The Patience of Job: Passing the Tests of Faith
President's Message

WE ARE VERY HAPPY to report that the class of 15 students who just graduated was the first class to receive its diplomas with the new name of the School: Austin Graduate School of Theology. They also made up one of the largest classes ever. We are proud of them and heartily congratulate them.

We are also pleased to welcome Hugh Gaine to the staff of Austin Grad. He has just retired from Ferro Corporation, and he and his wife, Elaine, have moved from Chicago so that Hugh can work as a volunteer for the school.

Elaine's father, Claude Hocott, was a great supporter of Austin Grad, serving as the first president, as a board member, and later as Chancellor of the School. Claude had a great vision for what the School could one day become.

A generous financial supporter during his lifetime, he and Judy also wanted to ensure that Austin Grad would continue to prosper after he was gone. We are grateful that he included the School in his will. Claude has left a legacy that will bless succeeding generations. People like Claude are invaluable to the cause of higher education.

Hugh will be working in the area of Planned Giving to help show others how they, too, can leave a legacy by including the School in their estate planning. Hugh enjoys photography, and took many of the photos in this edition. Welcome, Hugh and Elaine. — Carson Stephens

Restoration Movement in Texas

Whatever Happened to the Church in Waterloo?

THIS WAS THE QUESTION THAT PUZZLED WAYNE KILPATRICK, Professor of History at Heritage Christian University in Florence, Alabama, when he was conducting research on the history of the Restoration Movement in his region. His search of civil records revealed that a Church of Christ had been established around 1816 in Waterloo, a small town 20 miles east of Florence. Records also show that by 1836 the church had disappeared. What had happened to it, he wondered. His research uncovered a compelling story.

It seems that Benjamin Lynn, a minister for the Separate Baptist church, became interested in the Restoration work and preaching of Barton W. Stone, and sometime around 1805 came to Stone to be baptized. He then aligned himself with the Christian Church or Church of Christ (as churches of the movement also came to be known).

Benjamin Lynn had two daughters, one of whom, Rachel, married Marshall D'Spain. Benjamin Lynn died in 1814, but two years later, his daughter and son-in-law, the D'Spains, moved to Waterloo, Alabama where they established a church. The D'Spains had two children, a son Lynn and a daughter Hetty Lynn, who married Joseph Clark. The D'Spain and Clark families formed the larger part of the church at Waterloo.

The reason the church disappeared from Alabama records is because in 1835, the entire church at Waterloo moved to Texas. The frontier of Texas had been opened for immigration by the Mexican government, and the members of the church decided to go there. One account of the story reads:

Practically, the whole Alabama community . . . formed a company and started for Texas during the last half of the year 1835. The caravan, on its long and tiresome journey, did not travel on the Lord's Day. The members spent the day in worship and rest. Almost the whole company was made up of Disciples. It was a Church on foot, on wheels and on horseback.

This “church on wheels” was accompanied as far as Memphis, Tennessee, by Davy Crockett, the legendary hero of the Alamo. At Memphis he departed to lead sixty volunteers to join the Texas army. When the church arrived at Ft. Clark, Texas, they found that tensions between English-speaking settlers and the Mexican government were at the boiling point. So, they settled there temporarily.

After the war with Mexico ended, the members of the church scattered to settle in various parts of the state. The Restoration Movement spread with them and churches were established throughout Texas. So it was that, in 1853, the church came to be established in a town in Texas that had also been named Waterloo. But by then, it had been renamed Austin and had become the state capital.

On the Cover

"Cactus Music"

The work of Houston artist, Mary K. Forshagen, has won many awards and has been featured in many publications. She enjoys painting landscapes, still lifes and figures. www.forshagen.com

AUTHOR: Carson Stephens

Arr Work Above: Statue of Davy Crockett on view at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum in "The Life, Legend & Legacy of Davy Crockett Show & Exhibit" through August 18, 2002. The museum is located near the state capital across from Austin Graduate School of Theology on MLK Boulevard.

Alumnus Directs Camp for Inner City Youth

"I want them to know what love really is," he says. "They hear about it on the radio, but they don't really know what it is. They only know love in shades of gray."

These are the sentiments of Wes Fikes who graduated from Austin Grad in 2000 and immediately went to work full time at Camp of the Hills, a camp near Marble Falls for inner city kids.

The camp brings young people from inner cities in Texas and Oklahoma for a week of learning about God while experiencing the great outdoors.

"Some of these kids have never seen the sky at night," Fikes says. "Where they live, the city lights drown out the stars. When they come out here and see the stars for the first time, they are just silent."

"There is just so much to learn about God in nature," he continues.

Youth ministers who work with inner city kids can bring their young charges to the camp for a fee of $50 for each child. The camp is in operation throughout the summer and there are several sessions available.

Wes Fikes grew up in Kerrville, Texas. After graduating from high school, Fikes attended Texas A&M where he received his Bachelor's degree.

While at A&M, he was active in Aggies for Christ and participated in a mission trip to Thailand.

He became interested in ministry, and his youth minister from Kerrville, Dean Fitch, an alumnus of Austin Graduate, encouraged him to look into the school.

After finishing at A&M, he came to Austin Grad and completed a Bachelor of Science in Christian Studies degree.

When asked what he liked about Austin Graduate, he cited its small classes and the interest that the professors took in his education and spiritual well-being.

"I remember one of the professors pulling me aside and telling me that he wanted me to come by and visit with him," Fikes said. "That doesn't happen at a larger school."

At the end of this summer, Wes will be leaving Camp of the Hills to go to Houston. There, he will become a minister to junior high kids at the Impact Church of Christ, an inner city ministry in Houston.

"This way, I won't have to say goodbye to the kids at the end of a week," he says. "Now, I can be with them all year."

Argentine Ministry Nears Twenty Years

Since graduating from ICS (now Austin Graduate) in 1982, Alberto Pata has worked as a minister in his native city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. He and his wife, Jane, and their two children Christian (19) and Andrea (17), have established three Churches of Christ in nearly twenty years of ministry.

Their primary method of spreading the Word in this city of 14 million is by means of radio. Pata produces two types of radio programs. One is a 30 minute radio Bible study broadcast every weekday morning. Twice weekly, he conducts a one-hour interview show. Most recently, he interviewed renowned British author John Stott who discussed the uniqueness of Jesus as Savior and the authority of the Bible.

In a 1992 survey, theirs was the second most popular religious program in the nation. Jane, Christian and Andrea assist by manning the telephones to receive listeners' calls.

The Patas have been committed to ministry in Argentina since they first met in the late 70s.

Jane, a 1975 graduate of Abilene Christian University, also did post-graduate work in Latin American Studies at the University of Houston. She then went with a mission team to Argentina where she met her future husband, then a law student. After their marriage, they moved to Austin where he enrolled to study for the ministry at ICS.

Argentina has been in the forefront of international news recently because of the breakdown in its financial system.

"Our economy is bankrupt due to corruption and international debt," Pata says. "It creates difficulty for everyone, including our ministry. People with money in the banks are unable to retrieve it because the government has frozen their accounts."

Despite these and other hardships, the Patas remain dedicated to the Lord's work in Argentina.
Reflections

The Patience of Job: Passing the Tests of Faith

One of the most interesting scenes in Biblical literature is the scene in the book of Job describing the heavenly court. There, the sons of God, including the accuser ("the Satan") come to make their reports to God, the divine judge (Job 1 and 2).

The accuser has apparently been going about the earth seeking sinners whom he can prosecute before the judgment seat. Perhaps for this reason God says, "Have you seen my servant Job?" It may be a deliberate way to challenge the accuser. It would be the equivalent of saying, "See if you can find anything to accuse him of!"

Satan responds to the challenge. "Is it for nothing," he asks, "that he is blameless and upright? And who wouldn't be? You have given him nothing but goodies and erected barriers around him so nothing bad can happen to him."

The implication is that Job does not serve God for nothing, but is a hireling.

This is a serious challenge. Satan is accusing God of a set-up. The only reason Job is pious is because God protects him from harm and gives him good things. Job's piety is a fraud and his good life is payment for services rendered.

Satan believes that he would most definitely have a case against Job if God removed the hedge he has erected around Job and allowed all of his goodies to be taken away. Then, says the Satan, Job would "bless (= curse) God to his face."

Satan demands, therefore, to see whether or not Job's piety can withstand real scrutiny by undergoing a test. God, the judge, must allow the test to go on, or Satan could otherwise claim victory. So, God acquiesces.

The accusation of false piety was not just a dilemma for Job. It remains a contemporary question as well. If faith is never put to the test, is it really faith? If we serve God only because "the blessings come down as the prayers go up," then how does faith differ from payment for services rendered? The only way faith may truly be seen to be faith, indeed, is to allow difficulties to test its authenticity.

On some level, Job knew that his suffering was a heavenly test. For, he says in 23.10, "But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Likewise, the only way to know if our faith is real and our piety genuine is through testing where it is "tempered in the furnace to determine if it is gold."

Hear the words of James: "Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him" (James 1.12).

Job passed the testing of his faith. Job's faith was not dependent upon the blessings he received, or upon God's protective hedge, but upon God who raises the dead. In so doing, he dignified not only his faith, but ours as well.

R. Mark Shipp is Pat. E. Harrell Associate Professor of Old Testament

Largest Graduating Class Also First to Receive New Diplomas

At commencement exercises held May 19, fifteen graduates made up the first class to receive diplomas with the new name of the school emblazoned across the top. It was also the largest graduating class in the history of the school. Seven graduates received the Master of Arts in Theological Studies and eight received the Bachelor of Arts in Ministry and Christian Studies. Each received a diploma under the banner of Austin Graduate School of Theology.

Allan McNicol, Dean of Students, placed an official hood on each of the Master's graduates who were the first to wear the School's new official colors: Gold and Black Forest, a deep green.

Dr. David Worley, past President and now Chancellor of the School, gave the commencement address in which he challenged graduates to "keep the Lord's Prayer" as a regular part of their daily life and to allow its themes to shape their ministries.

Five of the Bachelor's degree recipients are in the process of making application to enter Austin Grad's Master's program.
Happenings

Professor Lectures in Croatia, Receives Honor

During Spring Break, Professor Allan McNicol traveled to Zagreb, Croatia to teach a short course at the Institute for Biblical Studies. Housed in the Zagreb Church of Christ, the Institute receives its academic recognition through arrangements with Rochester College and an Evangelical Seminary in Ostia, Croatia.

McNicol reports he was warmly greeted and was the house guest of Dr. Tom Sibbly and his family for a week. Sibley is principal of the school.

There were 16 students in McNicol’s class which was a study of the Jesus Tradition.

Two of his students were from Slovenia and one each from America and Serbia. Three had good English proficiency and took turns in translating into Croatian.

All the students had European educational backgrounds and over half were University students.

Still in its infancy, the Croatian school needs library resources and a full time Croatian instructor. Yet, its more than thirty students represent a great resource for future evangelism among the Slavic people.

The plan for the school is to involve its graduates in strategic church plantings throughout Croatia. One church has already been planted near Hungary.

This was McNicol’s second trip to Croatia where Mladen Jovanovic, a former Austin Grad student, is active in evangelistic work. McNicol plans to continue to visit overseas graduates of our school and help them in their ministries.

After returning from his trip to Croatia, McNicol was honored by the Board of Trustees of Austin Graduate School of Theology for his thirty years of service to the School. Dr. Mike White, representing the board, presented McNicol with a plaque at the 21st Annual Sermon Seminar.

21st Annual Sermon Seminar Attracts Attendees from 15 States

One of the largest groups of attendees in its history attended the 21st Annual Sermon Seminar hosted May 20-23 by Austin Graduate School of Theology.

“Ministers came from as far as Florida, California, New England, Washington,” said Dr. Michael Weed, who directs the seminar. “The vast majority come from Texas and surrounding states,” he said.

The total number of states represented by registered attendees was 15. “There were even attendees from Russia and Trinidad,” said Weed.

The event is particularly designed to assist ministers in the preparation of sermons. Each of four highly qualified speakers offer the fruits of his study on a biblical text within his field of expertise and then suggests methods for preaching the text to the church.

This year, three of the main lecturers were from outside of Austin and one was a professor at Austin Grad.


In addition to the main lectures, the attendees were feasted to luncheon speeches by Tony Ash, who is a professor of New Testament at Abilene Christian University.

They were given an extra treat on Tuesday afternoon when Dr. J. Budziszewski lectured on “Connecting with the Secular Mind.” He is a professor of philosophy and government at the University of Texas.

Attendees gave high praise to the content and presentations given at the seminar.

Partners Gather at Ranch

It’s an annual Spring ritual for Partners and Friends of Austin Grad to spend a weekend in the Texas Hill Country. They gather to hear reports of the school’s progress and to enjoy lectures presented by Austin Grad professors in their areas of expertise.

A special treat is the Saturday afternoon barbecue hosted by board member, Karen Weber, at her Loco Grande Ranch on the Pedernales River. Bob King is always the barbecue wrangler who prepares a delicious meal.

The lectures this year were held Saturday morning at the Blanco Church of Christ. The early afternoon was free for sightseeing, and the barbecue was held later in the afternoon.

Judy Hocott and Son, Dick Matthews

Budziszewski
Keepers of the Flame

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Books To Share

A Will to Do Well

Few tasks have more potential for conserving assets and helping others, than writing your will. In the absence of a will, the state will appoint an estate administrator who will have little discretion to do many of the things you might have wished. Moreover, in the absence of a will, some states will specify distributions of your assets to recipients that include the government, over and above required taxes!

Since none of us knows when we might die, we all need a carefully drafted will, regardless of our age. Specifying who will benefit from the distribution of our assets is a privilege we cannot achieve without planning. In addition to providing for loved ones, many thoughtful Christians include churches and/or schools in their wills.

While there are potential tax savings for giving to charitable organizations, the greatest incentive is the potential to bless others with the assets we have accumulated. Please consider including Austin Graduate School of Theology in your will. Many have already done so, and their thoughtfulness has greatly blessed our school. If you would like to discuss this or other ways of making bequests, please contact me at the school. My phone number and email address are listed below.

Hugh Gainey recently came to Austin Grad to work with Planned Giving and Student Recruitment. Contact him at: (512) 476-2772 or hgainey@austingrad.edu

Austin Graduate School of Theology

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Topics

Ages 2 & 3  Peggy Gray
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K., 1st, & 2nd Grades  Penny Tenpenny
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Jana Smith
Classroom Management  Sue Ginn
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Missions  Joyce Hardin
Prayer  Kelly Kitts

Workshop Location
Cameron Road Church of Christ/6014 Cameron Road/Austin, Texas 78723
512/452-0639  For more information, go to: www.rrcoc.org

Central Texas Bible Teachers’ Workshop
A cooperative effort of Austin Graduate School of Theology and
Central Texas area Churches of Christ

July 20, 2002