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The Bridge

Harding School of Theology

Fall 2010

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the Bridge

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Fresh Starts

Harding University
Graduate School of Religion
1000 Cherry Road
Memphis, TN 38117
www.hugsr.edu

Faithfulness

Faithfulness flows from the character of God. The well-known description of the divine nature in Exodus 34:6 identifies the great "I Am" as "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." This declaration constantly appears in Israel's statement of faith in passages like Psalm 86:15. God is always reliable and keeps his promises from creation to the Exodus, to the resurrection of the Christ, and to the return of the Lord.

Because of the Lord's faithfulness, God calls on us to respond in the same way. God becomes the primary allegiance and priority, our highest commitment. If we place God first, above all else, our other commitments in life will usually fall into their proper place. In contrast, the biblical narrative calls attention to the unfaithfulness of fallen humanity from Adam to the

flood, to the idolatry of Israel, to the mission of the prophets, to the fall of



HUFFARD

Through it all, a remnant remained faithful to the word and will of the Lord. Today we can still hear the call of Joshua to serve God in "sincerity and faithfulness" (Joshua 24:14).



McMILLION

but they are really two sides of the same coin.

Faithfulness creates a strong marriage and a good family. It is at the top of the

Jerusalem, to the crucifixion of the son of God, and to the churches of Asia.

list of family values that define wholesome entertainment. Christian singles model faithfulness in service and life style. Faithfulness creates ministry; the loss of it destroys ministry. If the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, the use of our gifts will be based on faithfulness more than success. Because we have been faithful in little, he gives us much. We all long to hear the Lord conclude, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

In a world of declining loyalty and limited commitments, faithful Christians give hope. In a world where relationships often seem to fall apart, faithfulness can be the glue that binds us together. Faithfulness to God, the church, and each other provides a solid foundation for life on which we can confidently move to a future blessed by God.

▶ Drs. Evertt W. Huffard and Phil McMillion

„training ministers „enriching faith „transforming leaders

HUGSR

Harding University Graduate School of Religion

Admissions
800-680-0809
hgsadmissions@hugsr.edu

Advancement
901-761-1355
hgsadvancement@hugsr.edu

The Bridge editor
901-761-1356

HUGSR fax
901-761-1358

Website
www.hugsr.edu

Dean's office
dean@hugsr.edu

Associate Dean's office
smcleod@hugsr.edu

Library
hgslib@hugsr.edu

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Editor
Mark Parker

Contributors
Larry Arick, Dave Bland, Evertt W. Huffard, Phil McMillion

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Newsletter Production
Tom Buterbaugh, Jennifer Hannigan

Harding University
Graduate School of Religion
1000 Cherry Road
Memphis, TN 38117

»»training *ministers*

»»enriching *faith*

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Dean's Note

The Rock

One of the challenges we have in interpreting the Psalms comes from the lack of context. The cultural context of David or Jeremiah was so different from our context that we can miss the power of their point of reference. On a recent trip to Israel, I ventured to put one Psalm in that context.

Standing at the entrance to the ancient triple gate of Hazor one morning in June gave me a new perspective on Psalm 71:3. When the people of the area were threatened by an invading army, they would flee to the city gates for refuge. Walled cities like Hazor, Megiddo or Jerusalem were really fortresses.

A few hours later I was at the gates of ancient Dan with yet another reflection on Psalm 71:3. Just outside the gate of the city an ancient

shrine of *massebot* ("erected stones") gave witness to objects of worship in the 8th Century B.C. Biran, the Israeli archaeologist, called this "the high place at the gate" with four stones purposefully placed on the stone pavement. One of the large stones was about three feet tall and had a smooth pointed top. A stone bowl filled with ashes sat next to it when it was excavated. A total of four sets of *massebot* were found near the gate from different periods. It appears this set was erected after the Assyrian conquest by Tiglath-pileser III in 732 B.C., suggesting a continuation of the cultic practices that preceded the destruction of the strong defensive walls of Dan.

So I picture in my mind people from the area merging into the gate on the eve of the Assyrian invasion. The city became their fortress,



HUFFARD

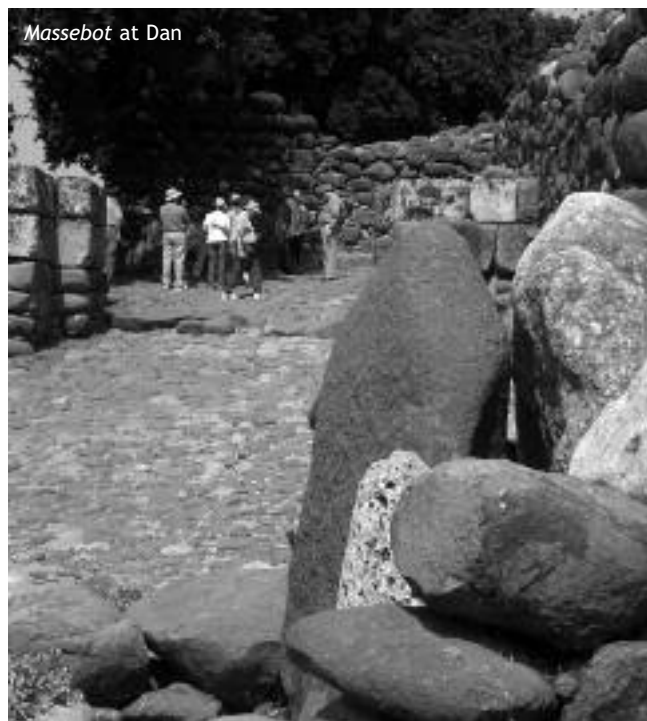
their refuge. They offered a sacrifice to the rock on the way into the gates of the fortified city, but the city still fell into the hands of the Assyrians. The enemy destroyed the elaborate defensive walls and *massebot*, but soon thereafter another *massebot* was built to a god that failed to protect them. The rock still sits there to this day, lifeless, useless and dead.

Psalm 71 seems to have been written by someone in his old age (verse 18) with a desire to faithfully pass on to the next generation a respect for the power of the living God. With the threat of evil and cruel enemies comes a call for deliverance (verse 4), a declaration of faith in God who is faithful:

"Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress" (verse 3).

Our God, not Hazor or Dan, will be our "rock of refuge." These cities are in ruins, but God is still with us. Our God can give the command to save more effectively than the king of the city can command the gates to be opened so the people can enter into its "safety." Our God, not the *massebot* near the gate of the fortress, will be our rock and fortress. As the quest for safety rises to the level of idolatry in our nation, we have much to learn about faithfulness from the Psalmist.

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



Massebot at Dan

Student Officers Selected

PRESIDENT

Jr. Sheets graduated from Plymouth State University.



Why are you on the Student Association?

“To lead the SA in serving the students of HUGSR for and to the glory of Christ alone.”

How is God using the

Graduate School to help you bear the image of Christ? “Sanctification in helping me to be quick to listen and slow to speak, helping me to love others even when we disagree (though I still maintain the right to convince!), further opening my heart to Christ, and that all that I do will be for the glory and praise of the name of God until the day I drop.”

VICE PRESIDENT

Paavo Tucker, from Varpaisjärvi, Finland, graduated from Freed-Hardeman University.



Why are you on the Student Association?

“I want to be a part of what is happening on campus and build community and serve in whatever ways I can.”

How is God using the Graduate School to help you bear the image of Christ? “God has used my time at HUGSR to transform my priorities. I have learned that becoming transformed into the image of Christ and building relationships with people should be my main priorities.”

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Kacey Young from Tuscola, Texas, graduated from Harding University.



Why are you on the Student Association?

“Harding has done a lot for me, and I enjoy giving back however I can, especially if it means serving the student body in a way that will make their time at Harding more enjoyable and beneficial.”

How is God using the Graduate School to help you bear the image of Christ?

“Harding provides me with an education that teaches by example how to make God my life and not just part of my life. It surrounds me with a strong Christian support system.”

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Ana Randolph, from Tampa, Fla., graduated from Lipscomb University.



Why are you on the Student Association?

“My position allows me to use my skills to serve my fellow students.”

How is God using the

Graduate School to help you bear the image of Christ? “The Grad School is preparing me to be a Christian who counsels, not just a Christian counselor. Both spiritual and academic aspects of my life are being fed by my time here.”

SINGLES REPRESENTATIVE

Marisol Rosas Castañeda, from Puebla, Mexico, graduated from Harding University.



Why are you on the Student Association?

“To love and serve others as we continue building and enjoying the HUGSR community.”

How is God using the

Graduate School to help you bear the image of Christ? “He has showed me, through new knowledge and experiencing love through the HUGSR community, how I can be a useful vessel in the world with love, joy and care — particularly among people who need guidance, encouragement and are hurting.”

MARRIED, ON-CAMPUS REPRESENTATIVE

Jonathan Strasser, from Wynne, Ark., graduated from Harding University.



Why are you on the Student Association?

“I want to be used by God to facilitate fun, vibrant Christian fellowship among those living here on campus and those

who visit here!”

How is God using the Graduate School to help you bear the image of Christ? “Two ways: One, as I try to learn how to wear Jesus’ sandals, God is using the Grad School to change the way I react toward people who are lost and bring my compassion increasingly in line with his own. And two, as a Grad School campus resident, I live in a community that sets the bar high for what Christian community can be, as neighbors help, pray for, encourage, and show hospitality toward one another — it is really cool!”

MARRIED, OFF-CAMPUS REPRESENTATIVE

Andrew Taylor, from Antioch, Tenn., graduated from Freed-Hardeman University.



Why are you on the

Student Association? “I have enjoyed my time thus far at HUGSR and wanted to help others connect to the community as well as make the

most of their studies. Being on the SA gives me opportunities to serve others in a greater capacity than ever before.”

How is God using the Graduate School to help you bear the image of Christ? “The knowledge and skills that I have acquired have helped me better communicate the message of God to others. I am constantly humbled by the sincerity of my classmates in their quests for truth and understanding.”

COUNSELING REPRESENTATIVE

Jessi R. Hankins graduated from Harding University.



Why are you on the

Student Association? “To serve the student body.”

How is God using the grad school to help you bear the image of Christ? “Learning counseling material from Christian professors helps to strengthen and enhance my own faith in practice.”

BRIEFS

Three Present at Conference

Two Master of Arts graduates presented papers based on their theses at the Christian Scholars Conference in Nashville, Tenn., June 3-5. **Preston Cottrell** (M.A., 2010; prestoncottrell@gmail.com) presented “Aesthetic Parallels to the Fanning/Richardson Controversy: A Cultural Interpretation of a Theological Debate, 1856-1858,” and **Shelley Jacobs** (M.A., 2009; sljacobs@sasktel.net) presented “The Gospel Is for All: J.C. Bailey’s Vision for an Evangelized Canada.”

Dr. Mark Powell (mpowell@hugsr.edu), associate professor of theology, presented “Apologetic for Trinitarian Doctrine and Its Bearing in the Life of the Church” at the conference.

Oster Invited to ETS Conference

Dr. Richard Oster (roster@hugsr.edu), professor of New Testament, has been invited to read his paper “New Light on the Apocalypse of John” at the Nov. 2010 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society. Even though he is not a member of this particular society, his archaeologically grounded insights into the Book of Revelation are noteworthy. He has a commentary on the book forthcoming.

Bland Publishes Articles

Dr. Dave Bland (dbland@hugsr.edu), professor of homiletics, published two articles for *Lectionary Homiletic*: one on Matthew 24:36-44 and the other on Luke 23:33-43.

Faculty

Preaching Series Fills Critical Void

Preaching is susceptible to trends. As preachers we find ourselves vulnerable to the latest homiletical fads and fashions. We jump on the bandwagon of PowerPoint, grapple with whether or not to move away from the pulpit, wonder whether or not to preach without notes, and ponder over the form to use in developing the sermon — on and on it goes. In the midst of all of these trends, preaching has often lost sight of its most fundamental responsibility, that of proclaiming the message of Scripture to the relevant issues of the day.

Thirteen years ago, David Fleece and I wanted to attempt to reclaim this focus. Combining the efforts of some of the most respected names in biblical scholarship (like Walter Brueggemann,

Tremper Longman, Richard Hays and Luke Timothy Johnson) with the best homileticians of the day (including Fred Craddock, Tom Long and Paul Scott



Wilson), we hoped to provide a unique synthesis that engaged both the mind and the spirit of those responsible for proclaiming God’s word. This project also involved highlighting the good preaching that is already a part of our own Restoration tradition. We asked preachers (37 in all) who we felt represent some of the best preaching in churches of Christ — men like Lynn Anderson, Chris Smith, Chris Altrick, Ken Durham, Spencer Furby, Jerry Taylor, Carson Reed and Mark Frost — to contribute

sermons based on the essays written by these well-seasoned scholars.

For the past decade, we compiled the essays and sermons into 10 volumes. The 11th and final volume, *Preaching Character: Reclaiming Wisdom’s Paradigmatic Imagination for Transformation*, will appear this September. Our goal has been to combine the best of biblical scholarship with the best of preaching. Ultimately the desire is for these volumes to serve as models for preachers across the country to show how God’s word, when approached with a spirit of intellectual honesty, has the power to transform the lives of individuals as well as the community of faith.

► **Dr. Dave Bland** (dbland@hugsr.edu)

Powell Speaks to Catholic and African Audiences

Dr. Mark Powell, associate professor of theology, served as respondent to the session, “The ‘Patient and Fraternal Dialogue’ Toward a Reformed

Papacy” at the Catholic Theological Society of America Annual Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, in June. The session was dedicated to reviewing Powell’s book “Papal Infallibility: A

Protestant Evaluation of an Ecumenical Issue” published by Eerdmans.

Powell also taught History of Christianity at Mapepe Bible College, Chilanga, Zambia, May 24-28.



Powell, far left, teaching in Zambia.

Last Wish and Testament

Nearly 65 percent of Americans do not have a will according to a recent survey. Without a will, you may be unable to insure that your assets will go to your family and loved ones when you pass away. The state may write a will for you instead, which may result in accidental disinheritance and other unintended consequences. Those who have wills are not guaranteed that the results accomplish what they intended. Sometimes the will of the individual is only a

wish. Don't let this happen to you. You can create a plan for the future, and planning is easier than you think. A part of the planning process is having someone who can do more than just write a will. You need an estate planning professional who can evaluate your estate and make recommendations for income flow for you and your family. The next step is to discuss with you how you can determine to distribute the balance of your estate in the most effective way. We want to make the services of an estate planning

professional available to you. Even if you have a will, it would be to your benefit to have it evaluated. Only two things can happen: The planner can evaluate the will and confirm that it meets your intentions, or he may make some suggestions of items that need to be changed. It is a win-win situation for you. The best part is there is no cost for the evaluation of your estate. Please give us a call at 901-432-7727 so we can give you the peace of mind that your will is more than a wish.
 ▶ *Larry Arick (larick@hugsr.edu)*

Scholarship Fundraising Tops \$400,000

The fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, saw the end of the School's most successful fundraising year for the annual scholarship fund. More than \$400,000 was given to fund students preparing for ministry, reports Larry Arick (larick@hugsr.edu), director of Advancement.



Conference, Dinner Celebrates Chaplains

On Sept. 11, chaplains met on the Graduate School campus for the

inaugural Hope & Healing Conference to train, inform and encourage chaplains from all ministries, including

military, hospital and prison. The conference was presented free as a service to chaplains.

BRIEFS

Education Program Expands to Memphis Campus

Harding University's Cannon-Clary College of Education began offering three graduate degrees on the Graduate School campus in Memphis this fall. The three degrees are Master of Arts in Reading, Master of Arts in Teaching, and Master of Arts in Advanced Teaching. The advanced teaching offers coursework that leads to national board certification.

"The College of Education's program works hand in glove with our programs," explains Dr. Evertt W. Huffard, vice president and dean of the Graduate School of Religion. "Their classes meet at different times from ours, serve a different population, and provide a valuable resource for the Mid-South educational community."

The graduate programs in education are offered through the newly-named Harding University Mid-South Professional Center, which is located on the Memphis campus, and are directed by Dr. Ileene Huffard (M.A.C.M., 2008; ihuffard@harding.edu).

Faculty Web Pages Added

Faculty information is now more accessible through the School's website: www.hugsr.edu. Faculty members' credentials, contact information, and an downloadable PDF with information about their presentations are all available on their own page. You may access a faculty member's page from www.hugsr.edu/faculty. Replace the word "faculty" with the professor's last name, for example www.hugsr.edu/oster.

Campus Life

Audio Recordings Welcomed into Digital Age

An archivist's job is never done, especially when technology changes. The L.M. Graves Memorial Library has a broad collection of sermons and lectures delivered on this campus and from across the nation. Many of these recordings are on forms of technology that are quickly fading. Reel-to-reel tape, for example, was at one time a main-

stay of quality recording. Today, however, few places would have the technology to play the tape.

Enter Chet Rutledge, an M.Div. student preparing for ministry, as well as a musician and sound engineer. Rutledge has been commissioned by the library to convert analog recordings into digital format — a long process that requires the skills of an audio engineer.

"Chet will help us move these important archival items in a more secure and useful form," says librarian Don Meredith.

A long-term goal for the project is to take the digital files and link them into the card catalog. "Users could find the recording as they would any other media form. And they could download it immediately," Meredith adds.

Coming Together

Each year the Student Association welcomes students at Coming Together, a family-friendly time of worship, food and fellowship. The Student Association's goal is to help develop the students into a community focused on growing in their kingdom service.



Anna Borchers, Jared King, Marisol Rosas and Lenin Munguia compete in a game to celebrate the start of the school year at the Student Association's Coming Together.

Ron Wade Works Hope in Memphis

Two years ago, after a successful 33-year sales career in the printing industry, Ron Wade (M.A.R., 1988, rwade@whyhopeworks.org) made a change — and change has been the theme ever since.

Wade moved out of the business world into the non-profit sector to lead HopeWorks as executive director.

HopeWorks is a Memphis ministry supported by churches of Christ that helps address under-employment. The ministry seeks to help individuals choose, find and keep a job that matches talents, goals and desires.

Through their program of personal and career development classes, HopeWorks graduates have had times of honest and intensive self-examination to help them get to the root of their unemployment. By building on a student's abilities, the HopeWorks staff and volunteers assist the students to develop marketable job skills. Students leave HopeWorks with personal direction, a meaningful resume, community support and spiritual encouragement.

When contemplating his own career change, Wade knew he had a unique opportunity to help people. "I didn't want to come to the end and then say, 'I wish I had made the change.'"

Students come to HopeWorks to seek change as well. One student recently contacted Wade from Mobile, Ala. He found HopeWorks

through a Google search, then got on a bus and walked there. "He's wanting to change his life," Wade explains.

The verse in Ephesians 2:10, "created in Christ Jesus to do good works," serves as a vital part of Wade's thinking. "I just want whatever God has in store for me. I want to see God's opportunities." Following God's opportunities is part of his personal journey.

But seeing God's opportunities is also part of the journey for students at HopeWorks. "Nearly 75 percent of our students have felony convictions," Wade explains. "Their support structure may be virtually non-existent." HopeWorks helps students process through issues of self-esteem, develop responsibility, and increase their marketability. God opens up opportunities through this growth process.

And the results speak for themselves. According to Wade, the recidivism rate for ex-convicts living in Memphis is 81 percent. For those completing the HopeWorks class, the recidivism rate is less than 10 percent.

These are impressive results. But there are things even more important for the HopeWorks staff. "We equip students with 'holistic hardware,'" Wade explains. "We take people where they are on their spiritual journey." But the thread of spirituality runs throughout the entire program.

Classes open in prayer. Christians volunteer as mentors, known as Faith Encouragers, to befriend the

students, and students are encouraged to connect with a local congregation.

"We are not a church," Wade points out. "But connecting people to what God is doing is an important part of what we do." Wade notes that on exit interviews, the spirituality aspect of the course receives high praise.

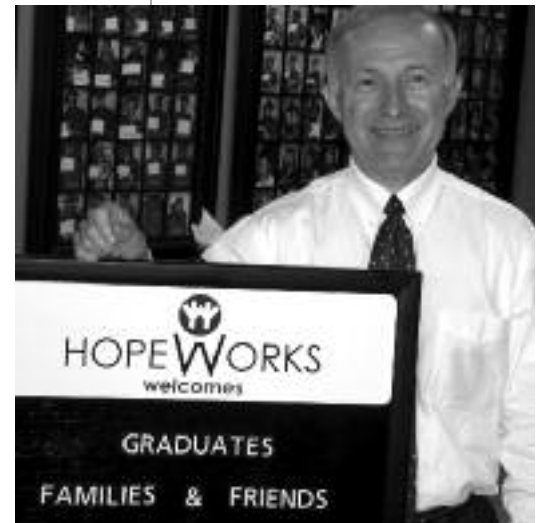
At the end of the day, HopeWorks changes lives of men and women for the better, and the ministry is changing Wade as well. "This ministry has shown me areas where I need to grow," he explains. "I am learning to better relate to my staff, students, and other area ministries."

As he moved into leadership at HopeWorks, Wade was actually on a trajectory he had been on for a long time. For the past 20 years he has been part of the Chinese ministry at Highland Church of Christ where he serves as an elder and is deeply involved in the adult education ministry.

Even while building his first career, he took classes at the Graduate School, eventually earning a Master of Arts in religion, focusing in New Testament studies. He credits his time at the Graduate School with showing him a key aspect of his current role at HopeWorks. "I experienced a real genuineness at the Graduate School," he says. "I felt like what you see is what you get. That's the same way I try to relate to staff and students. I have to be genuine. I don't have all the answers. In fact, I have a lot to learn."

Change to Alumni Online Access

Alumni may still access the online bibliographic database ATLAS, but the service provider has changed. Alumni should now go to <http://search.ebsco-host.com> for access to the site. Contact Don Meredith (dmeredith@hugsr.edu) for username and password.



Flanked by photos of HopeWorks graduates, alumnus Ron Wade welcomes guests to graduation at this life-changing ministry.

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Final Word

Fresh Starts

Fall is the time of new beginnings at the Graduate School. We start a new school year with a new theme, new students, and this year even with new faculty members. The pressure of end-of-semester work has not yet hit, so we enjoy the bustle of fresh starts and new beginnings.

On this campus, couples are moving from other parts of the country, beginning this educational experience adjusting to a new city as well as a new school and new friends. We have several couples coming from abroad, both American and international students. Their beginnings bring more significant adjustment and re-entry challenges.

And yet new beginnings, despite the challenges, bring excitement and joy. We've worked hard for this new start, prepared for it, and now it has begun. Students show up to class early and have their books and materials ready. They are eager for the journey to begin.

I may be stretching the metaphor too thin, but new beginnings remind me of what we strive for in this world. We live our lives serving God, waiting for the new beginning that will be perpetually new when Christ comes again.

Perhaps this was the idea John had when in Revelation 22 he has a glimpse into eternity as he sees a tree bursting with healing leaves and bearing 12 crops. Every

month there is new fruit! Every month is a new beginning!

I don't think anyone associated with a school would want a new beginning every month. But once a year is wonderful, and significant, not simply as a new academic beginning, but as a vision of what lies in store.

New people. New adventures. New insights. New friendships and renewed friendships. This is more than just the start of the school year. It is a glimpse of the new heaven and new earth. It is a glimpse of a returning Lord.

Let all who hear say, "Come!"

▶ *Mark Parker*
(mparker@hugsr.edu)