Heirs of the Reformed wing of the Protestant Reformation—some 75 million Christians in Reformed and Presbyterian communions worldwide—are preparing in these days to celebrate the 500th birthday of our spiritual founder. Since he has to be one of history’s most misunderstood persons, a good way of celebrating the life and legacy of John Calvin would be to try to get to know him, perhaps for the first time. This is what we are about in this issue of *Windows*.

When those of us planning this issue met for our first brain-storming session, we had some fun trying to catalogue all the ways in which John Calvin has been maligned: as a killjoy, a sourpuss, a dour and vengeful sort, a sadist, a narrow-minded prig, and on and on. It became ever clearer that probably no one in Western history needs a makeover more desperately than our man John.

Who fostered this bad rap upon him? Was it Calvin himself, or (as I suspect) certain Calvinists who have come after him? It makes no matter, because we are interested in polishing the poor guy up a bit in this, his big year. What follows is a series of interesting, delightful, and inspiring pieces that look at one of world history’s most pivotal religious leaders from a variety of different angles. We don’t expect to answer all of your questions; we merely hope instead to heighten your curiosity about him and to usher you toward a deeper look. And if indeed we are successful, you will want to examine the bibliography of books about Calvin that Michael Jinkins reviews in his “Dean’s Bookshelf” column inside.

By the way, there’s a Calvin Jubilee being planned in Montreat this summer, July 8th through 11th, that is co-sponsored by Austin Seminary, the General Assembly Office of Theology and Worship, and Montreat Conference Center.

The Jubilee will offer great worship, the presentations of numerous Calvin scholars from all over, and a 500th birthday party designed to be (dare I say it?) great fun! If you want to know more about the schedule and speakers or want to register, go to www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship; and if you want to make reservations for lodging, go to www.montreat.org/register/09-calvin-jubilee.html.

Well, so much for these words of introduction. Before we turn the page and delve into the rest of this issue, it’s only fitting that we pause to pray. Here is the prayer which Calvin was wont to use at the beginning of his lectures: *May the Lord grant that we may engage in contemplating the mysteries of God’s heavenly wisdom with really increasing devotion, to God’s glory and to our edification. Amen.*

Theodore J. Wardlaw
President
Why everything we know is wrong

Myths and urban legends about John Calvin
BY MICHAEL JINKINS

Myth No. 1: John Calvin was a real sourpuss.
Martin Luther is usually cast as the fun-loving, beer-swigging, warm-hearted Reformer while Calvin is caricatured as dour, the sort of person who (as one Episcopal bishop once notoriously described him) “sucked sour persimmons for fun.” In fact, Calvin was the Reformation’s chief apologist for fun. For example, he reminds us that God created food and drink “for delight and good cheer,” not simply for nourishment. Quoting the Psalms he tells us that wine is given to us to gladden the heart, and olive oil was made for dipping bread. Here’s a person who knew his way around a Michelin Star restaurant (never forget that Calvin was French!). According to Calvin, God did not create the world merely for utilitarian purposes, but for beauty and pleasure.

Myth No. 2: Calvin was a tyrant.
Recently this myth got some highly visible air time in The New York Times Magazine in an article titled: “Who Would Jesus Smack Down?” The article profiled a preacher who justifies his refusal to listen to the criticism of lay leaders by citing Calvin. When a member of his congregation complained, for example, the pastor suspended the complainer’s membership, explaining, “They were sinning through questioning.” The author of the article commented, “John Calvin couldn’t have said it better himself.” In fact, Calvin could and often did say it much better than that. Calvin distrusted the vesting of power in any individual (himself included), and abided with decisions made by the ordered bodies of his church and city even when he did not agree with them. Calvin believed that God makes God’s will known through groups more reliably than through the will of individuals, and there’s no better guarantee against the abuse of a leader’s power than a vigilant group in which authority is shared.

Myth No. 3: Calvin and Calvinism are identical.
This one’s tricky! There’s an assumption that everything we call “Calvinism” actually came from Calvin. A colleague recently mentioned that he was sitting on a plane reading a book about Calvin. The flight attendant saw what he was reading and said, “I know about Calvin. He’s the TULIP guy.” In fact, the well-known “five points of Calvinism,” memorialized in the acronym TULIP (Total depravity; Unconditional election; Limited atonement; Irresistible grace; Perseverance of the saints) dates from the century after Calvin (the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619), and represents the high water mark of “Calvinist Scholasticism” in which the warm personal evangelical movement that Calvin led was distorted by a calcified reactionism. Calvin scholars like James Torrance and T. F. Torrance, R. T. Kendall and Holmes Rolston III, have helped us differentiate between Calvin and his latter-day disciples. For example, while Calvin believed in predestination, he was very hesitant to say too much on the subject and largely avoided the implications of double-predestination. His followers were not so cautious!

Myth No. 4: Calvin was a religious fanatic.
There certainly is a popular perception of Calvin as a sort of religious fanatic or zealot. After all, there are some Christian Fundamentalists to this day who claim him as their spiritual father, and let’s not forget the various heresy prosecutions that have followed in the wake of “Calvinism,” especially in Scotland and the United States. In fact, Calvin himself deserves to be remembered both as a “Renaissance man” and a “humanist.” Calvin was part of that remarkable Renaissance movement that included Thomas More (the brilliant Catholic “Man for all Seasons” and martyr under Henry VIII of England) and Desiderius Erasmus (the Dutch scholar whose critical studies and satire paved the way for the Reformation). The humanist movement swept away the cobwebs of superstition and obscurantism and placed the Bible freshly translated in the hands of ordinary Christians. Calvin, like other humanists, was also a critical scholar of the Bible who believed that knowledge and wisdom, scholarship and science are not enemies of the faith.

Myth No. 5: Calvin was sadistic.
Obviously this myth is supported by the burning of Michael Servetus (a person who had the distinction of being considered a heretic by both the Protestants and the Roman Catholics and of being a physician who discovered how blood circulates in the human body). Calvin actively opposed Servetus’s teachings. Calvin denounced him to the Roman Catholic Inquisition. He believed that Servetus’s heresies were dangerous to the future of the church, and he wanted him silenced. In fact, however, what is less well known is that Calvin argued that Servetus not be burned at the stake. The conventional picture of Calvin cruelly twirling his moustache like Snidely Whiplash while Servetus burned is

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Continued on page 17
Calvin and Hobbes
Theology, politics, and the common good

By David H. Jensen

If you can't judge a book by its cover, you can often make an informed judgment about a book based on how it ends. This is certainly the case with the Institutes, Calvin's masterpiece that has had a greater impact on Reformed Christianity than any book besides the Bible.

This guide to Christian faith ends on a peculiar note: reflections on civil government. A theology that ends with politics, of all things!

For Calvin, Christian faith and civil government are related to each other because Christian faith is lived, not merely stated or believed. Faith is not simply cognitive knowledge, not saying “yes” to every line in the creeds, but (as every student at Austin Seminary learns) a “firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us … sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” Faith orients the entire human life in God’s goodness, the extension of grace to the world in Jesus Christ. In faith, we don’t simply know this goodness to be true, we live it out as truth; because faith affects every aspect of our living, we can expect it to be reflected in how we organize ourselves in society. Politics concerns how we relate to one another, and Calvin believed that our political life could be a reflection—however dim—of the kinds of relationships that God gives us in Christ’s covenant of grace.

Calvin believed, in short, that government could reflect Christian faith and promote the common good. His view was inherently hopeful, contrasting with more sobering assessments of government in his time and ours. In an earlier generation, Machiavelli argued that princes needed to act in swift and ruthless ways to consolidate power and ensure public safety. A generation after Calvin, Thomas Hobbes argued that persons cede rights to government in order to restrain their selfish and wild impulses. Without government’s restraining function, life became “nasty, brutish, and short.” For Hobbes and Machiavelli, government is a necessary evil that prevents us from grabbing each others’ throats. Their reflections have had a tremendous impact on subsequent political history, and are even reflected in jaded contemporary attitudes about politics. In our age of red states and blue states, we invariably count some as winners and others as losers: polarizing areas of interest are pitted against each other, and we wind up voting (if we vote at all) for the candidate who seems least repulsive and most able to maintain order in the midst of chaos. Even the word “politician” has become something of an epithet. In contemporary America, we accustom ourselves to the peccadilloes and the purpose of government. In our day, the idea of a “public servant” almost seems laughable.

For Calvin, however, government could serve the common good through public service. He possessed the audacious idea that government did not merely serve a restraining function, but could benefit society and actually make life better for all (not just the winners or the powerful). Civil government, in his words, could “ reconcile us with one another, and … promote general peace and tranquility.”

Government works best not when it leaves us alone or consolidates power in the name of safety, but when it fosters the collaborative efforts of people seeking the common good. For Calvin, we are better off together than we are by ourselves. Civil magistrates were charged with the task of finding ways in which civic life might actually improve as governments listened to the voices and concerns of the people. In words that may sound shocking to pastors, Calvin wrote: “Civil authority is a calling, not only holy and lawful before God, but also the most sacred and by far the most honorable of all callings in the whole life of mortal men.” These are hopeful words for times that have given up on political leaders.

How does government foster the common good? One way, Calvin thinks, is through taxation. As I write these words, I am beginning to file my own taxes: a task I begrudge and procrastinate every year. Calvin, to be sure, was aware of the abuses of medieval tax systems: they were often used to fatten the coffers of the wealthy while draining resources from the poor. In our day, too, we are familiar with projects funneled to powerful politicians that benefit less society as a whole and more a few
contractors in a particular congressional district. But Calvin felt that these abuses could be remedied if leaders would remember that “revenues are not so much their private chests as the treasuries of the entire people.” Leaders administer the people’s wealth by combining resources so that they might do things together that they couldn’t do on their own. Magistrates in Calvin’s hometown of Geneva undertook a remarkable series of projects that required taxes and the pooling of community resources: schools that opened their doors to those outside the wealthiest classes; charity hospitals that fostered public health. Given this heritage, it is no coincidence that humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross and the World Health Organization have headquarters in Geneva today. Together we are better off than we are separated from one another.

Lest we conclude that Calvin only had an optimistic outlook on government, he concludes the Institutes on a note of caution: in the wrong hands, civil government can rapidly degenerate into brutality. The slide from monarchy to tyranny is swift when appropriate checks on the power of civil government are absent. Calvin believed in relative safety in numbers, that the concentration of power in one set of hands was more susceptible to tyranny than other forms of government. Though he allowed for regional variation in the kinds of government permissible, he clearly sees advantage in systems that offer collaboration and multiple voices. In his age as well as ours, we are often tempted to seek one efficient leader who can accomplish everything for everybody, through quick measures that don’t require messy deliberation and compromise. Yet if magistrates allow such measures to occur, Calvin says they “betray the freedom of the people.” Heeding Calvin’s warning today, public servants, and government in general, should continually subject themselves to self-critique: Where are the voices that aren’t being heard? Is government reflecting the common good or the interests of the wealthy? Who benefits from governmental actions and policies and who does not? If we ask these questions, and expect our leaders to ask them of themselves, government can be a reflection of the common life to which we are called.

In the end, Calvin’s thoughts on civil government are less rose-tinted glasses on the realities of political life than they are expressions of hope in the providence and grace of God. God calls us into relationship with one another and intends those relationships for human flourishing.

The days that we have been given—even and perhaps especially in politics—can reflect in some small way the reign of God that has already come in Jesus Christ. ▲
Among a number of Presbyterians and other mainline Protestants, there is often a culture of sacramental indifference—a kind of “whatever” attitude as to the way and the frequency with which the sacraments are done, and, for that matter, preached about. To be fair, the roots of this culture of indifference are deep, some going all the way back to the time of our theological ancestor John Calvin himself. The Catholic Church by the late Middle Ages had developed a sacramental system that resulted in virtually every important milepost on the human journey being ministered to with an appropriate sacrament. One’s birth invited the sacrament of Baptism. One’s ongoing desire for the means of grace invited one to the sacrament of the Eucharist. One’s growth to an important moment of responsibility invited the sacrament of Confirmation. One’s desire for forgiveness invited the sacrament of Penance. The commitment made by a man and a woman to one another invited the sacrament of Marriage. The vocational decision to serve the church as a priest invited the sacrament of Ordination. One’s vulnerability in a moment of sickness or at one’s end invited the sacrament of Extreme Unction. A kind of ecology developed around this sacramental system by which the church marked the passage moments of life and administered various forms of pastoral care through its keeping of time throughout the life cycle.

And, for its own generally understandable reasons, the Protestant Reformation threw out this sacramental system. Luther and Calvin opposed any sacrament that was not explicitly mandated in scripture. Two net effects of the Reformation’s influence were that the sacraments in the Protestant churches were reduced from seven to two (Baptism and the Eucharist) and that the sacramental system of tracking the natural progress of the human
journey was shattered.

I believe that one practical result of the collapse of this sacramental system has been the attendant collapse of a reason to think sacramentally in any broad sense. We theological heirs of the Reformed wing of the Reformation have instead placed our primary confidence in thinking doctrinally. Through centuries of resulting arguments over such doctrinal thinking, by the way, we have bequeathed to the world the most schismatic of all the Protestant traditions to come out of the Reformation.

So it is that historically, sacramental preaching in at least the American expression of the Reformed tradition was limited to Communion Sundays and Baptismal Sundays (and, with hats off to Calvin, it was didactic preaching—the preaching of “teaching sermons” carefully exegeted from a handful of biblical texts that refer directly to Baptism or the Lord’s Supper). The tone of both the sermon and the liturgy of the table tended to emphasize the role of the Supper as a memorial or a remembrance more than as an eschatological glimpse of the glorious Messianic Banquet. Thus it was more penitential than celebrative. In practice, sermons focused upon one or the other sacrament occurring on a specific occasion came as close as Presbyterian preachers tended to get—until very recently—to the idea of preaching through the lens of sacramental consciousness.

Two things have changed, though, which I believe provide preachers in the Presbyterian-Reformed tradition with new opportunities to cultivate such a consciousness.

Preaching to the disestablished

The first is the essential disestablishment of mainline Protestantism in North America. From the colonial period on through the first half of the twentieth century, the Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Congregational churches were the senior religious stakeholders in the culture, and were given, because of their status, a singular measure of validation and protection. This was, of course, in exchange for the ways in which those churches—and in later waves, others such as the Methodist and Lutheran churches—blessed the culture’s dominant values and refrained, by and large, from strong prophetic critiques of these paradigms. For lots of reasons, though—chief among them the impact that such turmoil around Vietnam, Civil Rights, and Watergate had upon our culture’s trust in institutions and authority figures—this so-called Culture Protestantism began to break down.

Quite apart from an alarmist reading of these developments, there are many redemptive consequences that flow from the disestablishment of Culture Protestantism. One of them is that, at virtually the same moment that mainline Protestant churches have become uncoupled from a co-dependency with what we refer to biblically as “the principalities and powers,” these churches have begun to rediscover the formational importance of sacramental theology, specifically the depth and profundity of baptismal theology. At virtually the same moment that prayer in school and prayer at City Council meetings all began to disappear as artifacts of Protestant entitlement, mainline churches began recovering a deep sense of baptismal identity. In great measure, this recovery was the natural flowering of the liturgical renewal movement—fueled, for sure, by the then-vigorous ecumenical movement (itself owing its vitality to the Catholic Church’s Second Vatican Council). But I also believe that it represents the church’s developing understanding of its essentially counter-cultural character. More and more I see the contours of a faith that doesn’t seek to accommodate itself to the world’s rhythms and values, but seeks rather to stick out as the holy, disruptive, bizarre thing that it is.

Preaching in a postmodern world

Attendant to these changes is a second development, the impact of postmodernism, which gives preachers in our tradition a new opportunity to cultivate a sacramental consciousness. Our tradition’s deep affinity for Enlightenment rationalism bred a deep distrust of anything that smacked of mystery. Historically, we engaged instead in doctrinal exercises that sought to explain everything—even Baptism, even the Eucharist. We distrusted mystery so much that we gravitated toward sacred spaces dominated by nothing quite so much as bright light streaming through clear-glass windows—light bright enough to bathe every corner of our rectilinear buildings which, if too dark, might otherwise allow mystery to grow like mold. Presbyterian pastors formed by this deep suspicion of mystery were loathe to lift up a loaf of bread at the Table and say “This is the Body of Christ” (how could they really be sure?), and so they said instead, with far more certainty, “This represents the Body of Christ.”

Then came the twentieth century. With its two world wars, its social movements, its new manifestations of “man’s inhumanity to man,” and the upending of conventions at the hands of such notables as Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung, the pristine certainty of rationalism—Presbyterian or otherwise—was ultimately undermined. Here in the early days of the twenty-first century, postmodernism, with its distrust of reason and its elevation of the power of experience, is unseating a great measure of our trust in reason. It is coaxing from us a greater exploration of art, music, beauty, and dream, and giving us, as a new mantra, the distinction between “right-
brain thinking” and “left-brain thinking.”

With a disestablished mainline Protestant Church exploring once again the wellsprings of its identity and articulating a reinigorated baptismal ethic, and with its members more open not just to rationalism but also to experience, this is an opportune time for pastors and their people to cultivate a fuller sense of the sacramentality of life. It should start with preaching.

Preaching illuminated by the Spirit

Curiously, John Calvin may have been suggesting this very thing with a distinctively (but much overlooked) Reformed creation that he brought to worship, the Prayer for Illumination. Harold M. Daniels, in To God Alone Be Glory: The Story and Sources of the Book of Common Worship, observed that, in the order of worship that Calvin developed in Geneva, “following confession, pardon and the singing of the Ten Commandments, it was Calvin’s custom to leave the Communion table, enter the pulpit, and offer such a prayer.” This prayer called upon God to send the Holy Spirit to strengthen the hearts of the hearers of the sermon.

I have heard the suggestion made that in this Prayer for Illumination, Calvin was intentionally shifting the epi-
clesia of the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving said at the Eucharist (“pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine”) to this location before the reading and preaching of the Word (“open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit”). Was this strategic innovation intended to suggest that there was also something fundamentally sacramental about preaching itself? After all, the placement of a Prayer for Illumination to summon the Holy Spirit before preaching indicates a strong sense—right there at the inception of the Reformed tradition—that preaching was to be elevated to a new level of importance.

What difference would it make in our preaching if we behaved as if preaching were downright sacramental? It would surely call upon us to preach not just from the sheer exegetical specificity of the text before us for a given Sunday, but also with the imagination that—whatever the text—it has the potential to point us toward the sacramentality at the root of all of life.

Preaching the hidden pictures

When I was a kid, I can remember a children’s monthly magazine that featured a page called “Hidden Pictures.” Each month, the whole page would be covered in a different drawing—something seemingly typical, such as a street scene or a school building or a fire station. To take an initial look at the drawing was to see the things you expected to see—trees, children playing, dogs barking, whatever. But because you knew there were hidden pictures within this larger picture, you took another look. You looked and looked until, gradually, the other pictures—of a duck or a fountain pen or a pirate—appeared one by one. Barbara Brown Taylor, in meditating upon her own experience with such a book, wrote in The Preaching Life: “It was for me a source of unending delight—to find the hidden figures, to confront the ordinary in full confidence that it would yield the extraordinary if only I looked hard enough, if only I kept at it and did not give up. As best I can say it,” she says, “that is the same impulse that fires my faith in God even now. Day after day I look at my life, the lives of my neighbors, the world in which we all live, and I hunt the hidden figure, the presence that still moves just beneath the surface of every created thing.” To cultivate a way of life that assumes that God is present in every moment, in every picture—even, or maybe especially, the tragic ones—is to live into a way of seeing, says Taylor, “that requires a certain loosening of the grip, a willingness to be surprised, confused, amazed by the undreamt-of ways that God chooses to be revealed to us. To find the extraordinary hidden in the ordinary, we are called to participate in God’s own imagination—to see ourselves, our neighbors, and our world through God’s eyes, full of possibility, full of promise, ready to be transformed.”

I love the image she is working on here: that God is the hidden figure moving just beneath the surface of every created thing, which includes every text of scripture and every context, from Sunday to Sunday, in which that scripture is read. And to search for the extraordinary surprise lurking beneath what at first appears merely ordinary is to roam into that space where the world of the text and the realm of the sacramental intersect. Preach of what you see at that intersection, and you will be doing something far richer than just leaping from the text for the day to explain to the congregation what’s happening this morning to little Edith at the font. You will be putting to words an appreciation for the fundamental sacramentality of life, and it will not matter one bit that the word “baptism” never appears in the text.

Preaching to the Lord’s Table

A decade or so ago, while I was pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, the congregation completed an extensive capital improvement project, the centerpiece of which was the complete restoration of its Victorian-era sanctuary building. While we were getting ready for the year-long construction phase during which...
I n 1540 John Calvin is believed to have completed the first draft of *The Form of Church Prayers and Hymns with the Manner of Administering the Sacraments and Consecrating Marriage According to the Custom of the Ancient Church*. (Composing the title alone was a task that may have occupied the better part of that year; fortunately Calvin was able to borrow much from Martin Bucer in assembling the contents.) Sadly, the first edition of this cornerstone of Reformed worship is lost; however, nearly five hundred years later Calvin's liturgical legacy is very much with us. Through the second and third editions of *The Form of Church Prayers*, published in Geneva (1542) and Strasbourg (1545), we can glimpse his enduring influence upon the liturgical life of Reformed churches.

“Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” This call to worship from Psalm 124:8—still the first option provided in the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship*—sets the tone for Calvin’s order of worship and establishes the theological framework upon which it stands. The Lord, the maker of heav-

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en and earth, is sovereign; our only hope is to call upon
God’s name. This opening sentence also foregrounds the
assertion that Reformed worship begins with God’s ini-
tiative—the initiative of the creator, redeemer, and sust-
tainer of the cosmos. What else can we do but respond
with gratitude and praise?

A second aspect of Reformed worship revealed in
Calvin’s Strasbourg and Geneva liturgies is the priority of
the confession of sin. Immediately following the call to
worship “we confess and acknowledge unfeignedly before
thy holy majesty that we are poor sinners, conceived and
born in iniquity and corruption, prone to do evil, inca-
ipple of any good, and that in our depravity we trans-
gress thy holy commandments without end or ceasing.”
Strong words—but they are answered by a strong decla-
ration of God’s grace. The Strasbourg edition of The
Form of Church Prayers includes a bold and unequivocal
assurance of forgiveness in the name of the Triune God:
“To all those that repent in this wise, and look to Jesus
Christ for their salvation, I declare that the absolution
of sins is effected, in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.” This edition continues with the
Decalogue or Ten Commandments, illustrating Calvin’s
notion of the “third and principal use” of the law: to
teach God’s will to the faithful. Calvin’s profound sense
of human weakness is often emphasized to the point of
caricature by admirers and detractors alike; we often for-
get that, in Calvin’s view, even the monstrosity of human
depravity was easily eclipsed by God’s unsurpassable
grace. Nevertheless, a healthy respect for the difference
and distance between divinity and humanity, along with
a consistent concern for the corrupting power of sin,
remains a hallmark of Reformed worship.

The centrality of scripture is, appropriately enough,
evident at the heart of Calvin’s order of worship. The
minister approaches the pulpit with a prayer for illumi-
nation, calling upon the Holy Spirit to guide us “into the
true understanding of [God’s] holy doctrine, making it
productive in us of all the fruits of righteousness.” Owing
to this conviction that the Spirit makes the preaching of
the Word efficacious, Calvin had a high view of the
proclamation of the gospel; he maintained that God
appointed pastors and teachers in the church to do noth-
ing less than speak the Word of God with authority
(Institutes 4.1.1), so that people might hear and believe
the good news of salvation. Beyond the sermon, Calvin
taught that the whole practice of Christian worship
should adhere faithfully to the norms and patterns pro-
vided in the Old and New Testaments (with some
allowance for the contributions of the early church, as the
full title of his Form of Church Prayers suggests). This
“regulative principle” continues to be influential in shap-
ing worship that is “reformed and always being reformed”
according to the Word of God.

Calvin believed firmly in the integrity of Word and
sacrament. In the Institutes of the Christian Religion he
wrote, “Therefore, let it be regarded as a settled principle
that the sacraments have the same office as the Word of
God: to offer and set forth Christ to us, and in him the
treasures of heavenly grace” (Institutes 4.14.17). The
sacraments are signs and seals of God’s promises, con-
firming the faith we have received through the Word; in
turn, the Word always accompanies the sacrament, allow-
ing worshipers to participate in the sacrament with faith
and understanding. Unfortunately, churches of the
Reformed tradition (from Calvin’s time to ours) have
been reticent to embrace the full implications of Calvin’s
conviction. In the first edition of the Institutes (1536)
Calvin made a case for the weekly celebration of the
Lord’s Supper. The Genevan authorities compelled him
to compromise on this position; Calvin agreed to monthly
celebrations of the sacrament, but for a brief time was
able to arrange a system of rotation by which the Supper
was celebrated in at one of the Geneva churches each week. Calvin’s Form of Church Prayers reflects this com-
promise, providing for both patterns of worship—the
Lord’s Day Service of the Word as well as the Lord’s Day
Service with the Lord’s Supper. We might honor Calvin’s
vision of the church by reclaiming this integral relation-
ship between Word and sacrament—particularly by
increasing the frequency of celebration of the Lord’s
Supper, but also by recovering the role of Baptism as
entry into the covenant community, the body of Christ.
Word, Bath, and Meal belong together. As Calvin insist-
ed in his famous “marks of the church”: “Wherever we see
the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the
sacraments administered according to Christ’s institution,
there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists”
(Institutes 4.1.9).

At the conclusion of worship, the congregation typi-
cally sang a psalm or the canticle of Simeon (Luke 2:29-
32). The Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:24-26) fol-
lowed—words that are still familiar in Reformed worship:
“The Lord bless you and keep you.” Elsie Anne McKee
has suggested that (at least in Strasbourg) on Sundays
when the Lord’s Supper was celebrated, worshipers made
a special offering for the poor as they departed from the
sanctuary. This clear sense of connection between being
nourished at the Lord’s Table and providing sustenance
for the poor is an idea worth recovering. As Calvin wrote,
I offer this article as tribute to my late father-in-law, William Greenway Sr, who left this world that he so loved on March 22, 2009. —C. Rigby

Oh, how I will miss the world!” exclaims the Reverend John Ames, protagonist of Marilynne Robinson’s Pulitzer prize-winning novel, *Gilead* (115). An elderly man dying of heart disease, he says this in the context of confessing that he enjoys waltzing (though he doesn’t really know how) and plans to do more of it (but only in the privacy of his study). He adds that he had thought of keeping a book nearby that he could hold in his hands if he felt himself dying of a heart attack as a result of his exertion. One of the books he thought he might publicize in this unorthodox way was the second volume of Calvin’s *Institutes*. “Which is by no means to slight Volume I,” he insists (*Gilead*, 115).

Most people don’t associate Calvin with waltzing, regardless of which volume of the *Institutes* they’re holding. But Ames does, because Robinson does. It is possible, in fact, that the work of Robinson holds more to redeem the dour Calvin of stereotypes than does the work of any other contemporary writer. Her pursuit and celebration of the “real Calvin” is evident not only in her very well known works of fiction but also, and even more explicitly, in her lesser-known works of nonfiction.

In her introduction to *The Death of Adam*, for example, Robinson warns her reader that she discusses Calvin in several of the essays in her book, identifying him as “a figure of the greatest historical consequence, especially for our culture, who is more or less entirely unread” (*Death*, 12). She marvels at the fact that our society pressures us not to read Calvin. “The prohibition is more absolute than it ever was against Marx,” and is so strictly adhered to that even “learned-looking books on subjects to which he is entirely germane typically do not include a single work of his immense corpus in their bibliographies” (*Death*, 12). Robinson minces no words in condemning us for buying into the “folklore” about Calvin rather than “looking into” who he really was and what he was really about (*Death*, 12).

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**Waltzing with Calvin**

*Author Marilynne Robinson on Calvin and the love of this world*
And Robinson does look into it. While the Calvin of folklore supported the Empire, insisting that governing authorities be obeyed even if they wielded power abusively, the Calvin who wrote the Institutes took pains to describe circumstances in which the revolt of the people is entirely justified (Death, 14-19). While the Calvin of folklore holds we must “crush all considerations of humanity” in our service to a “ruthless” God, the Calvin who wrote a commentary on Psalm 139 insists “we are to seek the good of all” and that sinners are “to be reclaimed by kindness and good offices” (Death, 21-22). While the Calvin of folklore perpetuates orthodoxy, the Calvin who “is compelled and enthralled by an overwhelming awareness of the grandeur of God” is deeply heterodox, committed to reform (Death, 188). While the Calvin of folklore is a Bible thumper, the Calvin who authored commentaries on almost every biblical book “creates a body of interpretation that is not allegorical, not analogical, and not offered by him as certainly true” (Death, 191).

Robinson goes much further than correcting misconceptions about Calvin and offering a “more balanced” picture. Her work cuts to the very center of who he is and what he thought and why it matters to who we are as modern western people. In her Preface to John Calvin: Steward of God’s Covenant, the Thornton/Varenne anthology of his writings, for example, Robinson asserts that “nothing in Calvin’s thought is more striking than his evocation of perception, which has the potency and the splendor of a true apprehension of God” (Steward, xii). “His theology is compelled and enthralled by an overwhelming awareness of the grandeur of God” (Death, 188); his “undeviating discipline … suggests … visionary intensity” (Steward, xv).

Robinson emphasizes that what is so compelling about Calvin’s vision is his “paradoxical” conviction that the God of glory is known not only in the expanse of the cosmos but also in the particularities of our day-to-day lives. Calvin’s radical conviction (influenced, in part, by the humanism of his day) is that “the glory of God ‘shines forth’ from human nature” and is “at the very center of individual experience and presence” (Steward, xv). The sinfulness underscored by the Calvin of folklore certainly does characterize the fallen human condition, according to the actual Calvin. What is almost always missed, however, is that Calvin understood sin to be an aberration utterly inconsistent with our creation in God’s glorious image and our redemption in Jesus Christ. God’s plan for us is not that we, dulled by sinfulness, wait passively for God to act. Rather, God desires to show forth God’s glory in our acts of “creative freedom and ingenuity” (Steward, xxiii).

In Living By Fiction (Harper Perennial, 1988), Annie Dillard asks a question Robinson would answer emphatically with: “Calvin!” The question Dillard asks is: “Who interprets the raw universe directly?” She asks this question as a way of bemoaning the fact that we westerners, of late, seem to have given up on the search for meaning. We study only “human events and human artifacts,” says Dillard, but not “all we experience.” While theologians should be able to engage such interpretive work, Dillard observes, they generally fail to offer fresh insight, instead speaking “the same hard words” (Living, 145-146). Her hope is in artists, whom she believes are uniquely suited to the task (Living, 147).

One cannot read Robinson without being convinced that Calvin is a theologian—and an artist—who interprets the raw world directly. He offers us, as Robinson shows, “a clear and wondrous and complex articulation of the conceptual problem” that “lies at the center of all meaning” (Steward, xvi). And the problem is this: that “the Creator is, by his reckoning, utterly greater than any conception we can form of his creation, and at the same time free, present, just, loving, and intimately attentive to fallen humankind, collectively and one by one … It is as if we were to propose,” Robinson adds, reveling in Calvin’s insight, “that that great energy only exists to make possible our miraculously delicate participation in it” (Steward, xvi).

Robinson celebrates our miraculously delicate participation in this created world with every word she writes, with every character she creates. Astoundingly (especially for those of us whose opinions are influenced more by folklore than by exploration) the beauty of her prose and the genuineness of her stories are shaped in conversation with a 16th-century religious reformer whose contribution she extols to the point of embarrassment. But Robinson doesn’t really care if those who aren’t curious identify her as foolish, and she certainly isn’t reading Calvin because she thinks it will get her extra credit. Simply put: she immerses herself in his work, as one who loves this world, in order to love it more deeply. She waltzes, in her study (and in Gilead, and in her Home), the Institutes ready at hand. And she insists, with Calvin, that we continue to see all things as meaningful, because there is meaning in it all.

Selected Works of Marilynne Robinson

“John Calvin: His Life and Legacy”

An interview with video producer Blake Richter (MDiv’82)

Austin Seminary alumnus Blake Richter (MDiv’82) took some time from his day job as pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in De Kalb, Illinois, to produce the video, “John Calvin: His Life and Legacy.” Available from the Office of Theology and Worship of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the video includes a five-week, 20-page printable study guide and a 51-page PowerPoint supplement. To order, call 800-524-2612.

Richter, who has also produced a video for OTW on The Trinity, spoke with Windows about the making of the new film on John Calvin.

What are the challenges of making a video about a figure who lived five centuries ago?
I think he had a reputation for being kind of a sourpuss, a killjoy in some way. To revisit that time and to see him through fresh eyes was the biggest challenge. He really proved to be such a fertile figure for study. One of the biggest challenges was thinning out what turned out to be a great wealth of material about a truly remarkable man. He was someone who made deep and lasting friendships, and that showed up again and again as we worked through his life. He just had a great capacity for correspondence and also truly the heart of a pastor as he would reach out to people who had faced loss in various kinds of ways. That was very unexpected, but it was certainly part of what renewed our interest in him as we heard about his life and work.
What was your familiarity with Calvin before beginning the project?
I think I just knew him from what I’d read in seminary. I’ve returned a little bit to the Institutes and the Commentaries over the course of my ministry.

What was the nature of your research?
I tried to read several of the most familiar biographies. And then articles and books by the people we had scheduled to interview to better understand their interest and their expertise.

How did your understanding of Calvin evolve over the course of this project?
The part that I was so surprised at was his practical grounding and saying something useful for the church. He’d expound a doctrine and then he’d say, This is how it matters. This is how it makes a difference to the Christian life. That was unexpected and I think showed that my own reading of Calvin had been a little shallow to begin with.

What would you say are the central themes of the video?
I think understanding the character of God in Calvin’s theology, recognizing that loving parent who is so intimately present to us in the reality of Jesus Christ and made real by the Spirit’s work in our heart. From that foundation it’s possible then to think about the work in the church, realizing we’re always working among fallen and redeemed people who therefore should exercise power amidst community with checks on that power. And then to understand how we can impact the world. It all starts with understanding of the Triune God but from there we move to the church and the world. Those are, I think the key themes of the video and what I really hope comes out through the work.

What do you consider to be Calvin’s greatest contribution?
I think this conviction that theological reflection should matter. That it should have a consequence for the person in the pew. That because of what we understand about the Doctrine of God, or the nature of the church, or even the church in relation to the world, all those things have practical implications for how the life of faith is lived out. I think that legacy is a great one for wherever we find ourselves in the church. It should be the theme of our theological reflection in many respects, that this matters to the church and to the world.

Talk about the decision to tackle some of Calvin’s more challenging issues: predestination, total depravity, the execution of Servetus?
We knew they would be part of our discussion from the start. If people know one thing about Calvin it was the Doctrine of Predestination and if they knew two things about Calvin, it was the burning of Servetus. To understand what he actually meant in the case of predestination and to try to reflect on the historical circumstances about the execution of Servetus, and what Calvin’s actual role was. That doesn’t in any way excuse the city of Geneva or even Calvin for his role, but to just make sure we knew the history. That was always the goal. We felt if we didn’t address those topics in some way we’d miss the mark.

Talk about the locations you visited.
We went to France to the John Calvin Museum, to Geneva to the museum there. We went up to Rotterdam just to shoot the statue of Erasmus: a twelve-hour drive for 14 seconds’ worth of video—plus we nearly killed ourselves cutting in front of a trolley car! We shot a number of locations around France to get a feel for what piety would have been like in the time of Calvin. So we tried to shoot number of churches and cathedrals that would have embodied what that era would have felt like. In the U.S. we did an east coast swing, Union, Princeton, Yale, and a west coast swing. There was a lot of travel involved—from Geneva to Southern California.

Describe the role of the producer?
The classic understanding is the producer produces the content for the director to direct. In my case, content as it related to location and interviews, those scripted pieces that show up in the work. In the case of the documentary, the script becomes that verbal story line made up of each of those clips. So my primary task is to put one clip next to another in a way that told a story and makes sense.

Some of the most striking things don’t relate to what is said, and those are the fruit of my partner’s imagination. I can say we need to go to Chartres and shoot some stuff but he’s the one that makes it worth watching.

How does ‘film producer’ fit into your role as pastor of Westminster PC?
There isn’t a direct connection. This is mostly something that happens on vacation. The church was very supportive and granted me a month’s sabbatical. They have found my work is enriched by my exposure to the great themes and great figures of the Christian faith.
Do you think this will have an impact on your ministry?
It has had enormous impact on my ministry already. To return to the roots and remember how much Calvin believed lay people were capable of. And how much he was ready to put the governing of the church and the health of the church into the hands of the people we now identify as lay. I think that was just an extraordinary insight. His persistence in educating everyone in the way of the faith. Those were unexpected joys to encounter along the way.

He had a remarkable insight about the role of children and a unique understanding of baptism. He sort of differed from the traditional view that this is all about cleansing of sin. He wanted to add, No, it’s their right to receive this benefit of the Spirit.

The intimacy of his own personal relationship with God was another unexpected encounter. While he was eager to affirm God’s ultimate sovereignty over history and creation, he also spoke in such intimate terms about God as that loving parent who looks with favor on even the broken and incomplete gifts that children offer back to their loving parents.

Has your congregation noticed any difference?
Well, I’m sure it seems like I can’t preach now without talking about Calvin. I hope that great sense of intimacy, the thanksgiving that poured out of his work, I hope that has become more and more reflected in the work in I do. Right now we’re doing a Lenten study on Calvin. We’ve gotten to class two and so far the folks are hanging in there pretty well.

How do you expect the video to be used?
It’s already being used in classroom settings. A lot of people are using the 5-part study guide—you teach five classes, you watch a little bit of the video, and then have a discussion. Our hope also is that people will watch the film all the way through a couple of times because it’s intended to flow that way. We worked hard to make it an hours’ worth of material.

Anything final thoughts?
I have a strong sense of gratitude to Joe Small [of the Office of Theology and Worship] for his vision for the project and my partner Vernon Leat for his great creative ability and to each one of those scholars who took the time to talk to two guys on camera. Everyone was so gracious to us—it speaks volumes that people were wiling to give us so much time and to treat us so kindly all along the way.

Sacramental preaching
Continued from page 9

we would be unable to worship in that space, I preached a five-part sermon series entitled “The Furnishings of the Faith.” It was an attempt not just to acquaint the congregation with the theological and liturgical assumptions governing the changes that were coming in the sanctuary, but also to focus upon what I suggested were the five most important furnishings in that or any church—the pulpit, the font, the table, the Bible, and the pew. My text for the sermon on the table was the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Taking my cue from the hospitality provided by the father in that parable, I wanted the church to imagine how big the eucharistic table would need to be in order to provide such hospitality.

“I want that table to be hard for us to miss,” I said in that sermon. “I want that table to be so prominent in this church that, in our approaching it and going from it, we cannot help but catch a glimpse of that joyful and humble host who regularly prepares at the table an extravagant feast, and not because of who we are but because of who He is. He is the One who sets at the table a magnificent banquet which we’re not always sure we want, or need, but which, over time, warms us up in spite of ourselves until old grudges are forgiven and new pleasures are experienced and we start to notice a sense of reconciliation and joy that we have never known before. He is the One who celebrates our presence here, and who at the same time steps out into the cold to scan the horizon for the one who isn’t here yet. He is the One who sends us out into the world with the hope that, at each one of the numerous tables at which we sit, we might strive to be as welcoming at our tables as he is at his. I want a table in this church that is prominent and visible enough to serve as a lively symbol of persistent Christian hospitality and to remind us of the One who is present Himself in the breaking of the bread. Because, after all, we’re not a church without a table!”

Preaching Sacramentally
Indeed. We are not a church without a table. Moreover, we are not a church without a font. Here in the first chapter of the twenty-first century, we know that now—far better, perhaps, than ever. The power of the Gospel is diminished by any assumption that table and font somehow play lesser roles in the proclamation than we have traditionally expected of the pulpit. Or, to put it positively, the power of the Gospel is in fact enhanced by an approach to the ministry of preaching that remembers—day in and day out—that, as Fred Craddock once put it, “there is not one
square-inch in all creation in which, if one looks hard enough, one cannot find carved the initials of God.” Often hidden beneath the surface of things, those initials are nonetheless there, and ready to be unearthed for the glory of God and the edification of the church. The people in the pew are betting their lives on it, and I believe that Calvin was, too. It would be a shame for those of us who claim him as an ancestor not to notice.

Worship and music

Continued from page 11

“For as often as we partake of the symbol of the Lord’s body, as a token given and received, we reciprocally bind ourselves to all the duties of love in order that none of us may permit anything that can harm our brother, or overlook anything that can help him, where necessity demands and ability suffices” (Institutes 4.17.44).

There are other elements of our Reformed liturgical inheritance that must be mentioned—features not immediately apparent in Calvin’s Form of Church Prayers, but no less significant. The “full, conscious, and active participation” (to borrow anachronistically from the language of Vatican II) of the assembly was a paramount concern for Calvin. One important implication, of course, was proclamation and prayer in the language of the people—a tenet Calvin held in common with fellow Reformers. Congregational service books, first introduced in Reformed worship, were an outgrowth of that desire for full participation on the part of the people of God.

Another ramification of this principle was the singing of psalms: a primary means of popular participation in public worship. It is well known that Calvin limited music in worship to the singing of psalms and other biblical canticles. This injunction might seem less restrictive, however, were we to recall that Calvin considered the Psalter to be “An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul” (a phrase from the preface to his 1557 commentary on Psalms). Calvin encouraged and relished the singing of psalms—to the extent that, in 1539, he penned the first draft of the book that would become the 1562 Genevan Psalter—the source of a number of beloved, contemporary hymn tunes. Though we certainly wouldn’t want to jettison the treasury of modern hymnody, we would do well to embrace the expansive emotional range and theological depth and breadth of the psalms, following the example of our Reformed forebears.

Yet another signature of Reformed worship is its simplicity (some would say austerity) of form, eschewal of ostentatious ceremony, and wariness of idolatry. Calvin reserved the full wrath of his sometimes-poisonous prose for the excesses of the medieval mass. He warned that human nature is a “perpetual factory of idols” (Institutes 1.11.8), an admonition that still rings true in a society enthralled by celebrity and commerce. Here, however, a word of caution is in order. Calvin and his progeny were wont to substitute dry didacticism for the subtlety and splendor of liturgical symbolism and action, throwing out the proverbial baby with the baptismal bathwater. The children of the Reformation still have a tendency to talk the liturgy to death. (Confession of sin: I believe I have just exceeded the proposed word limit for this article.) I think we can retain Calvin’s appropriate regard for simplicity and concern about idolatry without sacrificing the mystery and meaning of Christian worship.

In the spirit of our theological ancestor John Calvin, I could no doubt devote four books to the topic of his contributions to Reformed worship. This brief essay will have to suffice. God be praised!

For Further Reflection

For accessible and engaging introductions to Calvin’s liturgical legacy see Bard Thompson’s Liturgies of the Western Church (Fortress Press, 1980) and Elise Anne McKee’s John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety (Paulist Press, 2001). I have relied on both sources for this article; all quotations from Calvin’s Form of Church Prayers are from the former. See also B. A. Gerrish’s Grace and Gratitude (Fortress Press, 1993); Gerrish makes a compelling case that Calvin’s whole theological project might be understood as a eucharistic theology, in the sense that it hinges on God’s abundant grace and our grateful response.

The mythology of Calvin

Continued from page 3

baseless. Calvin urged the courts to spare Servetus from burning, which Calvin considered a barbarous method of execution—and to behead Servetus instead. Okay, this one sounds like cold comfort even to me, and even if Calvin thought Servetus “had it coming” (to quote Clint Eastwood). The fact that Calvin believed the church was locked in a life and death struggle with Servetus and that the magistrates had no other responsible alternative than to execute him does not necessarily mean that Calvin was sadistic, though he does appear to have been a pretty typical product of a cruel age on this score. The burning of Servetus ignited a firestorm of controversy among Protestants as to whether such measures are ever justified. Incidentally, Servetus was opposed to the use of force to promote religion long before he was sentenced to death.

NOTE

Austin Seminary welcomed more than 200 guests from 22 states to MidWinters, February 2-4. Through lectures, conversation, and worship services, Thomas G. Long, Mary Louise Bringle, Paul Westermeyer, and Scott Black Johnston provided thought-provoking experiences in a variety of areas. For those unable to attend, all of the lectures are available for streaming on our website (www.austinseminary.edu; go to the “media gallery” and scroll down the menu under “Select a channel” to “Sermons and Lectures.”)

Members of the Classes of 1959 and 1969 enjoyed conversation over reunion lunches, and more recent graduates shared special fellowship opportunities. On Tuesday afternoon, Carroll Pickett (MDiv’57), author of Within These Walls, hosted a screening of “At the Death House Door,” the award-winning documentary based on his ministry in the Texas prison system. Pickett also delivered the keynote address at the Austin Seminary Association (ASA) Annual Meeting and Banquet.

Outgoing President Frank Yates (MDiv’75) presided over the ASA meeting introducing 2009 ASA President Patty Herndon (MDiv’93) and President-Elect Belinda Windham (MDiv’91). The following alumni/ae were elected to serve on the board: Richard Culp (MDiv’93), Gerald Goodridge (MDiv’02), David Green (MDiv’95), Nancy Mossman (MDiv’88), and Sabelyn Pussman (MDiv’05).

Honored during the meeting were the Seminary’s 2009 Distinguished Service recipients Marvin Griffin (DMin’90) and Bob Lively (MDiv’73).

Rodney Swisher (MDiv’98) introduced the first award winner with these words: “Even from the time of his call to the ministry that began some sixty-nine years ago, until the present moment, Dr. Griffin has never been one to dwell very long in the realm of the theoretical and overly cautious deliberation. He has always been a ‘Just Do It’ kind of preacher.”

He went on to note that Griffin has been involved in numerous religious and civic affiliations which further the mission of the church. Griffin has been pastor for fifty-eight years in Waco and at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Austin, where he still serves. He is corresponding secretary of the Missionary Baptist General Convention of Texas, president of St. John District Congress, and a certified deacon trainer for the Southern Baptist Convention. Griffin served on the Austin Seminary Board of Trustees from 1993-2001. He has been a force for economic change in his community and helped guide the formation of the East Austin Economic Development Corporation and the completion of a 12-unit senior housing complex. “As a teacher and author,” concluded Swisher, “he has been an exemplary pastor, preacher, counselor, and friend to all.”

Mike Murray (MDiv’61) introduced recipient Bob Lively by say-
The Janie Maxwell Morris Fellowship was established in 1953 by a bequest from Mrs. Milton Morris of Austin. This year’s $3000 W. P. Newell Memorial Fellowship winner was Joseph Moore. Moore is a member of Central Presbyterian Church, Austin, where he also completed his student internship. He received a BA (communication) from Trinity University. Prior to entering seminary Moore worked as a hiking and mountain biking guide in Arizona. Moore is a Jean Brown Scholar.

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And there was plenty of time for fellowship! Special events were held for members of the Class of 1959, 1969, 2006-2008, and the chalk-throwing former students of Professor Scott Black Johnston.

vehicle to enrich the life of a person training for the Christian ministry. The $4000 Alsup-Frierson 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,” was awarded to Cody Sandahl. A native of Austin, Sandahl is a member of Community Presbyterian Church in Port Aransas. He completed his student internship at Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church and also worked with youth at Covenant Presbyterian Church, both in Austin. He received a BA (computer science) from The University of Texas at Austin. Before entering seminary, Cody was a software engineer. Sandahl was a Jean Brown Scholar and has accepted a call as associate pastor of discipleship at First Presbyterian Church, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The Alsup-Frierson Fellowship for Excellence in Biblical Studies and Hermeneutics was established in 2005 by the families of Professor John and Carole Alsup of Georgetown, Texas, and former Trustee Clarence and Betty Frierson of Shreveport, Louisiana.

The winner of the $8000 Pile-Morgan Fellowship for 2009 is Megan Dosher. Selection of this grantee is made on the basis of Christian character, scholarship, and personal ability. Dosher is a member of University Presbyterian
The Reverend Dr. **Ann Fields** (MDiv’98) retires in April from her position as vice president for student affairs and vocation.

“We will certainly miss Ann as she moves into retirement. She has been a superb administrator of student services, a caring pastor, a faithful steward of the Seminary’s trust, an officer of the Seminary, and a delightful colleague,” says President Theodore Wardlaw. “It has been a special privilege to know and work with Ann, and to count her as a trusted friend. She has steadfastly represented the concerns and needs of students in all of our Cabinet deliberations.”

Fields began her eight-year tenure in the Seminary’s administration as interim director of admissions. She was promoted to vice president for student affairs in 2001 and since September 2008 has also presided over the Office of Vocation, handling matters related to vocation and the placement of graduating students. Ordained in the United Methodist Church, Fields is the author of *A Time to Speak: A History in Celebration of Clergywomen of the Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church*. She holds graduate degrees from Austin Seminary, Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State), and the University of Texas.

Fields has long been a sponsor and participant in Austin Seminary’s “Faithful Flyers” bicycle team which raises money for AIDS services. An avid outdoorswoman, she has retained her membership in the Girls Scouts of America for fifty-nine years; serving for twenty years as chair of the regional Scholarship Committee. In 2007 she received the Thanks Badge, the highest award given to an adult in scouting. In retirement, Fields is looking forward to working for the Yellowstone Association in the national park during the summers and doing short-term interim ministry work for the United Methodist Church the remainder of the year.
COMMUNITY NEWS

Jackie Saxon named vice president for student affairs and vocation

Austin Seminary has promoted The Reverend Jackie Saxon (MDiv’00), currently admissions counselor at Austin Seminary, to the position of vice president for student affairs and vocation, effective May 1. An alumna of the Seminary, Saxon comes to the new position with demonstrated gifts for administration, personal accessibility, and pastoral leadership. She succeeds The Reverend Dr. Ann Fields who retires in April.

Student life and vocational and placement services are critical to students’ success during their time on campus, as well as when they seek to serve churches and other ministries upon graduation. Says Austin Seminary President Theodore J. Wardlaw, “Jackie is particularly well-suited to manage the multiple demands of this position. She will do so with efficiency, care, compassion, humor, and faithfulness to this school and its mission.”

Prior to Saxon’s current position, she was the associate pastor of University Baptist Church, Austin, from 1998 to 2006. Jackie earned a BBA with an emphasis in finance and banking from Howard University in Washington, D.C., in 1984 and an MDiv from Austin Seminary in 2000. Before attending seminary, she was a financial analyst with IBM in both New York State and Austin. She was ordained in the American Baptist Church in 2001 and is currently a member of Church of the Savior, an A.B.C. church in Cedar Park, Texas. She continues to serve in various leadership roles on a national level within the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A. program boards and committees. She is also a member of the Austin Seminary Association Alumni/ae Board and other local councils and committees. Originally from Rochester, New York, Saxon made Austin her home in 1990.

Dearman to leave Austin Seminary

The Reverend Dr. J. Andrew Dearman, professor of Old Testament for more than twenty-seven years, has accepted a post at Fuller Theological Seminary. Effective July 1, 2009, Dearman will become Fuller’s associate dean of the School of Theology, professor of Old Testament, and director of the Fuller Texas regional campus in Houston.

“Andy Dearman has been a superb Old Testament scholar, a highly respected archeologist, an effective dean, and—most significantly—a caring teacher,” says President Theodore J. Wardlaw. “He has not simply taught Old Testament; more profoundly, he has taught and modeled the meaning of ministry and vocation. Students across several generations are indebted to him and gratefully recall his influence.”

Dearman joined the faculty of Austin Seminary in 1982 and served as academic dean from 1997-2003. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Emory University. An experienced archaeological researcher in the Middle East, he is the author of six books including Jeremiah and Lamentations (Zondervan, 2002) and Hosea (Eerdmans, in press), as well as more than forty entries in the Harper Collins Bible Dictionary, Revised Edition. Dearman is past editor of Horizons in Biblical Theology and has served on the editorial board of the Journal of Biblical Literature for the Society of Biblical Literature.

Starting in the fall, Dr. W. Eugene March (MDiv’60) will share in the teaching of Old Testament courses.
Seminary responds to global economic conditions with changes in staff, financial aid, and benefits

Austin Seminary has made necessary adjustments as a direct result of the nation’s economic recession and reduced capital available to it from its endowment. Almost 70% of the Seminary’s funding comes from its endowment, which has declined approximately 32% over the past eighteen months.

Cassandra Carr, chair of Austin Seminary’s Board of Trustees commented, “The Austin Seminary Board’s reaction to the current economic situation was to take action now, so that we can confidently move toward the future, continuing to equip servant leaders for the church and community.”

After months of deliberations, the board of trustees and Austin Seminary’s cabinet implemented Seminary-wide changes including the following: reductions in departmental budgets; a hiring freeze for faculty and staff, subject to presidential review, except for certain searches already underway such as the Louis H. and Katherine S. Zbinden Chair of Pastoral Ministry and Leadership; a freeze on salaries and changes in employee benefits; a reduction of the maximum need-based student financial aid from 90% to 85%; a reduction in the pension benefit for all employees on the TIAA/CREF retirement plan from 12% to 6%, effective July 1, 2009; reductions of some positions from full-time to half-time; the combination of some positions; and the elimination of nine staff positions.

Seminary President Theodore J. Wardlaw says, “All of these reductions will have an immediate impact upon this Seminary community, none so much as the loss of persons who have ably served our community, alums, churches, guests, and each other. Each of these persons made this Seminary better through their presence here, and we will miss each one of them mightily.”

Austin Seminary, like many institutions, is currently facing serious financial constraints due to the global economic recession. At its February meeting, the Seminary Board of Trustees instructed the administration to significantly reduce its annual budget; these changes are in response to that directive.

Grant to assist in diversity education program

Austin Seminary has been awarded a grant in the amount of $20,000 from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion to enhance diversity in its work of theological education. The grant will help fund a project to make Austin Seminary’s students, faculty, and administrators aware of racial/ethnic differences; understand sources, dynamics, and outcomes of racial/ethnic identity and racism; attain skills to resist racial/ethnic biases; learn to live and work in solidarity with those who are different; and acquire skills to mobilize congregations for this work.

David F. White, The C. Ellis and Nancy Gribble Nelson Associate Professor of Christian Education, who authored the grant proposal, says, “Austin Seminary, like much of the United States, exists at the intersection of multiple ethnic cultures where congregations must navigate in light of Christian faith. We believe the promise of welcome and inclusion of earliest Christianity has not yet been realized. If the walls of separation are to come down, there is work to be done in theological education concerning how we train students who will provide leadership in churches and communities. We are pleased to be among organizations participating in the advancement of this important work.”

Beginning this fall, Austin Seminary plans to inaugurate its diversity in theological education program, which will include faculty discussions, campus workshops and roundtable discussions, and consultations in course development.
The Reverend **Jackie Saxon** (MDiv’00) was the Martin Luther King Commemorative Preacher, February 10. Also participating in the service was the choir from Huston Tillotson University in Austin.

On February 17-19 the joint team from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) visited campus conducting their on-site accreditation visit, a process the Seminary goes through every ten years. The final report from the team is due in December.

The Reverend Dr. William Storrar, director of the Center of Theological Inquiry, presented the 2009 Settles Lectures on Mission and Evangelism, March 24-25. He delivered two lectures on mission and public theology, “The Common Ground” and “The Creative Tension.”

Austin Seminary Trustee **Elizabeth Christian** is being honored by the Girl Scouts of Central Texas. Named a Woman of Distinction, Christian will be recognized at an awards luncheon on April 16. The president of Elizabeth Christian and Associates Public Relations, she has served on Austin Seminary’s Board since 2007.

Austin Seminary’s Houston Extension program will sponsor a Spring Forum on “The Fundamentals of Fundamentalism” April 26 at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church in Houston. The guest speaker will be Jill Carroll, executive director of the Boniuk Center for the Study and Advancement of Religious Tolerance at Rice University.

Trustee Emeritus **Max Sherman** will be honored for his community service at Seton Cove of Austin’s “Celebrating the Creative Spirit” Arts and Music Event on May 13, 2009. Explains the organization: “honoring the creative spirit in one another we reflect wisdom, integrity, faith, hope, and love. Seton Cove is pleased to honor Max Sherman for exemplifying such a well-lived life.”

**Planning begins for next campaign**

In the midst of economic hardships, the Seminary has formed a committee to study the feasibility of the next capital campaign. “Some might wonder how the Seminary’s Board of Trustees, in the midst of a global recession and very real external pressures to reduce our budget, would be looking toward our next comprehensive campaign,” says Seminary President Ted Wardlaw. “It is our strong conviction that the current economic woes do not prevent us from thinking faithfully about the contours of our future, for these tough times will not last forever. The story of this Seminary, just like the story of our faith, is filled with instances in which thoughtful people dreamed big dreams even in the midst of tough times—dreams which in due course became reality. This is why we’re still dreaming toward a future that is itself running toward us!”

Members of the committee include: Trustee **Thomas Are**, Prairie Village, Kansas; **Ruben P. Armendariz** (MDiv’61), San Antonio; Board Chair **Cassandra C. Carr**, Austin; **G. Archer Frierson**, Shreveport; Trustee **Richard D. Gillham**, Dallas; Rev. **Lynn S. Hargrove** (MDiv’01), Bellaire, Texas; Committee Chair **John Hartman**, Houston; **Patricia Lee** (MDiv’05), Metairie, Louisiana; **John McCoy** (MDiv’63), Dallas; **Asante Todd** (MDiv’06), Nashville; Trustee **John Van Osdall**, Houston; **Melinda Veatch** (MDiv’96), Fort Worth, Texas; Trustee **Elizabeth C. Williams**, Dallas; Trustee Emeritus **Hugh Williamson**, Denver; **Frank Yates** (MDiv’75), Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Trustee Emeritus **Louis H. Zbinden**, San Antonio.

**Students celebrate with Professor John Ahn, center top, at the conclusion of their introduction to Hebrew class in January. Thanks to the curriculum changes, this is the last year that Hebrew will be taught in January; beginning in 2010 it will be offered during the regular spring term.**
**Seminary employees touch the future**

You may remember this bumper sticker: “I touch the future. I teach.”

Not all of us employees of Austin Seminary teach. Some do, but some of us shelve books, some keep the buildings sparkling, some answer phones, some maintain databases, some recruit new students. But all of us do touch the future.

We do this through the work we do every day in the classroom, the library, the administrative offices, the residence halls. Everything we do touches the future because everything we do.

*Continued on page 26*

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**Long-time friends invest time, faith, and gifts to benefit Austin Seminary students**

Nearly every month, several good friends gather for a birthday lunch and then take up a free-will collection to send to Austin Seminary.

Years ago all of these ladies belonged to the same church in Odessa, Texas. After several years of struggling, the church finally closed in 1993. The presbytery sold the property and, at the request of Session, sent a portion of the proceeds to Austin Seminary to establish The St. Paul Presbyterian Church Scholarship Fund.

The women of the church drifted apart, eventually joining other churches in town. “We were lost for a while,” remembers Betty Sue Dale. “We went for a few years and did not try to get together. Then one of us turned 70 and I thought it’d be great if we’d all get together for lunch to celebrate her birthday. We called the ladies who were with the church when it closed and we got the initial sixteen members of the group from that. We never intended to make it an ongoing thing, but we were together for about two hours and just realized how much we’d missed each other. We realized we had really grown up in the church together—as young women we’d watched our children grow, we’d gone through trials and tribulations and sadnesses—and we just didn’t want to let that go again.”

Soon, Mary Taylor, suggested that instead of buying and bringing birthday cards they use the money to build up the scholarship fund at the Seminary. From the initial funding of $33,500, they have grown the fund to almost $46,000. Citing a goal of $50,000, they made a covenant with each other that if the goal is not yet reached, “the last one standing would fund it,” laughs Betty. “I think some of the younger women are holding their breath!”

Over the years they have exchanged a lively correspondence with students who have benefited from the scholarship and even attended one’s graduation. These relationships have reinforced their enthusiasm for giving: “Some of us that are older,” says Betty Sue, “we just think education is the secret to the growth of our church and our faith.”

The Session hoped that the scholarship fund would perpetuate the name of St. Paul; something positive to come from the closing of the church. “We have grown to realize that we had clung to the church for too many years,” says Betty Sue. “We could have been working for the Lord in other ways rather than trying to prop up the church in a building. We’ve all matured. We miss our old church, but we have this in common. We are working toward this scholarship for a church that we dearly love.”

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**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 luncheons, 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 2009 are:**

- April 16: Kerrville
- May 7: Central Texas
- Sept. 10: Corpus Christi
- Oct. 1: Midland
- Oct. 29: Kansas City
- Nov. 12: Shreveport

Contact Sandy Wilder, at 512-404-4806, for more information.
Charitable Gift Annuity

Giving is a wonderful expression of faith, but financial restraints often hinder the ability to contribute. If you want to make a gift to Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary but also need income, a charitable gift annuity can be an answer.

A charitable gift annuity is an irrevocable gift that provides you (or someone you name) a stable, set amount every year for life. The annual payment is based on age and when payments start and could yield more than your current investments (see table at right). At the end of your life, you make a special and enduring gift to strengthen Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

For more information contact: Elizabeth Shumaker, Director of Development, 800-777-6127, ext. 4803 eshumaker@austinseminary.edu

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Helps “to educate and equip individuals for the ordained Christian ministry and other forms of Christian service and leadership” (from the Austin Seminary Mission Statement).

We also touch the future through our payroll contributions toward the Seminary’s Annual Fund, which provides tuition assistance, housing, computer equipment, library materials, and more. Forty-two percent of us give to the Annual Fund, including nine of us who contribute at the multi-year Partner level.

How do you touch the future of Austin Seminary?

—Sandy Wilder
Development Coordinator

Employee giving

Continued from page 21

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Goin’ greener!

Stotts Hall is offering another kind of “green” to its dining customers. Among the initiatives implemented recently are:

- transportation from the manufacturer to our local distributor that is CO2 neutral;
- paper coffee cups made from sustainable paper and lined with a renewable corn-polymer;
- hot food to-go boxes made from bagasse, a sustainable product made from spent sugar cane stalks;
- clear cups and boxes made from corn and disposable utensils made from plant starch material.

Did you know you can “give” greener, too? See how at: www.austinseminary.edu /greengiving

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DEVELOPMENT NEWS

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Faculty Notes

John Alsup, the D. Thomason First Presbyterian Church, Shreveport, Professor of New Testament Studies, and his wife, Carole, attended their 50th high school reunion in North Hollywood, California.

Whit Bodman, associate professor of comparative religion, met with PCUSA college chaplains and hosted a group of seven Turkish imams here on a State Department visit. He and a group of students are meeting with a group of Muslims every two weeks in a Bible-Qur’an study. He gave a paper “Which of the Lord’s blessings shall we deny?” at a conference in Baton Rouge.

Allan H. Cole, the Nancy Taylor Williamson Associate Professor of Pastoral Care has written a chapter on bereavement in The Church Leader’s Guide to Mental Health and Social Problems, Cynthia Franklin and Rowena Fong, eds. (Oxford University Press, forthcoming) and wrote studies on suicide, congregational loss, hospital visitation, and conflict prevention and resolution for “The Thoughtful Christian” and “The Presbyterian Leader.”

In January Associate Professor of Homiletics Jennifer Lord presented “Images for Preaching from the Revised Common Lectionary” at the North American Academy of Liturgy in Baltimore where she also convened the Liturgical Language seminar group. She preached and lectured at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City. Her essay “Preaching: Some Affirmations and Admonitions” is included in the WJK volume Best Advice: Wisdom on Ministry from 30 Pastors and Preachers, William J. Carl, ed.
People often ask, “If I could read only one book on this subject, what should it be?” I confess I’m usually frustrated when that happens. If a subject is worth one book, it’s probably worth several. Then it’s a matter of choosing among relative strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes, of course, there are bad books on a subject, and the question allows me to say, “Whatever you do, don’t waste your money or your time on that book!” But usually it’s just frustrating. So, I was enormous-ly relieved recently when Don Frampton, senior minister of St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church in New Orleans and a member of our board of trustees, asked me to recommend a few books on John Calvin. Here are the books I suggested to Don.


A serious reader of Calvin will eventually want to read his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), the best edition of which was edited by John T. McNeill and translated by Ford Lewis Battles, but I think it makes the most sense to start with the Parker biography, then to read a good edited collection (such as Reid’s), and then to read one of Calvin’s commentaries, perhaps his *Commentary on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, before getting into the Institutes. Calvin was first and foremost a preacher, and he really shines most brightly when writing about the Bible.

Michael Jinkins (DMin’83)
Academic Dean
CONTINUING EDUCATION NEWS

College of Pastoral Leaders awards grants for 2009

The College of Pastoral Leaders has awarded grants to seventy-eight clergy to pursue renewal projects during 2009-2011. A partial list appears below; the remainder will appear in the Summer issue of Windows. The next application deadline is October 31, 2009.

Art and the Pastoral Imagination
The Rev. Dr. James M. Burns, Jr., Memorial Presbyterian Church, Norman, OK
The Rev. Mr. Daniel G. Conklin, Epiphany Episcopal Parish, Seattle, WA
The Rev. Dr. Robert S. Rice, First Presbyterian Church, Norman, OK
The Rev. Dr. Thomas R. Shaw, Wooster Church of the Cross UMC, Wooster, OH

Artistic Players
The Rev. Ms. Gail C. Doering, Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church, Clayton, CA
The Rev. Ms. Jeannie Kim, Pine United Methodist Church, San Francisco, CA
The Rev. Ms. Wendy Komori Stager, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Pleasant Hills, CA
The Rev. Ms. Debbie Whaley, First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

Cross Cutters 2
The Rev. Mr. Kevin Arensman, First Christian Church, Pittsburg, KS
The Rev. Mr. Tracy R. Bair, Royal Heights United Methodist Church, Joplin, MO
The Rev. Mr. Gary D. Bell, First Christian Church of Newton, Newton, KS
The Rev. Mr. Joshua Bel, Fairview Christian Church, Lynchburg, VA

Fearless Friends of the Sacred
The Rev. Mr. Elias D. Burgos, Hospice of St. John, Lakewood, CO
The Rev. Mr. Thomas D. deBree, University of Colorado Hospital, Aurora, CO
The Rev. Dr. Larry A. Grimm, Hospice of St. John/Capitol Heights PC, Lakewood, CO
The Rev. Dr. Blaine Clarke Vestal, First Avenue Presbyterian Church, Denver, CO

Hope Springs 2
The Rev. Mr. Steven R. Blackstock, First Presbyterian Church, Belen, NM
The Rev. Mr. Michael Foster, First Presbyterian Church, Phoenix, OR
The Rev. Ms. Margaret H. Jorgensen, Buntyn Presbyterian Church, Memphis, TN
The Rev. Mr. William McGarvey, Community Presbyterian Church, Pittsburg, CA
The Rev. Mr. Terry L. McLellan, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Carrollton, TX

Living Tradition
The Rev. Dr. Kenneth H. Carter, Jr., Providence United Methodist Church, Charlotte, NC
The Rev. Mr. Randy Cooper, First United Methodist Church, Ripley, TN
The Rev. Dr. James L. Haddix, All Souls Church, United Church of Christ, Bangor, ME
The Rev. Mr. David C. Hockett, Milford Hills United Methodist Church, Salisbury, NC
The Rev. Mr. Jonathan D. Marlowe, Shiloh United Methodist Church, Granite Quarry, NC
The Rev. Dr. Wilbur Rush Otey, III, Selwyn Avenue Presbyterian Church Charlotte, NC

Los Companeros en Cristo
The Rev. Mr. James Bouzard, Christ Chapel Lutheran, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX
The Rev. Mr. Gregory H. Gaskamp, Living Water Lutheran Church, Leander, TX
The Rev. Mr. Stephen C. Kanouse, ELCA Mission Director, Texas-Louisiana, Dallas, TX
The Rev. Mr. Michael M. Robinson, Asst. to Bishop, S’western Texas Synod, ELCA, Seguin, TX
The Rev. Mr. Jeffrey Thompson, St. John Lutheran Church, Robstown, TX
The Rev. Dr. Ray Tiemann, Bishop, Southwestern Texas Synod, ELCA, Seguin, TX
The Rev. Dr. Lynn Schudy Ziese, Asst. to Bishop, S’western Texas Synod, ELCA, Seguin, TX
The Rev. Dr. Paul R. Ziese, MacArthur Park Lutheran Church, San Antonio, TX

The Balancing Act: Moms in Ministry
The Rev. Ms. Jennifer Butler, Faith in Public Life - PCUSA, Washington, DC
The Rev. Ms. Martha A. Dimmers, Children’s Hospital and Regional Med. Center, Seattle, WA
The Rev. Ms. Mary D. Lindquist, The Episcopal Church on West Kauai, Eleele, HI
The Rev. Ms. Tamara J. Seidel, First PC of Highland and Marlboro, Marlboro, NY

Multicultural Urban Leadership Emerging
The Rev. Mr. James Hickson Lee, New Covenant Fellowship, Austin, TX
The Rev. Mr. Thomas J. Heger, Beacon Hill Presbyterian Church, San Antonio, TX
The Rev. Mr. Samuel P. Riccobene, First Presbyterian Church, Austin, TX
The Rev. Mr. Hector M. Rivera-Velez, Christus VNA Hospice and Palliative Care, San Antonio, TX

Seminar: “The Life of Prayer: Mind, Body, and Soul”
On April 24, 2009, a one-day seminar will look at prayer as the chief exercise of faith for the Christian life. The group will consider why we pray, what happens in prayer, how we may pray (individually and corporately), and how to establish a prayer life and keep with it.

The presenter: Allan Hugh Cole Jr. is Austin Seminary’s Nancy Taylor Williamson Associate Professor of Pastoral Care.

Who should come? Provided for pastors and other church leaders, emphasis will be given to making prayer a more central faith practice in congregational life. Pastors and church leaders are encouraged to attend together.

Seminar: “Conflict Prevention and Resolution in the Church”
On May 15, 2009, we will take a look at persistent conflict in congregations, one of the leading causes of clergy burnout and congregational struggles. This day-long workshop will teach methods of conflict prevention and resolution to use with a congregation. Spend the day gaining insight and learning new theories and techniques for ministry.

The presenter: Allan Hugh Cole Jr.

Who should come? Pastors and lay leaders

Cost for each event: $55 (includes lunch)

Registration: go online to www.austinseminary.edu (choose Continuing Education and then Christian Leadership Education)
ORDINATIONS

Marta T. Pena (MDiv’06) to serve Morningside Ministries in San Antonio, Texas

Cameron T. Allen (MDiv’07) to serve Hospice Austin in Austin, Texas

Deborah E. Hollifield (MDiv’07) to serve First Presbyterian Church, Guymon, Oklahoma.

Melissa J. Russell (MDiv’07) to serve Highland Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas.

Derek Forbes (MDiv’08) to serve Arvada Presbyterian Church, Arvada, Colorado.

Victoria B. Griffin (MDiv’08) to serve First Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville, Texas.

Ryan T. Jensen (MDiv’08) to serve Government Street Presbyterian Church, Mobile, Alabama.

Mark R. Renn (MDiv’08) to serve Providence Presbyterian Church, Mobile, Alabama.

Cody M. Sandahl (MDiv’08) to serve First Presbyterian Church, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

NECROLOGY

Donald M. Megahan (MDiv’64) St. Louis, Missouri, July 4, 2008.
Thomas Jenkins (DMin’05) Rockwall, Texas, February 18, 2009.

Thinking Outside the Box

Connect with Austin Seminary alumni/ae over lunch while you learn from a dynamic speaker and from one another. Future events include:

May 14, Jackson Woods Presbyterian Church, Corpus Christi, Texas, Whit Bodman leading a discussion on “The Holy Land in America”

October 22, 2009, St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, Marble Falls, Texas, Janet Maykus on “The Importance of Clergy Peer Groups”

November 10, 2009, Grace Presbyterian Church, Round Rock, Texas, David W. Johnson on “Reformed Spirituality”
Call for Applications
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary’s
Holy Land Pastoral Renewal Program
Funded through the CF Foundation

Summer 2009

Austin Seminary’s Holy Land Pastoral Renewal Program is now accepting applications for its August Holy Land Pilgrimage. The pilgrimage will provide an opportunity for twenty pastors to engage in the spiritual discipline of pilgrimage. Our hope is that a time of focused travel, prayer, and discovery in Jesus’ homeland will shed new light on the personal faith of the pilgrims and inspire them in their leadership of others. Those chosen to participate in the pilgrimage will have travel expenses and lodging paid for through a generous grant from the CF Foundation Inc. Pilgrims will attend a two-day orientation session prior to travel, then leave for 14 days in Israel. The first week will be spent in Galilee, the second in Jerusalem. Pilgrims will join together ninety days after the pilgrimage to reflect on their experiences. Pastors accepted in the program must commit to the entire program. The program is intended for mid-career pastors (5+ years) who have not recently been to the Holy Land and who are not already participating in a clergy renewal program.

Application deadline: May 1, 2009
(a $300 application fee will be returned if you are not chosen to participate in the pilgrimage)

Travel dates: Orientation and Pilgrimage, July 31-August 17, Washington D.C.
Reflection gathering, November 9-11, Austin, Texas

For more information and to request an application:
www.austinseminary.edu/holylandpilgrimage