A NEW FACE
AT AUSTIN GRAD

September 1, 2003 marked the beginning of the work of Dr. Stanley G. Reid as President of Austin Grad. Reid follows Dr. Carson Stephens, who served as the School's President from January 1, 2001 to April 15, 2003. (See related article on page 7.)

Reid comes to Austin Grad after fourteen years as the pulpit minister for Granbury Church of Christ. "It was very difficult," Reid stated, "to leave people and a place that had become so entwined in our lives and hearts." One of the reasons Reid gives for accepting this new challenge is his deep love for the people of Austin Grad and his commitment to the school's mission. Reid traces his association with Austin Grad back to 1983 when he first attended a Sermon Seminar in the months of his first pulpit assignment. In the coming years, according to Reid, the school proved to provide a source of stimulation, dialogue, and encouragement. In 1995 Reid chaired the External Review Committee for the school. He has also been an adjunct faculty member since 1998 teaching graduate-level ministry courses.

Ministry experience that Reid brings to his new work includes tenures as Campus Minister for the University Church of Christ in Las Cruces, NM and the University Church of Christ in Abilene, TX. As a pulpit minister he served the Hyde Park Church of Christ in Austin, the Baker Heights Church of Christ in Abilene, as well as the Granbury Church of Christ in Granbury, TX.

Abilene Christian University awarded Reid with BA and MA degrees in 1977 and 1979, respectively. In 1994 he received the Doctor of Ministry degree from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. The degree was awarded with honors.

In 1975, Reid married Laynne Plemons who was his high school sweetheart. Mrs. Reid earned a BSEd degree from Abilene Christian University in 1976 and currently teaches fourth grade. They have two children. Alisha recently married Justin Ward. They are students at the University of Texas at Arlington. Allison is a sophomore at Abilene Christian University.
Spreading the Word About Austin Grad

This past May during its annual planning meeting, Austin Graduate School of Theology set as one of its main goals the increasing of enrollment by ten percent a year. Many steps have been taken to accomplish this goal including the hiring of a part-time recruiter, increasing radio advertisements and—possibly the most exciting—conducting recruiting trips.

On October 22, new president Stan Reid and recruiter Kirk Eason embarked on the first of these trips. The objective was to increase awareness of Austin Grad among selected campus ministry programs in East Texas. By informing these groups, we will be able to reach our goal of growth, and also help to touch lives around the world.

The first group to be visited was the Aggies for Christ (AFC) at Texas A&M. Considered to be one of the most successful campus ministries among Churches of Christ, AFC sends countless numbers of students into ministry and mission efforts. Kelley Davidson, campus minister, graciously allowed Stan to bring the Wednesday night devotional for about 200 Aggies. He spoke on the topic “Faith that Persists.” Following the lesson, Kirk had the opportunity to tell about the school and how individual Aggies could use it to bless their lives. Several contacts were made as students viewed our display board and asked questions about the school.

Next on the list was the Christian Campus Center better known as the Tri-C at Kilgore College (KC). The Tri-C is an active ministry involving about 30 students in devotionals, Bible studies, fellowship activities, and Bible classes for credit through KC. Several good contacts were made with students who are finishing up associate’s degrees at KC and then plan to obtain a bachelor’s degree in Bible or Ministry.

The final visit was to the Yellow House at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches. This ministry of about 60 students welcomed our ambassadors with tremendous singing. The minister from the Rusk Church of Christ (a former student at SFA and Yellow House participant) spoke on allowing God to make you what he wants you to be. A better lesson could not have been brought as a segue into discussing the mission of Austin Grad.

This two-day trip involved over 600 miles of driving and two late nights. Yet the contacts that were made and the experiences had by both Stan and Kirk were worth it. On October 29, Kirk made a similar trip to UT Arlington to talk about Austin Grad with the students of the Christian Campus Center there and to bring a lesson from 1 Peter 1:13 on preparing for action.

Similar trips are on the horizon. If you would like Kirk to come and share with your congregation about the School or know of individuals thinking about a degree in Theology, please don’t hesitate to call him at 1-866-287-4723 or email him at keason@austingrad.edu.

Contributed by Hugh Gainey and Kirk Eason

Kirk Eason addresses students at the Tri-C in Kilgore.
Summertime for Old Testament Professor Mark Shipp has usually meant mission trips, and this year was no exception. Mark and student Ron Hall left in July for two-and-a-half weeks in Nairobi, Kenya, followed by a week in Leipzig, Germany, and finally, four days in Eindhoven, Netherlands.

Their days were filled with teaching and preaching, beginning with Ron’s Sunday sermon at the Koma Rock congregation while Mark preached at the Rainbow church. They each taught two-week courses to 27 ministerial students at the Nairobi Great Commission School, lecturing up to five hours a day. The 20 Kenyan students were joined by seven others from southern (predominantly Muslim) Sudan, where civil war has raged for 20 years.

They next visited with Jackson Maina in the Aberdare Mountains. Mark preached at the church there, and so spirited was the singing, that members of the nearby Africa Inland Church pecked in the back door during services! Mark and Ron stayed at the “Ark,” where they could see wild animals at night from their windows. Following visits with several Kenyans, Mark spoke at the Ongata Rongai church in Nairobi during midweek services, and took turns with Ron speaking at chapel services.

In Leipzig, they were hosted by alumnus, Mark Martin. Dr. Shipp lectured five hours a day to East German ministry students and missionaries with Ron assisting. The following week in Eindhoven, our Austin Grad team was hosted by Mario and Debbie Rivas, former members at Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ in Austin. Mark and Ron again preached and taught. Their work completed, they began the trip home by way of England, where Mark collected daughter Sarah, who had taken high school courses at Cambridge. We are very proud of the work our men did this summer.

Contributed by Hugh Gainey
WITH GRATITUDE
AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THOSE

SUSTAINING GIFTS
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Mary V. Adams
Susan Hershey Annis
Iva Lea Barton
M&M Roland Beasley
Jim and Louise Beyer
Edwin and Joan Biggers
Christopher (B'99) and Lauren Bourell
Joe and Mary Bowles
Bob and Lajuania Burgess
Cameron Road Church of Christ
Harley and Mikhred Covalt
Thomas and Sandra Cox
Olivia Crouch Estate
Jesse Fox Estate
Adrin (M'97) and Terri Fletcher
Byron and Marilyn Fullerton
Ann Grey
Neil and Marsha Haney
Margaret Ann Hawkins
Edwin and Shirley Hightower
Judy Hocott
Frances O. Horn
Jake and Jean Isaac
Mrs. Lawrence Jones
Terry and Beverly Koonce
Rodney and Lawanna Lloyd
Brooks and Mary Ann Loveless
Jeb Loveless
Eddie (B'91) and Susan Mathews
Tim and Judith McKee
Allan and Patricia McNicol
Jenny and Bill Millican
Martha Jean Ownby
Paul and Barb Pape
Donniee Ramsey
John and Becki Ramsey
Bob and Mary Reagan
Anthony Santiago (B'94)
Mary Shilcutt
Matthew (B'89) and Angela Soper
Bill and Becky Stewart
Fred and Sondra Streltmeier
William and Jane Swiggart
Roy and Doris Walker
Dan and Jeannette Watson
Max Watson
Karen Weber
Ward and Sarah Widener
Don Williams
Mike and Gwen White
Jack and Ruth Wright
Fred (B'02) and Roxann Richardson
Dr. and Mrs. Robert White
Joyce Wighton

MEMORIAL GIFTS
B. MICHAEL CUMMINGS
Kaye Cummings Hodges
LUCILLE DODSON
Jack and Ruth Wright
OTIS GARNER
Lavon Baker
Judy Hocott
Ottie and Fran Olson
Ann Worley
MARYEANN GRIMES
Vicki and Jock Collins
Bert and Ruth Crowson
Mr. and Mrs. D. Michael Dalton
Joe and Neva Dupuis
Mary and Lynn Edwards
Joe and Martha Foy
Fielding and Flora Fromberg
Gordon and Lynn Grimes
Leslie A. Grimes
Walter J. Groman
Martha S. Hallman
Judy Hocott
Frances O. Horn
John and Frances Hunter
Jill and Jerry Kyle
Larry and Barbara Lee
Jesse and Janice Lutton
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas K. Matthews

LIGHTBEARERS
Jim and Louise Beyer
Mike and Sheila Dodson
Austin and Barbara Emery
Wilbert and Pat Hall
Robert (B'02) and Robyn Iversen
Jerry and Beverly Martin
Rob and Mica McNicol
Ottie and Fran Olson

primary conversation partner of the faculty is not the academy but the church. By whatever name, "seminary" or "school of preaching," I believe this vision of preparing faithful and capable ministers is correct.

It is difficult to be a Christian today; it is difficult to be a minister. It is also difficult to prepare ministers. While ministers must be adept in different tasks of ministry, ministerial education cannot be reduced to mastering a set of skills. Ministerial education must fundamentally attend to deepening faith, commitment, and understanding of Christian life. Ministers must be able to see the world in the light of Christian faith and to enable others to see God's presence in the routines of daily life. They can do this only if they study with others who have made these concerns foremost in their own lives and teaching.
IMAGES...
The images of those graduating from Austin Graduate School of Theology in the Spring of 2003 are indelibly imprinted in my mind. The photograph of that graduating class illustrates unmatched ethnic and gender diversity. While small compared to many other college and university graduating classes, I would put the 2003 graduating class up against any other I have seen or know about when it comes to diversity. One look at the photo of this class reveals one piece of the story that makes Austin Grad so special: this school is graduating women and men, Hispanic, African-American and European-American students distributed more in-line with our population than any other school I know about. Our diversity is a valuable mark of distinction and one that those of us who support Austin Grad should emphasize.
AG
Contributed by Dr. J. M. White, Chair, Board of Trustees

FROM THE “OTHER” PRESIDENT

The student government has only had one official meeting, but already we have a lot of ideas in the works. We have in unison decided that our main goal for this year would be to find a way to improve the community atmosphere at the school, to attempt to bring in some school spirit. This would be in response to the somewhat commuter nature that the school currently has. Because we have so many people who are simply auditing classes, who work full-time, who have families and many other responsibilities, there is little time outside of class to build relationships. We understand that everyone is very busy but we would like to see more “koinonia” going on in the halls. We are working on some ideas in an attempt to reach this goal during the school year. The easiest of these is some basic bumper stickers that bear the name of the school; some nice tasteful, collegiate looking stickers for the rear window of your car so that you can show some spirit and pride in the school. Another idea was to have a singing group perform at the Christmas party in an attempt to make our biggest social event of the year feel a little bigger. (Don’t worry—we will still have the traditional skits as well.) The idea that most of us are pretty excited about is a retreat for students, faculty and their families. This retreat will prayerfully take place on a Friday night and Saturday morning some time during the Spring semester. This retreat could possibly include activities for kids so that those of us who have children can still enjoy the teaching, singing and games that the adults will be participating in. The location, date and key speaker have not yet been nailed down so please contact me if you have suggestions or would be willing to help out with the planning and organizing of this event. Other possible ideas that we have suggested are bi-weekly or monthly luncheons for students to hang out, eat and fellowship together. These are the issues we are presently working on. Again, please feel free to contact me with ideas or suggestions. If you have any complaints please submit them in writing to the vice-president. For those of you who have not met any of the student government, they are:
David Condon—President; Stephen Boyd—Vice President; Ryan Lambert—Secretary; Ron Slockett—Treasurer.
AG
Contributed by David Condon
Many have asked me why I chose to leave the pulpit and a church that I dearly loved in order to come to Austin Grad. One man had a very concerned tone and looked about him when he asked, “Stan, why would you leave preaching?” But twelve year old Colton McCoy’s inquiry is one of the best I have heard. Colton attends the Granbury Church of Christ. I was the pulpit preacher at that church for Colton’s entire life span. On the way home from worship the day my resignation was announced, his dad noticed that something was troubling Colton. He asked Colton how he felt about my leaving. “Why would Stan want to leave us,” Colton replied, “and go be president of a cemetery?” During the assembly that day I had told the congregation that Austin Grad functioned much like a seminary in that its primary mission is to train people for service to the church. Colton is not the first to confuse a seminary with a cemetery.

In reply, I came to Austin Grad out of deep conviction that God led me here. In saying that I am not presumptuous enough to believe that there is no one else who could accomplish this mission. I did not pursue this position. When I was invited to interview for the job, I asked about a dozen people to pray a specific prayer. The prayer was for God to put an obstacle in the way if my coming to Austin Grad was not in the best interest of the school or of my family. I am here under the conviction that this is God’s will. To the brother who was concerned that I had left preaching or ministry I reply with all due respect. I have not left preaching or ministry. My ministry function has definitely changed, but the mission of Austin Grad is still in pursuit of kingdom work including all aspects of ministry.

Austin Grad is blessed with great people from the members of the Board, to supporters, to students, to faculty and administration. Although I have never been a student at Austin Grad, since 1983 I have personally benefited from its kingdom work on behalf of churches and ministers. Recently the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools sent a Visiting Committee to Austin Grad in order to examine our status for accreditation. In the exit interview the committee expressed to me high praise for the quality of the faculty and the student body. Built on a tradition of educating individuals and edifying churches dating back to decisions made in 1918, Austin Grad is in a position to do great work in a new century. Dr. McNicol summarized it well when he addressed new students in an orientation session last August. He said to the students that the faculty is serious about the study of the Bible and enjoined the students to become as serious. I am pleased and honored to be serving an institution with such convictions and goals.

But one of the greatest blessings to Austin Grad is its dedicated volunteers who serve only because they are sacrificial servants who love the school and are committed to its mission. The school could not exist without these dedicated people. One new volunteer to Austin Grad is Todd Whitley who has graciously donated his expertise and time to design and prepare the layout for this new edition of the newsletter. To Todd I give my sincere thanks. Likewise, you will notice that Hugh Gainey has volunteered his services by contributing content to the Update. AG

CARSON STEPHENS

WINTER 2003
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