



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring comes early at Augustine College – not the spring of new green growth but the blossoming of minds, which gladdens my heart every year. The truth of Tolkien’s lovely insight, that *man often fails of his promise but never of his seed*, is right before my eyes. Our prayer and hope is that these young people will not fail of their promise in future years.

The evidence for the existence of God lies in the way Augustine College has continued for twelve years. Humanly speaking, no one could have expected the College to work, but the grace of God, working through you, has made it happen.

Nevertheless, we are supposed to use our minds to work out our own salvation, acknowledging, at the same time, that this would be a fruitless activity but for the Spirit of God at work in the world. First, my apologies to so many of you whom I have not thanked for your help – we are eternally grateful for your prayers and assistance. Now I want you to start thinking and praying with me about what we do next. As the extraordinary success of our graduates shows, we are succeeding in giving young people the means with which to confront the tacitly atheistic university and flourish with a living faith, but we, the faculty, are growing older. David Stewart retired a year ago and how we miss him for his and Helga’s amazing love of the students, and for his erudition, and even for his gentle academic jokes. Edmund Bloedow seems to have life eternal but he and I are no longer young. Furthermore the commitment to the College of our Dean, Edward Tingley, is one of real faith with a salary below the norm.

Here are my suggestions, which will require some funds. There are many senior Christian faculty in the secular universities who would enjoy finishing their teaching career in a place like Augustine College. How do we make this happen? We need to find them, list them, persuade them, and help with the logistics of early retirement into the joy of real teaching, where one can openly offer each lecture to God as our reasonable service. The computer-literate young can track them down, while the financially competent among us can convince them that the transition is possible. Let us have your practical, ‘how-to’ ideas please.

Finally, there is another cloud the size of a man’s hand on the horizon, but this cloud looks to be rich with blessing. An article by Michael Novak in the June/July 2007 edition of *First Things* (www.firstthings.com), titled “Remembering a Secular Age,” started me on a journey. Novak’s thesis is that



The herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind.

GENESIS 1:11

Sarah Miriam Peale, *Still-life with Watermelon* (detail), 1822

secularism is over because it cannot satisfy the soul of man, an idea with which I am in complete agreement.

What was even more interesting is that he drew my attention to secular academics who were admitting this – Jürgen Habermas from Germany and Robert Fogel, Nobel laureate in economics, from Chicago. Both have written books: *The Dialectics of Secularism* by Habermas (with a man called Cardinal Ratzinger, now better known as Pope Benedict XVI), and *The Fourth Great Awakening* by Fogel. Fogel’s book is most interesting because he is saying that if we do not pay attention to the production of virtue in the home, we are lost.

Scarcely had I finished reading that when a ‘God thing’ happened, as the young say. Unbeknownst to me a young medical resident in the University of Chicago’s residency program began to pray that I would come and talk to his peer group. John Yoon had been helped during his training by a talk of mine and he wanted to get me into conversation with his peers. Once a year the residents choose the speaker for Grand Rounds and John inserted my name into the list of the currently famous. Amazingly, every one of the famous withdrew and I was the last one standing.

I had a wonderful time and spent an hour or so with Robert Fogel who, at the end of his life, acknowledges that it was the influence of his black Episcopalian wife, not his own influence, that made his children the people they are, people he can admire. It is impossible to overestimate the impact of a godly parent. Would that more godly parents knew about Augustine College and sent their children to us.

John Patrick | President

The Class of 2009

We welcome to our 12th Augustine College class a new student, who joined us in January:

Sarah Harrison, Eau Claire, Michigan

Having passed our winter Reading Week we are now looking ahead in the Calendar to **Graduation** on **Saturday, April 25** at 3:30 pm at the Church of St. Barnabas (Kent and James). The address will be delivered by **Dr. Craig Bartholomew**, H. Evan Runner Professor of Philosophy and Professor of Religion at Redeemer University College.

We welcome all friends of the College and any who might wish to learn more about us to join us in celebrating our students at the Graduation ceremony – always a proud occasion. The dinner will be at 5 pm; if you plan to join us please let us know.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Website launch

With this newsletter we announce the completion of two new undertakings: a **new website** for Augustine College and our introductory video.

In fact we have **two new videos**, which may be watched on the website or downloaded. These have been designed to be legible on personal-video-player screens. Should anyone wish to have them on a free disc suitable to pass on to an interested party, please contact us.

In addition to the complete renewal of the website, with all information fully updated, there are several new and interesting features to note.

On the home page, click the FURTHER LEARNING tab, then **The Livingroom**. This will take you to a page that will serve as an online space where members of the far-flung Augustine College community can gather around the theme of living as God intends, through the intellect. Here you will find new reading material and videos as well as recommendations and reviews of books, films, art, etc. by members of the Augustine College community.

What are the faculty reading that they think worthwhile? What have alumni seen or read and found worthy of attention? What are the **top 50 books** recommended by the AC community as a whole?

As our encounter with each other at Augustine College is such a unique thing – and as it comes to a too abrupt and artificial halt each April – it is our hope that we might find a way, here in the Livingroom, to continue learning together about the ends and means of living, even after we are dispersed. As this is still very new, we have begun with only a few items. We look forward to receiving your input. Share what you value. Check back every once in a while to see what is new.

Future special projects

With this newsletter – which announces the completion of the first phase of new undertakings for our second decade of operations (a new prospectus, brochure, video, and website) – we also announce the start of a new venture.

With the appointment of our Communications Officer, **Jonathan Randoy**, this past fall, we are now in a position to produce materials that might bring Augustine College to the wider community.

Augustine College was founded in 1997 to bring back to the public square some of the great wealth of learning once available to educated Christians but that our culture has increasingly turned away from. In our first ten years we did this chiefly through the students enrolled in the Augustine College program, who have carried this learning out into the world, and also through our week-long Summer Conference in June and the many speaking engagements accepted by our President.

In our second decade it is our plan to produce, on an ongoing basis, a new **series of videos** in dvd format that will bring the College to a broader audience. Many have told us how much they would like to take eight months off to follow our courses. That not being practical, it is our hope that we might produce a dvd series that would present past wisdom as it applies to problems in the world today, many of which seem the bitter fruit of abandoning that very wisdom.

Of the many possibilities open to us, we are interested to know what the AC community would like us to start with. To see some of the topics under consideration and for more on this project, visit the website and click Support the College.

Call to Alumni! In addition to the Livingroom, you will notice on your visit to the website a new Alumni page (on the home page, click the tab THE EXPERIENCE). Please send us a line to update the ‘where-are-they-now’ information beside your name in the space for your year.

Follow the link on your class page to a new Facebook page for each class, where you can post photos, etc. (We would love for one person from each class to volunteer as moderator of the Facebook page for their class for one year.)

AFAC

In its first year of operation as a registered charity in the US, the **American Friends of Augustine College** has industriously organized a series of talks at which faculty and alumni of the College spoke to interested parents and prospective students about the value of the AC experience.

John Patrick, Edward Tingley, and Luke Patient (2006) spoke in Philadelphia and Jenny Holmes (2008) joined John Patrick to speak in Dallas and Austin. There was much interest in

Augustine College, particularly from homeschoolers but also from others who were already at university. Cassandra Betts (2005) made an Augustine College Presentation at the Classical Christian Education Conference at Pittsburgh (Wexford).

COMING EVENTS

Student-for-a-Day takes place Tuesday, March 17th, during the March break for high-school students. Any student wondering about our program is invited to come and sit in on classes, join us for the Community Dinner, and sit in on the evening book discussion. The atmosphere is relaxed and our students and faculty are friendly. Lunch will be provided. Please contact us for more information. Visitors are requested to RSVP by the 16th.

Summer Conference

This year's Augustine College Summer Conference (Module VIII in our **Roots of Modern Medicine** series) will take place May 31–June 6 on the topic **Today's World: Science, Medicine, and Culture in an Age without Moral Consensus**, our final conference dealing with developments in the 20th century. Conference sessions will be offered on **Science Today: The Molecular Genetic Revolution, Alasdair MacIntyre: The Tyranny of Competency in Medical Education, Alasdair MacIntyre: Tradition vs. Relativism, Recognizing Postmodernism, The Path of Art in Postmodernity, and Medical Ethics 2009: On Data and Virtue.**

Augustine College/CMDA Conference

Two series of talks will be offered by faculty of Augustine College over a three-day period at the Christian Medical and Dental Associations' headquarters in **Bristol, Tennessee, April 3–5, 2009.** Under the heading **Changes in Thought Patterns in Science, Philosophy, and Ethics**, participants will explore ways in which many people today now think about nature and the principles of right and wrong.

These talks by the faculty aim to show the value of familiarity with the profound ideas our tradition once transmitted, ideas that have great power precisely in relation to the problems that confront us today from the front page of the newspaper. It is important that we understand our history merely so as to function in the 21st-century, answering the questions that life is posing us.

A key component of the change in outlook that has led to widespread disagreement about issues of life, death, and sexuality is the abandonment of the idea of **purpose in nature.**

John Patrick traces the changes that have led science into a scientific reductionism that has diminished the role of purpose in modern thought and encouraged scientism, the belief that science will explain everything. He examines the



effects of scientific reductionism on key ideas (e.g., 'fact') and follows typological biology to Darwin's *Origin of Species* and the logical impact it proved to have upon ethics.

Edward Tingley focuses on two recent phases in this process of change. He looks first at how the modern idea that man and his nature (e.g., his sexuality) have no established purpose led to the rise of abortion and the landmark ruling of *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 and, second, at how the faltering philosophical defense of abortion since that date is now carrying us beyond modern ethics into a postmodern ethics that the original defenders of *Roe v. Wade* recoiled from.

President Obama has expressed the desire to sign the Freedom of Choice Act. If passed, will it write *Roe* into law or represent a new, postmodern phase of our thinking about human life?

It is important that we notice the shift in recent thought from Enlightenment modernism to postmodernism. Applied retroactively to the historical issue of slavery, postmodernism comes out at odds with Lincoln, providing an occasion to revisit the traditional understanding of human purpose held by America's Founders.

Though hardly planned this way, a series of lectures suited to the 200th anniversary of the birth in 1809 of Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln. (Now if only we could have arranged this for February 12, their joint birthday!)

RECENT EVENTS

At the informal Alumni get-together over New Year's, the last five classes were represented with at least one alumnus. Fourteen alumni and quite a number of friends dropped in and out at different times, skated on the Canal, visited a museum, watched a hockey game, and revisited old haunts. Like old

times, all ate good food and spent time reading and discussing together.



Dr. Michael Heller at Augustine College

This year's annual **Weston Lecture** was given by **Michael Heller**, winner of the 2008 *Templeton Prize*, November 7, 2008. The event drew such a large crowd (more than 300) that, regrettably, we were compelled to turn people away. Dr. Heller, Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy at the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Cracow, is a cosmologist and Catholic priest who for more than forty years has developed the provocative ideas for which he was recognized by the Templeton Foundation. An audio recording of his Weston Lecture, titled "**Did It Start with a Bang? Science, Religion, and the Creation of the Universe,**" including the slides presented by Dr. Heller, is available for viewing or download on the Augustine College website.

This year's **Restless Hearts' Cafe** concluded on **February 12th** with the usual revelations of hidden talent and the standard display of outrageousness (a certain grubby, sock-faced personage comes to mind; also, how many ways are there to say 'No'? – just a few more than civility warrants). There were several presentations of truly beautiful singing, some strong recitations, and a long but spellbinding 'Tale of the Typo' (a warning to us all of how severely disruptive of human lives it can be to write 'disperse' instead of 'disburse!'). A highlight, however, was surely the new anthem of the event: "**Dr. Patrick's Restless Hearts' Cafe**" (sung to the tune of you-know-what) – keep your eye on the website for this!

WORTH READING

We refer you to the June 2008 issue of *Touchstone* magazine (Touchstonemag.com) for an article by **Edward Tingley**, titled "**The Skeptical Inquirer: If Only Atheists Were the Skeptics They Think They Are.**" For those who do not know *Touchstone*, it is a magazine well worth your attention.

ALUMNI NEWS

Stephen Slater (2002) is finishing a Master's degree in Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University in Israel, where he is involved with Students for Sudanese Refugees. He is planning his return to the US to teach.

Alicia (Hobart) and Richard Bing (2003) were blessed with the birth of Theresa Sydney Marie Bing on November 10, 2008.

Elisabeth Akers (Batchelder) (2003) continues to clerk on the federal trial court in Ohio. She is also taking voice lessons and has joined a choir.

Joshua and Janiece Loyd (2004) have adopted a boy from Vietnam and welcome Malachi Elkanah Eli Loyd, born February 11, 2009. In Texas, where they have purchased a home, Joshua is teaching residents and is medical director of a local free clinic and Janiece is home-schooling. They are certainly dedicated to their church since they travel one-and-a-half hours each way to get there on Sunday.

Two alumni applying to medical school for fall 2009:

Cassandra Betts (2005) and **Starr Driedger** (2008)

Susan Lamb (2008) is in Cambodia working at a medical clinic as part of a medical elective.

Jasmine Stairs (2008) writes, "If you ever decide to make Augustine a four-, three-, or two-year program, tell me and I'll be in the first class to come back." Jasmine's 4-year-old brother Gideon died from kidney cancer on December 20, 2008. Our prayers for the Stairs family go out on the occasion of this painful loss. Jasmine's family gives thanks for Gideon's life.

SUPPORT

We express our ongoing gratitude to the American Friends of Augustine College, the Spaenaur corporation, and each of our individual supporters for their most generous gifts, helping us go forward for another year.

Would you like to share in this exciting ministry?

There are many ways to lend a hand. If you would like to help with what we do, please let us know.

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