



## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

**W**hy do Christians talk so much about *ethics*? Why so much attention to right and wrong? And *what do we mean* by right and wrong – more particularly, what do we call “the authentic and urgent moral issues of today”?

“If I asked you to take out a piece of paper and write down three moral issues, basic issues in terms of importance, significance, and urgency, what would you write? Perhaps your list would include abortion, euthanasia, war, or divorce, since these are several of the issues we commonly think of as the moral issues of our day. Certainly they are important, significant, and urgent.”

Those words, from the book *Virtues for Ordinary Christians* by James Keenan, were published in 1996. Fifteen years later how many Christians would join Keenan in listing divorce as an urgent moral issue? How many would count it an issue at all? Divorce is one of the areas in which, statistics show, many Christians today lift their thinking from the Utilitarian playbook (‘it will *do us all more good* to part’).

More recently a poll found that nearly two-thirds of Americans believe “greed and materialism” or “poverty and economic justice” are the most urgent moral problems facing them, while 27 percent listed “abortion” and “same-sex marriage.” Just this past fall the “Manhattan Declaration” – a document thus far registering the voices of four-hundred thousand Christians – singled out three moral issues as a focus of special concern: “that the lives of the unborn, the disabled, and the elderly are severely threatened; that the institution of marriage, already buffeted by promiscuity, infidelity, and divorce, is in jeopardy of being redefined to accommodate fashionable ideologies; that freedom of religion and the rights of conscience are gravely jeopardized by those who would use the instruments of coercion to compel persons of faith to compromise their deepest convictions.”

I find myself speaking on some of those very issues and I ask myself, Why those issues? Are these the most urgent? Is it because lives are being lost?

**O**f course they are not the most urgent because to a Christian the most urgent issues are all the issues. No issue of love may be set aside. As the Manhattan Declaration itself acknowledges, “the whole scope of Christian moral concern, including a special concern for the poor and vulnerable, claims our attention.” *All of life* claims our attention because *it all* bears on lives being lost – lost because not chosen. **“I have set before you life and death.... So choose life in order that you may live....”**



**Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.**

**1 JOHN 3:18**

*The Last Judgement, detail* Hans Memling | 1470

Deuteronomy 30:19 is not really saying ‘choose to let people go on living’; it is saying, choose life for yourself. As we approach Easter the subtext – that that choice of life does not rule out saying Yes to death – is really very clear. There are worse things than death, the end of this life, one such thing being *refusing to live*. How do you live? Deuteronomy 30:20 completes the thought: **“by holding fast to the LORD your God.”**

**P**eople like myself, wading into the deeps of ethics *in word*, dispensing ideas that constitute *advice* about the pressures of desire, suffering, death, really ought to wonder whether the burdens they are calling others to bear *are* the fitting burden of the Cross. So people like myself are blessed by other Christians near at hand who – in their lives not just their words – hold fast to the LORD in times of trial and show us all what the love of Christ requires. It is one thing to talk, another to show.

It is hard to write about ethics, about Utilitarianism (which I was asked to speak on this February), and not be aware of the family of our Administrator, Harold Visser, as they awaited the birth of their seventh child, Lily Emke. Diagnosed in utero with trisomy-18 and a diaphragmatic hernia, she was not expected to outlive her birth, and she did not. What was **“holding fast to God,”** for the Vissers? It was to **“choose life ... by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice.”** It was to take nothing away that the LORD intended – a far cry indeed from the advice of Utilitarians.

The LORD said, **“Let your light shine before men” (Matthew 5:16)** and thinkers and talkers can give thanks for the particular blessing of others who do that. May the Vissers take comfort in offering us, as they offered their LORD, this beacon of themselves – followers who mean what they say because they live as they speak, giving us courage and showing us how it is done.

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Education in the Western World is suffering from fractionalism or terminal schizophrenia, particularly noticeable among those who build an entire life on a primary delusion – eminently logical and ultimately disastrous. Many modern academics live within such a delusion. They are so angry about the astounding facts of Jesus and His Church that, in the delightful words of Jonathan Sacks, they are practicing the intellectual equivalent of road rage!

Of late, I have read two books by Rodney Stark both of which I recommend: *To the Glory of God* and *The Victory of Reason*. In the first of these, in a section recounting the explosive growth of scientific knowledge (primarily the work of Western scholars who inherited, often unconsciously, a Judeo-Christian story), Stark surprised me. He gave an account of how he had accepted the utterly false account of the relationship between science and faith given by Andrew Dickson White, the first president of Cornell. He, like many academics today, considered science and faith to be at war, which they are not. I thought that most academics knew this but he says that, outside a small group of historians of science, there are few who acknowledge this. Christianity was essential to the start of modern science. If you do not know the story that begins at the end of the 12th century, get Stark's books and enjoy the read. Also indebted to faith is reason, likewise freedom and capitalism, which all began long before the Protestants and their work ethic came along (*pace* Weber).

Today our freedoms are under major attack. Traditional medicine and medical ethics are being torn apart and we are surely headed towards the need for two separate systems of medical care, one that upholds life and one that will be strictly Utilitarian. I spend much of my time encouraging brothers and sisters in the Church to wake up and get to work. Augustine College prepares the mind of the young but Augustine College will also stir up your Church or your community if you would care to invite us!

**John Patrick | President**

## CLASS OF 2010

Our 13th year continues with eight students, evenly split between Canadians and Americans. The students have just returned from Reading Week and are into the final stretch of their time with us.

At the end of that stretch, **Graduation**, which takes place this year on **Saturday, April 24th** at 3:30 pm at the Church of St. Barnabas (Kent and James). We welcome all friends of the College and any who might wish to join us in celebrating our students on this proud occasion. The address will be delivered by **Dr. John Patrick** and the dinner will be served at 5 pm. If you plan to join us please let us know.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2010

At this year's **AGM**, which took place **January 28th**, we were saddened to have **Dr. Wayne Nimigan**, one of the founding members of the College, step down from the Board. He will thankfully continue as part of the Management Committee (formerly named the Members' Committee). New to the Board are **Dr. David D. Stewart**, beloved former professor hardly new to us, and **the Rev. Doug Hayman**, Chaplain and current faculty member. Continuing are **Dr. John Patrick** as President and **Paul McKechnie** as Treasurer. We thank the entire Board and Management Committee for their willingness to volunteer for the well-being of the College.

This year's **Restless Hearts' Cafe** took place on **February 11th** with the usual display of hidden talent and outrageousness: Latin trouble ('Let's conjugate ourselves to extinction,' said the Romans – or so we were told), "The Cremation of Sam McGee" as you have never heard it before (the gaffes as entertaining as anything), and advice to young men from an 'older woman' all spring unbidden to mind. And then on the sober side of the coin (always appreciated): Orthodox hymnody, Christian reflections, a little Frost,....

Another **Augustine College at CMDA** event took place **February 26–28** in **Bristol, Tennessee**, when two series of talks were offered by Augustine College faculty at the headquarters of the Christian Medical and Dental Associations. **John Patrick** and **Edward Tingley** focused on topics ranging from reductionism in science and soul care for the physician to Utilitarianism and conscience rights.

## CLASS OF 2011

Announcing the Class of 2011! It is not usual for us to mention the upcoming class so early, but this year we have cause for an exception. With great joy and anticipation we look forward to a class of 20 students or more, our largest ever. **Commencement** will take place **Sunday, September 12th, 2010**. At sometime in the future – perhaps sooner than expected – we may need a bigger building. We ask people to let us know if they see something suitable.

## STUDENT-FOR-A-DAY

Student-for-a-Day takes place **Tuesday, March 16th**, 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 join 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 March 15th.



**Dr. Ralph C. Wood** at Baylor University

## WESTON LECTURE

Coming up shortly is the annual **Weston Lecture**, which will be held at 7:30 pm on **Friday, March 26th** at Saint Paul University Amphitheatre, 223 Main St. It is delivered this year by **Dr. Ralph C. Wood**, University Professor of Theology and Literature in the Department of Religion at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Speaking on **Clothing Our Moral Nakedness: Education for Christian Virtue**, Dr. Wood will revisit Richard John Neuhaus's famous thesis that the moral arena in our time has been vacated of serious social content by a refusal to deal with the most basic ethical questions: human nature, the human good, moral evil, the virtuous life. The result is not moral perversion so much as *moral nakedness*, the unclothing of our species as we revert to animality.

Dr. Wood's familiarity with both literature and theology will move us through Walker Percy's hilarious and N.T. Wright's more sombre account of our resulting predicament: "a bizarre privatism in which the left and the right become unacknowledged twins." Further attention to Flannery O'Connor and G.K. Chesterton – two advocates of education as training in the virtues – promise to make for an engaging evening. The instruction of virtue in the context of education "may well be a long twilight struggle," says Dr. Wood, "but it is the only one worth waging" in the hearts of the young.

Dr. Wood received his doctorate from the University of Chicago and has taught on the faculty of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. His books include *Contending for the Faith: The Church's Engagement with*

*Culture* (2003), *The Gospel According to Tolkien: Visions of the Kingdom in Middle-earth* (2004), *Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South* (2004), *Literature and Theology* (2008), and *Preaching and Professing: Sermons by a Teacher Seeking to Proclaim the Gospel* (2009).

## COMING EVENTS

On **September 16th John Patrick** is scheduled to debate **Peter Singer**, Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University and well known for his stance on infanticide and euthanasia. The debate will take place in Detroit at Wayne State University. We are talking with a US production company to explore the filming and possible broadcasting of the debate but as this is quite a new venture for us, we remain especially dependent on God's provision in technological and financial resources.

## SUMMER CONFERENCE

This year the Augustine College Summer Conference begins a new cycle of our **Roots of Modern Medicine** series, starting with a newly conceived Module I on the thought of ancient **Greece**. Each session in the week of **June 6–12** will deal with an aspect of the Greek understanding of medicine and human life – with topics such as the theory and practice of medicine before and after Hippocrates; ethics in medical practice; the Greek understanding of health, the body, suffering, and life; leading ideas of this period from philosophy, politics, theology, literature, and art.

## MEDIA NEWS

An Augustine College promotional DVD is now available. It includes our previous videos and new segments by **Dr. Patrick**, including a montage of clips on **Ethics, God, and Science** (all viewable in the Media Centre, [www.augustinecollege.org/mediacentre](http://www.augustinecollege.org/mediacentre)). These new DVDs are available for the asking to anyone who would like to pass them along to interested parties. Also in the Media Centre, the **2009–10 Hymn Sing** and two illustrated lectures by **Edward Tingley** (**Recognizing Postmodernism** and **The New Man and Modern Art**). An mp3-compilation CD of last year's Summer Conference is available on the cd/dvd orders page ([www.augustinecollege.org/orders](http://www.augustinecollege.org/orders)) and a DVD drawn from last summer's Alumni Conference (**The Abortion Debate and the Christian Tradition: How What Christians Have Forgotten of the Christian Tradition Is Needed in the Defense of Life**) will be available later this spring.

## AFAC

**American Friends of Augustine College** is completing its second year of service to the College. During the 2009 calendar year a total of 26,500 USD was raised in direct support of the College. Also, the board voted last June

to start a Professors' Fund to help Augustine professors and staff send their children to St. Timothy's Classical Academy, the local classical Christian school in Ottawa, begun by an alumnus of the College. An additional 4,500 USD was sent for that purpose.

In the area of promotion of the College in the United States, Augustine College will be represented at the Midwest Parent Education Conference and Curriculum Fair on **April 17–18, 2010**, at the KCI-Expo Center in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Dr. Cory Wilson**, a veteran of many Augustine College Summer Conferences, will present information on the College.

On **April 30** and **May 1**, **Chelsea Miller** (AC 2005) will represent the College at the Eighth Annual LEAH Homeschool Convention at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Centereach on Long Island, N.Y.

**Edward Tingley** will be in Dallas, Texas, at the 2010 annual conference of the CiRCE Institute. The conference runs **July 14–17** and is entitled **A Contemplation of Liberty**. We expect that many people interested in classical Christian education will attend. Thanks to a generous donation, Augustine College is one of the sponsors of this conference. We also anticipate having representation at home-school conferences in Pennsylvania and Arizona during the late spring and summer. For more information please check out [www.amfriendsaugustine.org](http://www.amfriendsaugustine.org).

## FACULTY & STAFF NEWS



We are pleased to announce the appointment of

### **Landon Coleman**

(AC 2008) as our new Recruitment Officer.

Landon will carry out a pilot project – an idea he initiated – to explore better ways of informing young people about Augustine College. Starting from summer 2010 he will develop and conduct

a tour of meetings at stops across Canada. If at some point the 'Augustomobile' passes your way you might well be interested in lending a hand, offering a hot meal, or billeting Landon. Or you might like to introduce him to prospective students. Check the website in the summer.

We write with great sadness that **Harold** and **Rebecca Visser's** daughter **Lily Emke** was stillborn February 21st. Though her parents had anticipated her early death, they did so with great support and peace. We direct those who would like to know more about the journey of the Visser family to [www.lilyemkevisser.blogspot.com](http://www.lilyemkevisser.blogspot.com).

## ALUMNI NEWS

**Meghan Elkink** (1999), writes her mother, "is just entering her final rotation, four months in Drumheller, Alberta (though she's currently on some hot beach somewhere with a small group of other Christian medical residents, escaping a week of our beastly weather). In July and August, she's committed to doing a locum for two docs here in Medicine Hat and then ... not sure yet! She can never say enough wonderful things about Dr. Patrick and we love it when she gets together with other grads and they spur each other on in telling funny stories about the school."

**Elisabeth Akers (Batchelder)** (2003) and her husband were expecting their first child March 1st. She continues to clerk but wonders why in the world she thought law school was a good idea. The Akers are at present immersed in and much influenced by Wendell Berry – aiming to grow their own food and homeschool, focusing on the 'permanent things', as Russell Kirk would say.

**Starr Driedger** (2008) writes, "I'm really enjoying medical school here in Saskatoon.... I heard Dr. Patrick speak in January at a Christian Medical and Dental Society conference! I'm also scheming to perhaps head out to Ottawa for the AC Summer Conference, but there's a chance I might go work in an Aboriginal community up North for the summer instead."

## PRAYER

We had an encouraging response to our prayer list. Those wishing to join can do so at [www.augustinecollege.org/prayer](http://www.augustinecollege.org/prayer). The next instalment will be coming out soon.

## SUPPORT

We express our ongoing gratitude to the Spaenaur corporation, to the Weston Foundation, and to all our individual supporters for their generous gifts, helping us meet our annual costs.

Please note that we can receive both us and Canadian charitable donations online – see the Support page. Also, planned-giving options are available for online donations.

## AUGUSTINE COLLEGE

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