The Word Became Flesh: The Incarnation
President’s Message

This edition of Theologia, coming at the end of 2001, gives us the opportunity to reflect on the progress of the school during the year.

First, the end of 2001 marks one year of tenure for me and ends what I call my “freshman year” at Austin Graduate. It has been a gratifying year and I am grateful for the encouragement of so many.

In 2001, we announced our accreditation to offer the Master of Arts in Theological Studies. This prompted a rather significant change: since we were now a graduate school, we moved to rename the college Austin Graduate School of Theology. This has been a positive development.

This year we reported that we would be able to continue our Bachelor’s degree program, which had previously not been possible. Incidentally, we saw our undergraduate numbers grow following the announcement.

In this issue, we share other news. Mark Martin, our registrar and an alumnus, will be leaving in February to pursue his work as a missionary in Germany. While we regret losing Mark, we have always known that this was his goal, and we applaud him for it. And, we tell the story of graduating senior, Angie Thier. It has been a joy to know Angie. Her bright attitude will be missed in our halls and classrooms.

Elsewhere, we happily announce two appointments. First, Dr. David Worley has assumed the post of Chancellor which was vacated by the passing of Dr. Claude Hocott. David has been a friend and mentor during this transition, and it is good to have him on the administrative team. Second, Dave Arthur has been named Vice-President. Dave is a wonderful co-worker and will serve well in his new position.

Finally, there is the appointment of new board officers and the election of a new trustee. Our board is composed of members who care deeply for the school. We have been blessed with good leadership in the past and that leadership continues. I am especially pleased that Neil Haney has agreed to serve with the trustees. He is a good friend and will make an excellent addition to the board.

To all our friends, we say “thank you” for helping us have a very good year. May every blessing be yours in the coming year.

On the Cover

“When the Angel Came”

Houston artist, Scott Bodenheimer, captures the moment of realization when Mary receives the angel’s word that she will bear the Messiah. Used by permission. (c) 1993 Scott Bodenheimer (www.bodenheimer.com)

Senior Finds Career in Non-Profits

As she began to approach graduation, twenty-two-year-old Angie Thier began to focus more sharply on career options.

“At first, I thought I would go to work in a secular field,” she says. “I wasn’t sure how best to use my degree.”

Angie will receive her Bachelor of Ministry degree in December. She started her education at Mary Hardin Baylor University, but transferred to Austin Community College.

She explains how she came to Austin Graduate: “I was looking for a school where I could learn more about God’s Word, and my youth minister looked into Austin Graduate School for me. That’s when I enrolled.”

“I initially wanted an education that would enable me to be more helpful in the ministries of my home church,” she continues. “I never really thought that I could use my degree directly in a career. This place made me reconsider.”

“One of the faculty members suggested that I consider working with a non-profit organization,” she says. “He said that the majority of non-profits began as Christian organizations and that they are always looking for qualified people.”

So, she applied to a non-profit organization that helps young people deal with pregnancy and issues of sexuality. They readily accepted her.

“I always hated the speaking classes at Austin Grad because I never wanted to speak publicly,” she says. “But now, I am not afraid to speak to youth groups in churches or schools because I have a passion for the subject. Kids are so mixed up about sex nowadays. I explain to them that sex is a gift God has given them for marriage. They should wait for marriage because this is God’s plan for them.”

She says she is grateful for the classes that taught her not only to speak, but also to understand and apply scripture.

“I didn’t just want to read the Bible, and perhaps use it inappropriately, when I was working with my youth group at church, or anywhere else,” she explains. “Classes here have caused me to think and understand. Now I know the scriptures, because I have truly studied them.”

When asked what has influenced her most at Austin Graduate, she says that it was interacting with ministers and teachers and seeing their passion for people.

“It is more than just a college,” Angie says. “Not only did the classes give me better access to God’s Word, but they taught me about God’s calling to holiness and having compassion for people.”

While at Austin Graduate, Angie served as student body president. Married for two years, she and her husband, Chuck, are active in the youth ministry of their church.
The Incarnation
The Word Became Flesh

All of the Gospels tell the story of the one Son of God, but each begins at a different point in the story. Mark’s narrative opens on the banks of the Jordan River where the prophet John summons all Israel to baptism which Jesus accepts. Matthew and Luke begin with the events surrounding Jesus’ birth, Matthew telling the story of Jesus’ “father” (legally speaking) and Luke the story of his mother.

John’s Gospel, however, takes the story as far back as it can be taken and begins where the whole Bible begins: “in the beginning.”

Genesis says that “in the beginning,” God spoke, and the world came into being, commencing with the light that shone out of darkness. John follows ancient interpretations of Genesis in holding that the creative Word God spoke was neither inert nor lifeless, but was personal, a partner and agent in God’s creation of the world. John would add that the Word was also God’s partner in redemption.

For John, God’s Word reveals the meaning of all creation. Further, this Word was not a casual utterance of God, nor an offhand comment. It was rather like the pledge a soldier makes to a dying comrade on the field of battle. God invested His Word with all that He is, and so, in a real sense, John can tell us that “the Word was God.”

In the Incarnation, the incomparable Word clothed Himself with human flesh and united Himself for all time with the child conceived by divine power in Mary’s womb.

Jeffrey Peterson is Associate Professor of New Testament.

“The Word became flesh and pitched His tent among us” (John 1.14). To find God and satisfy the spiritual hunger that abounds in our time, we do not need to climb to heaven ourselves. In Christ, heaven has descended to dwell among us. We need only to come within the sound of His voice and the circle of His embrace by joining ourselves to the people He has made His own and given power to become children of God.

Each person who learns of this amazing divine condescension is presented a choice which the Gospel of John shows people making throughout the ministry of Jesus. “He came into His home, but His own received Him not. To all who did receive Him, who trust on His name, He granted authority to become children of God” (John 1.11-12).

The entry of the Son into the world is not only an occasion for pious sentiment; it is also a challenge to decision and action. In the Incarnation of His Word, God has offered us the privilege of becoming members of His family and living in His house. We can refuse His offer, but we will receive none greater.

Alumnus Prepares for Missionary Life in Formerly Communist East Germany

Mark Martin, Alumnus of Austin| Graduate School of Theology, is preparing, as a member of a mission team, to plant a church in the former communist-controlled East German city of Leipzig. This major East European city has no church of the Restoration Movement and the Leipzig team plans a long-term work with the goal of growing an indigenous body of believers there.

Martin’s previous experience and preparation make him particularly suited for this work. A graduate of ICS (now Austin Graduate School of Theology), he also holds the Master of Divinity degree from Abilene Christian University. During his time of preparation to leave for Germany, Martin has served as Registrar at Austin Graduate. Fluent in the German language, he has taught Theological German as adjunct faculty during his tenure at the school.

He has a love for the culture and people of the German-speaking world and has made many friendships from previous mission trips.

A glance at a map of Germany reveals reasons for selecting Leipzig. Looking at the former East Germany and its southern-most state, Saxony, Leipzig’s population of some 500,000 and area of 290 square kilometers make it the second largest city in East Germany and the largest in Saxony. The entire state of Saxony lays claim to about 4.5 million inhabitants.

Leipzig has become a center of information technology, business, publishing, and education in eastern Germany.

See “Alumnus,” Back Page

Brandenburg Gate, Berlin
FORMER PRESIDENT, DR. DAVID WORLEY was named Chancellor in a recent board action. He assumes the role vacated by the recent passing of Dr. Claude Hocott. Worley served as President of ICS (now Austin Graduate School of Theology) from 1992 until December 2000.

During his tenure as President, the school achieved graduate status, being accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to offer the Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree.

Worley holds the B.A. and M.A. degrees from Abilene Christian University and the M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University. In addition to his new role, he will continue to teach classes at Austin Graduate as Adjunct Professor of New Testament.

“I am very glad to have Dr. Worley as a member of the administrative council,” said Dr. Carson Stephens, President of Austin Graduate. “His years of experience as President, and his academic credentials, make him a valuable resource for this institution.”

Worley’s love for mission work is well-known. He often travels to Russia and other parts of the world to preach and encourage Christian workers. He serves as an elder at the Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ in Austin.

In other action, the Board of Trustees named David Arthur as Vice-President.

Arthur holds the B.S. and M.Ed. degrees from Southwest Texas State University. His responsibilities include finance and oversight of day-to-day administrative affairs. He has served Austin Graduate for more than two years as Finance Officer.

He and his wife, Caroline, a registered nurse, have four children. He is an elder of the Western Hills Church of Christ in Austin.

NEW OFFICERS, NEW MEMBER ELECTED TO BOARD

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF AUSTIN Graduate School of Theology elected new officers at its annual meeting.

Named to serve as Chairman was Dr. Michael White, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Texas. White, an elder at Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ in Austin, follows Dr. John Davis who served three years.

“I have enjoyed working with Dr. Davis during my short time here,” said Carson Stephens, President. “He is a man of many talents and is passionate about the school. Mike White is also a man of great ability and will do well as Chairman,” he said.

Ms. Karen Weber was selected to serve as Vice-Chair of the Board and Mr. Jack Wright was re-elected Secretary-Treasurer.

The Trustees welcomed Mr. Neil Haney to the Board. He is Executive Director of Development for the Scott and White Hospital in Temple where he has been for twenty-four years.

An elder at the Western Hills Church in Temple, Haney holds the Bachelor’s degree from Abilene Christian University and the Master’s degree from Oklahoma State University.

“I am pleased and honored to serve on this board,” he said. “It has served its students well in the past and, under its new leadership, is destined to become an outstanding graduate school of theology. I am happy to be part of it.”

PASSINGS

PROFESSOR, ELDER

WILLIAM SHIVE

LONG-TENURED UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS professor and elder at University Avenue Church of Christ, Dr. William Shive passed suddenly on October 2, 2001 after a brief illness.

Born December 20, 1916, in Commerce, Texas, he received his B.S. degree from East Texas State Teacher’s College in 1939. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Texas in 1941.

Dr. Shive joined the Department of Chemistry at the University of Texas after serving on the faculty of Tulane University during World War II. He would remain at the University of Texas for the rest of his career where he would be a towering figure for over 60 years.

Nationally prominent as a professor of biochemistry, Dr. Shive was especially famous for his work in vitamin research. Yet, he had another great interest; he was passionate that undergraduate students at UT receive academic instruction in Bible.

To attain this goal, Shive spearheaded two innovative efforts that would leave an imprint on Austin Graduate School of Theology. First, he purchased considerable property adjacent to the University suitable for building classrooms. Austin Graduate now stands on some of this property. Second, knowing the importance of endowments, he was an initial instigator and organizer of what has become Austin Graduate’s endowment program.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Gwendolyn; his daughters, Kathleen Shive Matthews and Karen Shive Browning; and two grandchildren, Thomas West Browning and Kathryn Lee Browning. He will be greatly missed.
As 2001 draws to a close, it is noteworthy that it marks the 200th anniversary of the Cane Ridge Revival.

The revival that took place at Cane Ridge, Kentucky in 1801 was a pivotal event of the Second Great Awakening that swept through American religious life in the early nineteenth century.

"Revival," as a religious concept, was coined in the eighteenth century to describe a phenomenon whereby churches experienced an unexpected "awakening" of spiritual concern, occasioned by a special outpouring of God's saving grace, which led to unprecedented numbers of intense conversions that "revived" the piety and power of the churches.  

On the American frontier, camp meetings came to characterize revivals. At these meetings, large numbers of people would gather from great distances to listen to the preaching of various ministers and engage in worship and evangelism. Sermons delivered by ministers noted for their "plain speaking" preaching, exhorted listeners to "turn from sin" and to "seek salvation."

Many were overwhelmed with "conviction of sin," some to the point of physical collapse. Accounts of these meetings describe increasing intensity of excitement with crowds "rushing from preacher to preacher, singing, shouting, laughing, calling upon men to repent. Men and women fell upon the ground unable to help themselves, and in such numbers that it was impossible for the multitude to move about."

Barton W. Stone, minister of the Concord and Cane Ridge Presbyterian Churches, was greatly influenced by revivalism and, in 1801, traveled to Logan County, Kentucky to observe how revivals were conducted. He was deeply moved by the experience and returned to Cane Ridge to lead a revival. It was to become the most famous of all the camp meetings.

The meeting lasted one week, and 23,000 people attended. The preaching was simple, lively, and persuasive, with preachers from different denominations, including Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist.

Meetings were held on the Ridge at various locations. Generally there were five or six preachers holding meetings at the same time.

Perhaps the greatest result of the meeting at Cane Ridge was the influence that it had upon Stone's unhappiness with the disunity of the church. If ministers of different faiths could preach together and have such positive responses, why was it not possible for such a movement to continue until it enveloped the whole Church and the Church of Christ on earth truly became one?

Stone thus began a movement of Christian unity that transcended traditional differences. He would later declare: "We heartily unite with our Christian brethren of every name, in thanksgiving to God for the display of his goodness..."  

His followers would set aside distinctive denominational names and call themselves "Christians." His thinking is as follows: "We have taken the name Christians, not because we considered ourselves more pure than others—but because we knew it was the name first given to the disciples of Jesus by Divine authority. It is better agreed with our spirit, which is to unite with all Christians, without regard to names or distinctions."  

Within twenty years, Stone would meet another reforming preacher, Alexander Campbell, whose views were similar. They would soon join forces to experiment in restoring the early Christianity of the New Testament.

The Cane Ridge Revival thus marks one of the first stirrings of the Restoration Movement, the founding heritage of Churches of Christ, Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), and Christian Churches (Independent).  

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ART WORK

UPPER LEFT: A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE CANE RIDGE MEETING HOUSE.

UPPER RIGHT: A STAINED GLASS WINDOW AT THE CANE RIDGE PRESERVATION SITE DEPICTS BARTON STONE PREACHING AT THE CANE RIDGE REVIVAL.


Ibid.

Ibid.


"Kentucky Revival, Red River to Cane Ridge," The Revival Archives, HarvestNow.org

"The Second Great Awakening," ibid.


Rhodes Thompson, Cane Ridge Meeting House, Souvenir Booklet, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 26.

West, 28.

Ibid., 1.
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Alumnus Readies for Germany
(Continued from page three)

many. Leipzig’s yearly trade convention, the Leipziger Messe, has been the trade show capital of Germany since 1165, and it boasts the most modern convention facilities on the European continent.

Culturally, the city has a long history of excellence in theater arts, opera, and music. The reputation of the boys choir of the St. Thomas Church reaches back hundreds of years. The choir’s most famous director, Johann Sebastian Bach, spent 27 years composing and performing in the city.

The University of Leipzig, the second oldest in Germany, traces its beginnings back to the time of Martin Luther, who held several debates in its then new facilities.

Since the end of the Cold War, the city, along with the rest of formerly communist East Germany, has experienced the painful process of re-unification with the West. Unemployment is high with unofficial estimates as high as 30%.

Martin says that his team’s strategy is being developed through consultation with the congregations in Chemnitz and Dresden. Although the team will organize as a church immediately upon arrival, they will schedule worship times so that they can also participate in the worship assemblies of the churches in Chemnitz and Dresden.

The team members with whom Martin will be working bring a variety of missionary experiences. Some have previously served as missionaries in Germany and are fluent in the language.

“All of the team members come with hearts and minds full of a desire to minister to the longings of the East Germans with the peace of Christ,” Martin says.