The Benefits of Study at AGST

Austin Graduate School of Theology has a proud history beginning nearly 80 years ago as a Bible Chair at the University of Texas. Since that time, thousands of students have benefited from taking just one course or taking a sufficient number to earn a bachelor's or master's degree in theology.

Today, AGST alumni live and work around the world spreading the Word of God as ministers, missionaries, seminary presidents, youth ministers, educators, hospital chaplains, prison ministers, informed laymen and laywomen, business owners and in other ways too numerous to mention.

When these graduates and former students are asked what they most value and appreciate about their education at AGST, they often include the following:

- **Diversity.** AGST welcomes all students regardless of background, race, faith tradition, age or gender. This diversity adds to the education experience and enhances knowledge, understanding and respect of differences. While the statistics vary from semester to semester, in the fall of this academic year 58% of the students were male and 42% female; 71% white, 24% African-American and 5% Hispanic; 50% were Church of Christ, 16% Baptist, 14% Non-denominational, and 20% were of other faith communities. Over the years, AGST has had students who were Anglican, African Methodist Episcopal, Christian, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic.

- **Affordability.** AGST provides theological education at about 1/3 the cost of other private institutions. Current tuition is $205 per semester hour and just $50 to audit a course—a bargain by most any standard.

- **Qualified Faculty.** All full-time faculty members hold the Ph.D. from some of the most well respected seminaries and divinity schools in the country—Emory, Princeton, Vanderbilt and Yale.

- **Location.** Austin provides students exposure to a diverse culture that helps them put their knowledge into action. From 1990-2000, more than 85,000 foreign born people were added to the population

continued on page 2
New Beginnings Report

At its halfway point, January 31, the 2006-2007 New Beginnings Annual Fund Campaign had raised more than half of its $400,000 goal. The annual fund is vital to the success of Austin Grad's mission. Our goal this year is $15,000 more than what was raised in 2005-2006, but expectations are high that the goal will be reached.

Kirk Eason, Director of Development and Public Relations, says, “This is an exciting time to be part of Austin Graduate School of Theology. There are so many great things happening: servants are being equipped for the Kingdom, and lives are being changed. The increased financial support of Austin Grad’s friends is just a reflection of those achievements.”

The increased support is attributed to three factors. First, AGST’s record fall enrollment was followed by an even higher spring enrollment. Existing donors, seeing the growth of the School, have raised their level of giving. Our friends feel the momentum building as we make great strides in accomplishing our goals.

Second, one-time donors are giving more by making monthly commitments. While it may be difficult for many people to make a one-time annual contribution of $480, it is far easier to give the same amount in installments of $40 per month. Alumni especially are taking advantage of monthly giving. This benefits the School in significant ways.

Third, greater numbers of people are giving to the work of the School. As a result, contributions are up 21% over this time last year. Eason says, “People want to be a part of something that makes a difference. As word spreads of AGST’s success, individuals and churches become more involved.

The 2006-2007 New Beginnings Annual Fund Campaign runs until July 31, 2007. Your help is still needed. Your one-time gift, monthly commitment, or Pay-for-a-Day donation is vital to AGST and to countless Christians in future generations who will be impacted by what we do today. AG

“I made my first three-year pledge while I was still a student: $12 a month! I have been giving monthly ever since, trying to increase it each year.”

Matt Soper, B.S. ‘89

Benefits continued

of Austin. The nearby University of Texas hosts 4,500 plus foreign students from 115 countries. In addition, some studies show that Austin is predominately un- and de-churched, with 80-85% of the people not attending church at all. Opportunities for ministry abound.

• Intimate Environment. Personal attention, small classes, and individualized instruction from faculty members are the norm at AGST. Class size ranges from just 4 students to about 30 students giving ample opportunity to ask questions and interact with fellow students and faculty in an open and supportive atmosphere.

• Flexible Schedule. AGST offers evening classes which often enables coordination with other educational endeavors by the student as well as accommodating those part-time students who work full-time. AG

THE UPDATE
AGST Sponsors Upcoming Events

An important part of the School’s mission is to provide or sponsor events that assist the church in its work to serve God and the world. We are pleased to announce three such events that will be offered this spring and summer.

Creating a Healing Community
In Cooperation
with Lifeline Chaplaincy

March 30-April 1

Lifeline Chaplaincy, in cooperation with Austin Graduate School of Theology, is pleased to offer its 17-hour intensive weekend workshop designed to equip spiritual care providers and other interested persons with basic listening, self-awareness, and interpersonal relationship skills necessary for effective ministry.

This training is . . .

. . . required for Lifeline Chaplaincy spiritual care volunteers.
. . . recommended for ministers, elders, visitation ministry leaders, and others involved in providing spiritual care.
. . . approved by the Association of Professional Chaplains for continuing chaplaincy education credit for APC members.

Topics include:

• Defining a healing community
• Emotional word pictures
• Losses and their effect(s) on us
• Why me?
• Basic listening and communication skills
• Grief and grieving
• Story listening
• Caring for the caregiver
• Perception and its role in listening
• Role play in ministry and listening
• Life commandments

The 26th Annual Sermon Seminar
May 21-24

Good biblical preaching can strengthen the church, nourish the individual believer, and allow the non-believer to hear the gospel. Through our Sermon Seminars, we have helped renew biblical preaching and preachers. Outstanding scholar-preachers open their Bibles with participants to mine the depths of its message giving special attention to moving from text to sermon.

In recent years, Bible teachers and church leaders, in addition to preachers, have seen the benefit of the Seminar and have chosen to attend. Speakers this year are:

• Bruce McLarty—Preaching from Philippians and Philemon
• Curt Niccum—Preaching from Mark
• Tom Olbricht—Preaching from the Confessions of Jeremiah
• Glenn Pemberton—Preaching from the Call Narratives
• Jim Roberts—Selected Psalms of Lament in Preaching and Ministry

Please visit our website at austgrad.edu and follow the links under Sermon Seminar, or call 1-866-287-4723 for more details and registration information.

Teaching Is a Gift From God
The Central Texas Bible Teachers Workshop
July 20-21

Cameron Road Church of Christ, Austin, Texas

Keynote Speaker: Matt Soper
Pulpit Minister, West Houston Church of Christ

Classes for teachers of all age groups, cradle roll to adult. Special classes for youth workers.

A cooperative effort of Central Texas Churches of Christ and Austin Graduate School of Theology

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Western Hills Church of Christ, Austin

This list represents gifts from
November 2006 - January 2007
Dr. Tom Olbricht is respected as an excellent scholar and a devoted Christian. His dedication to preparing preachers, teachers, and leaders for the church is unsurpassed. AGST is pleased to announce that Dr. Olbricht will teach New Testament Theology as a visiting professor this summer. The course will be conducted in two sessions of morning classes, July 9-13 and August 6-10.

During his college studies, Dr. Olbricht considered devoting his life to preaching. However, as he confides in his book, *Hearing God’s Voice*, the encouragement of friends and peers, and his own self-evaluation led him in another direction. “I decided that our future demanded better trained preachers than those of my generation, and perhaps I could make a greater contribution by training preachers than by preaching.”

Thousands of students around the world are thankful for that decision. They have been inspired by Dr. Olbricht’s outstanding character and dedication and have used the knowledge he imparts to serve the church as ministers, missionaries, and university professors. All are welcome to register. The course can be taken for credit, as a special student, or as an auditor.

For information, contact us toll free at 1-866-287-4723. Austin residents can reach us at 476-2772. E-mails should be sent to registrar@austingrad.edu

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In June of 2005, Dr. Olbricht taught a course at AGST. One of his students made this comment:

“It was a rare privilege to take a class with Dr. Olbricht this summer. I learned so much from his immense knowledge, which ranged both wide and deep. I was especially impressed with his obvious delight in both teaching and learning. This was my first class at AGST, and Dr. Olbricht’s encouragement to me as a beginning theology student was an inspiration.”

— Brooke Hollingsworth

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**Elifeline Chaplaincy**

“Creating a Healing Community”

A workshop for those extending Christian compassion to the ill, elderly, and bereaved.

March 30-April 1

Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ
Austin, TX

Brought to you in cooperation with

AUSTIN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Call 888-767-6363 (toll free) for more information
Reid’s Reflections

Student registration this semester again reminded me about how special is the work, purpose, and vocation of our School and students.

Some think of seminaries as preacher factories. That view is inaccurate and too restrictive. I agree with Tom Long’s understanding. Long is Bandy Professor of Preaching at Candler School of Theology, Emory University. “Ministers,” according to him, “are not ‘made’ in seminaries. Seminaries train ministers; ministers are made in and through the church. People come to seminary to gain deeper knowledge of the Christian story, but they were first taught that story by Christian people in the church. They come to seminary to wrestle with great theological ideas, but it is the church’s theological heritage they will encounter.”

In addition, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers informs my understanding of our purpose at AGST. Training preachers is a central part of our work. However, it is not the sole purpose. We believe that every Christian is called and ordained for ministry at baptism. This vision of the church as a priestly people is compelling. Among our students, some but not all, will seek employment by the church as ministers. Therefore, we welcome anyone who is serious about growing in the knowledge, understanding, and practice of the Christian faith.

We gladly accept our opportunity to assist the church in making ministers of its people. This is accomplished through instruction in biblical studies, theology, history, and practical ministry. We make every effort to encourage and assist our students in living faithful lives in their families, churches, communities, and jobs. We encourage every student to use their education by being active in and accountable to a congregation of Christian believers.

Talking with students as they registered for classes was a joyful moment for me. I was reminded that these men and women give us a unique opportunity to serve God by assisting the church as it makes ministers. We accept our part in training them as our God-given vocation. AG

Pay-for-a-Day of Bible Teaching in 2007

Since 1996, many supporters of AGST have honored friends and family through the Pay-for-a-Day program. It’s a wonderful way to partner with the School and to express appreciation for someone special.

In 2007, consider honoring someone who has influenced your life in Christ. For example, this could be a special gift, a memorial, or recognition of a baptismal birth date. Whatever the special occasion, send your gift and tell us:

- The name(s) and address(es) of the person(s) you wish to honor and the occasion, if applicable.
- The message you would like to include (if desired).
- The specific day(s) or week(s) in 2007 that you’d like to honor them.
- One day is $300 – One week is $2,100.

On the date selected, a placard containing the name of the honoree and the special remembrance will be hung in the foyer outside the administrative offices of AGST. All instruction for the day or week will be conducted in honor of the designated person. The honoree will be sent a photo of the placard along with the donor’s name and any message the donor may wish to include.

Your Pay-for-a-Day gift is a powerful way to convey to a loved one the value you place on the teaching of the Word. One donor recently made such a statement by honoring her seven grandchildren with a week of instruction given in each of their names! When you Pay-for-a-Day/Week, you not only honor a loved one but help provide students with an excellent theological education and an opportunity to develop skills in practical ministry. To make a gift or obtain additional information, contact Melissa Dodson at 1-866-287-4723 or mldodson@austingrad.edu. AG
HOW TO GIVE TO

Austin Grad

Austin Graduate School of Theology depends on partners that share its mission of passing on the Christian faith. These supporters show their faith in God by giving generously to sustain the School’s mission in the following ways:

Annual Fund Campaign
The 2006-2007 New Beginnings Annual Fund Campaign runs from August 1, 2006 to July 31, 2007. Our goal this year is $400,000. There are several ways individuals or couples can give to Austin Grad’s annual campaign.

Endowments
Endowments are gifts that are invested and the interest is used to sustain the School. Currently, Austin Grad’s endowments cover approximately one-third of its annual operating costs. Increasing our endowments would allow us to move forward with our goal to expand our academic programs.

Planned Gifts
Planned Giving options are designed to help donors redirect money from taxes to institutions like ours. Planned gifts can take the form of wills, trusts, insurance policies, retirement plans, or a life income gifts. Please see your financial advisor concerning how you may benefit from these different options.

For more information on supporting the mission of Austin Graduate School of Theology, please contact Kirk Eason, Director of Development and Public Relations, toll free at 1-866-AUS-GRAD(287-4723) or within the Austin area at 476-2772.

Contact

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