

# The Flame



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## graduation

On May 10, 2007, Urbana Seminary celebrated its third commencement exercise. Three students completed the requirements for either a Master of Arts in Religion or a Graduate Certificate in Christian Studies. All were excellent students and are deeply involved in the ministries of their local churches. Each represents a blending of a heart to grow in the knowledge of God and His Word, along with a heart to serve Him and His people.

- Michael Heiniger fulfilled the requirements for a Master of Arts in Religion while serving as the Senior Pastor of Crossroads Community Church in Monticello, IL. He began his studies with us as a student of the Christian Studies Center.
- Jenny Heaton earned a Graduate Certificate in Christian Studies. She and her husband, John (alumni '06), plan on ministering in missions doing church planting among unreached peoples.
- Elaine Carovilla completed a Graduate Certificate in Christian Studies. Elaine plans to complete her Master of Divinity with us in the Spring of 2008.

As a school, we're delighted to add these students to our Alumni Association! We are eager to see how God will use them, their gifts, and their heart for Him and for people.



*... preparing people for Christian ministry and leadership, equipping them to love, know, and serve God...*

## desiree clark: what urbana seminary means to me

The flame insignia that is part of the Urbana Theological Seminary logo is the perfect symbol to represent this school. God lit a similar flame in my heart eight years ago and my passion



has been to learn as much as I can about Him. My church and small group helped set this “baby Christian” on the right path, but I felt called to know more. I had been contemplating and praying about going back to school but I didn’t want to travel far, as I have a large family and a part time job. But as expected, God answered my prayer and I met Dr. Cuffey one Sunday morning as he was the guest speaker at our church. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that there was a Seminary only twenty miles away and I immediately signed up for my first class.

At 39, I found myself experiencing adolescent anxieties about my capabilities as a student, but when I walked into my first class these anxieties melted away. It took only a few moments to realize that this environment was one of peace and knowledge. I was so enthralled with the lectures that I often wondered if my instructors ever felt the urge to pass by me and close my jaw! After my first semester at Urbana Seminary, I knew I wouldn’t be satisfied with just taking a few classes but that I needed to pursue an advanced degree. This was the place where I would learn how to spread the message of Jesus Christ to others who so desperately need to know of His love.

I was pleased to find out that I was not the oldest student in the program! It has been a joy to learn alongside young, old, married, single, men and women students with similar interests. The uniqueness of each student has as much to add to this environment as the dedicated faculty and staff. Classes are definitely challenging, but are also flexible enough to accommodate students who wish to learn more about Christianity, the Bible, and God without the commitment of a degree program.

Jesus taught His diverse group of disciples with challenge, patience, wisdom, and love. Two thousand years later I find myself experiencing the bright light of His message through those He has called to carry the torch. I will continue to fulfill my calling with the help of Urbana Seminary and I encourage all to join us in helping to light the flame of Jesus Christ in others.

## new courses respond to the culture

In the spring, as part of examining our mission and vision, we considered the curriculum we use for training. As a result of our reassessment, we decided to make several significant changes in required courses that will be tremendously helpful for our students. These changes respond to needs that we hear expressed often by people in our programs and reflect larger ferment in our culture that we feel called to address. They allow us to speak to the needs of people who will serve in many newer church ministries, often called emerging or emergent, as well as continue to address the needs of those in traditional churches. We’re excited about these additions to the required core of Master of Divinity classes. They include the following:

### **The Canon and Unity of the Bible:**

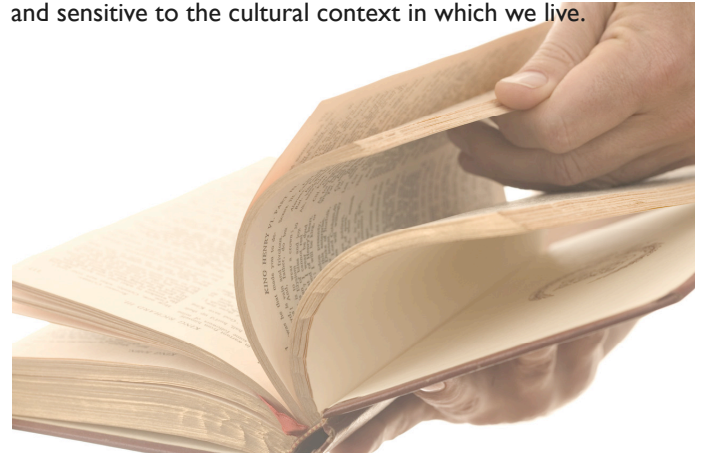
How can we be certain we have the correct set of books in our Bibles? Were any left out that ought to be in there? And when you put them all together, does the Bible make sense as a whole? This course will help to understand the process by which the canon of 66 books in the Bible was created and then examine the ways in which this canon is a single whole entity that has one unified purpose and direction, derived from the overarching story of God’s mission of bringing people to himself.

### **Theology and Contemporary Issues:**

When you learn theology, what do you do with it? Does it remain an abstract set of concepts with little relation to life today and in our culture? In Theology and Contemporary Issues the student will have the chance to examine the broad trends and “hot issues” in the current events of our culture and reflect on how a Christian should view these. The emphasis will be on how to think theologically, using the material covered in the introductory Theology sequence to analyze and apply a wise and thoughtful Christian perspective to life today.

### **Ministry and Evangelism in Contemporary Context:**

How do you reach others in a way that they will understand? How do you address a postmodern culture? Instead of studying ministry techniques and methods of evangelism isolated from the context in which they will be put into practice, we took material from the courses on cultural analysis and on evangelism and made one package. In this class we will develop an approach to ministering and sharing Christ that is authentic and sensitive to the cultural context in which we live.





## library donors: august 2006-june 2007

Many thanks to all who have donated books to the library this year! This year the library holdings have grown greatly through donations totaling about 2,500 volumes. Donations increase the scope and depth of our collection much more quickly and thoroughly than would be possible by relying on the library budget alone. It is exciting to see these new materials available for study. We deeply appreciate the generosity of those who have built up the library in this way so it can participate in the Seminary's goal of "equipping people to love, know, and serve God."



Countryside United Methodist Church

Joel Cuffey

Ken & Lori Cuffey

Terry Daly

Todd Daly

Dawn Davidson

Brian and Helga Eichelberger

Michael Halcomb

Milo Kaufman

Jeff Kelley

Mike McQueen

National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

Ogden United Methodist Church

Sandy Powell

Christian Ricker

John Roeckeman

Ron Simkins

Jason Unzicker

Clint Wilson

## new mission statement: what does urbana seminary do?

At the June 4<sup>th</sup> board meeting, the Trustees officially adopted Urbana Seminary's new mission statement. As a faculty and staff, we felt the Lord's urging to clarify our mission and vision as we look to the future, which necessitates staking out a clear place in the spectrum of seminaries as we prepare for accreditation processes. The faculty and staff have been meeting on a monthly basis at a series of mini-retreats in order to examine our place in the world of theological education. The new mission statement, as formulated by the faculty and staff, and discussed in depth and adopted by the Board, reads as follows.

*The mission of Urbana Theological Seminary is to provide graduate theological education which prepares people for Christian ministry and leadership, equipping them to love, know, and serve God.*

This statement provides a clear and concrete description of our work. As a school we offer education, of course. That is further defined as theological, focusing on the contents of our training in the disciplines needed for ministry, such as Biblical Studies, Theology, Church History, and Ministry. The credits we offer are on the graduate level, implying a greater maturity expected on the part of our students, who are highly motivated to learn, do advanced research to discover knowledge, and gain the tools and resources to become mature Christian thinkers. Our basic aim in providing such an education is to ready people to serve Christ in a wide variety of ministry roles, especially focusing on the nature of leadership. This education is a holistic education that engages the entirety of the student's being—calling on them first to fulfill the greatest commandment, to love God as the fountainhead of all that they will do in ministry; then to know Him and the Scriptures more profoundly; and finally to bring this process to completion by taking the knowledge they have gained into the church, the community, and world in order to serve God.

We are currently working on a statement of vision that will accompany the mission, in order to express what we want to become in the future, and how we will be distinguished in the accomplishment of that mission. More on that vision statement in the next newsletter!

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## new website goes online

In mid June the new version of our website went online. This redesign seeks to provide more information in a useful and user-friendly format. It has been reorganized to make clear what a prospective student would like to know, and also takes into account the currently enrolled students' desires for easily accessible program, policy, and schedule information. There is a newly rewritten section for donors to the school. Several other parts are forthcoming in the near future. Thanks to Ann Jones and Carrie Blount in our administration, as well as to Carolyn Zimmer with graphic design and Renata Fros who served as the web designer. Renata will be maintaining the website on an ongoing basis. We encourage you to check it out at

[www.urbanaseminary.org](http://www.urbanaseminary.org)!

And we welcome your feedback on anything you notice or would find helpful.

## letter from the president

Though summer may seem like a lull in the action for a school, in reality it's one of the most strategic times we have to plan ahead for the approaching academic year. As a result we aim to have the staff and faculty utilize the time to the fullest, beyond even the teaching of any summer school courses. For all of us, the process of considering the direction of our strategic plan continues right through the season. Those involved in administrative tasks spend time mapping out strategies for the upcoming months. Many of us are involved in projects of research and writing for publication. Contacts with new students continue. The catalog is almost finished. The new website is up and online. Revisions and plans for upcoming courses are already in motion. So keep praying for us to use our time to the fullest to have a fruitful summer season here at the Seminary. If we do, the new school year will be better than ever!

## summer courses

Urbana Seminary began the summer officially offering three courses. It quickly grew to a summer of three classes, one mission practicum, one field education, and seven independent studies. This has given us the opportunity to work in many small group class settings.

In May we offered our first summer course, Theology I, as a 7 day modular taught by Todd Daly. This course allowed our program students the opportunity to take a required course in a very condensed amount of time. Many students also began their field education work and a course in Mission Practicum to work on and bring back to the classroom at the end of the summer.

Throughout the rest of the summer, Tony Jones is teaching the Epistles of John. This course has the largest enrollment, with seven students who are studying the books of I, II, and III John in English translation.

Many students approached us this summer to individually study certain topics. A few of those include Theology readings, Greek readings, Women in Ministry, and Pastoral Ministries. Dr. Adrian Lamkin offered the History of Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism as an independent study.

## spring highlights

- April 21: another three of our staff attended the annual meetings of the North Central Association (regional accrediting agency) to better understand the process which we will pursue in the years ahead as we seek accreditation for the Seminary.
- May 10: celebration and ceremonies for those who have finished the requirements for their programs.
- May 17: Day of Prayer for the Seminary.
- June 18: new revised website goes online.

## summer transitions

For a school, summer often brings transitions:

- Esther Giezendanner, our Librarian, will be leaving us as of the end of July. She will complete her Master of Library Science degree in August and will be moving to a warmer climate in search of a full-time Librarian position. If at all possible, we would like to have the librarian position filled before Esther leaves so she can train her replacement. Please pray for wisdom and that we would find the right person to fill this post with the right qualifications and heart for our ministry. Many thanks to Esther for her hard work and numerous contributions.
- Jim Ward, who served ably as Assistant to the President, Academic Affairs, through the past school year, completed his work with us in a staff position and will concentrate his efforts on his own research, writing, and teaching endeavors. Many thanks to Jim for his valuable contributions to our life and discussions as a faculty and staff.
- Carrie Blount, our Assistant Dean, Registration and Finance, has begun taking classes to earn her MBA through Eastern Illinois University. Please pray for wisdom and time management throughout the summer for her and her family.

