Austin Grad is a community of scholars and students seeking to know, understand, and practice the Christian faith.


Organized by the faculty and staff, this annual event seeks to foster preaching and teaching that benefits the church within the contemporary culture and is based on sound biblical interpretation, thoughtful theological reflection and a restoration viewpoint.

Many participants return year after year, confident that they will leave the seminar with greater biblical knowledge and renewed enthusiasm for their work in God's kingdom. This year was no exception.

Bruce McLarty began the presentations with Preaching from the Gospel of John. With advanced degrees from Harding Graduate School of Religion and Ashland Theological Seminary and more than twenty years in the pulpit, Dr. McLarty brought both scholarship and practical experience to his presentation.

A prolific writer, professor of Old Testament, and Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Theology at ACU, Mark Hamilton offered insights for Preaching from Hosea that will help both preachers and teachers present the text in a way that is relevant to the contemporary church.

Educated in Texas and Great Britain, Dr. Todd Still is a New Testament scholar and professor at the George W. Truett Theological Seminary of Baylor University. He is the author of Philemon and Philippians in the Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary Series. This scholarship, along with his ministry experience in various churches, enabled Dr. Still to bring a fresh thematic perspective for preaching Philemon which will be particularly useful to the seminar participants.

Dr. Daniel Napier, Assistant Professor at Austin Graduate School of Theology, drew on his experience as a missionary and the model of the Patristic Fathers to encourage preaching and teaching that leads to a deep conversion and faithful discipleship.

Dr. Allan McNicol led a group of participants through a detailed study of Mark 9:14-29 entitled I Believe, Help My Unbelief.

Along with the early morning coffee klatsch, lunch and dinner breaks provided time for fellowship and sharing with old friends. At lunch on Tuesday, Eddie Sharp, pulpit minister at University Avenue Church in Austin and adjunct faculty member at AGST, shared wisdom from his forty plus years in the pulpit and from his fifteen years as part of the Ministers' Support Network team.

Each year participants express their appreciation for the seminar:

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32nd Sermon Seminar cont.

In 1988, I was invited...to attend the Sermon Seminar for the first time. I have attended every year but two since then.... Attending the seminar and hearing examples of what James (Thompson) described...as scholarship integrated with preaching prompted a desire in me to get more and better tools for ministry. In 1990, I began grad classes at ACU and did a MS and a MDiv.... I am set to defend my DMin thesis ...and graduate August 9. All of that to say that I owe much to the Sermon Seminar at Austin Grad.

--Greg Fleming, Preaching Minister
North A Church of Christ
Midland, TX

As an attendee at the Sermon Seminar for eight years, I have found this annual event to be indispensable to my preaching. Not only do I find my battery recharged through the worship sessions and fellowship with friends, but also from the presentations. In my mind these constitute the heartbeat of the seminar.

Each year I look forward to hearing from scholars and preachers in the trenches who allow us to "look over their shoulders" (as one presenter put it a few years ago) as they work through sections of Scripture. As a young preacher, I find myself using the material in different ways: from shaping a sermon series to gleaning insights on a particular passage. I frequently refer to my notes and have found them to be enormously helpful in taking the text to the people.

In an era of abundant information, it is easy to spend hours "chasing rabbits" while missing the main point of the text. In contrast the material from the Sermon Seminar continues to provide critical pieces to the puzzle of Scripture while remaining faithful to the gospel story.

--Charlie Johanson, Minister of the Word
Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ
Austin, Texas

Subject to available space, Sermon Seminar is open to everyone. Mark your calendar for May 19-21, 2014 and join us for the 33rd annual seminar.
Austin Grad Needs Your Help!

Austin Grad is an overlooked treasure and we need your help to spread the word about the school and the opportunities available to our students. Our faculty and staff are working hard to recruit new students, but we cannot do it alone. You are our eyes, ears, and voice in your church and the community! Here are three ways you can help Austin Grad in its recruiting efforts.

- **Send us students!**
  Whether you stand in front of or sit in the midst of the church, as you encounter people in your congregations who you think would be great in ministry or who have a desire to think deeper about Scripture and theology, please send them our way! Bring them by for a visit...we would love to meet them! Talk about us, and do so often!

- **Stay informed!**
  One way to continue talking to others about us is to keep yourself informed with what's going on at Austin Grad! *Update* is just one way of doing this. You may also want to occasionally check our website, austingrad.edu, for course schedules and other events. A new, great way to stay involved is by liking and following us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/AustinGraduateSchoolofTheology.

- **Let us come speak to your church!**
  Do you need a guest preacher? We have professors and staff that do that! Would you like Austin Grad to make a presentation at an evening service? We would love to do that also! If there are opportunities for an Austin Grad representative to speak at your church, we are available.

There are exciting and affordable opportunities for learning and growth at Austin Grad! If you would like for us to send you material to make available to your church, please let us know. We would be happy to do so!

Of course, we are always grateful for your prayers on behalf of the school and your continued support of our efforts and mission. May God bless you in your service and ministry.

— Matt Porter
Director of Recruiting
mporter@austingrad.edu

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Student Association Officers Hope to Increase Awareness of Austin Grad

The 2012-2013 school year was a busy one for the AGST Student Association. The association officers, Andrea Hendrick, president, Jeff Matteson, vice-president, Ambre Tandy, secretary, and Lino Luongo, treasurer, fulfilled their mission to "raise the bar—represent and promote student communication and community."

Believing that fellowship and service foster community, the association provided opportunities for the students to participate in both. Fellowship activities included the Back to School Bash and the annual Christmas party, complete with the traditional spoof of the faculty. A spring luau finished a very successful year. The funds for these activities came from the annual Chili Cook-off, a pizza lunch, and a chess tournament.

The student association at Austin Grad seeks to represent Christ by helping to meet needs in the surrounding community. The food bank at Jedidiah Baker Ministries benefitted from the fall food drive and the victims of a home fire in San Marcos received gift cards.

In April, students elected officers for the 2013-2014 school year. Spenser Prather will serve as student association president. A graduate of UT with a BA in English and a BA in Sociology, she is enrolled in the MATS program at Austin Grad. As an officer Spenser hopes to increase participation in the Round Table discussions and to equip students to promote an awareness of the school to potential students and supporters.

Undergraduate Angela Graves will be vice-president. She is committed to providing activities and programs that will attract area high school students and encourage them to study at Austin Grad.

Lottie Daily, incoming secretary, has earned an AA in Theology, a BS in Sociology, a MS in Urban and Regional Planning, and a law degree. She is currently enrolled in the MATS program. Lottie wants to work with the other officers to provide programs and activities that will "benefit our student body, faculty and community to the glory of God."

A native of Naples, Italy, Lino Luongo will serve once again as association treasurer. Before coming to Austin Grad, he was a preacher, now he is a full-time student working on a BA in Christian Studies. Lino wants the activities of the student association to benefit the students and increase recognition of the school. "Austin Grad is a wonderful place and there is passion for God!"

With these student leaders 2013-2014 should be a productive and exciting year.
Student Profile

Gabe Raveney

Gabe Raveney is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree at Austin Grad as well as an undergraduate degree in Philosophy at UT. His wife, Christina, is pursuing a degree in nursing. They are the parents of Winston, age live. Gabe enjoys playing with Winston, reading, eating, and outdoor activities. Gabe and Christina look to the future with much hope and excitement.

AG: Gabe, please share a little about your family background.

GR: I was born to missionary parents working in La Paz, Bolivia. My father is from France, my mother is from Georgia, and I am the fifth of seven children. After I was born we moved to Europe where my parents served in Turkey, Hungary, and various other eastern European countries. My early childhood was wonderful, exciting, and entirely orthodox. When I was about ten we returned, once again, to the States. Later, we moved to Argentina. As I neared high school age, I returned to the States to live with family friends and earn my high school diploma. After that, I traveled extensively in the US and abroad, finally settling in Austin.

AG: How would you describe your spiritual journey?

GR: Since my parents were missionaries, fundamental Christian principles and the salvation message were always a part of my life and vocabulary. After I left home, there was a period where I had to establish what I personally believed. It took some time and effort. As I traveled, I realized there was something very powerful in the Christian way of life. This was particularly evident when I saw the human poverty and suffering of the "third world" and how the Christian message, accompanied by charity, could offer something distinctive to those in need. I wanted to help, but first I had to learn. I began to study the Bible and Christian theology on my own, so that I could better understand what I believed and why. This process still continues.

AG: Who or what has had the greatest impact on your spiritual journey?

GR: My parents' dedication, self-sacrifice, and selfless devotion to the furthering of the Christian message have been a powerful influence in my life. Humanity at large has pressed on me an obligation to give something back. Several close friends have also played large roles in my spiritual journey, as well as the host of writers and thinkers that I have learned so much from in my studies.

AG: What motivated you to seek a theological degree and why did you choose Austin Grad?

GR: I wanted to change careers. Prior to this, I worked in the non-profit/charity sector. While there is merit and good in that vocation, I realized I was more interested in scholastic pursuits. When my curiosity about theology fueled a desire to learn in a more formal setting, I found AGST online. I chose Austin Grad because I could earn an undergraduate degree in theology. Also, I was met with warmth, acceptance, and encouragement that I could come back to school and pursue both undergraduate and advanced degrees.

AG: How do you see your studies at Austin Grad impacting your study of philosophy at UT?

GR: Overall the study of theology has helped me think about how issues in philosophy interact or intersect with my Christian beliefs. It helps me step back and consider how any philosophical idea might impact my faith. Since much of my formal training in Christian thought and theology has occurred at AGST, it will always be some influence in some form. Anyone who has taken courses with a professor like Dr. McNicol will be impressed by the serious and devout injunction to remain faithful and true to the Biblical message and text in all one's thoughts and actions.

AG: How have you been challenged at Austin Grad?

GR: I have had to catch up in various areas of study. I also had to learn how to be a student who can learn from others, who needs help, and who is in a position of humility overall. Trying to write compelling papers is always a

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In Memoriam: Abraham J Malherbe

On September 28 of last year, Austin Graduate School of Theology (AGST) lost a longtime friend, and four AGST faculty and emeriti lost a beloved former teacher, when Abraham J. Malherbe died in Hamden, Connecticut at the age of 82. Malherbe traveled from his native South Africa in 1951 to study at Abilene Christian College and Harvard Divinity School, receiving the Th.D. in 1963. He taught at ACC (now ACU), at Dartmouth College, and at Yale Divinity School, where he served for many years as Buckingham Professor of New Testament. He published numerous articles and books on early Christianity and its Greco-Roman environment, notably on Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, contributing an outstanding commentary on the Thessalonian letters to the Anchor Bible series.

“Abe,” as he was known to his many friends, was first associated with the institution that has grown into AGST as a teacher in the University of Texas Bible Chair, when he was a member of the ACC faculty. He also appeared on the Sermon Seminar program numerous times, spoke at the dedication of the Institute for Christian Studies building in 1990, and supported AGST through the donation of volumes to the David Worley Library. Most recently, in March of 2011, he and his devoted wife of almost six decades Phyllis (née Melton) were guests of AGST at a luncheon with faculty in their honor as the Malherbes were en route to Abilene, where Abe spoke to the Friends of the ACU Library, an organization he was instrumental in founding. His talk “On Being a Lover of Libraries” (available via youtube.com) offers a glimpse of the erudition, devotion to learning, and ready wit with which Abe dazzled and enlightened many students in a teaching career spanning half a century.

Chancellor David Worley commented, “We give thanks to the Father above for supplying Abe with the gift of teaching which he exercised in love for the church, especially the local congregation.” All of us at AGST join Professor Malherbe’s family, colleagues, and other friends in mourning his loss and recalling with thanksgiving to God the ministry of teaching and scholarship to which he devoted his life.

Student Profile continued

challenge for any student of theology, especially
in light of the vast body of scholarship already out
there. One has to accept that they are at a stage
of growth and learning and that humility is the
primary lesson to be learned.

AG: How has your time at Austin Grad been a
blessing?

GR: When my schedule allows me to attend,
chapel is a huge blessing to me. It is a privilege
to see faith in action and to see those involved in
academics also committed to worship. In chapel
I see how there can be dignity, solemnity, and
whole-hearted conviction in a simple and short
time together.

AG: What are your plans after graduation?

GR: I plan to seek a doctorate in philosophy. In
preparation, I have been accepted into a scholars’
program at UT and have received a fellowship to
do research for a paper that will contribute to my
graduate school application and will be featured
in an in-house journal. My long term goal is to
teach at the college level.

Recommended Reading

Sacred Rhythms by Ruth Haley Barton focuses on the
process of transformation and spiritual growth. This
book offers practical ways to discover and develop a deeper
relationship with God.

Recommended by Hugh Gainey

In Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Post-Modern World, Robert Webber invites
Christians who look to the Bible as the authority for matters of belief to rediscover the faith, worship, and discipleship of the early Christian centuries—a
resource from which we can discover teachings of the Scriptures we have neglected.

Recommended by Jeff Peterson

The Duties of Parents (1679), by Jacobus Koelman.
Although parents today would not want to follow every piece of advice in this devotional classic from the Dutch “Further Reformation,” it is filled with
sound wisdom that will get parents—and their children—to think.

Recommended by Keith Stanglin
Possibly the biggest challenge facing the church in the USA is its disestablishment. It must learn how to be a faithful minority in a context that appears to be changing from passive disregard to vocal opposition from some quarters. In such a setting, the church needs well-trained minister theologians to help chart its direction as it navigates unfamiliar territory.

I agree with those who believe that the church's ministers should function as theologians. Their role is not limited to that, but is weakened if it is less than that. Three basic functions of the minister theologian have been suggested. One has said that the primary task of the minister as theologian is to lead the congregation "in reading, studying, praying, singing, and confessing the Bible so that it becomes the story of its life." The tools of biblical scholarship provided at Austin Grad are of great assistance in the fulfillment of that function.

A second function of the minister theologian is to expose the church to its historic faith. Through the centuries the church has often lived at the margins and faced opposition. Knowing how Christians thought, believed, and practiced the faith in the past serves as an encouraging witness and gives us insight about how to be faithful in similar conditions.

A third function of the minister theologian is to assist congregations in becoming theological thinkers. As such, they come to examine every aspect of their daily lives in view of Jesus Christ. Through this reflection, congregations come to understand more deeply who God is, how God acts, and what God does in our world and in our lives.

At Austin Grad we are firmly committed to the worthy goal of equipping men and women who would be minister theologians in a variety of roles. I witnessed the outworking of that recently.

When visiting a local congregation, I was struck by how it has interfaced in various ways with Austin Grad through the years. The preacher that Sunday has taken classes for credit from our professors. His sermon was biblical with a strong message of practical application for the Christian life.

Another of its ministers holds a degree from Austin Grad. Teachers in the Bible classes of that church include those who have either earned degrees from our school or audited numerous classes.

Another church member who is an immigrant refugee is now seeking a degree from Austin Grad. He ministers within a community of refugees. That same Sunday an announcement was made about the church's partnership with another church. It is providing housing and Christian mentoring for men who are in transition from detention or in a recovery program. One of the ministers involved with that ministry is an Austin Grad student.

Reflecting about that led me to think of the many others who have studied at Austin Grad and are doing faithful Kingdom work in so many places and in so many different ways. It was strong affirmation that Austin Grad continues to fulfill its mission to promote knowledge, understanding, and practice of the Christian faith by equipping Christians and churches 'or service in the Kingdom of God.

The late Mike White, a former chairman of the Austin Grad board of trustees, often said to us, "Press on!" And we will. Your partnership in our mission is a great blessing. This good work could not continue without those of you who pray, support, and serve with us. Thanks so much.

—Stan Reid, President

Book Recommendations from Stan Reid

**The Seven Deadly Sins** by Solomon Schimmel

Schimmel is a Professor of Jewish Education and Psychology at Hebrew College of Boston. He draws on the moral traditions of Judaism, Graeco-Roman moral philosophy, and Christianity. Schimmel believes that modern secular psychology has added to our understanding of the human condition. However, he argues that its "arrogant disdain for past wisdom" leaves it seriously deficient in addressing problems of a moral nature. I do not agree with all of Schimmel's conclusions, but he has interesting insights.

**Sin and Grace in Christian Counseling** by Mark R. McMinn

McMinn's focus is captured in the following quotations from the book. "There was once a time when the language of sin and grace was understood, both in private and public discourse, but that era has largely been supplanted by a therapeutic culture that emphasizes symptoms more than sin and unconditional acceptance more than grace" (18). "Psychology is helpful, but is not fully sufficient for Christian counseling. We cannot get a full understanding of helping others without also looking at theology and spirituality" (75f.).

**Sinning Like a Christian: A New Look at the Seven Deadly Sins** by William Willimon

I have always enjoyed Willimon's trenchant writing style. He does not disappoint in this volume. Practical insights are offered with humor, sarcasm, and blunt honesty. For Willimon, "Church is about more than sin, but, by the grace of God, it ought not be less than this" (9). By honestly recognizing the infective nature and destructive power of these seven within us, he believes that God can cultivate the virtues. With Christians in mind he concludes, "Jesus Christ, who said upfront that he came to seek and save the lost, seems to have found you, seems to have remarkably transformed a basically deceitful person like you into a sort of savior. This makes you a miracle, a surprising work of God" (150).
On April 20th friends of Austin Grad gathered for a morning of fellowship, food, worship, and presentations. Professor Keith Stanglin gave the keynote address, Mark Shipp led worship, and Fred Strietelmeier, Chairman, delivered the trustees’ report.

Jedadiah Baker, Katelyn Horn, and Abel Salazar recapped their individual journeys to Austin Grad and their plans for the future.
Opportunity Knocks

At Austin Grad the new semester begins on August 28. The fall schedule offers great opportunities for individuals and groups to audit a course. With classes available morning, afternoon, and evening there is something to fit a variety of schedules and appeal to a range of interests.

If you want to increase your knowledge of specific biblical texts consider enrolling in the study of the Gospel of Mark, (taught by Dr. Peterson) or in Genesis (taught by Dr. Mark Shipp). For a more general study of the Old or New Testament you can choose from a variety of courses including Life and Teachings of Jesus (Peterson), The Story of Israel (M. Shipp), Biblical Theology (McNicol), and Reading the Old Testament (M. Shipp).

Have you always wanted to read the Bible in the original language? Elementary New Testament Greek I (Peterson) and Hebrew I (M. Shipp) can be the first steps to fulfilling that desire. If you want to be a better interpreter of the biblical text, Interpreting the Bible (Stanglin) focuses on the skills and tools of exegesis. Do you want to know more about Christian belief through the centuries? Introduction to Theology (Napier) is the class for you

For those actively involved in ministry and those who want to expand their understanding of ministry, there are several courses offered this fall. They include Teaching and Preaching, Christian Counseling, Ministries in the Local Church, and Spiritual Formation. Other ministry courses are noted on the school website.

In addition to classes in Bible, theology, ministry, and church history, two general education courses are scheduled for the fall semester.

For a complete list of all courses and instructors, go to www.austingrad.edu and use the Quick Link for Fall Semester. As they become available, syllabi can be accessed through the class schedule. To register for one or more classes call 512/476-2772.

Hear what some of our auditors have to say...

I enjoy the discussion with knowledgeable professors who stimulate critical thinking and I am better equipped to teach Bible classes.

—David Jones

Auditing classes at Austin Grad has enriched my knowledge of Scripture and brought me into fellowship with many wonderful Christians. Everything about my AGST experience has been blessing upon blessing. I recommend auditing classes at Austin Grad to my friends who are serious about Bible study, and many have taken advantage of the opportunity to become part of the Austin Grad family.

—Cheryie Palmer

We have enjoyed auditing classes at Austin Grad because they have offered such a fresh, "larger picture" look into the subjects. One thing that we enjoyed in a recent class was discovering ways in which ancient people thought, including words and sayings they used, which are important to the understanding of Scripture. The classes have been very thought-provoking, producing respectful and lively discussions (which often have included lots of laughter). Overall, the classes have had a hand in the strengthening of our faith walk. The cost of auditing is quite moderate and there are no tests required!

—Chris and Cindy Lippe
Visionary Philanthropy

Sustaining the Mission Through Charitable Gifts

It is said so often that it becomes trite, but it is absolute truth: "Your gifts of any size to Austin Grad make a significant difference."

In any charitable organization, it is the large and unusual gift that normally gets the public attention. These larger gifts are important and dramatic in their impact on the organization. We long for them. We ask for them and when we get them, we are eternally grateful because they are so meaningful.

Equally meaningful are those gifts given regularly to Austin Grad on an annual or monthly basis. These are gifts that sustain the school and keep it going each day. Without them, the cost of the education at Austin Grad would increase and would make it more difficult for our students to pursue their dreams.

If you are reading this, you have likely given one or more gifts to Austin Grad. May we once again say “thank you,” and let you know again how important your support is.

If you have not given and are looking for a place where your gifts will have lasting effect in furthering a mission of expanding the kingdom of God, we invite you to join the others who support Austin Grad in ways unique to their own ability.

For the sake of recognition we have classified your support in several categories.

Keepers of the Flame: These donors include Austin Grad in their giving on an annual basis or sometimes more than once a year. Whenever it is possible and convenient their resources are shared. These gifts will range from twenty-five to several thousand dollars. Whatever the amount, all are important. All gifts by Keepers of the Flame donors are tax deductible and may be made by check or credit card.

Light Bearers: Donors who are recognized as Light Bearers send monthly contributions to Austin Grad. Most are surprised by the amount of the tax deductible contribution at the end of the year when the monthly contributions are added up. For example, a $100 per month contribution translates to a $1,200 annual gift.

For Austin Grad, the monthly contributions help provide the necessary cash to keep the school running smoothly. Light Bearers monthly participation is a great example of visionary philanthropy. These gifts can also be made by check or by credit card.

If you are a Keeper of the Flame or a Light Bearer and you are employed or are retired from a major corporation, it is possible that your company will match your gift. If you are unsure, ask them or let us know and we will ask for you.

On the Austin Grad website there is a list of corporations that have matching gift programs. To view the list go to www.aust-ingrad.edu and click on "Support Austin Grad." Under "How to Give" go to "Matching Gifts." There you will find a link to a list of companies that match employee donations.

There are a number of other methods to support Austin Grad in meaningful ways. One way is our "Pay for a Day" program. This program honors or memorializes a special person in your life by funding a day of instruction at Austin Grad with a gift of $500. We will be happy to send you our pamphlet, "Pay for a Day: A Philanthropic Tradition." Requesting the pamphlet is without obligation but we would like for you to know about the program.

Finally, a most thoughtful way to support Austin Grad is with a gift in your will. Ask for our pamphlet, "Looking Beyond." Again, we are happy to send it without obligation.

Your support of Austin Grad is greatly appreciated and is so important to the school and to our students. Once again, we say, "Thank You."

—Neil Haney
Director of Development
Update

Update is a periodic publication of the Austin Graduate School of Theology, 7640 Guadalupe St., Austin, TX 78752. Our mission is to promote knowledge, understanding, and practice of the Christian faith by equipping Christians and churches for service in the kingdom of God.

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Calendar 2013

August 26
7 PM
Convocation

August 28
First day of classes

September 2
Labor Day Holiday

September 17
Constitution Day

November 28-29
Thanksgiving Holiday

December 6
Last day of classes and Christmas Party

December 9-13
Finals Week

December 16 – January 10
Winter Break