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Fall 2006

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Year's Theme Explores "Courage to Lead"

► **Editor's note:** The annual theme focuses the Graduate School of Religion into an in-depth, yearlong exploration of a theological or ministry topic and is inaugurated by a faculty member's article. This year's article is by Dr. Evertt W. Huffard (M.Th. 1976, dean@hugsr.edu), who teaches missions and leadership in addition to his work as vice president and dean.

In his book *Spiritual Leadership*, J. Oswald Chambers observes: "Courage of the highest order is demanded of spiritual leaders — always moral courage and frequently physical courage as well."

As our world continues to slide into self-serving relativism, as families lose their stability, and as Christians encounter more persecution in their minority status, the cry for courage to lead grows louder. As good men and women hesitate to lead at all levels because we are such terrible followers, the cry for courage to lead continues. As church leaders avoid conflict, and good leaders resign and abdicate leadership to the obstinate, the cry for courage grows louder.

Paul set the bar high in church leadership as a preacher, teacher, church planter and apostle. He confronted some

of the toughest issues any church could face, concluding in his first letter to the church at Corinth the admonition to "be men of courage" (1 Corinthians 16:13). He challenged Timothy to testify about the Lord, suffer for the gospel, and live a holy life because "God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7).

The courage to lead starts within our own souls. The spiritual pilgrimage calls for courage to assess our own sinful nature and trust our souls to the Lord. The call to discipleship demands that we first follow before being qualified to lead God's people.

Leadership is about more than who makes the final decisions; it requires foremost spiritual influence and service (Mark 10:43-44). Thus, God called Moses "my servant," not "my leader."

Leadership in the home requires courage to be transparent and consistently honest. Adults who model love and guidance in a family have a greater spiritual impact on children because they continually adjust toward a moral standard beyond themselves.

Leading a church takes more courage than managing one. One reason for the decline in churches is over-management and under-leadership. Too many congregations lack members with courage to confront conflict or assume responsibility for fear of criticism. The ministry Paul expected from all Christians includes warning the idle, encouraging the timid, helping the weak, being patient with everyone and intercepting retaliation. These responsibilities take as much courage as they do knowledge (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15).

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Dean's Note

Courage to Be a Temple

On our three-week study tour to Greece, Turkey and Israel in June, I consistently considered how to be "the temple of the living God" that Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 6:16. I knew that every day we would see the evidence of antiquated attempts to honor gods and emperors of Greece and Rome.

The first thing you see at Corinth, Athens, Pergamum, Sardis, Ephesus or Caesarea are the ruins of an ancient temple, usually built on a high place to impress people and honor the emperor or the gods. Even the ruins of the ancient Temple of Apollo in Corinth, the Parthenon in Athens, or the Temple of Trajan in Pergamum continue to impress the modern-



The Parthenon stands as a tribute to "gods that died with their civilizations."

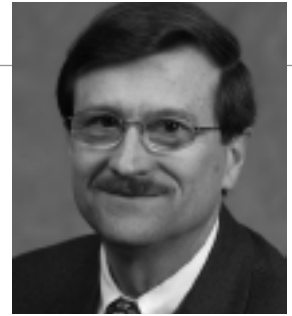
day visitor. I am always amazed at the energy invested in honoring gods that died with their civilizations.

Contrast this with the obvious absence of Herod's great temple in Jerusalem. The Jews had only one temple and one God. They had a vision of all nations coming to Jerusalem to honor their

God. The scene of Jews persistently praying at the western wall of the temple area in Jerusalem today amazes the Christian visitor to the city, since the temple was destroyed 1,936 years ago and God directed His disciples to move out of Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

It took courage for John to explain to the reader of the Gospel that Jesus referred to his own body as the temple (2:21) after recording Jesus' own prophetic reference to the destruction of the temple. It took courage for Stephen, in the very courts of the temple in Jerusalem, to declare that the "Most High does not live in houses made by men" (Acts 7:48). I can just see him pointing to the temple as he said this, and I understand why it infuriated the crowd. It took courage for Paul to stand on Mars Hill, in the shadow of the massive Parthenon, and confidently proclaim that God "does not live in temples built by hands" (Acts 17:24). I can also see him pointing to the top of the Acropolis of Athens as he said this.

So when Paul writes to Greek and Jewish believers in Corinth, he must have surprised them by his use of the temple of God as an analogy for the church (2 Corinthians 6:16) and the individual believer's body (1 Corinthians 6:19). The response Paul must have sought was the courage to maintain the unity of the corporate body as the temple of the living God and the courage to honor God with holy living. For God's



HUFFARD

holy presence to spread for 2,000 years all over the world is much more astonishing than the ruins of past temples. Wherever God's people dwell, there the temple of God can be found, and He will be honored.

The power of Paul's cross-cultural analogy came in the connection of God's presence (in a temple) to moral ethical living (God's character in contrast to the gods). This took much more courage, energy and persistence than the construction of a massive temple of stones in Corinth or Jerusalem.

As we focus our year at the Graduate School of Religion on the theme "Courage to Lead," we are reminded that there is no agreement between the temple of God and idols (2 Corinthians 6:16). We also live in a very pagan world, but the amount of resources we invest in leadership development and training continues to pale in comparison to the millions of dollars that go into our own buildings. The Christians that will leave the greatest legacy will be those who invest in the temple of the living God — in the development of leaders who maintain unity in the body and in the transformation of holy lives for service to God. The people who can do that will impress the world with the glory of the living God.

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

Commencement Held May 16

Thirty-four graduates received diplomas at the May 6 commencement exercises. The graduates have prepared for diverse ministries, including preach-

ing, missions, counseling, church planting, campus ministry, chaplaincy, youth ministry and academic pursuits.

Dr. Mark E. Powell, associate professor of theology, and guest speaker David

Chadwell (M.A., 1966), who has led congregations in Mississippi and Arkansas, addressed the graduates.

The graduates represented seven states and two foreign countries.



Members of the class of 2006 pose with faculty and program guests.



Fred Strasser of Wynne, Ark.; Robert Curry of Springdale, Ark.; and James Nesmith of Richmond, Va., received the doctor of ministry degree.



Steve Cloer was awarded the Jack P. Lewis Ministry of Study Award by the Student Association.



Paul Birston of Winnipeg, Manitoba, was granted the Dean's Award, recognizing his dedication and sacrifice to earn his master of divinity degree.



Award recipients Fred Strasser, D.Min.; John Kennedy, M.A. in Counseling; and Nathan Bills, M.Div., flank Dr. Evertt W. Huffard, dean.

New Alumni Reflect on Experience

These comments were collected anonymously from the survey of 2006 graduates.

- ▶ "I loved it without reservation!"
- ▶ "I considered the Graduate School of Religion and [other schools], and couldn't be happier with my choice."
- ▶ "My experience at the Graduate School of Religion has been profound and positive. . . . The Bible and mission focus and historical perspectives are awesome."
- ▶ "Attending the Graduate School was one of the best decisions of my life."
- ▶ "I thank God for everyone supporting this ministry."

Dates Announced

- ▶ **W.B. West Lectures**, Nov. 2, 2006, 7 p.m.
- ▶ **Ministry Forum**, April 5, 2007

BRIEFS

Marriage Resource Gains Nationwide Acclaim

Dr. Ed Gray (M.Th., 1978), professor of counseling, and Leanne Braddock (MAC, 2004) co-presented a two-hour Marriage Mentoring workshop at the national conference "Smart Marriages 2006" in Atlanta in June. Braddock updated the group on the military version of the program. Several new military program sites have been added as a result of the conference.

The California Healthy Marriages Coalition adopted the program for their June 2006 federal grant application.

The "Marriage Mentoring: Twelve Conversations" program is included on the federally sponsored National Healthy Marriage Resource Center Web site in the list of healthy marriage education programs.

For more information, visit www.12conversations.com.



WOODS, ELLENSON, LEWIS

Professor, Alumnus Honored

Dr. Jack P. Lewis, professor emeritus, and Dr. Clyde Woods (M.Th., 1961), professor of Bible at Freed-Hardeman University, were awarded two of three inaugural Graduate School Medallions by Hebrew Union University-Jewish Institute of Religion president, Dr. David Ellenson. Lewis and Woods were recognized for their service in encouraging "a vibrant religious life" in their faith communities.

Faculty/Staff

Vice President and Assistant VP Named in Administrative Restructuring

Dr. Evertt W. Huffard assumed the role of vice president/dean of Harding University Graduate School of Religion July 1.

Huffard joined the faculty at the Graduate School of Religion in 1987 and had been serving as executive director and dean since 1999.

"The decision to promote Dr. Huffard was an obvious one," said David B. Burks, president of Harding University. "He has been a leader at the Graduate School of Religion academically, spiritually and administratively. I am confident that the school will continue to flourish in all these areas under his continued leadership."

Huffard graduated from Harding University in 1971, then earned an M.A. (1972) and M.Th. (1976) from the Graduate School of Religion. He completed the Ph.D. in intercultural studies from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1985.

He has previously served as a missionary in Nazareth, Israel, and associate professor of religion at Pepperdine University. He has also filled a variety of ministerial positions in churches around the country.

As professor of missiology and church growth, Huffard teaches courses in ethnotheology, Gospel and Islam, world evangelism, faith development, and urban ministry. He writes and lectures in publications and conferences

around the world on these topics.

Mark Parker (M.Div., 2005; mparker@hugsr.edu) was named assistant vice



PARKER president as part of the same restructuring. He will oversee enrollment management, resource management and communications. Additionally, Parker will work with apprentices, seeking to combine their graduate education with hands-on ministry.

Parker is a 1988 graduate of Oklahoma Christian University and earned an M.A. in English from the University of Idaho.

Faculty Develop Ph.D. Curriculum

Over the past year, the academic affairs committee has researched the possibility of offering a doctor of philosophy degree in biblical studies at the Graduate School of Religion. The committee, chaired by



Dr. Richard Oster, professor of New Testament, presented a detailed study to the faculty in October 2005.

In May, Dr. David B.

Burks, president of Harding University, and the University board of trustees approved the development of the degree.

The degree would necessitate the addition of two Bible faculty members. Scholarship funds would be raised, and

the library would be enriched to support the research needs of Ph.D. candidates. Fund raising has begun for \$2.5 million to endow the program.

The faculty is continuing the process of developing the degree and seeking approval from accrediting bodies.

Walking in Holy Land

Professors Phil McMillion, Richard Oster and Evertt W. Huffard stand outside the theatre at Ephesus, which Paul attempted to enter in Acts 19. They visited the site while team teaching "Biblical Archaeology" in Athens, Greece, in May and June.



Successful Year Demonstrates Pew-level Support

The annual scholarship fund continues to be a significant indicator of Harding

University Graduate School of Religion's health. For the second year in a row, gifts to the annual scholarship fund have broken previous giving records. Gifts for the fiscal year ending June 30 topped \$325,000.

"What an amazing blessing," says Dr. Evertt Huffard. "We treasure every congregation and individual who has partnered with us through these gifts."

"Scholarship funds are important, and this milestone means that more students can be trained for ministry," says Larry Arick, director of

advancement. "Scholarships are a way to help reduce the student loans that burden ministers, or even keep them from ministry."



ARICK Nearly half of the scholarships awarded come from the annual scholarship fund.

Huffard sees annual gifts to the school as a link to the churches the Graduate School of Religion seeks to serve. "Very few of our gifts are from people or organizations not related to churches of Christ," he says. "So the support we receive from individuals and congregations links us back to the church.

Because they see the stability and leadership skills of our graduates at their congregations, they want to support this ministry.

"The advancement team sees their work as a ministry. They connect generous people with the servant-hearted students at the Graduate



ALEXANDER School of Religion." The advancement team includes Arick and Jeannie Alexander, administrative assistant.

For more information about annual fund giving and other gift options, contact Larry Arick (larick@hugsr.edu).



Howell, a first-round NBA draft pick, is scheduled to play in the annual golf tournament.

Golf Tournament Slated

The annual Harding University/Graduate School of Religion Golf Tournament will be played Sept. 25 at the Germantown Country Club. In addition to great golf, the tournament provides an opportunity to meet others interested in the unique ministry of Harding and the Graduate School of Religion. As a special treat this year, Basketball Hall of Famer Bailey Howell, who played 13 seasons in the NBA, is scheduled to play in the tournament.

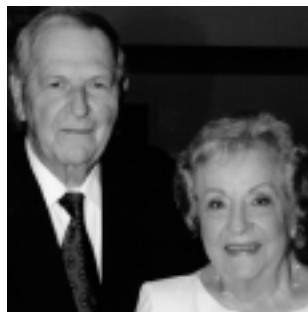
Pie Auction and Chili Supper Date Set

The annual Pie Auction and Chili Supper, hosted by the Memphis chapter of Associated Women for Harding, will be held Oct. 21 at Sycamore View Church of Christ, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 each. Guests are treated to a homemade chili supper and may bid on fresh homemade pies. Proceeds from the event help AWH support Harding University and the Graduate School of Religion.

Council Dinner to Honor Moffett

The 2006 Leadership Council Dinner is slated for Oct. 7 at the Holiday Inn on Central Avenue in Memphis. The dinner will honor Jimmy Moffett, who preached in Tennessee, Florida, Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas for more than 58 years. It also

will inaugurate the Jimmy and Peggy Moffett Endowed Scholarship Fund. Leadership Council members, whose gifts to the annual fund reach \$1,200 or more, may make priority reservations. Other tickets may be available. Please call (901) 761-1355 or e-mail hgsadvancement@hugsr.edu for more information.



JIMMY AND PEGGY MOFFETT

Theme *continued from Page 1*

The Word and history provide models of courage for a polarized culture that has lost confidence in its leaders. Leading the United States is not easy. Expectations are unrealistic in a society that is never satisfied. This makes

the challenge for leaders in the church and home even greater.

Our goal this year is to challenge one another to respond to God's call to serve with greater courage as we seek to become effective spiri-

tual influences. Through yearly events and daily chapel, I anticipate this theme will inspire courage in the lives of church leaders, church planters, missionaries and parents as they transform our world to the glory of God.

BRIEFS

Priority Deadlines

Although Harding Graduate School of Religion operates a rolling admissions policy, meeting the deadlines below gives future students the greatest opportunities for timely enrollment and scholarships.

- ▶ Admission for spring 2007 – Priority deadline: Oct. 1, 2006
- ▶ Admission for summer and fall 2007 – Priority deadline: March 1, 2007
- ▶ Scholarships for fall 2007-summer 2008 – Priority deadline: March 1, 2007

Admissions

Let the Adventure Begin

Thirteen students representing seven states began their Harding Graduate School of Religion adventure by taking “Advanced Theological Research” during a one-week intensive course in July. Students were immersed in the rich theological research tools of the Graduate School of Religion library.



Summer students included (back) Fred Burrows, Ohio; Paul Moore, Ontario; Keith Davis, Tennessee; Randy Hohf, Idaho; (front) Ledell Edwards, Arkansas; Corey Mullins, Tennessee; and James Holston, Arkansas.

Graduates Identify Key Areas of Transformation

The best judges of the success of Harding University Graduate School of Religion are its graduates. Each year Dr. Steve McLeod, registrar, surveys those gradu-



MCLEOD

ating to evaluate their experiences. Since the Graduate School of Religion seeks to transform leaders and does so as an academic institution in an urban context, several key areas serve as markers of student development and satisfaction. Here are some of the findings from the class of 2006:

- ▶ **LEADERSHIP:** 94 percent felt the school effectively prepared them to lead others
- ▶ **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** 94 percent felt students were encouraged to think freely and critically
- ▶ **PERSONAL GROWTH:** 94 percent felt the school helped promote their self knowledge
- ▶ **COMPASSION:** 94 percent felt the school helped them develop empathy for the poor and oppressed
- ▶ **BIBLICAL DEPTH:** 100 percent felt the school effectively prepared them to understand scripture and theology

Sparks Joins Staff

Nedra Sparks began serving at the Graduate School of Religion July 31. As administrative assistant to the assistant vice president, Sparks will be an important contact for future students in the admissions process. She also will assist current students with housing and other logistical issues.

“Nedra’s faith and her understanding of how ministers and their families operate will make her a great support for students,” said Mark Parker, assistant vice president. “We are honored to have her join this team.”



SPARKS

Sparks holds a degree in computer science from Oklahoma Christian University. She is married to Curt Sparks, a student at the Graduate School of Religion and minister of the Sycamore View congregation. Together they have been involved with ministries in Nebraska, New Mexico and Tennessee.

Are ministers best trained by academic study or experience in a church?

“I think both experiences are *mandatory* for shaping an effective minister,” says Charles Kiser (M.Div., 2006, crkiser@hotmail.com). He should know. For the two years before graduating from the Graduate School of Religion, he apprenticed as a preacher at the Highland Street Church of Christ in Memphis.

Kiser met weekly with his mentors at the church, Harold Shank (M.A.R., 1977) and Chris Altrock (D.Min., 2001).

“Every six months I created three or four ministry goals,” Kiser explains. “Chris and Harold took responsibility for mentoring me and holding me accountable for making progress. My goals concerned things such as spiritual formation, sermon preparation, pastoral encouragement, evangelism and spiritual discernment. At the end of each six-month period, we would review the goals, celebrate the growth, and make new goals based on previous progress.”

Kiser’s work took shape largely through the Bible class he helped lead. He taught the class, led a small group drawn from members, developed leaders, cast vision, and met pastoral needs. “The Bridgebuilders class was my ministry laboratory; it was like a little church to us — our church family.”

Preaching and evangelistic Bible studies were included in his responsibilities, as well as staff meetings and some elders’ meetings.

Weekly mentoring sessions with Shank or Altrock were integral to the experience. “In our meetings we would talk about ministry, preaching and life. I would often offer them a real life ministry experience I was encountering in the Bridgebuilders or a text that I was to preach from, and we would talk through it together.”

Apprenticeships give students the opportunity to learn about ministry and about themselves as leaders. Kiser notes a time early in his apprenticeship when he tried to make bold moves to increase commitment from the members of his class. “No one in the class knew me yet, and I think I was viewed as some kind of small groups ‘bully,’” he says. “The class didn’t respond well to my efforts.”

The goal is growth as a minister, however, and with the encouragement of his mentors he was able to learn from the experience. “In the course of the next two years, after I had gained credibility with the class, we were able to start several new small groups and train 10 new small group leaders.”

“Mentoring is the key to apprenticeships,” says Dr. Evertt Huffard. “This is a learning environment where students can learn to grow through the challenges they face in ministry.”

Kiser’s experience accentuates the need for effective mentoring. “I loved sharing my life with my mentors and just listening as they opened floodwaters of wisdom on me. That one hour a week

with either of them for the last two years is a precious gem I will treasure for the rest of my life.”

Apprenticeships are different from other forms of mentoring, however. They strategically target both the intellectual and the practical aspects of a minister’s growth. “This is more than on-the-job training,” says Huffard. “We evaluate potential apprentices, coach mentors and elders, and help both the apprentice and the mentor remain accountable for spiritual growth and accomplishing ministry tasks.”

Kiser, for example, took a leadership profile assessment, a spiritual gift survey, and a ministry readiness survey in order to help him and his mentors develop an apprenticeship that was mutually beneficial.

“Congregations are blessed to have the students on staff. Established ministers are blessed to be mentors. And students are blessed by the maturity of the congregation and the minister,” says Mark Parker, assistant vice president, who helps connect potential apprentices and congregations.

Apprenticeships combine the two elements necessary for the formation of ministry leaders: Students have both a real-life context for applying their academic training and an academic context for understanding their ministry experiences.

Along with his wife, Julie, and newborn son, Ryan, Kiser is currently on a team exploring locations for church planting.



Ijams Building Commemorated

In May 1972, the mansion on the campus of Harding Graduate School of Religion was named the Ijams Administration Building in honor of the life and ministry of E.H. Ijams. It was not until this year, however, that a picture of Ijams hung in the building. During chapel on Feb. 14, Dr. Harold Shank, David Ralston and representatives of the Ijams family presented to the school a painting of E.H. and Una Ijams that now hangs in the building. A plaque beneath the painting commemorates this couple’s lives of Christian service and leadership in training ministers.



JULIE AND CHARLES KISER

Finding Kemosabe

The Lone Ranger was never really alone. He always had Tonto, his quiet friend who helped him through thick and thin. Even when they were not together, viewers knew that the heroic pair would reunite to debrief about the day's adventures.

Ministry cannot be done alone any more than saving helpless townsfolk from the bad guys.

The connections developed with faculty, staff, other students and congregational leaders are among the most important aspects of leadership transformation at Harding University Graduate School of Religion.

During summer courses, we had the

opportunity to witness students from all across the United States come together for weeklong intensive courses. Many friendships had started in past years and had been developed through online courses, and the course at the Graduate School of Religion gave them the opportunity to reconnect.

Other students came for the first time. As the rigor of graduate school came into focus, they found classmates who understood — understood the challenges of the course; the challenges of balancing study, ministry and family; and understood the complexity of ministry itself.

We witnessed as both new and returning students found colleagues who will help support them through their education and into their ministries.

This phenomenon of relationship building is not limited to students finding peers.

As students seek apprenticeships, they are finding mentors who will intentionally guide them for two years. As they wrestle with graduate-level questions, they connect with faculty who understand the challenges of ministry and theological study.

Those most effective in ministry are team builders, not Lone Rangers. They have a support network inside and outside their ministry context. Jesus had disciples; Paul had Timothy and Titus.

What a blessing it is to be in a place where Rangers and Tontos abound, but none have to be Lone.

▶ *Mark Parker*
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