Recently, at a dinner party, a person across the table from me asked me a challenging question. “What’s your reply,” he said, “to the fact that the greatest majority of pastors of the country’s one hundred largest churches do not have a degree from a seminary?”

As happens at such parties, the conversation quickly shifted and I didn’t get a chance to offer an answer. But I have been thinking about that question ever since. What about the fact that the pastors of many of this country’s largest megachurches—personality-centered entrepreneurs who often exercise complete and ultimate control over their non-denominational congregations—are more likely to have a business or marketing or broadcasting degree than a theological one?

The first part of my answer, to be generous, would be to acknowledge that there is much we can learn from the Joel Osteens and the Clefro Dollars and all the rest. We can learn something, for sure, about organizational creativity and discipline. We can learn something about the role that charisma and inspiration play in worship and preaching, something about how “churches get bigger as they get smaller”—how dividing the congregation into small, high-identity cells of interpersonal intimacy creates building-blocks upon which large churches are often based. I give them that.

But the second part of my answer would be to suggest that, in greatest measure, the big-box church pastors are not much interested in seminaries or theological education primarily because we are preoccupied not so much with Growth and Big as with something that is profoundly countercultural—in a word, the Gospel. Our charter is not so much to promote ecclesial gigantism as it is to introduce new generations of pastors to that great and ongoing story which we call the apostolic tradition. Without such an introduction, a pastor, no matter how literate with high-tech signs and wonders, is finally left with platitudinous popcorn that may be a taste sensation but does not nourish at deeper levels. Somewhere, buried within the Old Testament or New Testament or Church History or Theology or Pastoral Care or Worship or Preaching or Ethics or Christian Education or Missiology or Comparative Religions classes we offer in seminary, there is an ancient story that nourishes the world. When students catch a glimpse of it, they say: “Wow! That’s my story, too! In learning about Abraham (or John the Baptist or Paul or Augustine or Marcion or John Calvin or Sojourner Truth or whomever), I am uncovering something about myself, about my context, that becomes a part of my proclamation and my ministry.”

We are in the business of forming substantive, passionate, humble, healthy, and well-informed pastors who can, in turn, lead yet another generation in the church’s ongoing story. And we believe that that’s not possible unless they step out of themselves long enough to be introduced to a host of conversation partners—the Communion of Saints—who will convey to them the Gospel, and with whom they will stay in ever-deepening conversation throughout their ministry.

And if that doesn’t put them in one of the country’s largest one hundred megachurches? Well, I’m grateful that it puts them in my congregation—and in yours!

Theodore J. Wardlaw
President
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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.
The flurry of scholarship that has dotted the landscape of ministry in recent years confirms what we at Austin Seminary have known for a century: vital churches thrive under strong and sensitive pastoral leadership. Perhaps more detrimentally, as negatively stated in Duke University Professor Jackson Carroll’s new study God’s Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations, “Few congregations will find it possible to exhibit vitality and excellence in the face of poor pastoral leadership.”

But where does good pastoral leadership come from and what does it look like?

According to Carroll, “much of the groundwork for excellence is either laid in theological schools or it is unlikely to happen. If the seminary is doing its job, it will ensure that its graduates know the Christian story, know how to communicate the story effectively in differing contexts, can lead the congregations in meaningful and spiritually challenging worship, are learning how to lead congregations in terms of the congregation’s needs and social context, and are growing spiritually, having developed disciplines that support that growth.”

A massive study on theological education by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, published in Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination (Jossy Bass, 2006), affirms a vital link between congregations and seminary and encourages the support of theological education for the good of the church. “[G]ood teaching abounds in seminary education, [but] good teaching can flourish only as long as it is sustained by a community that encourages and supports good teaching practice.” And the Auburn Seminary Center for the Study of Theological Effectiveness in a report published in 2007 argues that “theological schools and their sponsoring churches should cooperate more closely in evaluating and strengthening theological education.”

Connect the dots between seminary and church and you get not a line but a circle: a church that forms and empowers men and women to be receptive to God’s call, the seminary that educates and equips them to live authentically into their vocation, and new leaders who go back into the church ready to help form the next generation of believers.

Seminary and church are inextricably bound. But the outcome of that partnership can be extraordinary—passionate church leaders who are grounded in the language and tradition of the faith, inspired by the Spirit, and capable of offering to people in a troubled world the lens of Christian hope through which to focus their lives.

—RW
To number our days

“So teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” —Psalm 90:12

by Thomas H. Schmid

In the year following my sixtieth birthday, I spent a good bit of time thinking and talking about what the next chapter of life in the pastorate should look like. I invited the congregation into conversation with me. I preached a sermon. I wrote a newsletter column. I talked with the Personnel Committee. I spoke with the Session about it.

One Sunday evening I encountered my friend Louise Phillips in the church parking lot.

“What kind of response are you getting to your invitations to people to talk with you about the next chapter?” Louise asked.

“Not much,” I said. “You are the first person to mention it.”

“They’re not going to talk to you about it,” Louise said flatly.

“Why wouldn’t they?” I asked.

“Because when this chapter is over, you’re gone. When you finish it, you’ll be retired. And it’s either because they love you and don’t want to think about you leaving, or maybe they don’t love you at all that much but they remember the last time we went through an interim period and they don’t want to do it again. In any event they are not going to talk to you about it.”

Louise, an attorney, seemed to have cut to the heart of the matter. If there was going to be a deliberate plan for what the next chapter would look like, it was up to me to create it.

What a grand opportunity this proved to be! I began to think back to the way I understood it when the Still Small Voice first said, “I want you to be a minister.”

I flashed back to the time when I was fourteen years old. [Austin Seminary President] David Stitt came to preach in my home church, the Second Presbyterian Church of Houston. At Sunday dinner in our home, he asked, “Tom, what are you going to do when you grow up? You should consider the ministry.” What a compliment that was, coming from such a distinguished presence, and the compliment was compounded by having a follow up letter from Dr. Stitt and finding myself added to the Austin Seminary mailing list. In the spring of my senior year of high school, when I was still seventeen, I was received as a candidate for the ministry by Brazos Presbytery. Incidentally, there were eight boys of or near my age—all of whom must have caught a similar vision in the same nurturing context. Two of us are still serving congregations, a third retired earlier this year.

So, as my plan for the final chapter developed, I wondered what that fourteen-year-old could conceive of that might be realistic about the ministry. Or a seventeen-year-old. Or a twenty-one, or a twenty-five, or even a twenty-seven...
year old, which I was when I was ordained. What I do understand that a very young person can be captivated by a vision, and that the vision—tempered with realities—can mature as we mature.

There was preaching, of course, and as part of preaching the continued serious study of the Bible and theology. There was pastoral care, not only of the bereaved, the sick, and the elderly, but also for people who are in the midst of the every-day-ness of life. There was work with a talented and diverse staff, which I had no way of understanding in my youth the way I experience it now.

The Still Small Voice had neglected to mention service on presbytery committees. Actually, She hadn’t said anything about church committees, or moderating a session, or, for that matter, night meetings. I don’t remember Her saying anything about personnel issues, building or custodial supervision, and garbage pickup. And She didn’t mention a fire in the church building! Oyvey! There were a number of realities that were overlooked in the original call to ministry.

Yes, the reality of the call to ministry is that we pastors do moderate sessions, and we do a certain amount of resourcing committees. If we serve as pastors of congregations, there are certain administrative tasks to which we must tend. But some things can be delegated, and others can be done in new or different ways.

I recalled the strongly Barthian faculty at Austin Seminary in the late 1960s. [Professor] Jim Wharton had recently returned from Basel where he had completed his doctorate with Karl Barth. Our introductory readings in theology were in Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*, and for the first years out of seminary I regularly checked the biblical index of each volume of the Dogmatics to see how Barth treated the texts on which I was trying to preach. We were given assignments in Tillich as a counterpoint to Barth, but we all understood that Barth’s method was correct. My volumes of the *Dogmatics* are long gone, along with Emil Brunner. I still have the Tillich and Hans Kung that I began reading seriously in the 1970s, a few years out of seminary. As I pare down my professional library for a smaller study at home, I see that I will be keeping works by Walter Brueggemann, Douglas John Hall, and Sallie McFague, all of whom I have been reading in the past decade or two. It seems to me that the Austin Seminary faculty I knew would have hoped that their students would be moved by newer works of theology, and that our preaching would be kept fresher because of our exposure to new expressions of the faith.

What of the dynamics of a church staff? How could any of us have guessed the intricacies when we were young, or the importance of the right chemistry, of mutual trust and support? At this end of a career I can say that some staffs work together better than others, and I served with one that didn’t work out at all. I’m glad that my last professional chapter is with a group of people who are smart, capable, and who work well together.

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**Findings from the Auburn Studies report, “Effectiveness of Theological Schools as Measured by the Vocations and Views of Graduates,” published in December 2007, include these:**

- Interest in congregational ministry increases during seminary; more graduates enter congregational ministry than say they plan to before graduation.
- Attrition in the first years of ministry is low: about 1% per year.
- Many graduates of MA programs serve in ministry, including more than 1/3 in congregational ministry.
- Women are less likely to enter ministry and to stay, and they encounter more obstacles in religious professions. Women who hold MDiv or equivalent degrees enter and remain in ministry at almost the same rates as men, but are less likely to enter congregational ministry and are more likely to leave it during the first five years.
- To sustain a profession you need plenty of people at all levels of experience who stick with its primary form for the length of a career and many others who lead the institutions that support the profession, including denominational executives, specialized ministers, and theological educators.
- Theological education gets high grades from those who have completed it: traditional academic subjects are more highly rated than more practical ones.
- Theological schools and their sponsoring churches should cooperate more closely in evaluating and strengthening theological education.
Church history for the church

Professor points to evidence of God in the human story

by Ellen L. Babinsky

The study of the history of Christianity is not obviously relevant to the ongoing dailyness of a particular church. It is not always immediately apparent how the twists and turns of historical narratives contribute to the lives of the faithful members of churches. Nonetheless, I am convinced that it is of the highest importance to teach seminary students how God is at work in the unfolding of the story of believers’ struggle to be faithful. It is easy to miss seeing where God is at work in our daily lives and in the struggles of believers in the historical stories. It is also easy to decide that God is not at work in one story or another from history. More than once a student will ask in the fall semester introductory course, “But where is God in all this?” Our assumptions can get in the way, if not to blind us, then at least to cloud our vision. In answering the question of the relevance of church history for the church, I want to highlight several claims that I make as I teach the history of Christianity.

The first claim is related to that portion of the Apostles’ Creed that we utter with ease and possibly with inattention: “I believe in the communion of saints.” To believe in the communion of saints is to claim their story as my own. Believers and their communities struggled to be faithful in ways that give me courage, that affirm me in my own struggle to be faithful to God who is ever faithful. Studying the narratives of earlier faith communities offers us an opportunity to ponder ourselves in a different manner. We gain perspective on our own struggles.

At the same time, it is not always obvious that God is at work in historical developments. For instance, Marcion was a second century believer, the son of a bishop. He attempted to make sense of the Christian teaching that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. In Marcion’s view, the teachings of the Hebrew scriptures absolutely contradicted the teachings of the Gospel. In order to resolve the contradiction, Marcion declared that there were two gods. The God of the Old Testament was a God of wrath and vengeance, and therefore was not the Father of Jesus Christ. Instead, Marcion claimed, the God of the New Testament was the God of mercy and grace and peace, and only this God was the Father of Jesus Christ. With this claim in mind, Marcion made a list of what for him ought to be the authoritative scriptures for Christians; in effect, he created the first canon of scripture. Church leaders saw that this development needed correction and worked to develop an authoritative canon which included writings from both the Old

“Learning in the formative sense is a process by which the student becomes a certain kind of thinking, feeling, and acting being.”

Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination

Ellen Babinsky is professor of church history and associate dean for student academic affairs at Austin Seminary. She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and a member of New Covenant Presbytery.

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Handled with care

Mission Presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry walks alongside seminary students

BY JUDY FERGUSON

Having Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary within the bounds of Mission Presbytery is both a challenge and a blessing. Our Committee on Preparation for Ministry (COPM) is challenged by the sheer numbers of seminarians who come under care of our presbytery (currently forty-eight). Most of these inquirers and candidates attend Austin Seminary.

The blessings are endless, however. Each time we meet (five times per year for two days), we leave the Seminary knowing that our work is benefiting the church and the women and men whom God has called to be the future Ministers of Word and Sacrament for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The partnership between Austin Seminary and the presbyteries that make up the Synod of the Sun is invaluable. We rely on each other to nurture and care for the students under our care. There are strong ties between the Seminary and the churches from which the students come. Professors and pastors work together through the Supervised Practice of Ministry program of the Seminary to train our students in congregations and other ministry settings.

Most often, the COPM of Mission Presbytery meets at the Seminary, sharing meals with the students, faculty, and staff, and enjoying the hospitality of the McCord Center. Being geographically close to the Seminary allows us to be with our students in between meetings, attending their senior sermons and their graduation services.

Following a student for three plus years means that we share in all the milestones of that student’s seminary journey. We learn about the struggles that some have with Greek and Hebrew. In the Jan. term [learning Hebrew] we see them walking around with those flashcards looking sleep-deprived or huddled in small groups encouraging each other! We hear about the incredible stretching of one’s inner resources that comes from doing a unit of clinical pastoral education. We rejoice with those who have passed their ordination exams, and we weep with those who must try again. We counsel about opportunities for field education in a congregational setting. As a student nears graduation and is ready for final assessment, we are blessed with hearing a sermon and working with the student to produce the first PIF (personal information form).

It’s hard to really describe the growth changes that occur in an individual over the span of time that one experiences at seminary. The intentional, intensive spiri-
tual formation as well as the comprehensive theological training that occur mold and shape these men and women into those that God is preparing as the next leaders of our church. In some ways it is like seeing your grandchildren only a couple of times of year. You are amazed at how much they have “grown” and have learned!

In a recent meeting the committee spent some time reflecting on our work, asked ourselves these questions, and responded with some of these ideas:

**What does it look like when we have done our job well?**
- Tough love/pastoral care is shown.
- Issues are dealt with.
- We get good feedback from the presbytery.
- Intervention is done early in the process.
- Our candidates are faring well in their first years of ministry.
- The church is blessed.
- We feel like celebrating.
- Easter/Pentecost

**What gifts/qualities do we expect inquirers and candidates to have or to develop as ministers in today’s world? They should:**
- be awestruck that they have been called
- have a recognizable relationship to Jesus Christ
- winsomely able to articulate their beliefs
- humbly acknowledge they can’t be a minister except by God’s grace
- have love and respect for the church
- be willing to be molded/open to change
- be energetic, intelligent, imaginative, biblically literate, student of Scripture
- be transparent
- have a sense of humor

**How do we make all this happen? We:**
- state the mission of the COPM at the first meeting with each person
- go to where the students are when possible
- convey a sense of responsibility
- spend time together
- re-connect with sessions to empower and encourage discernment
- pray
- build relationships with inquirers/candidates

Students hear and compare stories about Committees on Preparation across the country. At our last meeting this spring we had a number of candidates in for final assessment prior to exiting the process. I wrote down some of their comments and requested permission to quote them. Here is some of what I heard:
- “You really want to help! You’re really not just gatekeepers!”
- “I have felt so blessed by this process. I am so thankful to God for you all.”
- “You have been thoughtful, caring, reflective, and helpful all through this process.”

And as one of my colleagues on the committee replied, “The whole process has been so humbling for all of us.” To which, we chimed in, “Amen!”

I have been personally blessed by my service to the COPM as it informs my work with college students, helping them to discern if God is calling them into a church vocation. Knowing the care and guidance they will receive as they start the inquiry process helps me to encourage and guide them in their next steps towards seminary. Participating in the partnership between our presbyteries, seminaries, and our church-related university makes me mighty proud to be a Presbyterian!

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**What makes an excellent pastor?**

*The Fund for Theological Education is an ecumenical advocate whose mission is to advance excellence and encourage caring, capable, and courageous young adults to become pastors and scholars—the next generation of leaders for the church. A research study among ordained ministers and lay leaders over a three year period led to the publication of Faithful to the Call: Reflections on Excellence in Ministry, published in 2007. According to their research, the ten attributes of excellent ministers include people who …**

1. believe what they are proclaiming;
2. love their communities;
3. display agility, flexibility, and grace under pressure;
4. know how to ask the right questions;
5. are courageous;
6. lead with strength and humility;
7. know their limits;
8. have thriving imaginations;
9. embrace lifelong learning;
10. mentor others.

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**Sources cited in these articles include:**
Jackson W. Carroll, *God’s Potters* (Eerdmans 2006)
*Faithful to the Call* (The Fund for Theological Education, 2007)
In June of 1985, while I was a pastor in Sherman, Texas, a few miles south of the Red River and the Oklahoma line, I served as a commissioner from Grace Presbytery to the annual meeting of the Synod of the Sun, held on the verdant campus of Trinity University in San Antonio. I remember very little of what was on the agenda for that multi-day meeting, but I will never forget one particular service. It was a festive and liturgically-rich Eucharist one evening in Trinity’s elegant chapel, and the place was packed with worshippers. There was an 80-voice choir that night, and the University of Texas Chamber Chorale, and the San Antonio Symphony Mastersingers.

There was a procession of representatives of various institutions of the Synod, there was a great deal of pomp and circumstance—everything except donkey rides around the building—and I remember like it was yesterday sitting next to Judy Fletcher in the balcony (our own Judy Fletcher, who is now the Synod Executive of that very same Synod), and feeling that night as if I had curled my toes over the edge of where earth ends and heaven begins. I now know that my dear friend and colleague Michael Jinkins was sitting somewhere in the nave—himself another commissioner from Grace Presbytery—and surely others of you were there, too. It was a great occasion.

The enduring highlight of that night, for me, was the preacher. It was Jack Stotts, and the occasion for all of this pageantry was the introduction of this brand-new president of Austin Seminary to the Synod, his immediate constituency. Fresh from the presidency of McCormick Seminary in Chicago, Jack’s appointment to this seminary had electrified this part of the world. Austin Seminary, after all, had gone through some hard times, and there were new and great hopes and expectations affixed to this tall, slender, kindly, wise, and gentle man. No wonder the chapel there at Trinity was filled

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Remembering and re-membering

A tribute in memory of Jack L. Stotts

by Theodore J. Wardlaw

This address was given by President Wardlaw to those assembled in Stotts Hall for the Austin Seminary Association Banquet and Annual Meeting at the conclusion of the 2008 MidWinters on February 6. Jack Stotts died on January 24.
with hundreds of people eager to hear what early tones he might be setting in his sermon.

I can remember vividly what he said that night twenty-three years ago. His sermon title was “Remembering the Future,” and he began with an illustration from a memoir by Russell Baker titled Growing Up, in which Baker is recalling how his elderly mother took a bad fall, after which, as Baker put it, “her mind wandered freely through time.” Stotts developed that as the governing image of his sermon, and dwelt on the importance of remembering. He described the church as “a self-conscious community of memory … a community with a history of relationships,” and he said these words: “our identity is related to our past,” and then he encouraged us in the act of remembering.

But then he made this move. He said that memory is not just a matter of remembering, but also of re-membering—becoming members again and again—in fact and in hope, to an ongoing community of memory, the church. Re-membering involved re-enacting, over and over again, the community of disciples of Jesus Christ who are forever being re-membered one to another. “Not by denying difference,” he said, “but in the creative tensions of constructive engagement, informing and correcting each other … We are grateful for our nation,” he said, but the task of re-membering calls us to be “advocates for a universal community where national power is employed for justice and peace, not used only to improve our own self-interests.”

As one of the architects of our reunited church, that on that night was only about two years old, Stotts went on to say, “We shall learn together what it means for each and for both [predecessor churches] to be members of a new denomination that God has given us and that God is calling us to create. We shall be members of one another in seeking our faithfulness toward the future.”

And toward the end of that sermon, anticipating that evening’s Eucharist, he moved to the words “in remembrance of me.” “To remember Jesus Christ,” he said that night, “is to remember that Christ remembers us. For Christ is with us no matter what our need, what our past, what our present. And because Christ makes us members of his body, we can live with good hopes.”

I had never met Jack Stotts. In fact, strictly speaking, I did not meet him that night. I did not actually meet him, in fact, until my family and I moved here in the early fall of 2002. But, starting on that night, I became a huge fan of his. And I never forgot that sermon.

In the summer of 2002, a day or two after the official announcement that I would be coming here as president, I was sitting in my office at Central Presbyterian Church in Atlanta and my assistant buzzed me to say that a man named Jack Stotts was on the line and wanted to speak to me. “Jack Stotts!” I said, and I began brushing my hair and straightening my tie. Jack Stotts on the phone to speak to me!

“Dr. Stotts,” I said, “what a great pleasure it is to speak to you. I remember so fondly that magnificent sermon you preached in San Antonio when you first came to Austin Seminary, the one that began with the illustration from Russell Baker about how his mother fell and then her mind wandered through time, and I can recall every move you made in that sermon. All of that work on ecclesial memory as a matter of both remembering and re-membering, and then how you moved to the eucharistic theme of ‘In Remembrance of Me.’ It was one of the greatest sermons I’ve ever heard.”

There was a moment of silence on the phone, and then he said: “I don’t remember that sermon.”

I now believe that he was joking with me. He did that a lot. He often had that mischievous twinkle in his eye that betrayed something of the inner child—the child that wanted to play—that dwelt just beneath the surface of the esteemed ethicist, the larger-than-life theologian and churchman, the wise head of that blue-ribbon committee that produced our most recent confessional statement. One of the great gifts of these first five-and-a-half years of my presidency here has been that I got to work under the same roof as that gentle giant. I got to walk down just one flight of stairs to be able to knock on his door and be ushered in and sit in one of his chairs and ask for and receive his wise counsel about anything. He could be serious and responsible like that.

And he could also be playful. He stopped once in my
office to examine my diplomas, and when he looked at my Yale diploma he said, “Oh Man!” He was envious because it was signed by Bartlett Giamatti. He was envious not because Giamatti had been the president of Yale and he somehow admired that presidency, but because he went on to become the Commissioner of Baseball. It was envy as if I had a coveted baseball card that he didn’t have. His playfulness, I think, was a clue that pointed to his deep humility.

It would be a shame on this occasion for us not to lift up Jack’s memory, and, thinking back to that sermon, I’ve titled these remarks “Remembering and Re-Membering,” and I’m thinking of the two ways of remembering that Jack offered up to us that night. One way of remembering looks back and endeavors to take from the altars of the past the flame and not the ashes. The other way of remembering looks ahead to the future and endeavors to imagine faithfully the places toward which our memory may be launching us. Both kinds of remembering are crucial.

Remembering. We remember that Jack was raised in Dallas, and was formed by the congregation of a venerable old downtown United Presbyterian Church there, the City Temple. He went to Trinity University, where he met his wife Virginia. They moved together to Chicago where he went to McCormick Seminary, and where Virginia earned her P.H.T.S. (which, as she explained to me, stands for “Putting Hubby Through School”). Then on to Yale University, where he earned his PhD. In the dissertation-writing phase, they moved to Tulsa where Jack was called by the presbytery there to be the campus minister at the University of Tulsa—one of our Presbyterian colleges. One of his lifelong friends from Tulsa wrote me a few days after Jack’s death, and recalled that a wealthy donor had contributed the money to build a new chapel on the campus there. When, at the opening ceremonies of that chapel, Jack invited an African-American theologian to preach, the donor was incensed and complained to the presbytery that Jack be dismissed and replaced with a more pliable chaplain. The man relating to me this story wrote: “the terrified presbytery complied with only three opposition votes.”

So Jack and Virginia moved from Tulsa to San Angelo, where he served a church there for a couple of years while completing his dissertation. Virginia remembers that in that church there was a wonderful Navajo woman. One morning they had a women’s meeting at the church and then they went to the Luby’s Cafeteria afterwards. The manager, himself a graduate of Trinity University, welcomed all of the white women but said to the Navajo woman, “I’m sorry, we can’t serve you.” All of the women put their trays away and they walked out. Later Jack paid a call on the manager and said, “I’m disappointed in you for what happened today. I’d hate to have to go to the newspaper and share this.” After that, Virginia tells me, no one was ever denied admission there again.

Those were days in which certain prejudices, abhorrent as they were, could still be expressed so blatantly; and standing up to them required a price. It was a price that Jack was willing to pay, and paying that price must have shaped Jack into the sort of ethicist that he was. I’m instructed, aren’t you, by Dorothy Bass’ observation yesterday in her first Westervelt Lecture: “Draw any line that excludes many others, and Jesus Christ is on the other side of that line.” In more recent years, by the way, Jack spoke plainly and theologically about the church’s current struggle with the ordination issue—again, forsaking safety in order to speak the truth as he saw it.

In due time, having moved from San Angelo back to McCormick, Jack taught for years and then, as president, led that institution through a major relocation that positioned the seminary in the intellectual heart of Chicago—in Hyde Park, near the University of Chicago campus and near a critical mass of other seminaries and divinity schools. It’s hard to imagine what McCormick would be today if it were at any other location.

When they came to Austin, Jack and Virginia spent eleven years encouraging and loving this hurting seminary into a kind of renaissance. He shaped the faculty in ways that are still visible, and he gave this school a new confidence. Some of you have said it this plainly: Jack saved this school.

So, on this day here in Stotts Hall, it is good that we remember this witness with gratitude.

And it is also good that we consider again Jack’s challenge not just to remember in the sense of rehearsing old memories; but also to re-member—become members again and again—in fact and in hope, to the ongoing community of memory, the church. There’s a fluidity to this kind of memory. Whatever else it means, it surely means that we be willing to understand tradition, for example, not simply as the fossilizing of some old idea.
just because it’s old, but rather as a sustained and ongoing conversation with the past in light of the ways in which the future may be summoning us. Re-membering means, as Jack put it, that “we shall be members of one another in seeking our faithfulness toward the future.” There’s something about re-membering that startles and tickles and delights the imagination of what we might yet be.

Here on this first day of Lent, on this day after Super Tuesday, in this season of time in which we as a nation seem virtually bloated beyond recognition by our own arrogance; the prospect of re-membering permits us to lift up our eyes toward the horizon and to risk imagining what we might yet be as people of faith.

Where do we start, in these days, to do such re-membering?

In Jack’s charge to the graduating class of 1986, he made a suggestion to them that I would like to borrow as a suggestion for us. You may think it’s an outrageous suggestion, but Jack, remember, was an ethicist. And a Christian. So hear him out. He charged those pastors-to-be going out into the church to remember to weep. Weep for their people. Weep for and with the world. And he said that the test of that kind of empathy would be “weeping for and with those the world calls enemies.”

“As citizens of the most powerful nation on earth,” he said to them, “we in this country are sorely tempted to believe that the fundamental relationship between people is and should be defined by power. That is power’s corruptive force,” he said. And the antidote to it, he suggested, was “a love for all people that allows us to weep for all.”

He acknowledged the difficulty of that sort of re-membering. He recalled a then-recent incident in which the United States had bombed two Libyan gunboats in the Gulf of Sidra. There had been numerous casualties, and a good bit of gloating and acclaim in our country. “No church,” he said, “issued a resolution of grief. Even in Libya there was no reference to casualties over the government-controlled airwaves. There was no one, it seemed, to weep for the dead.”

Then Jack noted that there was one story that got printed on an inside page of The New York Times. It was about a statement that was issued by a group of American soldiers involved in the hostilities. It said: “We recognize that these Libyans are human beings and we deeply regret that they have died. We weep for them and their families.” The Libyan dead seemed to be mourned only by the men who had sent them to their graves.

“Who will weep for the Libyans?” said Jack. “Our failure to weep for those called enemies,” he went on, “is a sign of our loss of the humanity given in Jesus Christ. It is evidence of the power of power. Conversely, our weeping for and with those the world calls enemies is a mark of God’s all embracing love and grace.”

“So, good-bye,” Jack said to those graduating seniors (and I would like to think now, maybe also to us). “And don’t forget to weep with and for your people. And with and for the world, including enemies.

“And finally, the blessing,” he concluded. “God go with you. To give you tears. And then to wipe away your tears. Until that day when there shall be no more death, nor mourning, nor pain.”

### Notes
2. Thanks to Mr. Joseph Dempsey of Tulsa who related to me this story, a similar version of which appeared in a recent issue of The Tulsa World.
3. Thanks to Virginia Stotts, who shared this anecdote with me.
4. From a lecture on February 5, 2008, by Dorothy Bass, the Westervelt lecturer of the 2008 Mid-Winter Lectures at Austin Seminary.

*In Jack’s charge to the graduating class of 1986, he made an outrageous suggestion: He charged those pastors-to-be going out into the church to remember to weep. Weep for their people. Weep for and with the world. And he said that the test of that kind of empathy would be “weeping for and with those the world calls enemies.”*
The two places where Stan Hall was most truly and fully himself were in the classroom and at the Lord’s Table. Both classroom and Table are places of nourishment and Spirit. Both are sites of liturgy where we connect with God and one another. Both represent moments when past and present are fused through the discipline of remembrance. Both represent a kind of work that is as fragile and fleeting as a child’s sandcastle.

Stan was crafted by God to teach and to serve the Eucharist. And, in these recent days, as I have reflected on his life and death, I have sensed the providence that formed him for these peculiar vocations: the strength of his grandmother, the courage of his father, the sustaining love of his spouse. I have felt more surely than ever the wisdom of those awkward phrases in the general prayer of thanksgiving in the funeral service of the 1946 Book of Common Worship (of which Stan approved): “We bless Thee for the good and gracious influences in his home and training, for all that ministered to his best life. We thank Thee for the goodness and truth that have passed from his life into the lives of others, and have made the world richer for his presence.” We are richer for his presence, as his absence reminds us today.

So many of us indulge in the illusions of permanence. We build buildings. We write books. We try in all sorts of ways to write our names in the wet concrete of this world, afraid to entrust our legacies to flesh and blood and spirit and words and the fragile discipline of memory. Stan lived more wisely than most of us in this regard. He knew what his legacy would be, and where it ultimately would lie, in the lives of his students and those to whom he handed bread and cup.

An inspiring teacher, Stan poured himself out in the classroom, with the profilgacy of a priest with a bottomless flagon, bringing Justin Martyr into a roomful of puzzled fledgling students, many of whom were skeptical of the relevance of a dusty second-century Samarian or a twentieth-century New England Yankee apparently in need of exorcism. Anyone who had the privilege of watching Stan teach will never forget that experience of witnessing a person caught up in the talons of God, utterly self-transcendent and self-forgetful, doing that for which God created him, reminding us with every labored breath that the only meaningful question about worship is whether or not it is pleasing to God. I have never known anyone who knew so much about the worship of God and the history and theology of the church, and who shared it with as much humility. Nor have I ever known a more perfect curmudgeon and visceral rebel against anything that smacked of sentiment, or untruth, injustice, or idolatry.

We, his students, colleagues, and friends, are Stan’s legacy. Letters written with ink that runs, sand sculptures at low tide, flesh, blood, spirit, words—and memory. We engage in the adventure of teaching and learning. We feed one another in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and so we meet God, and so we remember.
his students remember …

Stan truly inspired me in teaching me worship—the history, the tradition, the art, the mystery. Never do I enter a sacred space without the keen lens developed through Stan's teaching. I am so aware of the majesty of God and the smallness of humanity in relation to our God.

—Anne Mellor Emery (MDiv'07)

It was the first day of the first class of my first year at APTS. As we sat in anticipation, in walked this large man with a drooping, black Yosemite Sam mustache, who placed a stack of notes on the lectern and a pile of books on the desk (I'm sure at least one was by Annie Dillard). He took a deep breath through his nose, lifted his eyes to the assembly, and intoned “The Lord be with you,” in a voice for which the word “sonorous” was invented. Even those of us who had not been raised in a liturgical tradition instinctively responded, “And also with you,” to our own befuddled surprise.

—Paul Collier (MDiv'99)

Stan's passion for liturgy and the heart of worship was evident in every lecture he ever led, every worship service he presided over, and every Senior Preaching section he ever helped lead. I know I am a better worship leader because of him. I delighted in his booming voice and energy, his determination throughout his physical infirmities and his love of praising God in worship.

—Debbie Cenko (MDiv'01)

Even though the Session and Worship Team members of the Presbyterian Church I serve are not aware of it, Stan Hall is sitting in on our meetings. We don't see him, but he is very present. I want to get it right because Stan cared so much about worship. He cared for the right reason. He cared because he wanted to please the One who matters most in worship.

—Rick Brooks (MDiv'05)

On Sundays, I have the slightest idea of what I am doing and what it all means because Stan helped to open my eyes to the beauty, the mystery, and even the messiness and humor that sometimes accompany the church's worship. I'll miss his deep voice, his stories about being the most Protestant person at Notre Dame, and his way of being both heartbreakingly profound and side-splittingly funny at the same time.

—Everett Miller (MDiv'06)

Never a Sunday goes by that I don't think “what would Stan think of this” before I do almost anything in a church service. Stan has had a huge impact on my ministry and my understanding of the importance of liturgical motion in our worship lives ... Now Sundays will be even more scary knowing he is actually watching!

—Christopher Johnson (MDiv'06)

These are things that Stan taught me ... the beauty of the text and of carefully shaped liturgy that in turns shapes our worship and our lives ... His suggestion (recommendation) that a group could see more deeply into the texts than I ever would alone ... His love for the whole of worship that sparked a corresponding love in me ... His wry wit that made the whole thing an adventure.

—Martha Langford (MDiv'07)

I don't know if I've ever known anyone who could so skillfully weave humor and sincerity. His commanding voice and flawless diction shall echo down the worship halls of our memories and speak anew every time we who studied under him plan a worship service, participate in designing a worship space, or share the sacraments.

—Jason Teague (MDiv'02)

Entering the sanctuary [of my church] for the very first time back in 2000 I thought of how Dr. Hall would approve of the way the font, the table, and the pulpit are aligned on the chancel. Then I took the cover off the font and saw a tiny, cereal bowl beneath—of which Stan would definitely not approve. In its place soon after was a large bowl and pitcher, perfect for the sign-act of splashing water.

—Jim Wallace (MDiv'00)

Just this past week as I was preparing for a prayer service with a reaffirmation of baptismal vows, I was looking for the font. I checked in all the usual places but no luck. Finally I found it. Someone had moved it “out of sight” where it wouldn't be in the way during the service. Stan always said you had better be ready to nail down the font, the pulpit, and the table or others will find a way to cart them off.

—Greg Davidson (MDiv'01)

Stan's love of God's worship, reverence for the mystery, and humor-filled insistence that we experience and learn as much as we could shapes my ministry every day and my worship leadership in so many ways. I can't help but wonder if Stan has already begun to rearrange the great heavenly sanctuary, challenging the voices-on-high who say, “But we've always done it that way.”

—Phyl Shelley Stutzman (MDiv'05)

In a workshop class on the sacraments, Stan gingerly offered us a baby doll to practice baptism on. One after

Continued on page 23
Student fellowship winners announced

Five senior students received the highest honors given by Austin Seminary at the Austin Seminary Association Annual Meeting and Banquet on Wednesday, February 6.

The Janie Maxwell Morris Fellowship, established in 1953 by a bequest from Mrs. Milton Morris, is given to a graduate of Austin Seminary to pursue further graduate study; the fellowship carries a grant of $2,000. The winner of the 2008 award is Caressa Murray. A member of First Presbyterian Church, Garland, Texas, she received a BS in biology from Centenary College of Louisiana. She served as director of youth ministries at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Carrollton, Texas, for three years; completed a teaching church internship at Hope Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas, and a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Children’s Medical Center, Dallas, Texas; served as director of the Seminary’s after-school program; as an Austin Seminary deacon; and was on staff of several youth conferences. Murray has been called to be associate pastor of children, youth and families at Webster Presbyterian Church in Webster, Texas.

The Alsup-Frierson Fellowship for Excellence in Biblical Studies and Hermeneutics was established in 2005 by the families of Carole and Professor John Alsup and Betty and former trustee Clarence Frierson. The fellowship, given “to enable the honoree to pursue further study in the biblical field toward the end of fostering the ongoing dialogue with scripture in preaching and teaching, within the context of an ecclesiastical calling,” carries a grant of $3,000. The winner of the 2008 award is Phillip Hogan. Hogan is an ordained minister in the Assemblies of God Church and has a BS in religion from Mount Olive College in North Carolina. Before coming to Austin Seminary, he worked in full-time ministry as a youth minister and hospice chaplain for five years. While in Austin, he has worked at St. David’s and North Austin Medical Center as a chaplain. Hogan has served in the United States Navy and is now pursuing a career in Navy chaplaincy. A Jean Brown Scholar, he has completed both the Navy Field Training Experience and Supervised Practice of Ministry internship at Southwest Family Fellowship, as well as a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Southwest Family Fellowship, as well as a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Seton Medical Center in Austin.

In 1946 an endowment was established by Mrs. W. P. Newell of Albany, Texas, as a memorial to her late husband, W. P. (Dick) Newell. The income from this fund is to be used annually by the Board of Trustees of Austin Seminary to provide a scholarship, a graduate study fellowship, or in some other manner, enrich the life of a person training for the Christian ministry. This year, the fellowship provides a grant of $3,000. The W. P. Newell Memorial Fellowship winner for 2008 is Greg Amen. A member of First Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, he received a BS in computer science from the University of Central Oklahoma, after which he worked as a software engineer for twelve years. He served as the director of Christian education and youth and the administrator of the preschool and after school programs of First Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City. Amen completed a teaching church internship at First Presbyterian Church in Austin, and one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Integris Baptist Hospital, Oklahoma City. He is seeking a call as a solo or associate pastor in Oklahoma or surrounding states, and is particularly interested in preaching, teaching, and spiritual development.

In 1984, an endowment was established in honor of Leo V. Pile and Helen Porter Pile and Edmond Holland Morgan and Estella Martin Morgan, the income from which is to be awarded to a mem-

Fellowship winners Caressa Murray, Phillip Hogan, Greg Amen, Brian Dees, and Renée Roederer.
ber of the graduating class for the purpose of post-MDiv advanced studies. Selection is made on the basis of Christian character, scholarship, and personal ability; the fellowship carries with it a grant of $8,000. The winner of the Pile-Morgan Fellowship for 2008 is **Brian Dees**. A member of Grace Presbyterian Church in Midland, Texas, he earned a BA in religion from Austin College and is a Jean Brown Fellow. Dees completed a Supervised Practice of Ministry internship at the Religion and Labor Network in Austin. He is interested in teaching and social justice ministry and is pursuing PhD studies.

The Alumni/ae Association of Austin Seminary established the David L. Stitt Fellowship for continued study in 1971 in honor of the Seminary’s fourth president. The award is granted on the basis of scholarship, Christian character, personality, and ability. The fellowship carries an award of $10,000. The David Stitt Fellowship for 2008 recipient is **Renée Roederer**. She is a member of St. John’s United Presbyterian Church, New Albany, Indiana, and has a BA in music with a minor in religious studies from the University of Louisville. Roederer was a member of the University of Louisville Collegiate Chorale, which performed at the 2001 Presidential Inauguration, the Cardinal Singers, and won honors at the International Choir Olympics. A Jean Brown Scholar, Roederer completed a Supervised Practice of Ministry internship at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, Marble Falls, Texas, and was a Campus Ministry Intern at University Presbyterian Church for three years. She is interested in teaching theology, and plans to pursue further graduate study.

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**So far:**
- University Avenue has been closed and new vehicular access to the Hicks parking lot has been made available by way of the east footbridge.
- A new parking lot has also been constructed next to the fire station on 30th Street.
- Utilities including electricity, telephone, and cable are being relocated so that excavation on the Anderson House site can begin.
- $2 million received from the JEl LE Mabee Foundation.

**Ahead:**
- The foundation will be constructed in July.
- The building will begin to be erected in August and September.
- By early November 2008 the exterior walls should be done.
- Anderson House is scheduled for completion in April 2009.
**Spring President’s Colloquium**

**The impact of hate on our communities**

Roberta S. Clark led a discussion on “The Impact of Hatred in our Lives (and in Austin)” at Austin Seminary’s Spring President’s Colloquium, Wednesday, April 2. Clark is the Austin Community Director of the Anti-Defamation League and also the Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Community Association of Austin.

Clark talked about what constitutes hate, the ways that the Anti-Defamation League helps law enforcement track those who engage in hate crimes, and what each of us can do to make a difference. Students and visitors engaged Clark in a lively conversation following the lecture and invited her back to campus to speak at Manna on April 30.

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**To number our days**

continued from page 4

In 1971, I would suppose that hardly any medium-sized or smaller congregations had personnel policies and systems for reviews. I don’t remember any personnel training as part of my seminary curriculum. Someone may have talked about personnel practices, and stewardship, and staff relationships, and gender issues at some time during 1968-1971, but if they did, I didn’t get it. I simply had no context in which to understand those things. Now I do.

And I do understand that one important role I have as the pastor of the Falls Church Presbyterian Church is to encourage others who work here to foster their opportunities for growth, and to support them in every possible way. That’s good for the church, and it’s good for those who will continue to serve in the church in the generation to come.

I recalled an example from Henry Quinius’ church administration classes about the corporate executive who had used his last years to foster the careers of younger employees. Gratefully recognizing that our program staff members were working well together, I initiated conversations in hopes that they would stay through this chapter. None was to be taken for granted. Each replied appropriately to her or his life plans and circumstances.

Will I miss it? Yes. Do I have some anticipatory grief going on? Call it what it is. Of course I do. If it hadn’t been a treasured calling and a worthwhile career, I wouldn’t be sad for it to come to an end. Has it been perfect? No. Would I do it over again? With certain changes, sure I would. Will I ever attend another night meeting? No way.

Am I glad for Austin Seminary? Yes. Each time I return to the Seminary campus I know fewer people. But it’s always good to return to the campus, a home of the heart, and to walk around and feel the ambience, simply to be there. A great cloud of witnesses hovers over the place, faces and spirits of memorable teachers and good friends who are always important to me.

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**Sherman’s book honored by librarians association**

Former Trustee Max Sherman’s book, *Barbara Jordan: Speaking the Truth with Eloquent Thunder* is included in “The Best of the Best from the University Presses” program to be featured at the 2008 American Library Association’s Annual conference. “There are thousands of books published by university presses, so to be one of twenty-four selected is truly an honor,” says University of Texas Press editor William Bishel. Sherman has directed profits from the book toward Austin Seminary’s Center for Proclamation and Worship, where he is funding a faculty chair in honor of his wife, Gene Alice.

**Trustee Harris leaves administration of Loyola to teach**

Trustee Walter Harris Jr has announced plans to retire as provost and vice president for academic affairs of Loyola University, effective August 1. Having served in higher education just short of 40 years, he plans to take a year-long sabbatical and then to join the College of Music and Fine Arts as a tenured full-time professor of music.
Staff Notes

Elizabeth Shumaker is the new director of development, responsible for cultivating and building donor relationships, as well as supervising all fund development activities for Austin Seminary. She recently served as planned giving associate for the Oregon State University Foundation where, under her leadership, OSU garnered $24.5 million in planned gifts in one year. Shumaker is a nationally certified legal assistant and a board certified legal assistant, criminal specialist, having had a long career with the Law Office of David A. Sheppard in Austin. She has given numerous presentations on fund development, religion, ethics, and law. Shumaker is a member of Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church in Austin.

Karen Cappolino is the new administrative assistant to the faculty. A native of Chicago, Cappolino has been involved with several Christian mission projects locally, including the Micah 6 Food Pantry and the Interfaith Hospitality Network.

Christina “Chris” Roitsch is the new part-time Partnership Program Coordinator, making contacts and arrangements for the Seminary’s fund-raising functions.

Elsworth “Pete” Wright, who served on the Seminary’s maintenance staff from 1956-1996, died on April 12. He was 82. The Austin Seminary Association honored Wright in 1976 with an Award for Service.

Campus Visitors

Setri Nyomi of Ghana, general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, paid a call on President Wardlaw and Professors Ellen Babinsky and Cynthia Rigby on January 15.

Alumnus and Board Chair John McCoy (MDiv’63) was a Hoxie Thompson Lecturer in Professor Rigby’s “Theology and Literature” class this spring. The students enjoyed his presentation, “The Tragedies of Shakespeare From A Parson’s Perspective.”

Field Trip. Members of the Austin Seminary community visited the Kimball Art Museum in Fort Worth this January to see the exhibit, “Picturing the Bible.” Leading the expedition to some of the earliest works of art illustrating biblical themes were Academic Dean Michael Jinkins and Dr. Mark Smith, art history scholar and co-director of Flatbed Press in Austin.
Austin Seminary middler students Carrie Finch and Melissa Koerner have formed a Relay for Life team this spring to honor their classmate, Jamie L. Peterson, who has cancer. The team members are raising money and awareness by selling paper stars to display around the Seminary. The 12-hour event takes place April 25-26.

“We all have stories of people who are survivors and of people who we are remembering that night,” said Finch. “So we walk to honor and to remember our loved ones, we walk to help support the American Cancer Society’s fight against cancer, and we walk to be a part of the community that supports us as we pursue our calling.”

Peterson, a middler student, said in March that she had been free from cancer cells in her brain (medulloblastoma) for about six months. When she has been free of cancer cells for a year, she will technically be in remission. Peterson has had four reoccurrences of the medulloblastoma in the last seven years. However, Peterson didn’t become a part of Relay for Life because of her own cancer—she was a participant a few years earlier because one of her best friends had leukemia.

At the time of her own diagnoses, Peterson was an English teacher and a coach. After her diagnosis, she continued to teach for a while, then became a part-time pastor and decided to go to seminary. “I would say it was the cancer that kind of awakened me to that call again. Your priorities change and your relationships with God and other people change when you’re faced with tragedy, that kind of sickness. I just had this overwhelming sense of call, that I could not do anything else. It was starting to keep me up at night … so I quit teaching and coaching and came to seminary.”

Peterson stresses that everyone knows someone affected by cancer. And though she is the team’s honoree, Peterson hopes they can honor everyone at Austin Seminary that has battled cancer. To contribute, visit Relay for Life at: http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR?pg=team&cfr_id=5602&team_id=230796
and New Testaments. While the leadership indeed condemned Marcion’s views, his effort at trying to make sense of the Christian message offered an opportunity for other Christian leaders to make the necessary corrections. And so I include Marcion, along with many, many others, among the communion of saints.

A second claim I make is that the church is of God and belongs to God. We are stewards of the mysteries of God; we are not owners, and we certainly are not managers of these mysteries. Any number of times during a course of study I reflect that God preserves the church, not the flawed church leaders. Imperfect human leaders, always overly certain about how the truth shall unfold, almost always botch the job. The emperor Theodosius, having declared a doctrine to be orthodox what had earlier been declared heretical, went out hunting. For some reason his horse bolted and threw him. Theodosius died from the fall, his sister Pulcheria and her husband Marcian ascended the imperial throne, and the Nicene Creed was preserved for us today.

My third claim is that as multiple expressions of Christianity have emerged, I believe that the possibilities for praise of God have grown. Diverse ways of being faithful have increased the polyphony of thanksgiving to God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. This diversity of praise and thanksgiving is not a denial of the prayer of Jesus that we all be one. Rather the diversity of praise declares that we stand firm in the multiplicity of our traditions as we affirm Christ’s claim on each other. I would further insist that we cannot understand Christ’s claim on each other unless we study each others’ story. The Waldensians emerged in the late-twelfth century, claiming that scripture alone was their authority, not the pope and not the emperor. In the sixteenth century Martin Luther and then John Calvin made similar assertions, and included secular rulers in their plans for the reform of the church. Anabaptists around the same time insisted that the church must be purely separate from surrounding society, and that the secular ruler had no authority over their congregations.

More than once I have declared that the drive toward uniformity is by definition divisive and violent. Such a drive is divisive because unity is not achieved; what emerges is an ethos of violence where those of differing views must somehow be silenced. The study of church history engages our imaginations and our understanding so that we are empowered by Christ to witness to the unity that we receive from Christ and honor in a variety of traditions.

The commitment to teach and learn church history is a tough undertaking. Immersing ourselves in the stories of our Christian forbears to hear Christ’s claim can move us to the margins of our assumptions and of our understanding. Studying church history for the church can force us to ask difficult questions. When we least expect it, we might find ourselves praising and glorifying our great God who leads us on . . . and on. ▲

For the latest information, photos, and events, visit our Web site:

www.austinseminary.edu
Annual Fund: the Seminary’s lifeline

Don Hauk, who got to know the Seminary from the inside while serving as interim vice president of business affairs, knows that Austin Seminary means different things to people. He notes that it is a place devoted to training and developing church and community leaders, with beautiful buildings and a green campus and intelligent students, faculty, and staff. But he says Austin Seminary is even more than those things to him.

“It is a safe place, a diverse place, a place that values openness, love, and respect,” says Hauk, an ordained elder who belongs to Westminster Presbyterian Church, Austin. “It is a place where faith allows us to trust, where faith is reconciled with reason, where exclusion, arrogance, and intolerance give way to inclusion, humility, openness; a place with respect for the other; a place that values about our neighbor and the stranger; a place that teaches love is above all; a place that celebrates that mysterious force we call God. This gives me hope for the world, and this is why I am a Partner with Austin Seminary!”

Each year, Austin Seminary raises money for its Annual Fund through avenues like the Partnership program. Gifts to the Annual Fund support operating expenses such as faculty and staff salary and benefits, facilities management, and library resources—critical to fulfilling our mission.

Over the years generous donors have supported this institution with gifts and bequests to the endowment. Austin Seminary operates on an annual budget of almost $9 million. Today, 66 percent of the operating budget comes from the distribution of income from the endowment. Other sources of revenue include tuition and auxiliary enterprises (food service), which account for another 26 percent. The Annual Fund represents 8 percent.

The Seminary relies on annual gifts to help it fulfill its mission of forming the next generation of church leaders. Those who give to the Annual Fund include 25 percent of our alumni/ae, 100 percent of trustees last year, 32 percent of staff and faculty, and foundations, churches, and individuals, including Austin Seminary Partners (three levels of giving via a three-year pledge). Currently, Austin Seminary has 185 members in its Partnership program; eighty-five of those are first-time donors.

Please consider joining Austin Seminary in its mission by giving to the Annual Fund. For more information or to make a gift, please contact Carrie Leising, development coordinator, at 512-404-4806 or at advancement@austinseminary.edu

Austin Seminary Partners are a special group of donors who make a significant commitment of their financial resources in support of the ongoing work of the Seminary. Partnership Events, held in cities throughout the Synod of the Sun and in neighboring states, give potential donors an opportunity to learn about Austin Seminary’s mission. Partners pledge to support the Annual Fund at a level of $1,000-$5,000 per year for three years.

The remaining Partnership events for 2008 are:

- May 9 ..........Oklahoma City
- September 11 .........Houston
- October 9 ............Austin
- October 30 ............Dallas
- November 20 ......San Antonio

Contact Carrie Leising, at 512-404-4806, for more information.

Little Rock resident Catherine Caldwell, left, visits with Betty Matthews, wife of Trustee Emeritus Steve Matthews, and Seminary President Wardlaw at the Little Rock Partnership Luncheon on February 14.
One of the best book titles ever was Leslie Weatherhead’s *The Christian Agnostic*. The title may have been the best part of that book. But I’ve always resonated with it as a pretty good posture toward Christian faith. In an era when people seem to equate certitude with fidelity, a little agnostic humility toward the ultimate questions is not only seemly and winsome, it may represent the right level of reverence toward a God much bigger than we can imagine.

I confess that I’ve always had a fondness for agnostics. I like those whose respect for God leads them to be reticent. They help balance-out those pious souls who have a habit of “paying God metaphysical compliments,” as Whitehead put it, and thus end up saying far more than anyone knows. I also like the kind of agnostics who have a talent for spotting what is really crucial about Christian faith, even if they are shy about endorsing our faith.

For example, Jacques Derrida, the bad-boy of French deconstructionism, famously explained why he was reluctant to say that God exists. He did not want to force God into his category of existence. He was equally hesitant to say that the person sitting next to him existed. The issue was the freedom of the other person, the freedom of God. That’s respect, not doubt, at work.

Kurt Vonnegut was one of the most perceptive and theologically astute of agnostics. Whether he was analyzing human (specifically American) frailties, in his novel *Slapstick*: “all the damaging excesses of Americans in the past were motivated by loneliness rather than a fondness for sin”; or giving advice to the newly arrived in *God Bless you, Mr. Rosewater*: “Hello babies. Welcome to Earth. It’s hot in the summer and cold in the winter. It’s round and wet and crowded. At the outside, babies, you’ve got about a hundred years here. There’s only one rule that I know of, babies …. You’ve got to be kind”; Vonnegut drew on the prophetic theological vision of (as he called himself), “a Christ-worshipping agnostic.”

Recently Martin Marty reminded his readers of another passage in Vonnegut. It’s exactly the kind of insight that the right sort of agnostic makes about our faith that can help us hear, as if for the first time, the call to follow Jesus of Nazareth. In his book, *Palm Sunday*, Vonnegut writes: “If Christ hadn’t delivered the Sermon on the Mount, with its message of mercy and pity, I wouldn’t want to be a human being. I’d just as soon be a rattlesnake.” He says that this idea of “being merciful” which Jesus preaches “is the only good idea we have received so far.”

Sometimes it takes an agnostic, literally “a non-knower,” to remind us of that which we cannot live without in our faith. Only God is righteous, the rest of us need mercy.

—Michael Jinkins (DMin’83)

_Academic Dean_
FACULTY NOTES

John Ahn, assistant professor of Old Testament, was selected the Southwest Regional Biblical Scholar for 2009. In March he delivered a paper on Ezekiel at the Southwest Regional Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) Meeting in Dallas / Fort Worth.

Two books by Allan Cole, the Nancy Taylor Williamson Associate Professor of Pastoral Care, have been published: Good Mourning: Getting through Your Grief (Westminster John Knox Press) and From Midterms to Ministry: Practical Theologians on Pastoral Beginnings (editor, Eerdmans). He also penned a chapter on “Epistemology,” in The Encyclopedia of Social Work, 20th ed. (Oxford University Press) and an essay, “Teaching and Caring: The Educator as Nurturer,” for the APSE Advocate. Cole is spending part of his sabbatical semester at the Center for Theological Inquiry in Princeton, New Jersey.

Michael Jinkins, academic dean, has written the participant’s book in the new Disciple Bible Study Invitation to Psalms (Abdingdon Press). In March he attended with Allan Cole a meeting hosted by the Global Network for Public Theology at the Center of Theological Inquiry.

David Jones, director of the Doctor of Ministry program, won first prize in Bethany Theological Seminary’s “Peace Essay” writing contest, and that article will be published later this year in The Messenger. Jones presented both a paper and a workshop at the Annual Association of Doctor of Ministry education Conference in San Francisco, where he was elected president. His article, “On Becoming a Disciple,” appears in the April-June 2008 issue of The Living Pulpit.

Janet Maykus, principal of the College of Pastoral Leaders, was a presenter at the annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Continuing Education in Ministry in Columbus, Ohio, where she was elected vice president. She spoke on excellence in ministry through the work of clergy peer groups.

The Council on Southwest Theological Schools (COSTS) met at Austin Seminary on April 4. It was Academic Dean Michael Jinkins’ last meeting as president.

Stan Hall
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another of us mounted the chancel and moved through the prayers and actions the best we could. One after another of us were brought to tears over a baby doll, over the raw power of the sacrament in our sinning hands. Stan laced his fingers together and placed them on his chest and nodded wisely. He had somehow moved a charade with a baby doll into a sacred place where the shekinah might strike us down. And he had compassion on us.

—I. Brett (MDiv’02) and Alexandra Hendrickson (MDiv’01)

I remember him telling me the story about starting worship with a benediction one day, how he became unravelled, tried again, and began again with a benediction. Well, it seems to me that there is nothing better than to start worship with pronouncing God’s good word. So, Stan, may the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, may the Lord lift his countenance upon you, and give you peace, now and always. —Dieter Heinzl (MDiv’98)
Distinguished graduates honored

T he Austin Seminary Association (ASA), at its Annual Meeting and Banquet on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, recognized two people for their contributions to the seminary and church. Receiving the 2008 ASA Distinguished Service Awards were Ralph Person (MDiv’56) and Alfred “Fred” William Morgan (MDiv’71).

E. Dixon “Dick” Junkin (MDiv’62) presented the award to his former classmate, Ralph Person. Person came to Austin Seminary in 1953, spending his middler year at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. After graduating from the Seminary in 1956, Person traveled to Ceylon and India for student work, and eventually back to the University of Texas where he served as Presbyterian campus minister. He taught at Austin Seminary and Columbia Seminary and retired after twenty years as pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Temple, Texas.

Person’s “passion for the church’s story … has been in evidence throughout his ministry,” said Junkin. “He has helped many seminarians and laypersons discover themselves in the larger story of the church’s pilgrimage through the centuries, and in that discovery to be challenged to new and more courageous discipleship.”

When Junkin presented Person with the award, Person said he had decided to attend seminary around the time when WWII vets were coming back, wanting to change the world, and churches were growing rapidly. “Austin Seminary grabbed me and flung me forward,” said Person. “I never once felt that I could’ve gotten a better theological education anywhere else.”

Fred Morgan received the award from his associate pastor Holly Hasstedt (MDiv’99). Hasstedt said, “How do you describe a thirty-six year ministry of someone in a few short minutes, who himself cannot say ‘Hello’ in less than ten? … [Fred] is someone who I believe embodies the hands and heart of Jesus Christ in every aspect of his life, and I would describe him as a brother, a mentor, and a model for ministry.”

Morgan returned to Austin Seminary in 1974 where he was director of admissions and financial aid and dean of first-year students. He served churches in Corpus Christi and San Antonio and is now pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church in Austin. He was president of the San Antonio Urban Council, moderator of Mission Presbytery, a commissioner to the General Assembly, and a member of the Synod of the Sun’s General Council. Morgan is the longest-active pastor in Mission Presbytery.

When he was presented with the award, Morgan said, “I am indebted to a variety of people in this room today … I am grateful to Austin Seminary for giving me the room to be creative. I appreciate and am honored for all this institution has given to me.”

WELCOME…

to Alena J. Blackburn, daughter of Tasha L. Blackburn (MDiv’01) and Philip L. Blackburn (MDiv’01), born January 26, 2008.

to Kamilla Hutzler, daughter of Jeremy Schmidt and Izbella Hutzler (MATS’06).

to Judith O. Martinez, daughter of Jamie D. and David N. Martinez-Solis (MDiv’06), born February 13, 2008.

CLASS NOTES

1950s

Carroll Pickett (MDiv’57) is the subject of a feature documentary, “At the Death House Door,” which premiered at the SXSW Film Festival in Austin this March. The film profiles Pickett, who ministered to ninety-five death row prisoners in his role as chaplain to the “Walls” prison unit in Huntsville, Texas. The film received the “Inspiration Award” at the Full Frame Film Festival in Durham, North Carolina.

1960s

John L. Williams (MDiv’65) retired after serving as executive of the Presbyterian Synod of Mid-America for 22 years.

Robert M. “Bob” Poteet (MDiv’67) was honorably retired after 41 years of service to the church at the February meeting of New Covenant Presbytery.

1970s

Michael J. Cole (MDiv’75) was reelected as general presbyter of New Covenant Presbytery at the February meeting.
James M. Gill (MDiv’77) brought the formal request before presbytery to charter Peace Presbyterian Church in Pearland, Texas. The request was affirmed.

Jim Rigby (MDiv’79) was named the Texas Public Citizen of the Year (2007) by the National Association of Social Workers.

1980s
Stephen E. Newton (MDiv’83) and his congregation, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Nacogdoches, Texas, received a Lilly Endowment Grant for Clergy renewal.

C. Mathews Samson (MDiv’87) has written a book, Re-enchanting the World: Maya Protestantism in the Guatemalan Highlands, published by the University of Alabama Press.

Janice C. West (MDiv’88) will be taking a four month sabbatical and working on a project titled “Body, Mind & Spirit—Practicing What I Preach,” featuring original photography and writing.

1990s
George Cladis (DMin’96) has been called to the positions of executive pastor of Liberty Churches and chief operating officer of the New England Dream Center, a faith-based social service agency in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Laura Mendenhall (DMin’97) contributed to the publication Insights from the Underside: An Intergenerational Conversation of Ministers.

2000s
Everett Miller (MDiv’06) has launched the first blog by a minister in Cimarron Presbytery. The blog, containing daily updates and sermons can be found here: www.fpcnewkirk.blogspot.com.

James Anderson (MDiv’07), currently in a PhD program in biblical studies at the University of Sheffield, England, was quoted in an online edition of “Strata,” Biblical Archaeology Review, Mar/Apr 2008, discussing his archaeological work in Jerusalem.

ORDINATION

Britta M. Dukes (MDiv’05) to serve Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church, Austin, Texas.

Dana J. Mayfield (MDiv’05) to serve First Presbyterian Church, Colorado City, Texas.

Sandra Seamans (MDiv’05) to serve as chaplain at Faith Hospice, Dallas, Texas.

Kook Jin Nam (MDiv’06) to serve the Korean Presbyterian Church of Minnesota, Brooklyn Center, Minnesota.

Linda W. Sharon (MDiv’06) to serve as Chaplain of The Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas.

Anne Mellor Emery (MDiv’07) to serve Christ United Presbyterian Church, Hanover Township, Pennsylvania.

Robert C. “Carter” Robinson (MDiv’07) to serve First Presbyterian Church, Hendersonville, North Carolina.

Desiree M. Youngblood (MDiv’07) to serve First Presbyterian Church, Sanderson, Texas.

If you have been ordained recently and have not been recognized in Windows, please contact Georgia Smith, coordinator of alumni/ae relations at 512-404-4801 or alum@austinseminary.edu

NECROLOGY

Clifford W. Williams (MDiv’39) Fort Worth, Texas, March 27, 2008.


Elsie G. Ferguson (MDiv’00) Universal City, Texas, March 16, 2008.
The Class of 1968
Back row: George Holland, Trish Holland, Ken Jack, Jim McLeod, John Evans, David Fletcher, Jim Collier. Front row: Judy Fletcher, Betsy Pense, Cherie Bowman Reid, Mary Jansen, widow of Professor John Jansen, and Janelle Collier

The Class of 1958
Jim Berbiglia, Vi Berbiglia, Professor Pete Hendrick, William Walker, Holly Mitchell, and Marvin Williams

2008 REUNIONS

Check out our new Online Store!

Download mp3 files from the “Need to Know” series, $10 each. New titles on “Leadership” and “Spirituality” by David Johnson and Michael Jinkins!