chaplains serve an ever-changing group, and, since they have no pulpit per se, they rarely receive recognition for their important work.

Proceeds from the dinner will support Graduate School students, including those training for chaplaincy.

The \$50 tickets can be purchased through the Advancement Office, hgsadvancement@hugsr.edu or 901-761-1355.

## Tenth Annual Run for the Son

Weather for the Son but not for the sun. The April 24 5K race and one-mile fun walk was delayed and then cancelled by severe thunderstorms and tornadoes in nearby counties.

Ironically, the annual fundraiser was the most successful in terms of total raised. More than \$10,000

was added to the Graduate School scholarship fund, reports Larry Arick (larick@hugsr.edu), director of advancement.

One scheduled event was the competition between the Student Association and faculty — the goal of which was to see which group could get the lowest time with five runners and who could raise the most money. Although the

weather kept them from racing, the faculty did beat the students in raising the most money.

The Student Association inaugurated a new award based on their challenge to the faculty — the Arick & Alexander Silver Shoe — honoring Larry Arick and Jeannie Alexander (jalexan1@hugsr.edu) who organized Run for the Son.

## Flatt Writes Autobiography

Dean Emeritus Bill Flatt (M.R.E. 1962) has published his autobiography with the encouragement of his family. Flatt served as director of admissions, registrar, associate dean and dean/CEO during his 34 years of service to the Graduate School.

Flatt's former student Leanne Braddock (M.A.C. 2004) describes the book: "Combining history, folklore and down-home stories, Flatt lovingly recalls the wealth of wisdom he gleaned from family members, friends, research and neighbors in the rural Union Hill community, in churches, and at the Harding Graduate School of Religion, and how they encouraged and helped shape his spiritual formation."

The autobiography is available from the Harding bookstore in Searcy at 1-800-477-4351.



Jeannie Alexander and Larry Arick hold the Arick & Alexander Silver Shoe award for the winner of faculty versus student association challenge at Run for the Son.

# BRIEFS

## Tour of Greece and Israel Offered

The Graduate School will be offering the course Biblical Archaeology on site in Greece and Israel. The course is slated for May 16-30, 2011, although the date is subject to change based on flight availability.

Professors Evertt W. Huffard and Phil McMillion will teach the course and lead tours of important sites. The three-hour course is available to all Graduate School students; guest students from other schools are also welcome to apply.

The tour portions of the trip are also open to others not taking the course.

For more information, contact the office of the vice president/dean at dean@hugsr.edu or 901-761-1352.

## Campus Update

### 2010-11 Course Schedule Announced

In addition to a full slate of traditional classes that meet once per week, the following courses in various formats give students options in scheduling. For the full list of courses, visit [http://hugsr.edu/academics/schedule\\_classes.php](http://hugsr.edu/academics/schedule_classes.php).

#### Aug. 9-14, 2010 Intensive Course

American Restoration Movement

Dr. Ed Robinson

#### Oct. 4-9, 2010 Intensive Courses

Systematic Theology

Dr. Mark Powell

Small Groups Ministry

Dr. Eddie Randolph

Advanced Theological Research

Don Meredith

#### Doctor of Ministry Seminar, Sept. 30-Oct. 7

Wisdom and Moral Formation

Dr. Dave Bland

#### Monthly Courses

Major Prophets

Dr. Kevin Youngblood

Global Evangelism

Dr. Stan Granberg

Family Development and Parenting

Dr. Dan Williams

#### Online Courses

Wisdom Literature

Dr. Phil McMillion

Ethics and Character Formation

Dr. Mark Powell

Managing Conflict in Ministry

Dr. Carlus Gupton

#### Church Audit Courses

Psalms, Dr. Phil McMillion (weekly course, Tuesdays at 6 p.m.)

Small Groups Ministry, Dr. Eddie Randolph (Intensive course Oct.4-9)

## Family *continued from Page 1*

another (1 Peter 3:7), in addition to encouragement (Hebrews 10:24-25) and forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32). All of these are “family” concepts.

Do you see a vision of what the church should be? The terms above (and others) witness to the strong family character of the relationships developed in the churches, not just in a theological sense but of a deep personal nature.

The depth of individualism in American culture blinds us from the potency of these terms as they would have heard and lived in the

ancient world. Simply speaking, the “Christian family” ideally becomes the primary group for the believer, something that is even hard for committed modern believers to hear. In his book *When the Church Was a Family*, Joseph Hellerman demonstrates that priorities in American churches do not typically reflect a biblical view. American Christians place priorities as God, family, church and others. However, biblically our priorities should be more like God’s family, my family and others.

The family nature of the church is one of the facets of Christian community that is in need of serious restoration in the modern world.

Churches (and their members) cannot have the vertical aspect correct if they neglect the horizontal. And the horizontal aspect will never be right if one omits the vertical.

We need God, and we need each other — it’s just that simple.

► Dr. Eddie Randolph (D.Min. 1993; [erandolp@harding.edu](mailto:erandolp@harding.edu)) begins as associate professor of ministry at Harding Graduate School fall 2010.

## Nettle Named Alumnus of the Year

*Work with integrated church noted in conjunction with theme of Christian community*

Some say that the worship hour is the most segregated hour in America — but not at the Bypass Church of Christ in Vicksburg, Miss. Dr. Willie Nettle (D.Min., 2004; wjnettle@yahoo.com) preaches to a racially mixed congregation.

Racial integration is hard enough for a congregation to achieve, but the diversity of the congregation is more than skin deep.

People from multiple backgrounds call the congregation home. It also transcends socio-economic differences and differences in educational level.

Yet this congregation embraces their varied members, and now has three elders — two black and one white — and five deacons — three black and two white.

It is this unlikely mix of Christians that Nettle addresses each Sunday, giving voice to the work of God seen in that community of faith.

Any success members or observers might notice gets quickly attributed to God, the source of unity in Christ. “Unity is a creation of God just as salvation is the creation of God,” Nettle says. Christian unity and community begin by “recognizing and appreciating the prior work of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Nettle is clear that the unity his congregation enjoys

is not the work of any earthly leader. “Since God creates unity, our unity does not come when we eliminate our problems and disagreements,” he says.

Nettle looks to Paul’s words in Galatians 3:26-28 and Ephesians 2:14-22 to show how unity is brought about by God. “Christians do not create brotherly unity; Christians maintain it!”

Christians must live in and maintain the unity that comes from being children of God.

“Because we are all in Christ, we live in peace despite disagreements, prejudices, imperfect respect, differences and weaknesses.”

This diverse-but-united church actually integrated because of other congregations splitting.

When Nettle planted the congregation in November 1987, after completing his Master of Divinity at Harding Graduate School, the target population was the black residents of Vicksburg and Warren County where he was raised.

Fifteen years later, Nettle completed his Doctor of Ministry from the Graduate School with a dissertation exploring mentoring for leadership development. Soon after he graduated, the congregation was re-planted, so to

speak, when two other congregations in the area split.

Those splits resulted in the creation of another local congregation, Nettle reports. But less than a year later that new congregation merged with Bypass, and the new, integrated congregation became a reality.

Through church planting, church maturing, integration and now leadership development, Nettle has been charged with keeping the congregation focused on what God is doing in that community.

It has not been easy.

The groups involved were suspicious, Nettle notes, especially about appointing elders. “After much teaching, prayer and two different attempts, God has blessed us to overcome this tremendous challenge we faced.”

Because of his leadership in building this dynamic Christian community, Nettle was awarded the 2010 Alumnus of the Year award by the Graduate School on April 1 at the annual Advancement Council luncheon.

“Willie Nettle’s commitment to God and to the church in Vicksburg make him an ideal representative of what we want our alumni to be able to do,” said Dr. Evertt W. Huffard, vice president and dean. “His congregation gives us a glimpse into what we have been exploring as this year’s theme — Christian community.”



NETTLE

## Guided Research Efforts Foundation of Article, New Book

When Mike O’Neal (M.A.C.M. 2008; onealma@bellsouth.net) submitted his guided research project as part of his degree, it was just the beginning of that document’s life.

Now, with some modifications, O’Neal’s research project has



been published by 21st Century Christian as *An Angel’s View: Encountering God Through the Stories of the Heavenly Hosts*.

Despite the title, O’Neal emphasizes the book is not about angels but about God. *An Angel’s View* looks at the stories of the angels in the Bible through the lens of what they teach us about God’s holiness, love, justice and sovereignty.

O’Neal’s venture into research and writing was not an obvious one. After all, he has been a NASA engineer for 31 years. “I never liked to write papers,” he says. “I would always ask what the minimum number of pages and citations were that the instructor required.”

By the time he finished his degree, he had found a new passion. “I started to love forming the research question and then digging through the rich works of the Graduate School’s library to formulate an answer.”

Similarly, the guided research paper of Ethelene Bruce White (M.A. 2009; royandeb@yahoo.com) was the basis of her article “Jane Campbell McKeever (1800-1871): A Brief Biography With Comparison to Her Brother Alexander Campbell on the Issues of Slavery and Abolition,” published in the spring issue of *Stone-Campbell Journal*.



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## Final Word

# Hope Mongering

**N**oted marketing consultant Seth Godin recently wrote of hope mongering as a means for developing relationships in business. There is plenty of fear mongering, he noted, but hope brings long-term results.

I am hesitant to let the business world co-op a term as rich as the term hope.

Theologically the kind of hope a business guru talks about reduces down to wishful thinking and optimism. But the message of Christian hope is based on an understood reality — God’s ultimate victory over the powers of evil, a victory in which we currently participate.

Ever since Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, life with God has meant hope. God’s work is about hope. The well-known song “The Steadfast Love of the Lord” sets Lamentations 3:22-24 to music. But this text comes in the middle of serious lament over the fall of Jerusalem and the terrible plight of the survivors. We are not

in the garden. But God is still working to bring us back.

The fact that the text for that song comes in the middle of a lament makes sense in some ways because hope and fear go together. The notion of hope only has meaning when that for which we long is more desirable than our current state. And in God’s story, hope is always more powerful than fear, pain, sin or injustice.

Hope that does not affect us now is not hope. Hope does not mean we do nothing, waiting passively for rescue. Hope means we know rescue is on the way, so we do everything we can to be part of that rescue effort. Hope empowers us to be part of what God is doing in the world.

Complacency is the enemy of God’s message because complacency neither fears nor hopes. Ministers and churches content with who and what they are will not be able to live in hope or share hope with others.

Unless the painful state of the world

pains you, unless you long for the redemption of lost souls, unless you long for life in the renewed garden of Revelation 22, you cannot truly hope.

In our context at Harding Graduate School, hope is vital to training ministry leaders. Students typically bring fear with them — fear stemming from ministry ineffectiveness, fear of school, fear of challenging preconceptions, logistical fears such as paying bills and finishing assignments. But these fears bring the opportunity for God to renew, redeem and refresh. Seeing God work in their lives here gives students hope for what God will do. They know God will continue to work in their lives and the life of their ministry.

Hope may be good business, but it is better theology, and it is the lifeblood of transforming leaders.

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