



Spring 2018

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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"From High School to MDIV in Six Years?"

Beginning this fall, an incoming freshman majoring in Bible could complete a B.A. in Bible and a Master of Divinity in just six years. How? By following the new B.A. in Bible-MDIV Track approved this spring by the university faculty. It is no secret that the number of college students choosing to major in Bible has been declining for many years. That decline mirrors the decreasing number of people who choose to enter full-time ministry. This downward trend is visible across all fellowships within the United States, not just the Churches of Christ. The reasons are many, but at least one factor is the high cost of private Christian education combined with the relatively low salaries typically offered to ministers.

It is not hard to understand why a student graduating with \$30,000 in debt after four years of college would be discouraged by the prospect of accepting a youth ministry position that pays \$40,000 per year. It also makes it difficult to persuade that student to continue their education at the graduate level which will only add to their financial burden. Nor can we assure these graduates that a graduate degree will make them more attractive to congregations looking to hire them. In some cases it does, but not every congregation appreciates the depth and breadth a graduate degree in Bible can deliver.

In response, Harding School of Theology first proposed this "3 + 3" solution two years ago. What if a qualified student – meaning a bright, disciplined student – fulfills most of the requirements for the undergraduate Bible degree in their first three years of undergraduate study, then spends the fourth year taking the first 24 credit hours toward the MDIV degree? And what if those 24 hours were included in the total of 128 hours required for the B.A. degree? And what if they spent that fourth year – their senior year of college – taking only graduate courses by commuting to Memphis one day a week, or taking one-week intensives at HST, or taking courses remotely through HST Live? *continued on pg. 4*



Dr. Monte Cox, Dean
College of Bible and Ministry

LIVING WORLD RELIGIONS FIELD TRIP

*Overwhelmed. Grateful. Sad. Welcomed. Foreign.
Connected. Exhausted.*

When Dr. Monte Cox, dean of the College of Bible and Ministry, asked students on his Living World Religions class field trip to describe their feelings in one word, these are some words they used. The group of 112 students and chaperones, which included four from Crowley's Ridge College in Paragould, Arkansas, visited seven places of worship in Chicago, Illinois, and engaged in dialogue with clergy and lay members from each faith community.

The first stop on the four-day trip was at the Bahá'í House of Prayer, the only one of its kind in the United States. Students admired the beautiful architecture, observed a Bahá'í prayer service, and were given the opportunity to ask questions of Bahá'í members.



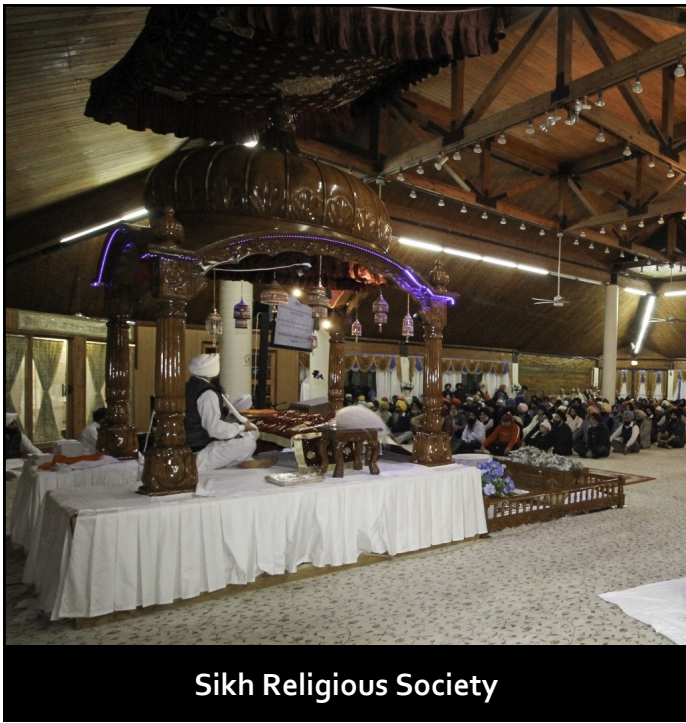
From there, the group travelled across town to the Muslim Community Center where we were offered warm hospitality and the opportunity to observe a Muslim prayer service. Rayelle Brown, a senior Communication Sciences and Disorders student, enjoyed seeing firsthand how Islam and Christianity shared a common foundation in God/Allah. "People always focus on the differences, rather than the similarities." The recognition of commonality between people, despite faith tradition, is an important takeaway from this experience.



Our third stop was the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago. Hindu members offered a brief background to their traditions and deities, and students toured the two temples on the compound.

Friday ended with observing Sikh worship at the Sikh Religious Society. The Sikh members served us *langar*, a traditional fellowship meal, and shared about their faith community and practices.

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Saturday morning began with Shabbat Service at KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation, a beautiful Reform Jewish synagogue. The local rabbi and cantor engaged with the students and we enjoyed a service in both Hebrew and English, with some familiar expressions of faith and many new experiences within the Jewish tradition.

Following the synagogue, the group spent time at Soka Gakkai International Buddhist Cultural Center. Adherents demonstrated their practice of chanting and shared personal testimonies about their beliefs and how they came into Buddhism.

After we left the Buddhist center, the group toured the city of Chicago for a few hours. Later that evening, we gathered to worship and reflect on our experiences. Bible major Graeme Gastineau commented that, "Seeing how

passionately millions of people worship their gods and practice their faiths makes me more appreciative and passionate about my own." Senior Casey Phillips felt gratitude, not only for the experience of learning firsthand about the various religions studied in the class, but more importantly for the opportunity to meet individuals who practice them. "They were hospitable, loving and humble. My prayer is that God would turn their hearts to be devoted to himself."

Faith Parker describes being impressed with the dedication and reverence that practitioners expressed for their faith traditions, "Yet, each one lacked the personal relationship that we share with God through Jesus." The group celebrated that unique relationship with renewed appreciation on Sunday morning at the Sheldon Heights Church of Christ congregation where members welcomed us as family. We shared worship and communion with our brothers and sisters in Christ before beginning the drive back to Searcy.

For 20 years, Dr. Cox has taken students on this trip, and on a similar one to Dallas, Texas. I am privileged to have participated in both trips and I return each time with a new love and respect for those who live out their respective faiths with dedication and perseverance, and a greater commitment to my own service of the Most High God.

Teresa Castleman
Event Coordinator / Assistant to the Vice President
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Office for Church Relations



Under that plan, a student could reside in Searcy, retain their undergraduate scholarship, and participate in campus life as an undergraduate. After all, we don't want to lose the influence of these seasoned, mature students in their last year here. After year four, B.A./MDIV Track students will graduate with their class, but will have completed one-third of the 72-hour MDIV degree. That means they would be poised to complete the MDIV degree over the next two years.

Since we announced the approval of this new degree program a few weeks ago, a number of students have told us they plan to switch to the new degree, so the B.A./MDIV Track is officially up and running. If you know a high school student or a potential non-traditional student who might be interested, please let me know by sending an email to mcox@harding.edu. I'd love to tell them more.

Monte Cox, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Bible & Ministry

FACULTY NOTES

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

- ◆ Dr. Monte Cox hosted the annual Mid-South Shepherding Summit February 23-24 at the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ. The theme was "Shepherding Beyond Our Walls." On April 2, Dr. Monte Cox spoke twice at "Kerygma," an enrichment seminar for preachers, at Oklahoma Christian University, on the topic, "Preaching the Gospel in a Pluralistic Society."
- ◆ Dr. Shawn Daggett, Director of the Center for World Missions, presented a lecture on "The Life and Mission to Japan of William J. Bishop," Ibaraki Christian University Mito Area Ministers' Meeting, January 15, 2018, Omikacho, Japan. He was also awarded a sabbatical in the spring of 2018 to research and write a History of Missions of the American Churches of Christ.
- ◆ Dr. Allen Diles presented a lecture on "Luther's Life and Legacy" for Harding University's interdisciplinary Humanities Colloquium on October 24. Dr. Diles also presented a review of Global Church Planting by Craig Ott and Gene Wilson for the annual Teachers of Missions Workshop in Dallas on February 24.
- ◆ Dr. Nathan Guy was selected as the recipient of the Coventry Prize for the academic year 2016/2017 for his PhD dissertation entitled "The Theological Basis of John Locke's Political Thought." The Coventry Prize is awarded to the student achieving the highest mark or recommendation in Divinity at St Edmund's College (Cambridge University).
- ◆ Dr. Kraig Martin led a panel discussion on "Being Honest About Doubt" at Harding University on February 26.
- ◆ Dr. Paul Pollard (retired) authored Romans: An Exegetical Commentary. It was recently published by Truth For Today Publications. A book signing will be held at this fall's Harding Bible Lectureship.