My good friend and long-time teaching colleague George S. Heyer begins his excellent volume, *Signs of the Times: Theological Essays on Art in the Twentieth Century*, with the following sentence: “There runs through Christianity, at least in its Protestant variety, a deep strain of suspicion toward visual art.” Likely we all have a sense of how this suspicion continues among those churches and church members who are the heirs of the Protestant tradition. “What place do objects of visual art or symbols of any sort have in our life of faith?” is a question with which the Reformers wrestled and one with which we, too, need to be thoughtfully engaged. It is neither an easy question to answer nor an unimportant one.

In my own Christian pilgrimage, symbols and works of visual art which have intentionally grown out of the Christian tradition have become more and more significant. The meaning and experience of Christianity have been deepened and enriched by them. Yet I believe I remain convinced that—because of their inherent power—a healthy suspicion is in order. In the Christian faith, the arts and symbols are never ends in themselves, but are a means to an end and are always dependent upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ; indeed, they are to be subservient to the Gospel. They assist us in deepening our experience of the Gospel.

This issue of *Windows* addresses in helpful ways the basic question of religious faith and symbolism. An article by Professor Kathryn Roberts, “There’s a Snake in the Temple,” describes how symbols can become idols, illustrating the danger of the power they possess. Another article, “From Logos to Logo,” by David Gambrell, a gifted writer, a fine theologian, and a talented musician who enriches our seminary worship with his compositions and leadership, chronicles the uses of Christian symbols at the beginning of Christianity and today.

The rich symbolism of the Seminary Chapel is described in a commentary of my own which was recorded on a “walking and talking tour” of that edifice which stands at the center of our campus. It has been a special place for me for almost thirty years.

Robert M. Shelton
President
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**Cover: A symbol is a word or image that vibrates, suspended in the tension between the literal and the figurative, a-tremble with meaning and ambiguity. Our cover illustrates this phenomenon, juxtaposing one of Austin Seminary’s most recognizable images—the Chapel rose window—with one of the loud clanging cymbals of the 150th Psalm. We hope you get a bang (!) out of it. Illustration by David Gambrell.**

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**Got 1%?**

Theological Education Fund
(1% Plan)

The theological schools of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) no longer receive funding from the basic mission budget of the General Assembly. Churches are asked to contribute 1% of their operating budgets to the fund, which is then distributed to the seminaries.

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**Publisher and Mailing Statement**

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If you’ve ever visited the campus of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, you remember the Seminary Chapel. Its grand, almost gothic frame stands head and shoulders above every other building on campus. You remember the crown of spires atop its tower; the dark, elaborate woodwork within; the tall, vaulted ceiling; the intimate warmth of the nave; the soft and splendid light that filters through the rose window.

If these walls could talk
ly $47,000. On the cornerstone is a symbol for “I am who I am,” the passage in Exodus where Moses is being called and says, “Tell me your name.” On the right is a symbol for Jesus, the first three letters of his name in Greek: iota, eta, sigma.

As you enter the Chapel you note the trinitarian representation on the entrance arch: the hand of God the Father; the lamb with the seven seals representing the Son; and the dove representing the Holy Spirit. The Presbyterian seal is on the top—symbol of the former Presbyterian Church U.S.

The lamp representing the witnessing church is on the right; to the left is the burning bush, which is the indestructible church.

The Latin underneath says, “Let the light shine forth in the darkness.” The wreath around it represents victory and triumph. The star at the top of the seal represents Jesus Christ.

Inside, the symbolism is very powerful, but is not noticed frequently by worshipers. The Chapel itself is built in what is called a cruciform configuration. The east end is always the direction the congregation faces. (This chancel happens to face north geographically, but liturgically it’s east.) Christ is supposed to come from the east and if you’re in worship then you’re symbolically facing the direction Christ is to return.

On the Narthex screen you see the symbol for Jesus, again represented as the lamb of God with the seven seals from the Book of Revelation. There are the symbols for the disciples. Judas, of course, isn’t there; he’s been replaced by Matthias with the double-headed battle axe. You will recognize some of the other disciples’ symbols: the crossed
keys for Simon Peter; Saint Andrew’s cross, Matthew the tax collector with the money bags; James the Lesser with the saw, because supposedly after he was martyred his body was sawed in half; the seashells for James the Greater because of his mission of baptism; Bartholomew with the knives, because he was suppos edly skinned alive. The ship represents Jude because of the missionary work he did; Thomas is a carpenter’s square on a staff; Philip is a cross and a pilgrim’s staff; and the two oars and a battle axe represent Simon the Zealot; John with the serpent on the staff. John’s Gospel says, “as the serpent is lifted up in the wilderness, so will the Son of Man be lifted up.”

The columns on the west side of the Chapel bear symbols for the four evangelists. The symbols rotate around the columns so that they appear in different places on each column. You have the winged human, which represents Matthew because of his emphasis on the humanity of Christ; the winged calf for Luke because of Luke’s emphasis on Christ’s sacrifice; the winged lion because Mark’s Gospel comes roaring out like a lion; and John’s Gospel is represented by a winged eagle because christology soars so high in the Gospel of John.

The major prophets are on the other side—major not because they are more important but because they are larger books in the Old Testament. The saw represents Isaiah because he was killed by sawing his body in two. The cistern for Jeremiah because he was thrown into a cistern. The lions, of course, represent Daniel in the lion’s den. Ezekiel with the closed gate because Ezekiel prophesied the siege of Jerusalem. They rotate in the same way as the evangelists. The Rose of Sharon at each corner of the capital symbolizes the Messianic promise found in Isaiah 35.

The ship figures in every corner of the Chapel represent the Ship of Zion, the way in which the church represents the safety that we have in all the tumultuous times of life. The nave, where the people sit, comes from the Latin navis, meaning ship.

The rose window at the top of the chancel is quite distinctive. You can see in the middle of the window the cross and the crown. The cross represents Christ’s sacrificial death, but you notice it is an empty cross and not a crucifix because indeed Christ was raised from the dead and is no longer on the cross. The crown represents the victory and triumph Christ gained over death and the grave. Notice the symbolism running all around the outside of the rose window: the anchor represents hope and security; the heart, charity and love; the dove represents the Holy Spirit; the scales, justice; the scroll, the law; the shield, faith; the lamp represents truth and knowledge; the owl, wisdom; grapes and the branches represent our unity; and the oak, sturdiness or strength.

On opposite sides of the altar are the Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the end; in the middle, again, the first three letters for the Greek word for Jesus, which you saw out front. The cross on the altar represents the sacrificial death of Christ. The candles are symbolic: “I am the light of the world.” We should not worship without lighting those candles.

Some people say the most distinctive symbol in the Chapel is the pelican, or the “pelican-in-her-
piety” on the reredos. Legend has it the pelican is the most loving, the most giving of all birds. And so the pelican willingly pricks her own breast to feed her young when there is no other food. It has come to represent the atonement, Christ’s sacrificial death, the shedding of his own blood for the redemption of all humankind. John Evans did a beautiful job of recreating it in the needlepoint over the PULPIT.

The vine and the branches—symbolizing the “I am the vine and you are the branches” unity that we have with Christ—appear on the pulpit and the COMMUNION TABLE. The cross on the LECTERN represents faith; the anchor, hope; the heart, charity and love. I frequently am asked about the three rabbits on the lectern parament, also done by John Evans. It’s marvelous work and adds a great deal to the Chapel. The rabbit, or hare, in Christian theology has to do with the defenselessness of human beings; the rabbit is preyed upon by all. It recalls our defenselessness and our need to put our trust in Jesus Christ to care for us and save us. And of course the rabbits’ ears form a trinitarian symbol.

For years we only had an old rickety table that we brought out for communion. One year, Stuart Currie gave the Currie Lectures and he took the honorarium and said, “What would you like to do in the Chapel to provide a communion table?” So we found a craftsman from San Antonio and designed it with him, picking up the vine and the branches symbolism.

THE VESSELS on the communion table were purchased by a graduate of ours; they were made in the Iona community in Scotland. You can see the Celtic cross and the Latin cross on the flagon and chalice. I like very much those symbols. You might be interested to know the theological debates that go on over the vessels—whether they should be there without being filled. Some say you shouldn’t have them out on the table unless you’re celebrating the Eucharist. But I take a different view; I think they are powerful symbols even if you’re not celebrating. I think they add to the symbolism and the meaning of the table itself.

THE PASchal CANDLE has become a regular part of the CHAPEL. When I first began teaching at Austin Seminary no one would have thought of a Paschal candle. I taught the worship courses for a number of years and it was fascinating to watch the students’ eyes light up when you started talking about symbolism and sacramental theology because it wasn’t something they were really familiar with. The Paschal candle, because of the interest in the Easter Vigil, has come to have a distinctive place in the community. The stand was crafted by C. D. Weaver, who served for sixteen years as dean of student life and pastor to students. The BAPTISMAL PITCHER AND BASIN are very new; they’ve just been added in the past year or two. We are not a baptizing community. We are not a church, therefore we have no basis to baptize, but these serve as a symbol of our baptism. That, I think, is important.

There is no substitute for an in-the-flesh experience of the worship and fellowship that is the Austin Seminary community. If you’ve never visited us, we hope this article whets your appetite for a taste of that feast. We’ll be saving a place for you.
Symbols can be powerful and life-giving; pointing beyond themselves, they speak of the inexpressible. God is not really made of stone, but the Bible speaks of God as a rock because God is as sure, as solid, and as unmovable as a rock. Symbols are immediate and visual, providing the picture that speaks the thousand clarifying words. But in order to be symbols they must point to a reality beyond themselves. Otherwise, they can turn poisonous.

BY KATHRYN ROBERTS
Snake in the Temple

In the eighth century B.C., theologians in the Judean royal court came to this profound realization—and that is why Hezekiah eliminated the snake in the temple.

Hezekiah's subjects were a religious people. They worshiped in Solomon’s splendid temple under the guidance of priests trained for generations in the orthodoxy of the faith. With genuine piety they offered their sacrifices, burned incense, and celebrated the cycle of festivals, offering up gratefully their tithes and thanksgivings to the God of their salvation.

The Jerusalem temple was a visual delight, created by architects who literally had the wealth of Solomon at their disposal. Its representations reminded one of the physical world in all its beauty, pointing to the God who created everything from the pomegranate to the seas. Central to the divine throne room were two winged lions, the cherubim, whose outstretched wings formed a platform extending across the entire width of the thirty-foot-square room, at a height of fifteen feet. Upon this exalted throne the deity was envisioned as invisibly sitting, feet planted firmly on the ark of the covenant, which sat on the floor beneath the cherubim. Standing behind the cherubim throne—towering above it—was a tall pole supporting an impressive bronze winged serpent, the seraph.

This snake in the temple had long been associated with Moses and the wilderness period. Numbers 21:4-9 relates a wilderness event in which a bronze serpent on a pole plays the central role. The children of Israel, easily wearied by life in the desert, complained against God and Moses. “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food” (Numbers 21:5). As punishment the Lord sent “fiery serpents” among the people to bite them. As the people began to die from the fiery (or poisonous) bites, they again appealed to Moses, this time repenting of their sin and asking Moses to intercede on their behalf so that God would deliver them. The Lord delivers through the agency of a bronze serpent lifted high above the camp. Everyone who was bitten could look up at it and live. The symbolism of the serpent was widely known to be ambiguous and contradictory. It could be at the same time a symbol of danger and death and of healing and salvation. This is how it functions in the wilderness narrative: looking up to this source of death brings about the restoration of the people's health. Numbers 21 is probably given as the rationale for the presence of the bronze serpent on the pole in the temple. It was called Nehushtan, which is a play on the similarity of the words “bronz” and “serpent.” It is a reminder of God’s deliverance during the wilderness wanderings.

In his late night conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus calls attention to the serpent in the wilderness as a way of pointing to the salvific quality of his own “lifting up,” namely, the crucifixion. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him might have eternal life” (John 3:14-15). Like the serpent on the pole, the cross as the instrument of death is also the means of God’s salvation.

Jesus refers to this rich symbolism behind the serpent, even though he himself never saw it, since Hezekiah had removed it from the temple more than 700 years before his birth. The bronze serpent in the temple had become a snare. Sometime in the distant past, the people had begun offering incense to it, and it changed from a symbol of God to a god in itself. The people continued to associate the serpent with Moses and the healing in the wilderness, but instead of praising God for the healing they turned their attention toward the bronze symbol. The serpent became the object of their prayers for healing. Nehushtan had become a god, so it had to be eliminated. The danger that the serpent posed happened numerous times in the Old Testament and is still a danger wherever Christians worship. Because of the very human tendency to worship the visible over the invisible, the second commandment warns against images for God, no matter how orthodox they may be. The danger is in “exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles” (Romans 1:23). Even snakes.
In the beginning was the Word (Logos) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John’s Gospel begins with a cipher: the Word of God is enfleshed in God’s image, humankind. Jesus Christ, human and divine, is—in the metaphor of the Scriptures—both Word and image, language and picture, text and graphic. How has this powerful dual metaphor—this paradox of media—influenced our communication of Christ’s gospel and our identity as Christ’s church?

From Logos to logo (TM)

The evolution of the shapes that shape Christian identity
Musicologists have coined the term “text-painting” to describe a cluster of notes that is figuratively yoked to a verse or phrase of language in such a way that they mirror and interpret each other. Advertisers and graphic designers speak of “logos” and “wordmarks”—vehicles for expressing the image and identity of a corporate body or organization. The halls and pages of the church’s history are quite literally littered with such inscriptions, symbolic representations of the truth of Jesus Christ, the trajectory of Christian tradition, and the shape of Christ’s body. The following is a brief history of a few of the most significant of those symbols, and some thoughts on the future of the graphic face of faith.

**Go fish.** Many are familiar with the story of the fish. Early Christians, fearing persecution from the Roman authorities, encrypted their communication and identity in the figure of the fish. This simple line drawing, consisting of two intersecting arcs, could be easily replicated by people who could neither read nor write. It was abstract enough to elude imperial suspicion, but unmistakable to those in the know. Some historians suggest that the fish pointed the way to home-churches and other Christian gathering-places.

Aside from allowing the early church to go secretly against the flow of Roman oppression, the symbol of the fish bore significant metaphorical and theological freight. It represented the call to discipleship—to be “fishers of people”; it evoked a sort of eucharistic imagery by way of the feeding of the five thousand; and it served as a witness to the resurrection—the breakfast on the beach. Furthermore, the fish became a mystical symbol of baptism: “We little fish,” Tertullian said, “after the image of our ichthys [Greek for “fish”], Jesus Christ, are born in the water, nor otherwise than swimming in the water are we safe.” In other words, apart from the enwrapping grace and love of God, we are like fish out of water.

On an even deeper level, the fish came to stand for a miniature creed. Some clever believer built an acrostic statement of faith on the letters of the Greek “ichthys”: “Iesous Christos, Theou Houios, Soter,” or “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.” Even today, the fish symbol is often depicted with this inscription. This most obvious union of word and image communicates volumes about the faith in an iconic shorthand.
Cross examined. Another marriage of script and sign can be found in the cross. The earliest sign of the cross comes from the chi, the first letter of the Greek word for Christ. Archaeological records reveal that this “X” marked the commonly held belongings of the first Christian communities. Soon, more stylized versions of the cross emerged from the intersection of the letters chi and rho, another abbreviation for Christ.

Across centuries of Christian tradition, the cross has been made and remade in the image of the particular cultures and communities that have adopted the faith for which it stands. Witness the examples pictured above.

Other symbols abound. The cathedrals and catacombs are like old attics, full of lambs and doves, tables, chairs, circles, squares, triangles, burning bushes, angels’ wings—some discarded and forgotten, some well-worn, some hidden away like old treasures.

Signed and sealed. The designers of some of our new denominational seals have rummaged through the attics and closets of church tradition, hoping to “dress up” their church’s corporate image. These “main-line drawings”—the United Methodist cross and flame, the United Church of Christ’s cross and globe, the Unitarian lamp, for example—represent new approaches to graphic Christian identity in the age of websites, bumper stickers, and t-shirts. The Presbyterian logo is perhaps the symbol *par excellence*, standing head and shoulders (or dove and fish?) above the rest in its multivocality. One analysis of the official seal of the PC(USA) finds no fewer than eight overlapping symbols therein, acknowledging that other interpretations are possible and valid as well. If the Swiss army needed a new symbol, this would be it.

Presbyterian craftsman James Avery has a studio in the Texas Hill Country that resembles a pantheon of denominational seals and other Christian symbols, engraved in precious metals and crafted into rings, bracelets, pendants, and earrings. The popularity of Avery’s rings, in particular, brings to mind Clement of Alexandria’s counsel to early Christians, that “if they were to wear any rings at all, to wear them on the little finger of the left hand where they would be no impediment to labor, and to engrave upon them Christian symbols, the fish and the dove, the anchor, the lyre, and the ship.”
**What would Jesus wear?** What would Clement think of “What Would Jesus Do?” (WWJD?) bracelets? This must-have accessory for the latest generation of God’s children represents a new, market-savvy trend in the signification of Christian identity. Like the Ichthys-fish, WWJD? is a miniature creed, or code of ethics, for these new disciples. It also serves as a tie that binds Christians together, allowing them to pick each other out in a culture that is (sometimes) hostile to people of faith.

Enter the FROG. This latest offering from the people who brought you WWJD?—also available on bracelets—is an acronym for “Fully Reliant on God.” Perhaps an amphibious logo is a fitting metaphor for the evolutionary adaptation of Christian symbolism in an increasingly unchurched culture. As biblical literacy and Sunday school attendance decline, even children who were “born in the water,” must be able to live and breathe on the arid terrain of secular materialism. A growing school of brand-new converts faces yet another challenge: learning to navigate the waters of ecclesial tradition, as well as the “living waters” of nascent spiritual awakening.

Some anthropologists have referred to human beings as symbol-making animals. John Calvin famously observed that the human heart is a factory for idols. These are two sides of Caesar’s coin. A strong streak of iconoclasm in the Reformed tradition has endowed many of us with a healthy suspicion for symbols, icons, seals, and signs. But our history also demonstrates that God has chosen to speak in many tongues—through story, song, and shape, as well as sermon and Scripture. We must be careful to hold these truths in tension. For indeed, God may be praised with clashing symbols.

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**The Moderator’s Cross**

For more than fifty years, small silver Celtic crosses have symbolized the office of Moderator of the Presbyterian Church. In 1948, the Reverend Dr. Harrison Ray Anderson purchased two such crosses on the island of Iona off the coast of Scotland. He presented one of these to Dr. Jesse Baird, moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) and the other to W. E. Price, moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS). As he did so, Dr. Anderson, long a supporter of reunion, suggested that some day the crosses would be welded together as a symbol of our reunited church.

In 1953, Dr. Anderson was elected to represent the General Assembly of the PCUSA to the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church of North America (UPNA). Shortly before leaving Chicago, he received a letter from the Reverend Frederick W. Ingle of Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. Ingle, having also purchased a Celtic cross in Iona wrote, “If you would like to present it to the moderator of the United Presbyterian Church to be kept ’til that day when we shall be one again, I would consider it an honor to contribute it.” Dr. Anderson presented that cross to Dr. Samuel Weir, moderator of the General Assembly of the UPNA in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Two of these crosses were riveted together in 1958 and presented to the Reverend Theophilus M. Taylor, first moderator of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) upon union of the PCUSA and UPNA.

In 1983, all three crosses were joined together at the Reuniting Assembly and presented to the moderator, the Reverend J. Randolph Taylor. They were riveted rather than welded, a reminder that unity can be broken. They are not identical, but unique, a reminder that unity does not require uniformity.

*The PC(USA) Moderator’s Cross appears in the title photo on page 8.*

*David Gambrell (MDiv’98) is associate for public relations at Austin Seminary.*

*Thanks to the following students, faculty, and staff for graciously sharing with us the symbols of their Christian faith: Blake Brinegar, Brian Brock, Patsy Chaney, Catherine Civeletto, Kristin Galle, John Gruel, Pete Hendrick, Tina Huyck, Suzanne Isaacs, Melani Longoni, Crissy McCoy, Paul Sink, Sheri Sice, Marti Stratton, and Jason Teague.*
Jane Dempsey Douglass
Hazel McCard Professor Emerita of
Historical Theology, Princeton
Theological Seminary

“Emerging Visions of Christian
Unity Around the World”

Jane Dempsey Douglass noted
that much of the energy for
Christian unity today does not
come from where Americans might
expect it (the United States and
Europe), but from Christians strug-
gling against apartheid in South
Africa or repressive governments in
Latin America.

Her first lecture surveyed recent
Reformed dialogue with other
Christian traditions. She noted
tremendous growth in Reformed-Catholic theological collabora-
tion since formal dialogues began
in 1970, the World Alliance of
Reformed Churches (WARC)-Ori-
ental Orthodox Churches dialogue
on topics such as christology
and tradition, and the WARC-Organiza-
tion of African Instituted Church-
es dialogues on issues of Scripture,
justice, and monogamy in the
African context. She noted that
Reformed-Lutheran dialogue has
been especially fruitful in overcom-
ing historic divisions, having led to
the establishment of full communi-
cation between Lutherans and
Reformed churches in Europe (the

see Douglass, page 13

C. Ellis Nelson
Research Professor of Christian
Education, Austin Presbyterian
Theological Seminary

“Childish Religion: What You
Should Do about It”

Ellis Nelson’s first lecture was a
sweeping summary of David
Heller’s findings and theories in The
Children’s God. The lecture began
with a brief discussion of religious
image issues which need to be
resolved in the transformation from
childhood to adulthood. Our pre-
dominant images of God are rooted
in images we formed in childhood.
For many, these images stay with us
for years and are often more impor-
tant than our religious faith.
Coming to recognize this fact is the
first step in reorienting these images
into healthy, faith-centered images.

Dr. Nelson’s second lecture took
a careful look at the sociological
influences on children’s images of
God. Since culture is the largest sin-
gle sociological factor in a person’s
life, we must think of the baby in
terms of its environment and care-
givers—the factors which come
together to form the self of the baby.
He concluded that the experiences
of infancy, feelings, and physical
actions must inform the emotional
basis for our images of God and our
subsequent faith in God. If it is true

see Nelson, page 13

Ralph Wood
University Professor of Theology and
Literature, Baylor University

“Three Kinds of Christian Witness
in Imaginative Literature”

Ralph Wood began by suggesting
that reason is the faculty of
truth and fantasy is the faculty of
reality; without elemental truths we
would have chaos. C. S. Lewis and J.
R. R. Tolkien agree that reality can
be discerned only through imagina-
tion; if we don’t know Jesus imagi-
natively, we don’t know him very
well. Wood expressed the idea that
our Christian terms have worn thin
and our imaginations are dull. Lewis
and Tolkien, in their writings,
attempt to “baptize” our imagina-
tions to enable us to discover reality.
The authors use different styles of
fantasy to stimulate our drab imagi-
nations. In Lewis’s writing we can be
Christ to each other. In contrast, we
never see a Christ figure in Tolkien’s
work; he feels that the Christ event
is unique and can never be duplicat-
ed. Tolkien portrays heroes—not
saviors—striking out on quests
because they are called, not knowing
if they are to return. The heroes who
possess absolute power are always
willing to give it up to shatter evil.

Wood told us in his second lec-
ture that satire evokes laughter and

see Wood, page 13
Douglass


In her second lecture, Professor Douglass talked about the equal partnership of women and men in the church. She argued that sources for movement towards equal partnership around the world include the Bible itself and local visions of harmonious community, and thus are far more than reactions to Euro-American feminism. She reported the growth in the number of churches in the WARC that ordain women to the ministry of word and sacrament, now reaching seventy-five percent.

In her last lecture, Professor Douglass discussed Christian solidarity in a changing world order, in which Christians in the northern hemisphere cannot not know about the struggles of Christians in the south for survival and human dignity. She noted that WARC studies have devoted attention to the economic realities of global debt and free trade as well as ecological destruction. She suggested that the Reformed tradition’s understanding of the seductiveness of idolatry offers a tool to unmask economic power and self-seeking consumerism as idols over against God, who calls for justice.

In sum, Professor Douglass’s survey of the Reformed tradition’s participation in the current struggle for Christian unity reveals the vitality of the ecumenical movement as it continues to address historic church divisions and speaks a prophetic word of unity rooted in a vision of the reign of God’s peace throughout the earth.

—Timothy Lincoln
director, Stitt Library

Nelson

that by ten months children have learned all of the sounds needed to speak in their native tongue, why is this not also true for religion and images of God?

Dr. Nelson began to correlate his first two lectures in his third and final lecture. He told us that children gradually begin to accommodate their images of God with whatever instruction they may be receiving about God and religion: the first step toward gaining a personal faith. A child’s primary image of God is what the child uses to interpret lifestyle situations. This is the blending of religious experience with life experience. Most children and adults do not relate to God but to an image of God which has been conditioned by culture and personal childish images. And that image of God is directly related to and based upon the type of emotions which are shared between child and caregiver.

Dr. Nelson finished with particular implications for congregations and Christian education: We need to reorient our education focus from one of Sunday School being the only teaching opportunity in the life of the congregation. Other adult education opportunities for parents must be discovered and shared with the entire congregation. Since the home is where religious instruction begins, there also should be a shift in Christian education to recognize the home as a viable avenue through which to teach both children and parents, and thus aid in the healthy development of childish images of God which will transform into healthy adult faith.

—Paul Sink

senior M.Div. student
Raleigh, North Carolina

Wood

helps us avoid arrogance. He reminded us that even the Bible laughs with joy and self-criticism. In Walker Percy’s Love In The Ruins, the main character, living in a spiritually dead America, realizes that we are all pilgrims searching for God, whom we love. Flannery O’Connor uses Hulga Hopewell, in “Good Country People,” to show us that our lives are unconditionally given to us. In “Revelation,” O’Connor reveals that the Christian’s complacency needs to be burned away, saying “faith which is not fierce is not real.”

In his last lecture, Wood stated that real devotion realizes that the character of God is incomparably near and also far. Devotion affirms what Calvin says so well, “God is always acting in the world, if God should withdraw his hand a little . . . all would dissolve.” Devotional poetry contains praise and thanks for the God of Jesus Christ while the human remains stricken with fear and trembling. Wood went on to examine two poems by George Herbert. “Prayer” reminds us that the act of prayer is an enormous privilege belonging first to the church. “Denial” is a devotional confession of God’s absence and deafness, which is answered in the praying. Here, Wood quotes John Updike: “Prayer for greater faith is the one that never goes unanswered.” Hopkins’s “God’s Grandeur” says that when we ruin natural order, we also ruin humanity. The final poem “Carion Comfort” refers to suicide: people who are continually “burned” by life will understand this one, and it reminds all of us that some people are continually unhappy.

—Janice Brown

MA student from Austin
Outstanding seniors honored at Austin Seminary Association Banquet

Each year Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary awards four major fellowships to graduating seniors in recognition of their outstanding academic achievements and promise for ministry. This year’s fellowships were announced at the Austin Seminary Association Annual Meeting and Banquet on Wednesday, February 2, 2000.

The alumni/ae association of Austin Seminary honored the longtime president of the Seminary by establishing the David L. Stitt Fellowship for continued study in 1971. Winner of the 2000 David Stitt Fellowship, which carries a stipend of $7,500, is Valerie J. Sansing. Born in Benton, Illinois, Valerie received her undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois in 1984. A candidate for the ordained ministry from Oak Hill United Methodist Church in Austin, Valerie was appointed last fall as associate pastor of Bethany United Methodist Church, also in Austin. She is married to John Sansing and is the mother of two children, Aubrey and Jenna.

In 1984 an endowment was established in honor of Leo V. Pile, Helen Porter Pile, and Edmond Holland Morgan of Harlingen, Texas, and Estella Martin Morgan of Dallas, Texas. The recipient of the $6,000 Pile-Morgan Fellowship for 2000 is John R. Gage. An Austin native, John received a B.A. degree in religious studies from Yale University in 1992. Having completed his classwork in December, John was ordained in the United Church of Christ and is presently serving as associate pastor of the Church on the Green in New Haven, Connecticut.

In 1946 an endowment was established by Mrs. W. P. Newell of Albany, Texas, as a memorial to her husband. Elizabeth A. “Anni” Judkins is the 2000 recipient of the Newell Fellowship, which provides a stipend of $2,500. Anni received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in deaf education and counseling from the University of Tulsa in 1982 and 1988, respectively. She is currently serving as the president of Austin Seminary’s Student Senate. She is a member of First Protestant Church, New Braunfels, Texas, where her husband, Tim Judkins, is a pastor. They are parents to three children, Tiffany, Joey, and Lisa. She plans to pursue doctoral studies after graduation from Austin Seminary.

The Janie Maxwell Morris Fellowship was established in 1953 by a bequest from Mrs. Milton Morris of Austin. The fellowship carries a grant of $2,000, and the recipient for the year 2000 is John Gruel. John came to Austin Seminary from Edmond, Oklahoma, where he had practiced medicine as an orthopedic surgeon since 1979. John received the B.S. from Oklahoma State University and the M.D. degree at the University of Oklahoma where he also completed a surgery residency. A member of First Presbyterian Church, Edmond, John is married to Leslie Gruel and is father to two children, Laura and Ben.

Lea and Winnie Gage, accepting the award for their son, John, join fellowship winners Valerie Sansing, John Gruel, and Anni Judkins.
Honoring the past—preparing for the future

How do we best bring honor to our past and at the same time provide for the future? In a family, we do this by gratefully celebrating what has been shared with us by past generations. Then we try, as best we can, to wisely use what we need for our present living, and carefully invest the rest in the future, providing for those who will follow—our children, grandchildren, and generations yet unborn. The same is true of the institutions of government, business, church, and learning. Today, we can bring honor to our founders and to those who prepared the way for us, by demonstrating our own faithfulness in making provision for those yet to come.

It is with this same conviction that the Board of Trustees of Austin Seminary established The Sampson-Vinson Heritage Society at its most recent meeting. The purpose of the Heritage Society is to honor the leadership of our first two presidents and the generosity of others whose financial provision established and maintained Austin Seminary in its early days. Now we want to encourage that same spirit of giving in present generations. Through our gifts we will make similar spiritual and material provision for those who, in the providence of God, are yet to come.

Preceding Thornton Rogers Sampson and Robert Ernest Vinson were pioneers in theological education like R. K. Smoot and R. L. Dabney. Later, many others maintained and expanded the Seminary, like Thomas White Currie, David Stitt, and Jack Stotts. For nearly one hundred years, these early founders and more current leaders, along with numerous distinguished faculties, struggled to establish and enhance a seminary here in the Southwest, for the preparation of clergy to serve in Seminary’s future. The mission of the Seminary and the noble goals of our recently adopted Master Plan will be achieved only with continued faithfulness, careful planning, and additional financial resources.

The Sampson-Vinson Heritage Society now provides an additional vehicle for accomplishing these important goals. You can become a charter member of the Sampson-Vinson Heritage Society by providing a planned gift for Austin Seminary in your will, or by making the Seminary a primary or partial beneficiary of a life-income plan or insurance policy. You can also list the Seminary as recipient of a “pay upon death” amount of your IRA, your bank or brokerage account, or another instrument of planned giving. Please join more than one hundred other persons who have already made provision for the future of the Seminary through planned giving. Those who have taken such action and informed the Seminary of the gift will be listed as charter members of The Sampson-Vinson Heritage Society. Charter membership will remain open throughout our centennial year 2002.

For assistance and information regarding planned gifts or guidance in completing your planned gift, please contact Jerold Shetler, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 100 East 27th Street, Austin, Texas, 78705; 800-777-6127; jshetler@austinseminary.edu.
Certificate in Spiritual Formation Courses

**September 14-17, 2000**
Immersion Weekend
Austin Seminary faculty & staff

**September 24-29, 2000**
Literature & Practice of Spiritual Direction
Dr. John Kloepfer

**October 12-15, 2000**
Old Testament Spirituality: Wisdom Literature
Dr. Andy Dearman

**October 22-27, 2000**
Immersion Week
Austin Seminary faculty & staff

**February 1-4, 2001**
Immersion Weekend
Austin Seminary faculty & staff

**February 11-16, 2001**
Immersion Week
Austin Seminary faculty & staff

**March 4-9, 2001**
Old Testament Spirituality: Daniel
Dr. Steve Reid

**April 26-29, 2001**
Spiritual Theology
Dr. Cindy Rigby

For information on the Certificate in Spiritual Formation program, please contact Nancy Cross at 512-472-6736; sfp@austinseminary.edu.

In partnership with Columbia Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and Whitworth College

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**PC(USA) Moderator Freda Gardner** paid a visit to the Austin Seminary campus on Monday, February 14, meeting with the faculty and addressing the community in worship. Gardner spoke eloquently and with enthusiasm of her encounters with churches in the denomination over the past five months. She cited numerous instances of exciting ministries being done at the congregational level, often in concert with ecumenical neighbors. Gardner also celebrated the denomination’s “Year with the Child,” calling children not only the church’s future but “God’s gift to us today.”

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**Historic Victory: The fightin’ Calvinists settled an old score with the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest by winning the Polity Bowl 25-20 on December 4. Hallelujah! The perseverance of the saints finally paid off**
Centennial Committee appointed

In anticipation of the Austin Seminary's centennial year in 2002, President Robert Shelton has convened a Centennial Committee. Under the leadership of chair John McCoy (MDiv'63) and co-chair Cynthia Logan (MDiv'79), the committee will have the responsibility for planning and implementing programs and events for the celebration commemorating the Seminary's first one hundred years.

Members of the committee are: Lee Bowman (MDiv'97), Marion Childress-Usher (MDiv'80), James Currie (MDiv'79, ThM'89), Fane Downs (MDiv'88), Clarence Frierson, Judy Fletcher (MDiv'69), Stan Hall, John R. “Pete” Hendrick (MDiv'52), J Carter King (MDiv'70), Jorge Lara-Braud (MDiv'59), Laura Mendenhall (DMin'97), Nancy Nelson, Ken Peters (MDiv'83), Catherine Sautter, Gene Alice Sherman, Jane Shetler, Jerry Tompkins (MDiv'55), and John Williams (MDiv'87). The committee will be staffed by John R. Evans (MDiv'68), Austin Seminary's vice president for development and church relations.

Among the special celebrations being considered by the Centennial Committee are the publication of an updated history of the Seminary, presentation of a historical drama, and special seminars and commemorative events throughout the centennial year.

Accreditation reaffirmed

Following eighteen months of critical evaluation, the Seminary’s accreditation has been renewed by the Association of Theological Schools and the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Accreditation represents a seal of approval for the Seminary’s academic excellence and institutional well-being and allows the Seminary to award degrees at the masters and doctoral levels.

Forty prospective students and their spouses attended Discovery Weekend, February 25-27. They attended Chapel services and classes, met with the faculty and administration, toured Seminary housing and the Texas Capitol, and enjoyed a community barbecue.

Daryl Johnson (MDiv'86) is the new operations manager for the Seminary. Daryl is a current Doctor of Ministry student and has two children, Nicholas and Molly.

New for spring ...

Of the eight students participating in the ritual Signing of the Declaration of Intent during opening worship for the Spring 200 term, six have enrolled in the Master of Divinity program and two in the Master of Arts in Theological Education. At right: Kimberly Gaddy, Michael William Morris, Robin Pearcy, Barbara Koons, and Joy Richards.
Stephen Breck Reid was inaugurated to the position of Professor of Old Testament Studies on Tuesday December 1, 1999. He delivered the inaugural address, “Daniel’s Critique of Tillich’s View of Course,” in the Seminary Chapel.

Reid joined the faculty of Austin Seminary in 1990 after serving almost ten years on the faculty of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California.

Professor Reid received the B.S. in religion from Manchester College and the M.Div. from Bethany Theological Seminary. He earned the Ph.D. from Emory University in 1981; his dissertation examined “The Sociological Setting of the Historical Apocalypses of 1 Enoch and the Book of Daniel.”

Reid is the author of four books, including the 1999 publication, Uncovering Racism (with co-author Kathryn Goering Reid). Other books include Listening In: A Multicultural Reading of the Psalms; Experience and Tradition: A Primer in Black Biblical Hermeneutics; and Daniel and Enoch: A Form Critical and Sociological Study.

Dr. Reid has published widely and frequently serves as a media consultant. He has contributed more than thirty articles for The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary and consulted on the Dreamworks Production feature film “Prince of Egypt.” He recently made a guest appearance on the A&E network program “The Good Book of Love: Sex in the Bible.”

Reid is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren. He serves on the governing body of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and has served as an associate trustee for the American Schools of Oriental research and a trustee of Bethany Theological Seminary. He is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) Council.

He and his wife, Kathy, a Mennonite pastor, are the parents of Derek, Jacob, Mary Carlisle, and Jesse.

Shirley Guthrie is Jean Brown Scholar for 2000

After (a very biblical) forty years in “exile,” Dr. Shirley Guthrie has returned to his native Texas to serve as the Seminary’s visiting Jean Brown Scholar and lecturer in systematic theology for the spring 2000 semester.

After Guthrie’s first pastorate in Rusk, Texas, he joined the faculty of Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, the institution he served for the next four decades. In that time, Guthrie established his authority in systematic theology with his seminal work on Christian Doctrine, a volume that holds a special place in the bookshelves and hearts of countless Presbyterians; this year’s junior class will learn about Calvin and Barth from one whose name is—by no less than Walter Blueggemann—mentioned in the same breath as theirs.

At a recent community forum, Guthrie expressed his gratitude that “the prodigal is still welcome.” Indeed.

IN BRIEF

This year’s Southwest Commission on Religious Studies in Dallas, March 4-5 will have a distinctly Austin Seminary flavor. Leading the way for our faculty is Bill Greenway, assistant professor of Christian studies, who is the program chair for the Philosophy of Religion and Theology division. Also presiding over various events are Terry Muck, professor of religion, and Steve Reid, professor of Old Testament. Other participants include: Michael Jinkins, associate professor of pastoral theology, Kathryn Roberts, assistant profes-
Professor of Christian Ethics Ismael García lectured to a group of foundation representatives on the future of Hispanic/Latino theological research in the United States at the University of San Diego on February 25.

Sherron George, assistant professor of evangelism and missions, led a seminar on mission and spirituality at the Oasis 2000 Conference on Reformed Spirituality at First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta. She will preach and lead a missional Bible study at the Synod of the Sun Assembly in Ft. Worth, Texas.

Laura Lewis, professor of Christian education, continues her work with the new PC(USA) catechisms, making presentations to two communities in South Louisiana and one in New Mexico. She also conducted two workshops at the annual Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) convention in Houston. In addition she has written several articles on the catechisms for Vanguard.

Professor of Old Testament Stephen Reid addressed an Assembly of Anabaptist Evangelists on the topic of the Old Testament and Evangelism at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana.

On March 12, Ralph Underwood, professor of pastoral care, will give two lectures on “God’s Life-Giving Ways: Paradoxes of Pastoral Ministry” to an ecumenical group of chaplains and pastors in St. Louis, Missouri.

Nelson Chair in Christian Education
What does the “C” in C. Ellis Nelson stand for?


In this case, it stands for “chair.” The C. Ellis and Nancy Gribble Nelson Chair of Christian Education was established by the Austin Seminary Board of Trustees to honor Ellis Nelson’s lifetime of outstanding service to the church in general and to Austin Seminary in particular. The chair also represents a family legacy—that of Dr. Robert Gribble, 1914 graduate of the Seminary, Old Testament and exegesis professor, interim Seminary president, and father of Nancy. Together, Ellis and Nancy Nelson have inspired and touched the lives and ministries of countless people. Through this endowed faculty position, Austin Seminary seeks to attract, nurture, and support other such committed people of faith and “teachers of teachers.”

The “C” might also stand for “challenge.” In response to this action of the trustees and to anonymous gifts of $30,000, the Austin Seminary Association Board moved to challenge its members to meet this initial grant dollar-for-dollar with gifts and pledges sought within the calendar year 2000. All alumni/ae are encouraged to make a one-time contribution “over and above” any regular gift to the Annual Fund of Austin Seminary, in order to make this special tribute to the Nelsons—and to the teaching ministry of the church—a reality.

Care to contribute to Christian education? A special appeal will be mailed to all alums later this month. Call the Office of Development at 512-472-6736.

Luncheon at GA
will be Wednesday, June 28, 2000, from 11:30-1:30 aboard
The Queen Mary
Ticket prices are $20
Featuring an address by President Robert Shelton
“Shaped by the Past, Poised for the Future”
Three alums honored by peers

The Austin Seminary Association, at its Annual Meeting and Banquet on Wednesday, February 2, 2000, recognized three of its members for their extraordinary contributions to the church. Receiving the 2000 ASA Awards for Service were Fane Downs, John R. Evans, and John Edward Withers III.

Fane Downs (MDiv’88) is the pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Midland, Texas. She has served as associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Dallas; was moderator of Grace Presbytery; chaired the Women’s Ministry Work Group for the Synod of the Sun; and has twice been a commissioner to the General Assembly. Currently, she is serving on the executive board of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians and on the editorial board of Reformed Liturgy and Music. She is the author of the 1999-2000 Bible study for Presbyterian Women, Old Songs for a New Millennium: A Study of Psalms.

John R. Evans (MDiv’68), Austin Seminary’s vice president for development and church relations, was honored for his life-long commitment to the institutions of the Presbyterian Church. After graduating from Austin Seminary, Evans served as associate pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Austin; director of church relations for Austin College; associate director of the Texas Presbyterian Foundation; and was the Synod of the Sun’s stewardship education facilitator for mission funding. In 1984 he became the Seminary’s director of vocation and admissions, moving into the development office in 1991. Evans was named Distinguished Alumnus of Austin College in 1994. He has served with distinction on the national level, most recently on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Board of Trustees, presiding over that body’s bicentennial year as chairman in 1999.

John Ed Withers (MDiv’65) was pastor for sixteen years of the Church of the Savior in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, a union church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the United Church of Christ. Prior to the churches’ union, he was pastor of Northwest Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City. Since 1993, he has answered calls from churches in transition as an interim pastor in Nebraska, Kentucky, and Texas.

Withers has served on the boards of Austin College, Moor-Ranch, the Kansas-Oklahoma Foundation of the United Church of Christ, and as moderator of Indian Nations Presbytery.

ALUMNI/AE NEWS

Judy Fletcher (MDiv’69, outgoing president of the Austin Seminary Association Board, presided over the annual business meeting where Carl McCormack (MDiv’95) was elected president and Warner Bailey (MDiv’64), vice president for the year 2000.

Fletcher is executive of the Synod of the Sun; McCormack is pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Harrison, Arkansas; and Bailey is pastor of Ridglea Presbyterian Church, Ft. Worth, Texas.

New members elected to the ASA Board for a three-year term are Mary Currie (MDiv’79), working as a Union Seminary Fellow developing material for commissioned lay pastors; Grant Groves (MDiv’60), pastor, First Presbyterian Church, De Queen, Arkansas; Tom Reighney (MDiv’86), pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Jennings, Louisiana; and Ron Siflen (MDiv’73), pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas.

BIRTHS
To Suzanne and R. Scott Simpson (MDiv’94), a son, Zachary Scott, November 14, 1999.

To Erin L. McGee (MDiv’97), a daughter, Hannah Mohona Louise, adopted November 13, 1999.

To Monica and Karl E. Schwarz (MDiv’99), a daughter, Sarah Elizabeth, December 22, 1999.

CLASS NOTES
1950s
Sam M. Junkin (MDiv’57, ThM’64) has been named interim president of Schreiner College. Junkin served as Schreiner’s third president from 1971 until 1996, when he retired. He presided over Schreiner’s evolution from a junior college and military preparatory
school to a nationally ranked four-year coed liberal arts college. Schreiner has been affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) since the college was established in 1923.

1980s

Helen Locklear (MDiv’89), associate for Social Welfare Organizations and executive director of the Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association, has been named the Associate Director for Racial Ethnic Ministries for the PC(USA).

Gilley G. Richardson (MDiv’86), has been promoted to lieutenant colonel and is a senior Army chaplain at Arlington National Cemetery.

**The Class of 1990 remembers...**

The first week on campus, being greeted by name by President Jack Stotts. “To me it symbolized—no, more than symbolized—it embodied the spirit I’d hoped to find here: a community where everyone knew one another and everyone cared for one another.”

The 1988 madrigal dinner, designed to relieve some of the pressure from the senior class taking ordination exams. Dr. Stotts arrived dressed as the pope. The occasion was marked by camaraderie, “a tremendous sense of the community that is the church—I learned that here.”

Alan Lewis’s prayers, even in the midst of his own illness and personal suffering. “The way the institution stood by him; the spirit that is this place.”

The Seminary’s curriculum and people—the way the two went together.

Fred Holper taught that if you weren’t doing communion by memory by the second year in ministry then you’re not working hard enough. Holper exhorted his classes to “Make sure they hear you pouring the water.”

“Hold that loaf up!” “Smell that bread!”

A senior preacher became ill and was unable to fill the pulpit. Dr. Shelton was helping to put together a fill-in service. One student asked, “What will you pull out of the sermon file?” Shelton responded, “That's not funny.” The thought had not occurred to him to recycle an old sermon.

Lewis Donelson tells a nervous intern at Central Presbyterian Church helping with communion she could do everything but the words of institution. Later in the service, when an elder fumbled a plate and bread went flying, Donelson leaned over and said, “See, that wasn’t your fault.”

During Prospectus Weekend, all the students wore pajamas to a Saturday morning class on Fred Holper’s 40th birthday; a tombstone shaped cake; a “revival” featuring “Brother Freddie.”

Shooting Cynthia Campbell with a squirt gun from the balcony, during the Paschal Vigil, exclaiming, “Remember your baptism!” “... As I recall, Fred was not pleased.”

Senior (preaching) moments: someone brought a portable microphone into the rest room (leading to a new theological term: “enflushment”); an illuminated photo of Jesus knocking on the door plugged in and set up in the pulpit; dancing in the balcony to represent the fire of the Holy Spirit.

One of only two Senior proms held at the Seminary took place at George Heyer’s house. A German ecumenical student was persuaded to be queen, after some explanation about American teenage customs.

 Packs of Seminary children. Three little girls and one boy were “playing communion.” The young officiant held the bread up to the little boy’s face and said “This is Christ’s body—eat it!”

**Send your own recollections of 300 words or less to:** Windows, 100 E. 27th Street, Austin, TX 78705-5797; e-mail: rwhittington@austinseminary.edu

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**Necrology**

**Glenn W. Murray** (MDiv’35), Lubbock, Texas, February 8, 2000.

**James P. Higginbotham** (MDiv’45), Farmers Branch, Texas, November 26, 1999.

**Leonard A. “Tony” Richardson** (Certi’47), Lake Charles, Louisiana, December 24, 1999.

**Thomas H. Parsons** (MDiv’53), Victoria, Texas, November 30, 1999.

**Martin R. Wilkinson** (MDiv’56), Houston, Texas, November 11, 1999.

**Lewis A. Petmecky** (MDiv’68), Ingram, Texas, January 3, 2000.

**R. Wayne Dockery** (MDiv’78), Denton, Texas, January 18, 2000.

**William T. “Tyke” Harris** (MDiv’84), Fulton, Missouri, January 30, 2000.
Members of the classes (clockwise from top left) of 1940, 1975, 1950, 1990, and 1960 enjoyed the opportunity Midwinter Lectures afforded them to refresh their theological education and to reminisce with classmates about their Austin Seminary days.