



September 1, 2020

Because you are a friend and partner in the mission of Austin Grad, I wanted to inform you about an exciting development at our school. Austin Grad is entering into a management agreement with Lipscomb University of Nashville, Tennessee in connection with a merger with Lipscomb that is anticipated to consummate in January 2021, subject to various closing conditions.

These developments were sparked by a discussion I initiated with key members of the Lipscomb administration in July of 2019. Over the years Dr. Randy Lowry, president of Lipscomb, and I have discussed the challenges faced by independent seminaries. I am impressed with the fact that Lipscomb has become a premier Christian university of over 4,700 students under Dr. Lowry's leadership.

In addition, Dr. Lowry has guided Lipscomb to use its personnel and resources to assist smaller Christian schools face formidable challenges. Austin Grad has come to a point that it needs such assistance to face daunting challenges and address difficult decisions. Many seminaries have been forced to merge with other schools while others have closed. I am confident that Austin Grad, in the new arrangement with Lipscomb, can anticipate a brighter future.

As you know, I had planned to retire from the presidency in June of this year, but the future of Austin Grad was not secure, and I wanted to help complete the work to collaborate with Lipscomb. So, prayerfully, Laynne and I agreed to delay our plans and I offered to continue my work with Austin Grad through this school year, if needed. The board accepted my offer.

Now that agreements are in place between the two institutions, Laynne and I are ready to return to planning the next chapter in our lives. To begin the leadership transition, I am moving to president emeritus of Austin Grad and **Dr. John York** will provide management services to Austin Graduate School of Theology under the agreement between the schools, effective immediately. John has been on faculty at Lipscomb for 22 years. He is associate dean and professor in Lipscomb's College of Bible & Ministry and is the director of the Doctor of Ministry program in its Hazelip School of Theology. Prior to joining the Lipscomb faculty, John served in full time ministry with congregations in Oregon, Texas and Tennessee. He also taught at Columbia Christian College (later Cascade College) for seven years.

I am convinced that the mission begun by visionaries in Austin over one-hundred years ago will continue far into the future. The boards and administrations of both Austin Grad and Lipscomb have prayerfully worked together to establish this partnership in Kingdom work. We all see the hand of God in this undertaking.

I invite you to join me in continuing to pray for, financially support, and be involved partners in this wonderful ministry as the first new steps are taken.

Grace,
Stan Reid