

Alumni ADVANCE

ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FALL 1995



Impacting
the
World



Rev. Fletcher Hardy: Used of God

by Jonathon Page



If it weren't for the Reverend Fletcher Hardy, there would be fewer graduates of Asbury College and Asbury Seminary.

Fletcher has brought, motivated or otherwise encouraged more than 30 individuals to attend either the College, the Seminary, or both. Out of the 30, "I think it's about 60 percent for the College and 40 percent for the Seminary," he recalls.

Although Fletcher Hardy never attended church until he was 12, his family was Bible believing. He grew up in Virginia and during high school he began working on his apprenticeship with a large engineering firm. Once he graduated, World War II entered into history and Fletcher went to serve his country.

At the start, he worked on the building of the Pentagon and later, while out of the country, he witnessed the first nudgings of his call. "I was in the islands doing construction, yet I always had a longing to do something for the Lord," he says. "I came out of the service and married a lovely, devout Christian woman, Ann. I even went to church on my honeymoon...from that day on, there was never any question—we went to church."

It was after a sermon by Arthur Hamis that Fletcher felt a very strong call on his life from God. Much later, he shared this feeling with his wife, "Ann told me that if God had called me, I didn't have a choice," he remembers. "I visited a couple of other colleges besides Asbury and I didn't see anything that was a witness...Everything I'd been doing before I was converted, they were still doing."

Disappointed, he went to his pastor and told him he felt a strong call to ministry, but he knew he needed a college education. His pastor wisely suggested he take a look at Asbury. "I was 28 at the time when we visited," Fletcher recalls. "When I got to Asbury, I saw a lot of brotherly love and students praying and praising the Lord. They showed so much interest," he says. Mere contact with

Asburians was all it took for Hardy to make up his mind. "When I left I told Ann that's where we're going if they'll accept me. I didn't have a very good academic background. We went down to Sims drugstore and talked about our situation. Mr. Sims said he'd find us a place by the next day and when we came back he had found us a place to stay with Bishop Pickett's mother."

Taking that act of kindness as God's faithfulness, the Hardys went back home and liquidated everything they had and came to school. Because he was leaving his vocation, Fletcher felt some family resentment, but he was determined not to ask anyone for any money. "Mrs. Pickett told us not to worry about the rent, to simply pay it when my GI Bill came in. Of course, \$35 a month wasn't much, but it was all we had."

After graduation from the College in 1952 and the Seminary in 1955, Fletcher was determined to make Asbury known. "The students and faculty were great at Asbury. I thought that it could do for others what it did for me, so I committed then that I would introduce as many youth and adults to both the institutions."

That commitment has been evident over the years. The first student he brought to Asbury was Raymond King. "He couldn't afford it so I went to the bank to get a loan for \$325. I told them I would pay the loan back and they agreed to it," he remembers. "Raymond whetted our appetite. We decided to keep bringing students here."

Donald Shields was one of those students. Baptized as a baby boy by Fletcher in 1959 at Oakland United Methodist Church in Virginia, Donald felt the call to ministry when he was 25 and Fletcher encouraged him to come to Asbury Seminary for his education. "He and Ann brought me to the campus and I sat in on classes. I felt this was where God wanted me," Donald recalls. "Fletcher is very much an encourager like Barnabas was to Paul. He has a lot of wisdom and a common sense style, which makes him very effective."

Larry Craddock was also influenced by Fletcher through his ministry at Oakland U.M.C. "Fletcher

gave me fellowship, he nurtured me and disciplined me. I started asking him questions about ministry when I sensed the call at age 25," Larry says. Fletcher naturally suggested Asbury, so in 1979 Larry and his wife visited during a ministers' conference.

"God used Fletcher at a critical point in my life, when decisions had to be made," Larry recalls. "Looking back, I see how Fletcher relied on God's Spirit. He never pushed me in my decisions." Fletcher's "ministry of recruitment" didn't stop at the admission's office door. "While I was at Asbury, Fletcher would call or write regularly, which helped keep me motivated," Larry recalls. Both Donald and Larry said they keep in contact with Fletcher and consider him their mentor.

In describing the essence of Fletcher Hardy, no words are better than those of one he's impacted. "He is a man who loves God with all he has, helping others, perfecting the Spirit of Christ in others," Larry describes. "He sees God's best in people, the potential in others."

Married for 49 years, the Hardys' witness extends to their family as well as the College and Seminary. "All the children have a real desire for Christ and are active in the church," says Fletcher.

"We've had such an extended family here in Wilmore," Fletcher continues. "I think it's a miracle for an institution to take someone like me, where I was, with my background, and challenge me."

"I hope someday to have a little something to leave the institutions," Fletcher says. "I told my children if Ann had any money left, it was going to the college and seminary." With a legacy of more than 30 students who are now Asbury alumni as a result of his encouraging ministry, the Rev. Fletcher Hardy has already bestowed his greatest gift upon these institutions—himself.

Jonathon Page
is a current
Seminary student
pursuing an M.Div.
degree.



Lenny Stadler '87 was the 1995 clergy recipient of the Harry Denman Evangelism award in the Western N.C. Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Lenny pastors Weddington United Methodist Church in Matthews, N.C. In six years the church has grown from 440 members to nearly 1,200 members.

Doug '87 and Lynelle '87 Vogel are in their fourth year at Village Green Free Methodist Church in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Michael Young '87 has begun D.Min. studies at Houston Graduate School of Theology. Since 1987 he has been teaching at John Wesley College in High Point, N.C.

Joseph Teague '85, pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in St. Petersburg, Fla., was a recipient of the Circuit Rider Award and \$1,000, given by the United Methodist General Board of Publication. In four years Joe led Trinity Church into a successfully integrated church in a community plagued by drug abuse and street violence.

Kevin Thompson '88 pastors North Anderson Free Methodist Church in Anderson, Ind.

Melanie Usry '88 is Christian education director at the Hamburg, Ark., United Methodist Church.

David Cotton '89 is a full-time chaplain at Jersey Shore Medical Center, Neptune, N.J.

Michael Hogenboom '89 is pastoring Kingston West Free Methodist Church in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

Michael Mozley '89 is associate pastor at First United Methodist Church in Marietta, Ga.

Paul Rowley '89 is associate pastor at First United Methodist Church in Collingswood, N.J.

Edsel Calhoun '90 is pastor of the Lurgan United Brethren Church in Shippensburg, Pa. Talbot Davis '90 is pastor of Mt. Carmel-Midway charge in Monroe, N.C., the same charge he has had since graduating from Asbury Seminary.

Lisa Dout-Thompson '93 is serving as youth consultant for the Western Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church. Lisa has been director of Christian nurture for the First United Methodist Church in Warren, Pa.

Scotty Gullede '90 is assistant pastor and minister of music, at First Wesleyan Church in Kannapolis, N.C. Scotty has been involved in three foreign mission ministries to Russia, Bolivia and South Africa.

Lydia Wilson Monroe '90 is children's pastor at Pearce Free Methodist Church in Rochester, N.Y. Her husband, John, teaches at Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester.

Steve Pescosolido '90 and Karen are in their fifth year at the College Hill United Methodist Church, Waco, Ky.

Robert Raschka '90 is pastor of Porter United Methodist Church in Porter, Ind. He is also on the board of directors of the Samaritan Counseling Center, and chairperson of the Calumet District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

Michael Rash '90 is pastor of Liberty Wesleyan Church in Summerfield, N.C. He is also a reserve chaplain in the USAF and chaplain at a near-by hospital.

Stephen Smith '90 is youth minister at Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church in Greenville, N.C. Kim Stroh Smith '88 works with the youth along with Steve and they have seen the numbers grow to about 70 young people.

Blake Wood '90 is senior pastor of the New Life Community Church in Olney, Md. Arlene Weigand '90 and Bill Watkins, Assoc., are associate pastors.

Neil Anderson '91 is serving as vice president for academic affairs and academic dean at Zarephath Bible Institute in Zarephath, N.J. Neil is also completing his Ph.D. studies at Drew University.

Brent Baker '91 received the Th.M. degree from Duke University in May 1995.

1990s

Joe Aurand '90 is field ministry/module director for Central Pennsylvania Youth for Christ and lives in Lewistown, Pa.

Nancy Cummings Buonocore '90 is director of Heartbeat Community Service, Inc., a crises pregnancy center in Millerstown, Pa.