Continuing the Dream

Austin Grad Announces Major Fund-Raising Campaign

A major fund-raising campaign known as the Continuing the Dream Campaign was officially announced at Friends' Day held on October 18, 2014.

Board chairman, Fred Strietelmeier, announced to the group that the beginning stage of the campaign had been completed and over half of the goal had already been committed.

“The planning stage of this campaign has transpired over a couple of years. After several refinements, the goal of $3.5 Million was set by our Board of Trustees at our April Meeting.”

Strietelmeier explained that the campaign is not a capital campaign but a comprehensive campaign designed to enhance programs at Austin Grad. A priority list of needs was developed and a case for support written. Calls were then made on members of the Board of Trustees and other friends in order to explain the campaign and to offer opportunities for participation.

We have been amazed and humbled by the response of our friends during the initial phase of this important campaign,” he continued. “We had hoped to have at least 40% of the goal achieved prior to announcing it today. I am thrilled to announce that we now have 57% of the goal, or $2,000,000 in gifts and pledges.”

Five important areas will be funded by the campaign:

- Online BA courses ($500,000)
- Marketing and Recruiting ($600,000)
- Institutional Endowment ($1,500,000)
- Scholarships ($300,000)
- Mission Apprentice Program ($600,000)

Each of these areas is of vital importance to the mission of Austin Grad. Funds from the campaign will enable the services offered to our students to be enhanced and new programs to be implemented.

Dr. Terry Konce, former chairman of the board of trustees from Houston, Texas, and Dr. Jerry Christian from Lampasas, Texas are co-chairs of the campaign.

All friends of Austin Grad are invited to participate in the campaign.
AUSTIN GRAD DINNERS

FRIENDS OF AUSTIN GRAD GATHER IN HOUSTON

A gathering of 28 friends of Austin Grad met for dinner at the highly regarded Rainbow Lodge in Houston, Texas on Saturday, July 19th. The event was hosted by Drs. David and Amy Fuller, Dr. Robert and Sara Jane White and Dr. Matt and Angela Soper. Amy Fuller, who served as Mistress of Ceremonies, is a trustee of Austin Grad. The Whites and Sopers are members of Austin Grad’s Board of Visitors.

President Stan Reid spoke to the guests about the history and mission of Austin Grad. Neil Haney, Director of Development, explained the Continuing the Dream Campaign. Matt Soper, an alumnus of Austin Grad, recalled his educational experience and what it had meant to his faith journey. A video presentation by alumnus Ed Fleming was also presented.

“We are so grateful for the opportunity to tell the Austin Grad story to our friends in the Houston area,” said Dr. Reid. “We are especially thankful for the Fullers, the Whites and the Sopers for organizing an enjoyable evening.”

DAVIS’ HOST AUSTIN GRAD DINNER IN KERRVILLE

The beautiful Guadalupe River flowed silently by the deck of John and Billie Davis’ home located outside Hunt, Texas. The setting was the scene of a pre-dinner reception for approximately 25 friends of Austin Grad. The Davis’, long associated with Austin Grad through John’s membership on the Board of Trustees, hosted a dinner casually entitled, “What’s Going on at Austin Grad.” The event was held on August 21, 2014.

After a buffet meal, guests gathered in the Davis’ living area for several presentations about Austin Grad. President Stan Reid welcomed the group and told a bit about the school’s history and current plans for the future. A video by Cal Reed, an Austin Grad alumnus, was shown. Reed told of his life’s experiences which caused him to seek God and ultimately come to Austin Grad. He is now a member of the Marble Falls Church of Christ.

Gary Stork, an Austin Grad alumnus and recently elected to the Kerrville City Council, also spoke about his experiences and his passion for Austin Grad. Specifically he mentioned the Austin Grad publication, Christian Studies, and how important it was to him as a deacon of the Kerrville Church of Christ. James Penland, a member of the Austin Grad Board of Visitors, told of the reasons he and his wife Barbara support Austin Grad and encouraged all in attendance to do likewise.

“We are grateful to John and Billie Davis for hosting this impressive group of Austin Grad friends,” said Stan Reid. “John has served as a member of Austin Grad Board of Trustees for many years, and Billie is always there to help in any way she can.”
Following a welcome by Dr. Stan Reid, Dr. Keith Stanglin introduced Mark Lanier, the guest speaker at Austin Grad on Tuesday evening, October 27. The Dr. Claude Hocott Commons was packed for the occasion.

Lanier began by sharing conversations at a conference where several of the lawyers were atheists. These conversations were the prompt for his latest book, *Christianity on Trial*. His explanation of their issues and statement and his responses were testimony to his faith and willingness to encounter opposition. He stressed the need for Christians to be more willing to share their faith and speak out for following Christ. Following his presentation, he welcomed questions from the audience. Afterward he signed copies of his latest book, *Christianity on Trial: A Lawyer Examines the Christian Faith* (InterVarsity Press, 2014).

After receiving a BA in Biblical languages from Lipscomb University, he attended the Texas Tech University School of Law, completing his JD in 1984. He is one of the top trial lawyers in the United States and has received recognition in his field from *The New York Times*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *The National Law Journal*, and *Texas Monthly*, among other publications. He opened The Lanier Law Firm in 1990 and also founded the Christian Trial Lawyers Association, a non-profit organization that creates a network of principled attorneys to minister to others through civic-minded endeavors.

Lanier and his family built the Lanier Theological Library, one of the largest private religious studies library open for public usage. The library houses nearly 100,000 volumes in areas of Biblica Studies, Judaic Studies, Church History, Greek and Latin Classical Studies, Linguistics, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, including the collections of several deceased scholars. He teaches regular classes in Houston, Texas on Biblical Literacy that are also posted on the Internet in video, audio and written formats.
from the President

Through the years we have had many outstanding students. Charlie Johanson is one of those. Like most of our graduates, he is quick to acknowledge how the instruction and mentoring he received at Austin Grad played a significant part in equipping him for the outstanding ministry he is providing as Minister of the Word at the Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ in Austin.

Early last summer, Charlie contacted me. He asked if I would be available to meet with him, his father, Keith, and Jose Harrell. At the time, Jose was working as a summer youth minister for the La Vernia Church of Christ where Keith serves as an elder.

Although Jose is currently a student at Texas State University, his conversations with Keith revealed a desire to deepen his faith through biblical studies. Naturally, Keith told Jose about Austin Grad because he knew firsthand the quality of biblical education that his son, Charlie, received through the school.

Knowing that, Keith suggested a visit to Austin Grad. So last summer, Keith and Charlie accompanied Jose on his first visit to our school where Jose had the opportunity to interview faculty and staff members. His initial conclusion was that he should return to Texas State and finish his undergraduate degree and then look at pursuing a master’s degree at Austin Grad.

Earlier this month, I received an email from Jose, inquiring about entering our undergraduate program in Christian Studies. Jose's experience as a summer youth minister in La Vernia and his circumstances this semester had deepened his desire to develop his faith through intensive biblical and theological study.

He is now in the registration process to enroll in Austin Grad for the spring semester. We have countless stories to tell about the individuals who were blessed by their educational experiences at our school. Beyond that, their churches have also been blessed. I am confident that it will be the same for Jose and the churches and communities that he will have the opportunity to influence in his lifetime.

Reflecting on this, I am reminded of how important our work at Austin Grad is. I am thankful for those like Charlie, Keith, and now Jose who understand this. I also imagine the amount of good that could be done if there were more students receiving an outstanding Christian education like that offered at our school.

I am often asked what Austin Grad needs most. Of course we need prayers, encouragement, and donations. But most of all, we need students to join us in our mission to know, understand, and practice the faith by equipping Christians and churches for service in the Kingdom of God. Your assistance with identifying and recommending more students like Charlie and Jose would be a wonderful blessing.

Stan Reid — President
Friends’ Day began with the announcement of the opening success of “Continuing the Dream Campaign”. Following worship three students shared their story of studying at AGST. After a brunch provided by Lynn and Dan Snow, the Faculty Presentation was given by Dr. Mark Shipp with Dr. Jeff Peterson giving the response. The morning ended with final remarks by President Reid and a closing prayer. Deanna Munger, wasn’t planning on graduate school, but found herself auditing Introduction to Theology. She was “hooked” after the first class, and a switch from audit to credit followed. “I have felt that my time put into my classes has come back to me in benefit, multiplied.” Jan Swinney shared what it has meant to be brought to God’s seat and be lifted up. “My studies have changed the way I think about Christian.” Why is she at Austin Grad—to teach 3rd-5th graders so they will have a vision of God! An additional benefit—having Hebrew and Greek in common with her son! Lewis Wilson decided, after 26 years of working for the state and teaching, he wanted to serve in a different way and hoped ‘or a new challenge. After researching schools, he enrolled at Austin Grad where he feels the Spirit of the Lord is present. He is now engaged in prison ministry and leads “Pennies for Prison,” a non-profit to help prisoners.
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University Avenue Church of Christ, Austin
Western Hills Church of Christ, Austin

This list represents gifts received from June 1 to Oct. 31, 2014
SUMMER MISSION REFLECTIONS

DANIEL NAPIER

By the grace of God and the generosity of the University Avenue congregation, my daughter, Rebecah, and I were granted the opportunity to serve Jesus’ people in Marseille, France; Dundee, Scotland; Zagreb, Croatia; and St. Petersburg, Russia this summer.

Our journey began with two weeks among the brethren in Marseille. Almost three decades ago, a team of missionaries fromem and equipped through the St. Louis Mission Apprenticeship Program initiated a work in Southern France. As the church grew, they began a program called Chrétiens en Mission (CEM). Inspired by the St. Louis program, CEM adapted to the specific needs of a West European, French-speaking context. This summer about eighty young people from around the French-speaking world gathered to worship, absorb substantive teaching, and engage in a shared mission. Besides general participation, my contribution consisted of a series of lessons from Paul’s letters on specific practices by which we come to steadily see ourselves as limbs of Christ.

The next leg of our trip took us to Dundee, Scotland. There I delivered eleven lessons under the general title, ‘The Way: An Invitation to Jesus’ Form of Life’. For two weeks we enjoyed the hospitality of Linda and Dr. Alastair Ferrie and fellowship with the church.

From Dundee, we traveled to Zagreb, Croatia. Over the course of three weeks, I preached for the church and reconnected with those I had mentored during the six years of our service there. Since Mladen Jovanovic’s passing last September, I’ve yearned for an opportunity to visit the churches in Croatia and worried over their plight in prayer. Almost a year later, we were pleased to find the Kuslanova congregation in a healthy state. Mladen is sorely missed, and will continue to be, but God is calling others to exercise leadership as needed. Even when the Spirit uses one person prodigiously, we must never forget that God’s Spirit is the primary agent. Mladen knew it and said so. We often dismissed his words as an expression of modesty. But he was right.

Finally, we ventured to St. Petersburg, Russia to the Christian Resource Center Russia. At their invitation I delivered a condensed course of fifteen lectures and three seminar sessions on the Theology and Spirituality of the Church Fathers. About fifty church leaders from all over Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, and the Ukraine gathered for the event.

I was impressed with their enthusiasm for the subject matter and the probing nature of their questions. Yet more impressive was the spirit of unity in Jesus’ name affirmed across the boundaries of nationalist struggles. God is working among his people in Russia and the Baltic States. We, too, might learn something valuable from them.

We’re unspeakably grateful for each of you who contributed to this service. It’s a joy to partner with you in the gospel.
From its beginnings, under founding editor Michael R. Weed, Christian Studies has intended to offer “Scholarship for the Church,” as stated in the journal’s motto since 2008.

Christians in America face new challenges today. We are living in what David Bentley Hart has called a post-Christian world. Churches must consider how to adjust to new realities and a cultural environment that appears in some respects less hospitable to the open proclamation and practice of historic Christian faith, while in other respects offering unprecedented opportunities for authentic and powerful Christian witness.

How do we communicate the gospel by word and deed to a culture that believes it has already heard and rejected it, but which may never have seen faith working through love? How do we foster authentic transformation into the image of Christ, both in ourselves and others?

One vital function of scholarship for the church is to raise questions and promote discussion that allows churches to evaluate options for ministry and service. This aim ties together the essays on various topics contributed to the latest issue by Austin Grad faculty and emeriti. While each author speaks for himself, the reader of an issue is invited to join the ongoing discussion—and the occasional charitable argument—pursued at the faculty lunch table. Each issue is offered to our readers in hopes of spurring productive discussion toward the growth of faith, understanding, and discipleship.

Some changes are coming soon to Christian Studies, and we want our readers to be a part. Please go, to your computer, type austingrad.edu/survey in the browser window and take our Reader Survey. Make your wishes for the journal known!

Kerrville Church of Christ uses Christian Studies...

In a conversation with Gary Stork, a deacon in the Kerrville Church of Christ, he explained their experience with Christian Studies. Several members receive the journal, and they realized through their conversations about the topics there were many ways in which the church could make use of this valuable resource. Not only was the benefit personal, but in sharing their thoughts with others the importance increased. Explanations within the journal answered questions and provided additional ideas to pursue, as well as a tool for teaching. Take the suggestion from Todd’s information above and make your wishes known for future journal publications, and begin to take advantage of this great resource.
New Staff Introductions

Lauren Day
Director of Communications and Recruitment

Previously Lauren worked five years in the Washington, D.C. area, recently serving as director of external affairs at the Leadership Institute where she oversaw the reputation and public image through building strategic partnerships and managing marketing and communication activities.

Earlier she worked for a Texas Congressman on Capitol Hill, reported on foreign direct investment news at China Briefing Media in Shanghai, managed marketing campaigns and business development as the marketing coordinator for an engineering firm headquartered in Texas, and taught a graphics course for three semesters at Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications as an instructional associate.

A sixth generation Texan, Lauren graduated summa cum laude with a B.S. in Integrated Marketing Communications from Abilene Christian University. She completed the public diplomacy graduate program at Syracuse University in New York, receiving a M.S. in Public Relations from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and a M.A. in International Relations from the Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs. Lauren and her husband Nate are proud to once again call Austin home.

Dawn Bond
Registrar and Director of Admissions

Dawn graduated magna cum laude from Midwestern State University with a B.A. in English and a minor in art. She earned her M.A. in English with an emphasis in writing with perfect scores.

As a first year graduate student, she was the 2011-12 recipient of the Harry Brown Writing award. Her fiction and poetry have been published in college literary publications in Texas and California, and her research on "Meeting the Needs of Creative Writers in the University Writing Lab" was presented at the San Diego conference in 2013.

Dawn's writing and teaching skills have also extended to curriculum development and implementation in her many teaching positions, spanning the ages from preschool to college learners, focusing on teaching methods that satisfy the ways that students actually learn.

She also graduated from Sunset International Bible Institute with a certificate in Women's and Deaf Ministry and serves her church as an interpreter for the deaf. She has worn many hats since her husband works in full-time ministry. Dawn and her husband have two children. Their son is a U.S. Army intelligence collection specialist, and their daughter is a senior at Bastrop High School.

Abel Salazar
Recruiter

Abel began his association with Austin Graduate School of Theology in late 2009 as an undergraduate student. He was elected student body association treasurer for the 2013/2014 school year and then president for 2014/2015. He is now planning to enter the MA in Theological Studies program soon.

He brings a background in business to the School. Previously, he was employed as a foreman for a large welding facility. His experiences in customer service and dealing with employee issues have been invaluable as a recruiter.

He and his wife Roxie lived in the Kyle area for many years before settling in San Marcos, where they are members of the Holland Street Church of Christ.

Stephanie Byers
Bookstore Manager and Assistant Librarian

Stephanie has held several positions in management through the years. She assisted her husband in helping at-risk youth through his company, J R Brothers Ministries. Later, she managed the office and assisted personnel at Star Center Gymnastics.

Currently she is the manager of the Bookstore and assists in the library, making certain that appropriate resources are available for students and the academic programs at Austin Grad.

She and her husband, Rob, live in Austin and have three children.
Endowing Your Annual Gift with a Bequest

Gifts made monthly or annually by donors to Austin Grad are very important to the operation of the school. The loss of these gifts, for whatever reason, affects the level of education services provided to our students. Sadly, from time to time we experience the loss of a close friend through death. While nothing exceeds the sadness of losing a close friend, the loss of their annual support is a constant reminder of how valuable their friendship was.

One of our friends recently asked, “How much would it take for a gift in my will to continue my annual support after I am gone?” This question showed the passion she felt about Austin Grad and the sincere desire to continue support of the school after the end of her life.

This visionary philanthropist realized that by planning now, her annual gift would continue in perpetuity even after life ended. In other words, her interest in the mission of Austin Grad would not end at death but would continue for as long as the school existed.

What our friend was suggesting, was endowing her annual gift with a bequest in her will.

Example:

Assume that your annual gift to Austin Grad is $1,000. The question becomes, “how much would I need to include in my will to assure that the school will continue to receive $1,000 a year from me after I am gone?”

It is estimated an endowment fund will draw approximately 5% interest each year. In order to generate $1,000 per year, a bequest of $20,000 would be required ($20,000 x 5% = $1,000).

Upon receiving your bequest, the funds would be placed in the Austin Grad endowment fund specifically designated for the purpose of continuing your annual support in the future.

Arranging a bequest:

A bequest to endow your annual gift may be included in a new will or by adding a codicil to your existing will. Be sure that it is specifically written that the interest drawn from your bequest each year is to be used as your annual gift to support the mission of Austin Grad.

Here is some suggested language for your will:

I give, devise and bequeath to the Institute for Christian Studies dba Austin Graduate School of Theology, a not for profit (501)(c)(3) seminary located in Austin, Travis County, Texas, the sum of $_______. The purpose of this bequest is to approximate the amount of my annual gift that was given to the school during my lifetime. It is my intent that the amount of interest drawn on the bequest be distributed to Austin Grad on an annual basis to support the mission of the school.

The contents of this article are not intended to be legal advice. So please consult your attorney and tax advisors for legal guidance. We will be happy to meet with you and your advisors at any time.

Thank you for your support of Austin Grad and for looking beyond.

Neil Haney—Director of Development
Update

Update is a periodic publication of the Austin Graduate School of Theology
7640 Guadalupe St.
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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.

Toll-free: (866) AUSGRAD
In Austin: (512) 476-2772
Online: www.austingrad.edu

Editor: Carol Gafford
belah1938@gmail.com

Contributors for this issue:
Stan Reid, Neil Haney,
Daniel Napier, Todd Hall, Abel Salazar

President:
Stan Reid
sreid@austingrad.edu

Development:
Neil Haney
nhaney@austingrad.edu

Recruitment, Communications:
Lauren Day
LDay@austingrad.edu

Recruiter:
Abel Salazar
asalazar@austingrad.edu

Registrar:
Director of Admissions
Dawn Bond
dbond@austingrad.com

Library:
Todd Hall
thall@austingrad.edu

Bookstore:
Stephanie Byers
sbyers@austingrad.edu

CALENDAR 2014

NOVEMBER 27-28
Thanksgiving Holidays

DECEMBER 12
Last Day of Classes

DECEMBER 15-19
Finals Week

DECEMBER 22
Winter Break Begins