



Winter 2017

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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Faculty Profile: Dr. Jesse Robertson

1. Welcome to Harding University! Could you tell SLL what motivated you to come to Harding?

I completed my master's degree at HST several years ago, and during that time I came to appreciate the Harding culture. During the interview process for my current position, I was again impressed by the joyful atmosphere, the academic quality, and the sense of mission. I am very pleased not only to have the opportunity to teach, but also to continue to learn and grow personally.



2. You had a rather unusual introduction to our annual Bible lectureship! Can you share that experience with the readers of SLL?

I think it was on Thursday before lectureship that Dr. Monte Cox asked me if I would fill in for the Tuesday night keynote speaker. He let me sleep on it, and the next day I said, "Yes." Dan Williams was extremely gracious in helping me get on track with the program. It was a busy couple of days getting ready, but I was thankful for the opportunity to be introduced a little more widely to the Harding community. Everyone was very gracious and encouraging.

3. What is the greatest motivation for you as a teacher? What kindles your passion in the classroom?

Teachers always like to see the lights coming on in students' eyes as they grasp some new point or connect ideas in meaningful ways. When we dig into a textual study and see the meaning opening to us as we discuss it together, it just doesn't get any better. The results are a clearer grasp of God's gracious nature and greater joy in trusting in him.

4. Have you had any unusual or memorable experiences as a Bible professor?

There will be a few students, maybe only one or two a semester, who will seek out deeper dialogue with the teacher because they are at a critical point in their faith development. These conversations may only last a few weeks, while some last for months, and others for years. These relationships have given me a front row seat to God's amazing transformative power. Sometimes the result has been a baptism, or more often, simply greater joy and peace in a student's life. Some of these conversations are still ongoing, and I treasure them.

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5. Tell us about your family.

Kayla and I have been married for twenty-six years. We have three children. Jacob got married to Audrey last year, and they are both in graduate school. Emily just married Ben in September, and she is a social worker. Anna is ten and a student at Harding Academy.



6. Where did you complete your undergraduate and graduate degrees, and what did you study?

B.A. in Bible, Freed-Hardeman University, 1991

B.S. in Mechanical Engineering, Tennessee Tech, 1993

M.Div., Harding School of Theology, 2004

Ph.D. in New Testament, Baylor University, 2011

7. Was there a teacher and/or preacher who made a significant impact on your life? If so, how did he influence you?

There have been many. J. A. Thornton was the first preacher I ever remember hearing. He baptized my father. I remember thinking when I was very young that I wanted to be like Brother Thornton. During my college years, my first Greek professor, Dr. Dowell Flatt, opened our eyes to what it meant to read the New Testament with “first-century glasses” and to engage in critical issues. I also had the opportunity later to preach alongside two of my professors, Roy Sharp and Billy Smith. They taught me especially about the role of relationships with people in ministry.

8. Before joining our faculty, you worked with one of our sister universities. What were your responsibilities there?

At FHU I was an associate professor of Bible, but for the last three years there I only taught one class per semester because I became the Dean of Graduate Studies. In that office, we were responsible for enrollment management and promotion of new programs for all graduate departments, including theology, education, counseling, and business.

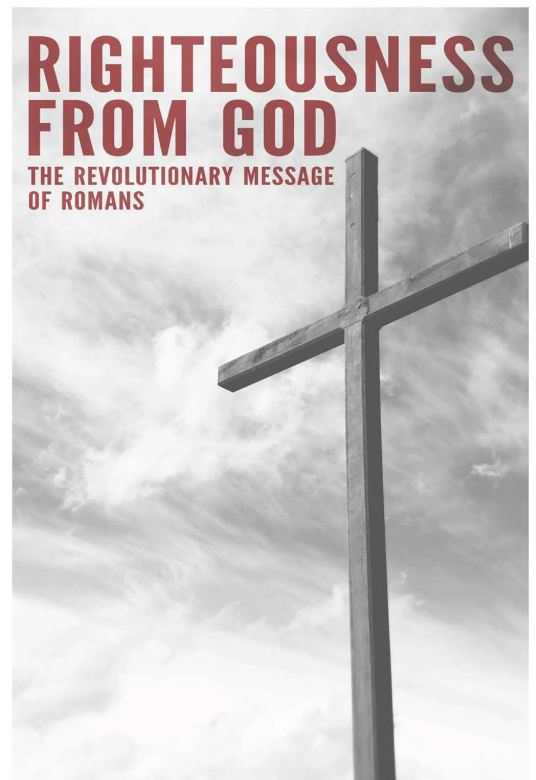
9. You have significant ministry experience. Can you tell us about your church background, and how it influences your classroom teaching?

Immediately after college, I was the full-time minister for the Church of Christ in Leachville, AR. I have been an interim preacher for churches in Tennessee and Texas. For about seven years, I was sharing the pulpit at the Estes Church of Christ in Henderson, TN. These congregations ranged in size from 25 members to 450. I certainly can identify with the person who is preparing to minister in a more rural setting. One of the ways that these experiences influence my teaching that I am firmly convicted of the need to keep looking more deeply into the message of Scripture. The Bible reveals God’s nature to us, and the more clearly we see him, the more alive and engaged our congregations will be, no matter the size or location.

10. I know that in your studies you have given a lot of thought to Jesus and his kingdom. As you reflect on all that you have learned and experienced, what is your vision for the future of the church?

I hope that we will continue to turn to scripture to challenge us and correct us, that we will always see each congregation as a mission point, that the good news of God’s love will fill our hearts and overflow into all our relationships, that our submission to Christ will be so deep that it leads to undistracted discipleship, that we will continue to seek the unity of all believers, and that our dependence on God in faith will be more often discussed and expressed.

RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM GOD: The Revolutionary Message of Romans



In 57 A.D. an obscure Palestinian Jew sat down and wrote a long letter introducing himself to a group of Romans, citizens of the Empire and inhabitants of the greatest, most powerful city on earth. The result of this unlikely correspondence is what the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge would later call "the most profound book in existence." Paul's letter to the Romans is the fullest, richest, most comprehensive examination of God's provision of salvation, an essay so majestic the commentator Godet deemed it "the cathedral of the Christian faith."

Perhaps no other book, outside of the gospels, has had so great an impact over the centuries. For example, in the year 386 A.D. a dissolute young professor of rhetoric named Aurelius Augustinus picked up a Bible, which fell open to the book of Romans. There his eye fell upon the words *"not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature"* (13:13-14). His heart convicted, the professor renounced his wicked past and became a Christian, and the man the world would come to know as Saint Augustine went on to develop into one of the most influential scholars in the history of Christianity.

One of the greatest religious upheavals in history was launched on October 31, 1517 – almost exactly 500 years ago – when a German monk named Martin Luther penned his 95 Theses. Luther, who for many years had struggled to pacify his tormented conscience by strenuous works of religious merit, had been appointed to teach the book of Romans at the University of Wittenberg. He learned from Paul's letter that salvation is not earned by human righteousness, but that *"The righteous will live by faith"* (1:17). This insight not only gave Luther spiritual peace, but it provided the spark which ignited what we know today as the Protestant Reformation.

The Methodist revival, which swept over this country like a mighty force in the eighteenth century and had a profound spiritual impact on millions, began in a small Bible study in London in 1738 when John Wesley heard someone reading from Luther's *Preface to Romans* and for the first time comprehended, in a personal way, that the death of Jesus was for *his* benefit.

The utopian, humanistic religious liberalism which held sway at the turn of this century fell by the wayside when a Swiss theologian named Karl Barth, disillusioned by the carnage of World War I, published in 1918 a groundbreaking commentary on Romans which reaffirmed its sobering message of the sinfulness of sin and the "Godness" of God.

Here at Harding University, generations of college students took Jimmy Allen's class on Romans and testified to the way his lectures opened their eyes, often for the first time, to the richness of God's salvation. As Jimmy often said, "If you 'get' Romans, God will get you."

And, of course, the greatest spiritual impact of this remarkable book has been in the hearts of countless Christians who have been transformed by its sweeping exposition of sin, salvation, sanctification, and God's sovereignty, and have experienced for themselves the "righteousness" from God" (Romans 1:17, 3:22).

That's why the theme of the 2017 Harding Bible Lectureship will be "RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM GOD: The Revolutionary Message of Romans." I encourage you to mark your calendar for September 24-27, 2017 and join us for a rich spiritual experience!

-Dan Williams, Lectureship Director

2017 WINGS CONFERENCE

The 23rd Annual Women in God's Service Conference (WINGS) will be held on the campus of Harding University February 24-25, 2017. Dr. Elaine Denman will be the keynote speaker on the theme "You Are Here," building on last year's event which led participants to reflect on their own spiritual history.

This year will focus on living our lives for God, wherever we are. In conjunction with the theme, several breakout groups will be meeting to discuss how to do this in various situations and life-stages.

Registration is now open at <https://www.harding.edu/events/wings> and regular updates are being offered on our Facebook page "Women In God's Service (WINGS)". We hope that you will join us, and invite others to come with you! If you have any questions, feel free to email us at wings@harding.edu.

MOM DAUGHTER STUDENT
widow SINGLE SAVED
hopeful anxious LOST
KIND childless grieving FRIEND
joy-filled CARING patient LOVED WEARY gentle
invisible abandoned adopted
CALLED transformed FORGIVEN

You are HERE.

WINGS 2017
harding.edu/WINGS

PROGRAM CHANGES ANNOUNCED

The College of Bible and Ministry is making administrative changes to its Bachelor of Ministry and Master of Ministry programs. The Master of Ministry will now be directed by Dr. Tim Westbrook under the auspices of the Center for Distance Education in the College of Bible and Ministry. Dr. Westbrook has so ably served in this capacity for 11 years. It takes a unique set of skills to teach online well, and his talents in both the Master of Ministry and the undergraduate programs are solid and much appreciated.

The Bachelor of Ministry degree program trains non-traditional students (24 years of age and older), most of whom are making career changes from a "secular" vocation to full-time ministry. For the last several years, our Bachelor of Ministry students have been in the same classes with our other undergraduate Bible majors. Their primary "cohort" experience is the daily CAMT chapel that the Bachelor of Ministry students lead. That chapel will continue. Beginning in fall 2017, the Center for Advanced Ministry Training will be absorbed by other offices in the McInteer including the Center for Preaching, the Center for World Missions and the Center for Family Ministries. The services provided by the CAMT office — including recruiting, academic advising and mentoring — will now be shared by the entire undergraduate faculty of the College of Bible and Ministry.

We are pleased that since 1974 more than 500 non-traditional students have earned bachelor's degrees through what was first called the Christian Communication Program, then Harding School of Biblical Studies, and now the Center for Advanced Ministry Training. We can tell story after story about how these fine men and women are serving in God's kingdom today. Our commitment to offering this preparation to this group of students continues. The current CAMT staff will be reassigned within the College of Bible and Ministry. Director Bill Richardson will return to the classroom full time next fall while Gary Gregg and Aleshia O'Neal will assume new responsibilities. In the meantime, they will be assisting the students and faculty throughout the transition.

Winter 2017