



Summer 2016

The College of Bible and Ministry of Harding University seeks to lead all students to know, live and share God's Word and to understand, love and serve God's world through and beyond their chosen vocation.

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HEALTHY MINISTERS, HEALTHY CHURCHES

Recently a student dropped by my office to talk about his dad. His father had been the preacher for a congregation located in a state far from here but was now leaving that church. When I asked the young man why, he answered, "Dr. Williams, dad was their preacher for over 15 years, and in all that time they never once sent him off to a lectureship, seminar, or any other place where he could get his cup filled. He's been giving and giving, but now he's just drained."

If we want to have healthy churches, we need healthy ministers. If we want to have healthy ministers, they should be given the opportunity to get away occasionally and get their own cup filled. Even ministers need to be ministered to every now and then.

That sad conversation reminded me of the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 19. In the previous chapter, Elijah had experienced one of the greatest spiritual "highs" in all the Bible, with an astounding victory over the 450 prophets of Baal. That high was promptly followed by one of the deepest "lows" in Scripture, as Elijah becomes drained, despondent, and even depressed.

In response the Lord sends an angel to strengthen Elijah. The angel touches the discouraged prophet and then says, "*Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you*" (1 Kings 19:7).

Can you relate to Elijah's condition? Have there been occasions in your ministry when the journey was too much for you? From time to time could you have benefited from the strengthening touch of an angel?



That is the role of our Office of Church Relations. Don't get me wrong: I cannot claim any supernatural powers, and I certainly don't possess an angelic appearance! It is my personal privilege, however, to direct one of the largest gatherings in our brotherhood, and our purpose in the annual Harding Bible Lectureship is to provide resources, renewal, and refreshment to the many dedicated Christians – elders, deacons, ministers, members – who are on the front lines of the kingdom of God.

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

Looking back over my own ministry with the great College Avenue congregation in El Dorado, Arkansas, I can identify stretches of time when I was spiritually exhausted and “the journey was too much” for me. For more than 28 years I faced the pressures of preaching in the same pulpit week after week, and there were times when I needed a break and an opportunity to feed my soul and recharge my batteries. When that happened, I was thankful that the Harding Lectureship was only three hours away; that my elders gave me time off to attend; and that my congregation placed funds in the budget to provide for the staff’s participation in such events.

One of Elijah’s problems is that he had been conducting a “Lone Ranger” ministry (1 Kings 19:10,14). In response, God provided him with a partner, a protégé named Elisha (1 Kings 19:16). Jesus would later demonstrate the value of this arrangement when he sent his disciples out two-by-two (Luke 10:1).

Early in my ministry I worked with a small congregation in eastern North Carolina. I had no elders, deacons, or staff members to share the load or talk over the problems that preachers inevitably encounter, and to reach a sister congregation required at least an hour’s drive in any direction.

That experience of isolation gave me a lasting appreciation for association with my fellow ministers, for time spent with individuals who understand the pressures of preaching. I am aware there are many men who still toil in similar circumstances today, and I keep them in mind as we plan each year’s Lectureship program. The fellowship displayed among our guests, and scenes of friendships renewed, is a heartening thing to watch.

Every year we have more than two thousand people who participate in this event, and we appreciate your support and your trust. For the past 92 years, ever since our first fall as a four-year college, students and friends of Harding have gathered for the annual Bible Lectureship. As our president, Dr. Bruce McLarty, has noted, “Lectureship has always been part-homecoming, part-revival, part-intensive Bible study, and part-celebration of the University itself. You might say that Lectureship is one of Harding’s gifts to the church and that your presence at Lectureship is a gift from you to Harding.”

This year’s Harding Bible Lectureship is scheduled for September 25-28. You’ll find a complete schedule at www.harding.edu/lectureship. Take a break – get away for a few days – and get your cup filled at our lectureship!

-Dan Williams, Ph.D.

Vice-President for Church Relations



SENIORS MINISTRY CONFERENCE HELD



Seniors Ministry is serious business – and the 24 people who enrolled in Abundant Living’s

Seniors Ministry Conference in June learned just how serious and urgent the need is. The conference was led by Pat Malone, Seniors Minister for the Pleasant Ridge church in Arlington, Texas. Those who attended the three night, two day conference headed back to their home congregations loaded down with resources.

Malone, whose pet reference to Christian seniors is “veterans in the Lord’s army,” said “people are gonna get the best we have to give!” Just like military veterans, Malone says Christians over 60 have “pioneered” the way for seniors ministry through their service in the Kingdom of God ever since they grew up in the time that America was pioneering the path to religious freedom.

From digging through Medicare and Medicaid to understanding Social Security and disability, Malone provided resources. Attendees left with names of organizations and agencies that provide everything one can learn about Alzheimer’s, aging, elder law, caregiving, stolen identity, advance directives, investment protection, healthcare fraud, housing options, government resource catalogs, safety and independence, communication and relationships, depression, loss and grief, downsizing, dementia, nutrition, money matters and spirituality.

Practical application of ministry *by* and *with* Christian seniors was modeled by the methods used in the Caring One-on-One ministry Malone co-leads in his home congregation. “Every activity is designed to provide information and motivation,” Malone said. And each stems from the church’s mission – “to lead people into a life-changing walk with Jesus Christ.”

Malone’s passion for seniors permeated the atmosphere as he impressed on those present that seniors are not just important in our churches for what they can do but for *who* they are as essential parts of the *body* of Christ, the church. “If every part of the body is essential, we should be making seniors as much a priority as we make youth,” Malone said. “And if any part is diseased or hurting, the rest of the body should be reaching out to help. We must be intergenerational if our body is to be healthy!”

Conference participants came from five states – Arkansas, Missouri, Texas, Kentucky and Tennessee. “The fellowship with those from all over who have the same goals in seniors ministry was very special,” according to Andy Clausen, Seniors Minister for the Broadway congregation in Paducah, Kentucky. “Pat challenged and inspired us as we saw hundreds of ways to help our seniors plug in to serve others in and out of the Kingdom.”

Shellie Wofford, who works with seniors at the Legacy Church of Christ in North Richland Hills, was also inspired by the devotional thoughts and singing led by Harold Valentine, a senior Christian from Searcy. “Harold gave us a lot to think about,” she said.

Mark your calendar now for the third annual Seniors Ministry Conference at Harding University on June 6-8, 2017.



-Kay Gowen

Harding University's 93rd Annual Bible Lectureship







HOLY HOLY HOLY

Living in the Presence of God

September 25-28, 2016

FACULTY NOTES

Our Bible faculty are serving the kingdom all over the world. Here are some examples:

-  **Dr. James Bury** conducted a workshop on Bible study for teachers at the Xenia (Ohio) Church of Christ, March 4-5.
-  During the month of April **Dr. Allen Diles** visited congregations and missionaries in Prague and Ceske Budejovice in the Czech Republic. He preached in Prague on the topic "We Saw Thee Not." In July Dr. Diles presented a weekly series of Bible lessons on the book of James for the Providence Retirement Center in Searcy, AR. He also preached on the topic "Ask the Lord of Harvest" at the Northside Church of Christ in Harrison, AR, on the topic "Healing of the Ten Lepers" at the Beebe Church of Christ in Beebe, AR for their Vacation Bible School adult class, and on the topic "Pray and Act" from Nehemiah 1 and 2 at the Cabot Church of Christ in Cabot, AR.
-  **Dr. Peter Rice** participated in a panel review of Michael Sandel's book What Money Can't Buy at the Christian Scholars Conference in Nashville in June.
-  **Drs. Anessa and Tim Westbrook** led a mission team of ten students to Szolnok, Hungary for seven weeks. The group presented in local schools, had Bible studies and participated in a camp, reaching more than 250 kids through the various activities.
-  **Dr. Dan Williams** spoke on "Developing Effective Deacons" at Summer Celebration of Lipscomb University on July 1.
-  **Dr. Kevin Youngblood** was on sabbatical last Spring during which time he served as visiting scholar at Southeastern Baptist Theological seminary (Wake Forest, NC). While there, he conducted research for a commentary on the Book of Lamentations and lectured on Hebrew grammar and on issues related to Septuagint studies.

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