It's that time of the year again. There is something special about it. The searing summer heat is replaced by cooler, more comfortable temperatures.

The season of giving is upon us, but the season of Thanksgiving is even closer.

Gratitude abounds. Thoughts turn to blessings from our Creator that we enjoy every day. "Thank you," on our lips is whispered in prayer and shouted to our friends.

We at Austin Grad observe the return of previous students and welcome new students as the fall semester begins. These students serve to remind us that Austin Grad is also a blessed institution. It is blessed because of friends who choose to join us as partners in our mission. That mission is:

To promote knowledge, understanding, and practice of the Christian faith by equipping Christians and churches for service in the Kingdom of God.

We hear from alumni of Austin Grad who report dramatic progress in their kingdom work. They often express gratitude for the support they received from Austin Grad friends who made charitable gifts that contributed toward the cost of their education.

These students are a reminder to us that we can’t say, “thank you,” too many times.

By now, you certainly know the value of your support of Austin Grad. Without it, accomplishing our mission would be difficult.

We thank God for his continued blessings and guidance. We thank him for using friends like you as tools of service.

You have told us the joy you feel from being a part of this wonderful ministry. Equipping men and women for service and the honor of serving churches in various ways are high callings. With your continued help, Austin Grad will continue to serve.

So at this wonderful time of the year, we are reminded again to say, “Thanks for Giving.” Your generous spirit is more than encouraging. It glorifies God through a good work and helps Austin Grad teach our students in the best possible way. Our prayer is that you receive as much joy from giving as Austin Grad does from receiving.

Thank you and God bless you.
Portait of a Donor:

Iva Lea Barton

When you meet Iva Lea Barton, you immediately realize you are in the presence of a gracious and gentle woman. If you are observant, you quickly add generous to the adjectives that describe her. But, it is her life story that reveals her strength and vision.

Iva Lea McKay was born in Byers, Texas, a small town near Wichita Falls. The youngest of four children (three girls and one boy), she started first grade in a two-room school at Wilson. After her family moved to a farm near Lamesa, she attended Lamesa High School and went on to Texas Tech where she earned a degree in Home Economics Education. After graduation she taught Homemaking at Frenship High School in Wolfforth for four years.

In 1947, Iva Lea McKay married David (Dave) Worley. While Dave purchased and managed radio stations, she embarked on a career as a wife and, eventually, as mother to David Worley, Jr.. During their marriage, Dave discussed his radio ventures with Iva Lea—a practice she credits with making it possible for her to assume control of the business after Dave's untimely death in 1964.

Iva Lea Worley proved herself to be more than capable as the owner of KOKE AM in Austin. When KOKE FM became available, she quickly purchased it in spite of her attorney's advice to avoid the FM market. While she is no longer active in radio, she considers those years as a single mother and business woman a great experience. During that time she developed into a strong woman who could do what she needed to do in order to preserve her husband's legacy and support her son. However, her successes were not limited to the business arena; she is a talented gardener and decorator who used her gifts to serve the Bridgewood Church of Christ in Ft. Worth.

In 1973, she married Fred Barton, a professor at Abilene Christian University. During their twenty-seven years of marriage, they divided their time between Salado and Ft. Worth. Mrs. Barton is now a resident of Austin and worships at Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ.

As one who values education in general and Bible-oriented, Christ-centered education in particular, Mrs. Barton is a generous supporter of Austin Grad. Initially, she became involved with the school through her son but, as her personal experience with the school has grown, Mrs. Barton has developed her own relationship with the faculty and staff.

Throughout her life, Mrs. Barton has looked to others as examples for living a life of Christian service. She learned to serve by watching her mother and older sisters care for their families and others. As her Bible Class teacher, Helen Young also inspired her. Today, Mrs. Barton considers herself blessed to share a common endeavor with both longtime and new friends who also support Austin Grad. It is her hope and prayer that Austin Grad will live on and on—providing a quality education and a continuing opportunity for students to benefit from the knowledge and example of a well-qualified and godly faculty.
Student Association Responds to Need of Fire Victims

Student Association Officers meet in Student Commons to plan upcoming events. Left to right: Cedric Goodman, Liz Eprright, Andrea Hendrick, Lindi Parshall.

As the fall semester began at Austin Grad, wildfires raged in communities around Austin. The devastation was greatest in the Bastrop area with more than 1400 homes destroyed. Recognizing the need for financial aid as well as donations of clothing and household goods, the Student Association began a campaign to meet some of the needs in Bastrop. They raised more than $130 and collected various household items. The Bastrop Church of Christ and the Red Cross received the monetary donations. Aaron Brown served as coordinator for the distribution of clothing and household items.

Student Association officers for 2011-2012 are Elizabeth (Liz) Eprright, president, Andrea Hendrick, vice-president, Cedric Goodman, treasurer, and Lindi Parshall, secretary.

Because her father served in the Navy, Liz Eprright lived in California, Hawaii, and Connecticut before coming to Texas. She earned her BA in Biology from Albertus Magus College in New Haven. Prior to enrolling in the MATS program, Liz worked for the Texas Department of Health.

Her enrollment at Austin Grad is somewhat surprising to Liz. She says, “It took time for it to sink in that I was supposed to go to seminary.” When asked what she plans to do when she completes her degree, she replies, “That hasn’t been made clear to me yet. But, I’m excited to see what the Lord has planned for the future.”

Her time at Austin Grad has brought greater breadth and depth to her personal faith. She has moved from popular Christian writings to a scholarly discussion of faith and theology that requires her to examine and understand what she believes and why.

Liz chose Austin Grad because she wanted to learn from professors who are men of faith with practical experience in ministry. She has not been disappointed.

Andrea Hendrick grew up in a children’s home where her mother and father served as house parents. She graduated from Abilene Christian University with a degree in Social Work, Sociology, and Psychology. Immediately after graduation she worked in South Dakota on the Ogila Sioux reservation.

Returning to Texas and needing a job, she went to work at DFW Airport clearing shipments through customs. Andrea went on to obtain a Customs Broker’s License. Presently she works at Freescale as a Global Trade Compliance Specialist.

Andrea is studying for the Master of Arts in Theological Studies. She says, “The study of theology is my passion. I have always known I would eventually pursue a degree in theology. . . . When I walked into the building

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Trustee Profile
Rodney Lloyd

Austin Grad is blessed to have a dedicated and knowledgeable Board of Trustees who lead and support the school. One of those devoted leaders is Rodney Lloyd of Boerne, Texas. Dr. Lloyd, a native of Winters, Texas, completed his undergraduate degree at Abilene Christian University and earned a doctorate in Biochemistry from the University of Texas. While at UT, Dr. Lloyd and his wife, Lawanna, worshiped at University Avenue Church of Christ. This was his introduction to the Bible Chair.

After graduate school, Dr. Lloyd worked for Jefferson Chemical, Texaco Chemical, and Goldschmidt Chemical. Now retired, he has a new "career" and passion—teaching chemistry to high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors at the Geneva School of Boerne.

Dr. and Mrs. Lloyd worship at Oak Hills church in San Antonio where he teaches Bible classes and leads a small group Bible study in their home.

In 1989, Dr. Lloyd accepted a position on the Administrative and Development Board of Austin Graduate School of Theology. When the Board of Trustees expanded beyond the elders at University Avenue Church of Christ, Dr. Lloyd was appointed to the board. At present, he is chairman of the governance committee and serves as a member of the finance committee.

As a Trustee, Dr. Lloyd is fully aware of the challenges that face Austin Grad, the first being a need for additional funding to offset increased operating costs and to maintain the programs that most directly serve the school's mission. An additional challenge is finding an effective way to increase student enrollment. Dr. Lloyd is equally cognizant of the school's primary asset: a well-equipped faculty that challenges students and produces graduates capable of preparing workers for the Kingdom.

Dr. Lloyd has a vision for the future of the school. As a step toward a larger enrollment in the MATS program, he would like to see the school pursue additional accreditation through the Association of Theological Schools. He is intrigued by the wide-spread use of online courses in higher education. He sees an online curriculum as a further opportunity for Austin Grad to meet the needs of a large segment of the student body: those students who are entering ministry as a second career. He also wants Austin Grad to offer additional undergraduate courses, providing BA level students with an education wholly centered in a Christian perspective.

Additionally, Dr. Lloyd would like to see a full complement of sixteen board members. Filling all the seats could bring greater ethnic and gender diversity and a broader perspective to the Board of Trustees. With added growth in enrollment and programs Austin Grad will experience greater name recognition and more and more men and women will find the theological education they desire "here in their own backyard."

Dr. Lloyd describes himself as, "blessed to be a part of Austin Grad, to share the story where it is unknown and to serve with the faculty, staff and students." Austin Grad is equally blessed to have a man of such wisdom, insight, and vision committed to equipping men and women for Kingdom service.
Student Association Responds to Need of Fire Victims continued

[Austin Grad] I said, 'Of course, this is where I should be.'"

When she completes her degree she plans to write and teach. She hopes to share her passion with those who are struggling with their faith. She is particularly interested in reaching out to women in prison.

At Austin Grad, Andrea found a faculty that cares deeply about preparing students to faithfully interpret and pass on the word. This is just what Andrea wanted to learn.

Cedric Goodman (MATS) came to Austin Grad via the University of Georgia, where he played wide receiver, and the NFL, where he signed as an undrafted free agent with the Pittsburg Steelers. Even though he did not make the team he considers it a great experience. In addition to being a full-time student in the MATS program, Cedric is training in the hope of securing a place on the Olympic team for the 400 meter race.

Cedric wanted to attend seminary because he is naturally inquisitive and wants answers to his many questions. He chose Austin Grad because it felt like the right place to study. He has found his time here to be challenging, as well as intriguing, and many of his questions now have answers. Those answers help him understand how to pass on the Christian faith.

After he completes his degree, Cedric plans to go to law school. He wants to use what he learns at Austin Grad to guide his life both professionally and personally as he serves others. He says, "Attending Austin Graduate School of Theology has given me the opportunity to strengthen my faith because I pursue God's word more, while gaining a deeper understanding of Christian theology."

Lindi Parshall was born in Austin and grew up in Dripping Springs. A graduate of Dripping Springs High School, Lindi is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies. In addition to attending Austin Grad and serving as secretary of the Student Association, Lindi works as a children's pastor ministering to children and teens.

After graduation Lindi will either continue her ministry to children and teens or study to become a military chaplain. Her time at Austin Grad prepares her for these ministries by giving her more insight and greater understanding of various faith traditions.

Lindi is grateful to the faculty at Austin Grad because they have encouraged her when others have criticized her for being a woman pursuing a ministry degree. She has this message for potential students: "If you are even thinking about a theological school, this is the best place! ... I love AGST!"

Austin Grad Professors Publish New Works

In The Conversion of the Nations in Revelation, Allan McNicol examines the longstanding tension between the description of the destruction of unrepentant nations early in the book of Revelation and their final experience of salvation in Revelation 21:24-26. Dr. McNicol's book is available at a special price in the Austin Grad bookstore.

Edited by R. Mark Shipp, Timeless: Ancient Psalms for the Church Today is a unique combination of Psalter and commentary on the Psalms. Volume One: In the Day of Distress covers Psalm 1 through Psalm 41 with new musical settings, translations, and scholarly insights.

Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann says, "This publication of fresh work in the Psalms is an enormous gift to the church. The daring offer of fresh words in translation and fresh music invite the church to sing its faith in generative ways."

Timeless, a publication of ACU Press, is available in the bookstore.
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This list represents gifts received July through September 2011.
"Gratitude is Happiness Doubled by Wonder"

I write this in the immediate afterglow of our most recent Board of Trustees meeting and Friends' Day. Those were happy occasions drawing together likeminded people committed to the mission of Austin Grad.

In response to the board meeting and Friends' Day, one participant sent me an email. I was struck by how she succinctly captured the essence of the meetings. She said, "It is always good to be in the company of such great Christian minds. I am in awe of the accomplishments of so few."

After each board meeting and Friends' Day, I spend some time processing and evaluating what took place. This time a line from Orthodoxy by G.K. Chesterton came to mind: "The test of all happiness is gratitude." In A Short History of England, Chesterton elaborated on the thought. "I would maintain," he wrote, "that thanks are the highest form of thought; and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder."

Thinking about the board meeting and Friends' Day leaves me with much gratitude for and wonder at what God is doing through so few in a small school like Austin Grad. Because of friends and churches who partner with us we can remain focused on our mission to promote knowledge, understanding, and practice of the Christian faith by equipping Christians and churches for service in the Kingdom of God.

Austin Grad has numerous opportunities, but also faces substantial challenges. The trustees demonstrated courageous vision as they discussed ways to meet the opportunities and address the challenges.

During Friends' Day, recognition was given to the 36 years of service contributed by Professor Emeritus Michael Weed. Words of serious reflection about Michael's accomplishments were sprinkled with numerous moments of humor. Michael's contribution to our school, the church, and his students were noted. Hearing presentations made by his colleagues and a former student caused me to remember how remarkable Austin Grad is and to be grateful for its role in Kingdom work.

There is a video recording of Friends' Day available. You can request a copy by emailing dkoehn@austingrad.edu or calling Debbie at 512-476-2772. Upon viewing the video, I believe you will find yourself agreeing with the one who said, "It is always good to be in the company of such great Christian minds. I am in awe of the accomplishments of so few."

I am also grateful that one of Professor Weed's students is his successor. Dr. Daniel Napier will join the Austin Grad faculty in August of 2012. Professor Napier received his BA degree from Austin Grad in 1998. He earned a MA in the History of Theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 2000, and a PhD from the Free University in Amsterdam, the Netherlands in 2010. Daniel is currently a missionary and lecturer in Philosophy and Theology at the Institute of Biblica Studies in Zagreb, Croatia.

Commenting on his appointment, Daniel said, "The invitation to join the Austin Grad faculty both honors and humbles me. It seems

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In Memoriam

Barbara Joyce Eldridge
July 3, 1933 – June 13, 2011

Austin Grad is mourning the loss of a good friend, Barbara J. Eldridge. Barbara passed away in June in Iowa Park, Texas.

Barbara was a registered nurse and worked until her retirement in 1994. After her retirement, she and her late husband, Ernest R. Eldridge traveled extensively. In their motor home, they traveled with the Sojourners, a group of travelers committed to doing the Lord’s work as they travel.

Because of their desire to support the work of Austin Grad, Ernie and Barbara created the Ernest R. and Barbara J. Eldridge Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust, in December of 1997. While the trust provided income to Ernest and Barbara for their lifetimes, because Austin Grad was named as the charitable remainderman, the school received the assets that remained in the trust at the time of Barbara’s death. These assets were used to support the general operations of the school.

“Austin Grad is so honored to be the charitable recipient of the Eldridge’s thoughtful generosity,” said Dr. Stanley G. Reid, President of Austin Grad. “Through people like them who passionately believe in our work, God will continue to bless Austin Grad.”

“At Austin Grad, we often talk of visionary philanthropy,” said Neil Haney, Director of Development. “Mr. and Mrs. Eldridge were perfect examples of visionary philanthropists. Fourteen years ago, they made arrangements for the future support of Austin Grad. Today, when it is most needed, their plan is benefitting the students and programs of Austin Grad.”

Everyone at Austin Grad cherishes the memory of Ernest and Barbara Eldridge.

From the president continued

especially appropriate to be handed the baton by Michael Weed. He first taught me the significance of receiving the tradition of Christian faith from those who have gone before us and passing it on, ever so slightly enriched, to the next generation. As I reach back to receive the baton from Professor Weed, I celebrate how well he ran the race before me. I also look forward and pray that God will make use of me too in shaping a new generation of servants in his kingdom.” The announcement of Daniel’s appointment can be accessed at http://www.austingrad.edu/press releases/Daniel_Napier.pdf.

So, in the afterglow of our most recent meetings of the Board of Trustees and Friends of Austin Grad, and in anticipation of the seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas, I am truly struck with awe, wonder, and gratitude for how God uses all those who work and give to make Austin Grad such a unique school. Chesterton got it right. “Gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.”

—Stan Reid, President
Friends' Day Spotlights Michael Weed

Dr. Michael Weed retired in August after 36 years of service at Austin Grad. As the Billy Gunn Hocott Professor he prepared hundreds of men and women for kingdom service. Former colleagues and students recognized Dr. Weed’s contribution to church and school at the semi-annual Friends’ Day on October 15th.

Wendell Willis, Professor of Bible at Abilene Christian University, spoke of the years Michael Weed and he worked at Sweet Publishing. They co-authored several books and “spent many hours reading, discussing and occasionally debating Christian concepts.” Dr. Willis described Dr. Weed as “a very genuine person, a person one can disagree with openly and fully and still remain friends.”

Written greetings from former colleagues Dr. Tony Ash and Dr. James Thompson were read by current associates Dr. Eddie Sharp and Dr. David Worley.

Dr. Ash described Dr. Weed as “concerned about his students, having compassion for those facing problems, rejoicing in those who advance in their spiritual walk, and enjoying the moments of humor that grace the student-faculty relationship.”

Dr. Thompson called Michael Weed a “creative genius” with a copy machine, continually “rewriting history” by superimposing the faces of fellow professors on the bodies of nineteenth century leaders.

James Thompson was not the only one to mention Dr. Weed’s sense of humor and imaginative practical jokes but Michael is most appreciated for his love of the church. Jeff Peterson noted that he “passionately believes that all theological scholarship should be for the purpose of strengthening the church.”

Mark Shipp said, “Michael teaches by example what it means to be ecumenical.” Allan McNicol recognized Dr. Weed’s work in editing Things that Matter calling it “his lasting legacy.”

Charlie Johanson (MATS 2007) spoke on behalf of Dr. Weed’s many students. Charlie noted the number of students who credit Dr. Weed for teaching them to think theologically and to critically examine each belief in terms of the truth about God and the church.

In concluding the tribute to Dr. Weed, Fred Streitelmeier, President of the Board of Trustees, presented him with a new desk chair bearing the Austin Grad logo.

Michael Weed has blessed the students, faculty, and staff of Austin Grad for thirty-six years. May his wisdom, grace, and encouragement continue to bless others for many more years.
**Visionary Philanthropy**

I recently came across a quote that has stuck with me and continues to be meaningful. I can't give credit to its author but I appreciate whoever it is.

The quote says, "Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting."

The quote is meaningful to me for several reasons. First, it describes a lot of people I know. I have been fortunate to know some of the most generous people in the world. Most of them are described by this quote.

Most people who share their resources do so from a genuine motive to help others. Seldom are they concerned with self-gratification. The benefit of others is their concern. They do not keep lists of those they have helped and often do not recall specific acts of kindness when reminded of them. On those rare occasions when others reciprocate their good deeds, they never forget and are forever grateful.

Secondly, I like the quote because it seems so consistent with our Lord's teachings about giving. Matthew 6 comes to mind. Jesus taught that the purpose of our acts of kindness should be to help the needy and not to call attention to ourselves.

There have been many surveys designed to determine the main reasons people give to charitable organizations. The results are always the same. People give to organizations like Austin Grad because they believe in the institutional mission. Tax benefits and recognition are secondary. Not that they are unimportant, but first and foremost, the true philanthropist lives and gives to serve others.

At Austin Grad, we believe in recognizing and honoring our donors. We list their names in our publications. We name facilities for them. We put them on our donor wall. Why? Because we want them and others to be ever mindful of our gratitude for their generous support. Moreover, their example serves as inspiration for others to do likewise.

Yet, we know their hearts. There is no doubt that their support is given for the right reasons. Their concern is to support the mission of Austin Grad and the students who attend here. They are true philanthropists. They give, often without remembering, and take without forgetting. We are all blessed by them.

Neil Haney
Director of Development
Don't Miss the Next Issue of Update

You are reading volume 97 of Update, the Austin Grad newsletter. Volume 98 will be distributed electronically via e-mail. Over the course of four months, January through April 2012, subscribers to the electronic version of Update will receive four issues of three to four articles each.

There are several advantages to an electronic newsletter. First, it allows us to provide you with the most current information about Austin Grad, our students, and our activities. Additionally, an electronic newsletter is more economical, making it possible for us to direct more of Austin Grad's financial resources to meeting the needs of our students. Finally, it is environmentally responsible. At Austin Grad we are keenly aware of our duty to protect and preserve God's creation; a paperless newsletter does not destroy trees or contribute to the landfill.

If you are not currently receiving our electronic newsletter, you may subscribe by sending your e-mail address to rkennell@austingrad.edu.