

***50 Years
of the PhD Program in Religion
at Baylor University***

1965-2015



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It is a privilege to greet you as we mark the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Baylor Ph. D. Program in Religion and to express profound gratitude to all who have contributed to the program's enriching history. The reflections contained in this publication provide one set of insights into the experience of students in the program; thanks to those who have written.

Walther Eichrodt, the famous Old Testament theologian of the early twentieth century, suggested that the way to envision the theology of the Older Testament is to cut a cross section through all its parts to see which theme might relate to all the parts. I would suggest that if we follow that procedure with these reflections, the two themes that consistently appear are scholarship and community. Those themes run through the generations, through the various kinds of careers enjoyed in academy and church, and through various denominational backgrounds. The scholarship takes various forms such as seminars and classes, faculty research, qualifying exams, and dissertation research. The community includes relationships with faculty, with student colleagues, and with families. I have now been at Baylor more than three decades and so have witnessed much of the history of the Ph. D. Program, and I would affirm the centrality of these themes. I believe those who began the program would be delighted with these two constants of scholarship and community. The Baylor undergraduate educational experience also prizes those two constants. The hundreds of students who have graduated from the program multiply the program's influence with teaching, research, and service in various contexts.

In 2015, some things have changed about the Ph. D. Program, but it continues to lead the Religion Department with emphases on scholarship, teaching, and service in the context of Christian community.

Based on these reflections from alums, we can joyfully say today in relation to the Ph. D. Program (in the tradition of Dag Hammarskjöld): For what has been, thanks. For what will be, yes!

In thanksgiving and hope (and cordially),

W. H. Bellinger, Jr.
Chair, Department of Religion
W. Marshall and Lulie Craig Chair Holder in Bible
Baylor University



I came to Baylor in 2007 after having taught at three other Baptist institutions. I became the Director of Graduate Studies of the PhD Program in Religion in the summer of 2010. As I now begin my ninth year at Baylor, my knowledge of and respect for this program's existence has grown immeasurably. I know more of the story about the people who had the foresight to begin the program and what that entailed. The letters in this booklet testify to the stories of alumni whose lives were profoundly changed as a result of this program. The students they have touched in their teaching ministries are impossible to count, but clearly they number in the hundreds of thousands. It is humbling to see the effects of the PhD Program in Religion in its first fifty years through these stories.

The next fifty years look just as promising. Our program has benefitted immensely from the increase of resources that Baylor has committed to graduate education to enhance the quality of its support. This commitment means our doctoral students do not have to go into debt to cover tuition, and they work for the department part-time with stipend help so they can devote time to being full-time students. That was not always the case. In the early phases of the program, our alumni did not have these benefits and had to work to support themselves and their families. Yet, as one reads these reflections, one cannot help but be struck by that fact that the memories they recall do not focus on the hardships they endured. Repeatedly, and impressively, they recount memories of relationships that were forged through the bonds of the program. The emphasis upon these relationships has been one piece of the glue that has held this program together, and I am proud to say that this aspect of our program has not changed. Our faculty – across the entire department – continue to invest time and energy in the lives of their graduate assistants and graduate students. I trust that the next fifty years will also benefit from this caring attitude that will help our graduate students become the kinds of teachers and scholars that will continue to bring pride to the Department of Religion at Baylor University.

Sincerely,

James D. Nogalski
Director of Graduate Studies
Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible

1965-1980

Lynn McMillon ('72)
President/CEO, The Christian Chronicle
Dean Emeritus, College of Biblical Studies
Oklahoma Christian University

I love the Department of Religion at Baylor University and am proud of the education I received there. My time there was challenging, frightening, empowering and highly stimulating. I had taught at Oklahoma Christian College in Oklahoma City for 2 ½ years and the college wanted several of us to work toward doctorates so after considering other graduate schools I selected Baylor even though it was a new Ph.D. program. Baylor accepted me despite the unaccredited 96 hour M.Th. degree which I held, and for their generosity I am ever grateful. Dr. Ray Summers and the faculty gave me an opportunity and later complimented me on my work at Baylor. What a blessing to have studied under those men. I learned so much from every one of them and will always be thankful for the experience to study under Dr. Glenn Hilburn, Dr. James Wood, Dr. Bob Paterson, Dr. Davidson, Dr. Robert Reid, Dr. Wally Christian and Dr. Ray Summers.

When I arrived in late December 1968 I learned that the “entrance exams” they had downplayed before I arrived were in fact a major hurdle. The Qualifying Exams (QEs) as the students called them were a daunting series of nine three-hour exams running from Monday through Friday covering world religions, church history, ethics, psychology of religion, systematic theology, historical theology and more. I was scared senseless. But I learned so much in the next six months preparing for those exams. The QEs were a burden and a blessing. Formal entrance into the program required passing at least six of the exam. I was blessed to pass all nine, some designated outstanding. The only blanket “A” that I ever received in all of my education was Dr. Summers’ course in eschatology that summer right after the QEs. Could not have come a better time! My brain was fried and my nerves were exhausted. Somehow that benevolent “A” represents the many ways that the faculty of the Department of Religion helped me and others. They pushed us but also encouraged us and I am grateful for both.

That first semester I took Dr. Christian’s Historical Theology course, Dr. Wood’s Religions of the Near East, Dr. Patterson’s Systematic Theology and Dr. Hilburn’s History of the Orthodox Church. They were all truly great experiences. Dr. Glenn O. Hilburn was assigned as my major professor since I had designated church history as my primary field of study. I quickly came to love and admire Dr. Hilburn for his combination of scholarship and personal warmth. He knew how to motivate, encourage, challenge, teach and all of the good qualities associated with great teachers. His attitude to me as a member of the Church of Christ taught me so much about respect for others’ beliefs. He also taught me to never stop loving freshmen and sophomores even though more advanced studies and classes might be more stimulating. He always taught at least one lower level course for that very reason. To this day I love my freshmen classes and he is the reason. At that time we were required to have a 12 hour minor outside of the department of religion and I selected ancient and medieval history which put me studying under Professor Robert Reid.

I took everything I could under Professor Robert Reid, history department, who was unquestionably the most engaging classroom teacher I have ever had at any level. He allowed 40 students per class and one had to be early in the enrollment line to get a place. He would walk into class and put a simple outline in the upper left corner of the board, draw any needed diagrams, maps, charts, etc. and then deliver the topic of the day in a combination lecture, semi-dramatic and most engaging manner. He was mesmerizing. I not only learned a lot about Roman and Greek history from him but perhaps more importantly I learned how to relate to an audience and manage a class. He has to be one of Baylor's master teachers of all time.

Though I never had Dr. Dalglish, Old Testament, for a course he was legendary at Baylor and one of my favorite stories involves him. Around 1970 Crozer Theological Seminary closed and merged with Colgate in Rochester. As a result they sold unneeded library holdings and since Baylor was building their religion holdings, especially older works, this provided an opportunity for growth. As students we knew that Dr. Dalglish was sent to survey the library and bring back a recommendation. Instead, as we understood, he told the Crozer people on the spot that Baylor would buy all of it! So a few weeks later six, yes that is six large Atlas moving vans backed up to what was then the new library and for several days the books were unloaded. Duplicates and were sold to ACU and other universities but most of it came to Baylor. We were told that a generous donor had picked up the tab! That was my first real awareness of the financial backing that blesses Baylor.

Then there was the French exam, oh yes, the French exam. I didn't need it because all of my dissertation resources were in English in the UK but a modern language was a university requirement. I studied. It was one of the most challenging requirements for me especially after I first met with the professor who would administer the exam. When I sat down in his office he twiddled a fob on his watch chain, showed it to me and asked "Do you know what this is?" It was a Phi Beta Kappa key. I knew then I was probably in trouble. I was right. But in his generosity he passed me the second time around.

Though I entered Baylor forty-six years ago I am still amazed at the tuition rate then—a flat \$30 per credit hour and no additional fees of any kind! We were even entitled to free athletic and drama tickets. That was an incredible price even then and had it not been for that tuition rate I could not have attended Baylor. I am forever grateful. Baylor's program was perfect for my needs as a new teacher in a small Christian college where I would expect to teach a range of religion and history courses. At that time it was a Ph.D. program for those planning to teach in a small liberal arts college where one would have a range of courses.

I returned to Oklahoma Christian College in the fall of 1971 as an assistant professor and over the years advanced to professor and then was appointed by the President as a Distinguished Professor. Thought I had not sought the position I was appointed Dean of the College of Biblical Studies at Oklahoma Christian University in 1996 and served 14 years in that role. Today I am blessed to be back as a full time classroom teacher.

Thank you Baylor and thank you Department of Religion at Baylor!

Brian Harbour ('73)

The Baylor Ph.D. program in religion sabotaged my carefully laid plans! As a young man planning to go into the ministry, my plans included graduation from Baylor and then graduation from one of our Baptist seminaries. A Ph.D. in religion never crossed my mind, but when I learned about the program, I knew it was the right path for me. Choosing this route instead of seminary has provided a richer and broader theological background, and I have fond memories of all of the professors with whom I studied. Being in the first group, it seemed at times that we were making it up as we went along, but that only added to the excitement of the challenge.

Everyone might not remember that the Ph.D. in religion program had a football team who played in the intramural league. I don't remember everyone on the team, but I do remember that Ben Curtis was the quarterback and I was a receiver. And we were quite successful! Just a few years ago I finally got rid of the red and white Adidas shoes that enabled me to run under some of Ben's powerful throws.

During most of my class work I served as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Calvert, Texas, about an hour's drive from Waco. I loved the balance this provided me. While on campus, I was up to my neck in theological discussions and serious literature and in depth exegesis of the Scriptures, but then when I returned to my little church in Calvert, I had to translate all of the academics into the practical realities of everyday life. I loved the daily challenge of connecting academia and church life.

When it came time for me to select my dissertation topic, I struggled with the choice. I knew that my primary vocation would be in the church so I wanted to do my dissertation on someone who was theologically accomplished but who also was still actively involved in the church. These were the sixties when the Death of God theology was a hot topic, so I wanted to do my dissertation on someone who actually thought God was still alive! My first choice was Elton Trueblood. His books energized the Lay Renewal movement in the church at that time and I had read several of them. His book, *A Place to Stand*, remains one of my favorite books. I wrote a carefully thought out letter that covered two pages explaining who I was and what I wanted to do. I ended the letter with a request to let me do my dissertation on him. I waited eagerly for a response. Finally, about two months later I received a letter that contained one sentence: "No I am not interested."

At that point, I turned to Harry Emerson Fosdick, and since he had just died, I knew he could not turn me down. That was a great choice, for his churchmanship and his preaching have greatly influenced my ministry. As a side story, years later I obtained some of Fosdick's sermons on tape. As I finished listening to the first tape, hearing his voice for the first time, the person who narrated the introduction and conclusion to the

tape announced that Dr. Fosdick preached the sermon I just listened to on Sunday, October 22, 1944, which just happens to be the day I was born!

When I first began to seriously plan for my future in high school, I always found myself drawn both to preaching and teaching. I felt my primary vocation was in the preaching ministry, and I carried out that calling for over forty years. Yet, I could never get away from the calling to teach as well, and having my Ph.D. from Baylor has opened doors of opportunity in academia as well. For ten years, I taught as an adjunct professor at George W. Truett Seminary. Then, when I retired, I have been able to teach at Baylor as a Visiting Professor. I have also been teaching at Dallas Baptist University in the History Department for the last seven years, which my minor in history on my Ph.D. and the seminars on historical theology qualified me to do.

My whole life would be different had I not pursued the Ph.D. at Baylor, so I will be forever grateful for the fellow students with whom I shared the journey and the professors who to this day continue to shape my thinking. Thanks to all of you!

William H. Elder ('74)

When I was completing my seminary studies with an objective of going into a doctoral program to prepare for teaching on the university level, I evaluated the doctoral programs of several institutions. I was looking for the program that would offer the most depth of research and breadth of related disciplines. At Baylor I would be able to study under the personal direction of a world-class scholar, and I would be expected to take graduate courses in cognate areas. I was extremely impressed with the scope and quality of Baylor's program; therefore, I chose Baylor and I found the whole program to be filled with challenge and excellence on the professorial level and the student level.

After completing my Ph.D., I had the opportunity to teach at the university and seminary levels. I was also a part of a N.E.H. Endowment study at Yale University. In all of these experiences, I felt well prepared by my Baylor graduate degree. Many scholarly and pedagogic opportunities increased through the years, and I attribute those opportunities to Baylor's preparation via the doctoral program in Religion.

While a doctoral student at Baylor, I was blessed to study under the direction of professors with many, many years of teaching and research experience, all of whom I felt cared deeply about their students. I also found the community of graduate students to be a very fertile and encouraging environment in which to continue through the maze of curriculum requirements.

In conclusion, I am deeply grateful to Baylor University for pioneering the doctoral program that has become a well recognized, leading academic and formational discipline of Religious studies. I have and will continue to recommend Baylor's program to many.

Gratefully,
William H. Elder

Herman Joseph Haag, Jr. ('75)

Very few decisions have impacted my life more than the decision to enter Ph.D. studies in Baylor University's Department of Religion in the fall of 1972. I had finished the M.Div. degree at Southwestern Seminary the previous spring, and the safe and standard move for pursuing Ph.D. work in my peer group was to stay at Southwestern. But the religion department's doctoral program, only a few years old at the time, held out the promise of a well-rounded terminal degree in a university setting, and I was more than intrigued by that promise. Three and a half years later, I was hooded by Ray Summers and H. J. Flanders and incredibly glad that I had chosen Baylor.

My initial career goal to teach at the university or seminary level was never realized, but my degree had unwittingly prepared me for another career—three and a half decades of service on the staff of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission. All of the many ethical reflections, essays, and publications I wrote during that span were undergirded by my Ph.D. studies at Baylor. The study leaves I enjoyed with James Gustafson at the University of Chicago and with Stanley Hauerwas at Duke were made intellectually and academically possible by my studies at Baylor. All of the advanced theological texts I have read over the course of the past forty years have built upon the foundation that was laid in Ph.D. work at Baylor. And last but not least, every one of the multitude of classes I have taught in local churches during those years have reflected what I learned at Baylor.

Graduate seminar work at Baylor was challenging, demanding, and rewarding. I will always be deeply indebted to Ray Summers, Bob Patterson, Glenn Hilburn, Bruce Cresson, and H. J. Flanders for their thorough and honest scholarship and their high expectations and genuine caring for every student. Seminars at Baylor were small enough to allow robust discussion and diverse enough to lead us beyond the safe and familiar.

During all of my work at Baylor, I felt truly involved in the academy of advanced theological studies, along with the responsibilities that involvement entailed. I will never forget what Dean Toland said to me and the other the Ph.D. students who commenced with me in December of 1975. To paraphrase, he said that all of us had the responsibility to use our training and to use it well and to reflect in everything we did the integrity and honesty required by serious academic study. I hope I have done so over the course of the intervening decades, and to the extent that I have lived up to Dean Toland's challenge, my professors in the religion department are largely responsible. May the Ph.D. program live on and flourish for many years to come and bless the lives of many other students like me.

Sincerely,
Herman Joseph Haag, Jr.

Jerry C. Henson ('75)

Prior to entering the new Baylor Ph.D. program in the fall of 1967 as part of the *second* entering class. I had completed a baccalaureate at Hardin-Simmons and a B.D. (now M.Div.) at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth. Originally I had planned to become a pastor, but early on in college had discovered the world of higher education and set the goal of becoming a college professor. As an undergraduate I was advised that if I wanted to teach in a Baptist college or seminary I would need to earn a seminary degree, which I did.

During my seminary years late twentieth century fundamentalism was in its ascendancy, and causing many on the seminary faculty to be very cautious--thus less inspiring--in their teaching. The firing of Prof. Ralph Elliott from Midwestern Seminary had revealed that they too might be in serious jeopardy for their own jobs. As a result I began to think of going east for graduate work and had my eye on Princeton, thinking that then I might find a career teaching in one of the state university departments of religion that were opening around the country at that time.

At this point my only sibling, a younger brother, was killed in an accident at the age of 20. My parents operated a "mom and pop" hardware store in a small town on the Texas border with New Mexico and Dad had serious health problems. So my wife and I decided to move back to my home town, help my folks in the store, and support them through their grief process. During the year and a half we lived there, I was on the lookout for a Ph.D. program closer to home in the event that Dad's health further deteriorated. Soon I learned of Baylor's plan to open the program we are now celebrating. At the appropriate time I applied and was accepted.

You must be wondering why I have so belabored my personal experience. The reason is that it is key to one of the clearest memories of my time at Baylor. The death of my brother made real and concrete the theological/philosophical problem of evil and suffering. I was struggling in my soul and mind with an issue I had only encountered tangentially in the experience of friends or in classroom discussion. With the encouragement of professors like C. W. Christian, Dan McGee, Edward Dalglish and Glenn Hilburn as well as Robert Baird and Bill Cooper in the philosophy department I enjoyed an unfettered opportunity to dig deeply not only into the problem of evil, but also many other orthodox theological formulations that had troubled me since high school. I was expected to know how these issues were handled in scripture and in past and current scholarship including the various confessions, creeds and declarations in the history of religious and philosophical thought.

Beyond these expectations, I was encouraged to test orthodox notions against my own life experience. As I was doing this, I stumbled upon a gripping "aha!" moment. At Dr. Christian's suggestion I read and reviewed for a seminar Charles Hartshorne's *The Divine Relativity*. It opened to me a new understanding of thinking about God and the world, indeed about countless theological issues. I couldn't wait to share this marvelous book with my fellow doctoral students. But the reaction was both disappointing and instructive. Most of my peers only scratched their heads and didn't seem to understand what they were reading or to see its significance. I regretted that, but learned something

every teacher should know, that a text can be revelatory and ecstasy producing for one person, but jibber-jabber to others. I learned that especially in the area of religious and philosophical studies I had some explaining to do. To do that explaining I had to work very hard to make ideas very clear.

On a lighter note, I have fond memories of the time my cohort was enduring the "qualifying exams." It was four-and-a-half days of tests on the areas covered by the discipline of religion. Three hours in the morning, a quick lunch, then three hours in the afternoon. By noon on Thursday we were all giddy with silliness. It was winter and a smattering of snow had fallen on campus the night before. At the lunch we all went outside and had a grand snowball fight, acting as much like first graders as we could. It was a welcome respite from the tension and a refresher from the fatigue.

Another great experience was being part of the Graduate Theological Fellowship. I don't remember clearly whether it was organized the first or second year, but it met a genuine social need and allowed us to get to know our peers more closely. I hope it or something like it is still going.

Just recently, on May 15, 2015, I retired from a 45 year career teaching religion, philosophy, and history in the community college. Only in the last decade has the community college been appreciated for the valuable contribution it makes to the lives of persons who otherwise would not get to college. My training at Baylor prepared me well to deal with students whose lives were often tumultuous, students whose lives were frequently invaded by crises like the one I experienced. My experience at Baylor helped me to show students that in the midst of life crises, some ways of thinking are better than others.

Jerry C. Henson

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Royce Money ('75) Chancellor Abilene Christian University

In 1967, I was a newly-minted M.Div graduate from Abilene Christian University, where I also did my undergraduate work. Since I had for several years determined to preach in a local congregation of Churches of Christ, I turned down other offers upon my graduation to accept a position of pulpit minister at the Silver Spring Church of Christ, just across the Maryland/District of Columbia line. That very eventful and disturbing time in our nation's history.

I had not been there long until I began to think about doctoral-level work in Religion. After look around on the East Coast, I heard of a "new" Ph.D. program that Baylor had recently begun. Being born and raised nearby Temple, I was certainly familiar with Baylor's rich Christian heritage and fine academic reputation. I then decided in the late spring of 1968 to move to Waco in August and begin preparation for what was then a series of nine qualifying exams to be accepted into the program. That decision marked the beginning of an intensive year of study, including taking some leveling courses in some academic areas that needed shoring up.

By the time I was admitted, I was convinced that I had made the right choice. During my three years, I worked two as a graduate assistant to Dr. James E. Wood, Jr. He introduced me to an entire new level of insistence on high quality and integrity in all that I was doing. Meanwhile, a half-time position at the Columbus Avenue Church of Christ opened up in the youth ministry area. Lynn McMillon, now Dean Emeritus of Oklahoma Christian University's College of Biblical Studies, shared the other "half" of the ministry position in Christian education for the church. Lynn was also enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Baylor. It was good to have both a colleague at work and at school, and we became lifelong friends. During the three years Pam and I were in Waco, I worked a total of three part-time jobs and she stayed home and gave birth to two beautiful daughters at Hillcrest Hospital. Wonderful memories!

The Baylor Ph.D. program in Religion opened up new vistas of theological and historical inquiry for me. Dr. Glenn Hilburn was my major professor for my dissertation and also a professor to whom I owe much. After graduation, I was in local church ministry for 14 years and then had an opportunity to join the faculty at Abilene Christian University. In 1988 I became Provost and in 1991 became the 10th President of ACU, serving until 2010. Now, as Chancellor I get to teach on a part-time basis and present at numerous academic and church conferences. I thank God for Baylor University and its lasting impact on my life in my service to the Kingdom. Go Bears!

Sincerely,
Royce Money

BAYLOR
U N I V E R S I T Y

Randy M. Wood ('78)
Professor, School of Education
Baylor University

In the fall of 1973, I was admitted to the graduate program in Religion after completing my Master's Degree at Southwestern Seminary and TCU. My interest in counseling and education led me to major in the Psychology of Religion major with a minor in Education. I can not say how wonderful the years of study and academic growth were for me. I found that the faculty were exceptionally interested in the graduate students and did everything that they could to make sure we had the materials needed for our courses.

Working with Dr. John Davidson, Dr. Dan McGee, Dr. Bob Patterson, Dr. Leo Garrett, and others made life very interesting over these years. I can also say that the classmates in that early class were very friendly and helpful as we were all trying to decide what we were going to do with our lives. I felt that not only did the work in the department help me to understand academically the discipline I had chosen to study, but it also helped me to review my life and find direction.

Upon completing my classwork, I immediately went to work for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in their personnel office where I worked for 5 years. With my ultimate goal still working with students, I then moved to Shawnee OK as Dean of Students at Oklahoma Baptist University. Again, 5 wonderful years happened and then in 1985 I was asked to join the faculty of Baylor University in the School of Education as the Director of the Center for Christian Education. A marriage of my interest in students, education and calling were all put together for this assignment which has now lasted over 30 years! I truly feel blessed by the great foundation that the Department of Religion gave me and how they prepared me for a lifetime of work.

Most Sincerely,
Randy M. Wood

1981-1990

Thomas L. Marberry ('82)
Professor of New Testament
Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College
Moore, Oklahoma

I consider the opportunity to participate in and graduate from the Ph.D. program in Religion at Baylor University a great privilege and an important part of my academic and professional development. The program gave me the necessary academic skills to pursue a career in Christian higher education within the Free Will Baptist denomination. I have completed thirty-six years at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College in Moore, Oklahoma and nine years as President of El Seminario Biblico La Cruz in Reynosa, Tamps., Mexico. During my years at Hillsdale, I have served as instructor, Director of External Studies, and Vice President for Academic Affairs. I currently serve as Professor of New Testament. The academic skills that I developed while at Baylor have been and continue to be crucial in my life.

When I enrolled in the PhD program at Baylor in January of 1974 the program was still relatively new. The classes were small; we had a great deal of personal contact with faculty and with our fellow students. The opportunity to study under great teachers and scholars such as Ray Summers, Bob Patterson, Dan McGee, Edward R. Dalglish, and Bruce Cresson was a rare privilege. I learned both from their excellent instruction and from their Christian commitment what it means to serve God within an academic community. Dr. E. L. Dwyer served as chair of my dissertation committee. His patient guidance and wise counsel made it possible for me to complete this most significant research and writing project. Dr. H. J. Flanders became chair of the department during my time as a student; he was most helpful to me in the latter stages of completing the degree.

I have not had a great deal of contact with the Religion Department since I graduated in December of 1982. I am sure that it is much larger and more comprehensive than it was during my days as a student. I treasure the information I gained, the people I met, and the opportunities I received for growth and development.

Thomas L. Marberry

Joel C. Gregory ('83)
Chair, Preaching and Evangelism
George W. Truett Theological Seminary

The PhD in religion at Baylor was one year old when I enrolled as a Baylor freshman ministerial student in 1966. As a religion major, I studied at the undergraduate level with the same men – it was all men then – that were launching the PhD program. Drs. Ray Summers, Bob Patterson, Glen Hilburn, Dan McGee, Bruce Cresson, Jack Flanders, Wally Christian, Eddie Dwyer and later Leo Garrett were all teaching both undergrad and in the PhD program. That is, I was aware of the program even as an undergraduate from its recent inception.

The PhD students roaming the halls of Tidwell in the late 60s were considered to be exotic creatures by those of us at the undergraduate level. They seemed to be in some alternate universe and we lowly freshmen observed them with silent awe.

Upon graduating from Southwestern Seminary, I made the decision to return to Baylor for a PhD largely due to the presence of Dr. Summers. He had been the formative influence on most of my professors at Southwestern. His roots in Baylor and Baptist education at Southwestern and Southern went back to the 1930s. He was the gentleman scholar always immaculately attired in spotless and appropriate suit and tie or blazer; he also kept his desk spotlessly clean. I used to enter his office with trepidation and wonder where everything was – not a thing out of place. Where did it all go?

Dr. Summers also wore his learning lightly. He never attempted to impress with his knowledge of the field. That led to some memorable challenges in New Testament PhD seminars when a student would quote from *New Testament Studies* or some more arcane *Festschrift* thinking Summers did not know the source. Not only was he familiar with all sources but he would also correct the student in his misuse of the source and expand on the source itself to the amazement of all.

The gentlemen named above have been part of the landscape of my life since I was an undergraduate at Baylor 1966-1970 and then a PhD resident 1974-1977. Summers, Hilburn, Patterson et al seem to be for me at this stage and age of life more like uncles, beloved family members who across a lifetime shaped my learning and understanding of biblical studies, church history and theology. To be able still to see some of them fifty years after first seeing them as an undergraduate is one of the great graces of life. As a senior adult I now sometimes walk the hallways of Tidwell remembering where their offices were and moments of teaching from long ago. Other names are on the doors now but I still hear the same voices.

Often I catch myself saying something at Truett Seminary and wonder whether they said it or I thought it. The tributaries of their influence have a confluence in my life that rests beyond discernment.

One mystery of my PhD experience has never been solved. After the defense of my dissertation I sat outside of the room atop Tidwell awaiting their verdict. After ten minutes, the gathering of distinguished dons beyond closed doors burst into loud and prolonged laughter. I thought my goose was cooked. Then they invited me in and welcomed me to the club. I still do not know what was so funny.

R. Robert Creech ('84)
Professor, Pastoral Leadership
George W. Truett Theological Seminary

I heard of Baylor's Doctor of Philosophy in Religion as I was completing my M.Div. degree at Southwestern Seminary in 1976. I planned to do graduate work in New Testament and to prepare to teach biblical courses in a Baptist college or university. When I learned that Dr. Ray Summers was chairman of the Department of Religion and a professor in New Testament, I immediately took steps to apply. Dr. Summers' name became familiar to me on the first day of Greek class as a freshman at Houston Baptist University. Several of my college and seminary professors had studied with him and quoted him often.

Ray Summers proved as memorable to me as he had been to my teachers. I recall the letter of acceptance he addressed to me as bearing a personal and caring tone. I remember the phone call I received from him telling me he had secured an assistantship for me, even though I was entering in January and most of those had been assigned in the fall. I took every seminar Dr. Summers offered, save one. He retired before I could complete the cycle.

Others on the faculty proved to be equally influential in my academic education. I minored in Christian Ethics and served as graduate assistant for Dr. Dan McGee during all of my residence work. His thinking in the classroom and our conversations on a near daily basis contributed to an interest in ethics that continues to shape my thinking, preaching, teaching, and writing.

Dr. James Leo Garrett led me through a seminar on the Continental Reformation. I recall being the only one in the room who was not majoring in church history, and finding it a challenge. He taught me as much about research and writing as he did about Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli. He was a demanding editor, a kind Christian gentleman, and a profound scholar.

Dr. Wally Christian's wit and wisdom were a delightful part of my studies at Baylor. Knowing him to be another keen-eyed editor, I asked him to serve on my dissertation committee, confident that if got by him, both theologically and editorially, I could feel proud of the product.

Without exception, the faculty were distinguished by both their scholarship and their character. Dr. Bill Pitts, Dr. Bob Patterson, Dr. John Davidson, Dr. Ed Dwyer, and Dr. Ed Dalglish led the way into Protestant history, biblical theology, research in religion, and biblical texts. Both then and now I was awed by the privilege I had to study with these scholars.

Dr. H. J. "Jack" Flanders became my professor during my first semester, in a seminar on the Fourth Gospel, an area of New Testament scholarship that I intended to engage in my dissertation. When that time came, he faithfully and carefully guided me through that process. It was my privilege a few years later to contribute an article to a *Festschrift* in his honor.

My degree from Baylor has made it possible for me engage the career in teaching and ministry that I envisioned during my seminary education. I was able to move quickly from my residence work to my own classroom at Houston Baptist University in 1979. Then, in 1987, I accepted a call to serve as pastor of the University Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, a congregation near the Johnson Space Center. The Baylor Ph.D. lent some credibility in the scholarly and scientific community that I found myself serving. The degree also continued to open doors for me to teach adjunctively at three seminaries while I was a pastor. Just six years ago, I returned to the classroom at Baylor's George W. Truett Theological Seminary, equipped both by the solid academic training I had received at Baylor twenty-five years earlier and by the experience in the field.

I am grateful for having chosen Baylor's Doctor of Philosophy program and for having been received into its halls. The personal relationships that developed with my professors, the small seminars, and the collegiality with my fellow students made the experience a rich one. The quality of academic rigor and the resources of Baylor University made it the right place for me to study. Baylor prepared me to serve Baptist higher education, Baptist congregations, and the Baptist denomination.

Robert M. Parham ('84)
Founder/Executive Director
Baptist Center for Ethics

Eight students entered the Baylor University Ph.D. program in religion under ethics professor Dan McGee in 1981: Lee Berg, David Crosby, Jim Johnson, Neal Rodgers, Paul Sadler, Billy White, Ron Wilson, and me. We were joined the next year by Ray Higgins. Others who circled the ethics seminars included Curtis Freeman, Gary Furr and Hal Ritter. Most stayed in the program. A few left early.

We were a band of brothers. We shared library carrels, meals at lunch, lecture notes and white-out correction fluid--being the last generation to use electric typewriters. We collaborated to navigate the inscrutable quirks of professors.

We were all Baptists--and most of us were deeply concerned about the fundamentalist attack on Baylor and takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention. We even loaded up a van to drive to the 1984 SBC meeting in Kansas City to vote against Charles Stanley. Late on the night before the election, in a hotel room overstuffed with students, we received a call promising that moderate Baptists had the votes to win. We did not.

Life's challenges and changing priorities over the decades have frayed our connectivity, but surely not diminished our memories of solidarity in Tidwell.

Nor have the years eroded my gratitude for Dan McGee who sharpened my analytical skills. He taught me that explaining had as much value as activism, that institution-building was as important as the prophetic word, that listening was as critical as honing one's argument.

His investment in me transcended the program's impersonal nature. He knew my wife's name and celebrated the birth of our first child.

McGee opened doors for me without my seeing his fingerprints. He was a mentor in the shadows.

Thankfully, Glenn Hilburn introduced needed collegiality into the program when he replaced Jack Flanders as chair of the department. He networked with students, dispensed advice and left our cups running over with Baptist history.

The cheerful Bill Pitts was an engaging lecturer. The weathered John Davidson kept students grounded. The kindly Naymond Keathley offered two splendid seminars--the Synoptic Gospels and Romans. To my eternal amusement, I learned the painful consequences of being the last student to sign up for book reviews. I had to read B. H. Streeter's massive volume on the synoptic gospels, unlike some of my classmates who had much thinner books.

The Baylor Ph.D. program qualified me for employment at the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, where I joined another of McGee's students, Larry Braidfoot, who had followed yet another McGee student--John Wood.

That opening experience, in turn, afforded me the opportunity to found and to lead the Baptist Center for Ethics, better known today as EthicsDaily.com, for almost 25 years. Little did I imagine that the Tidwell basement seminars would open the doors for

me to become a documentary filmmaker, book author, newspaper columnist, interfaith collaborator, global trekker.

Richard Walsh ('84)
Professor of Religion
Methodist University

From a small Texas hometown and with little knowledge of the workings of graduate schools, I applied to Baylor alone, and, happily, I was accepted at mid-year into the PhD program in religion. I had barely enough money for the first semester, and no idea how I would pay for the rest of my education. On my first day in Waco, I had an appointment with the inimitable Dr. Ray Summers. My trepidation increased tremendously when he pulled out my academic file and began to review aloud my deficiencies, credits, and future program. I left in a bit of a daze. To my horror, Dr. Summers' secretary called me later that same day to tell me that he needed to see me again that very day. I was certain that Dr. Summers' review of my academic file had convinced him of my unworthiness and that he was summoning me to expel me. When I arrived, Dr. Summers asked me what I thought I was doing in the program and I tried, haltingly, to justify myself. He then wanted to know how I was going to pay for my education. When I told him I had no idea, he told me that I would become Dr. Patterson's graduate assistant the next day. Of course, Dr. Summers (and then Dr. Patterson) had to explain what that position entailed—including how it would fund my education. I'm still not sure why I was the recipient of such graciousness, but that first-day experience was typical of my entire time in the BU PhD program, which was, for me, a series of encounters with quietly competent faculty graciously providing instruction and other forms of support. Among many wonderful kindnesses at Baylor, I remember ...

- Dr. Richard Cutter, my Greek teacher, calling me to find out why I had missed class (a toothache) and then arranging an appointment with his dentist on the same day so that it wouldn't happen again, as he put it.
- Dr. Bob Patterson carefully instructing me in research methods for one of the many books on which he worked—and the boxes and boxes of books that I hauled in his station wagon between the library and his office.
- Gentlemanly Dr. Jack Flanders handing out his incredible bibliographies on the first day of every seminar—bibliographies that are still in my possession and use.
- Dr. Bill Pitts helping me navigate my first big city and my first SBL meeting—and finding me a place to sleep.
- And last, but really first, Dr. Naymond Keathley mentoring, and actually befriending, me through written exams, dissertation (including the umpteenth rewrites of the first sentence only to arrive at the version with which we began, but now knew, he claimed, for the first time), defense, job search, first job—and on to the present day.

If Dr. Summers shepherded me into the program, Dr. Keathley led me out and watches over me to this day, so that my present experience of the Baylor PhD program remains that of that very first day. Competence and graciousness—extending to “care”—that’s what I remember about the Baylor PhD program in religion.

Gary Furr ('85)
Pastor, Vestavia Hills Baptist Church
Birmingham, Alabama

In the fall of 1979, my wife and I moved with our two children to Waco, a town where neither of us had ever been before. I had been accepted into the Ph.D. program, having applied to it with encouragement from Dr. Dean Martin, then at Campbell College where we lived during my seminary training. I had persuaded her that yes, Texas was hot, but as a kid in Irving, it seemed bearable enough. A dry heat, I told her. She has never let me forget that bit of disingenuous marketing.

My first semester began with a seminar in Old Testament Theology with Bob Patterson, whose taciturn frown presided for three hours straight over the first paper, a hasty thirty page single-spaced effort by fellow first-year student Jim Williamson, who had persuade a lovely freshman lass to type his paper on "The Names of God in the Old Testament."

Unfortunately for him, her complete unfamiliarity with any religion beyond John 3:16 resulted a paper which, because it was first, did not get proofed. This was in the days before we had personal computers. So we listened in anguish as he stopped at a hundred typos about "Ed Shaddai" and forty variations of Yahweh (Yumah, Yemoo, and so on). *Write an addendum for next class, said Dr. Patterson.* The rest of us sat thinking, "What have I gotten myself into?"

The next several years were the juggling of too much to do, too little time and virtually no money. Stresses were high, the way difficult, and the inner obstacles the worst of all. Yet now, at age 61, I can look back and say that not a week goes by as a pastor when I do not call on something I learned under my teachers—Wally Christian, Bob Patterson, and Glenn Hilburn (who I suppose gave everyone that disgusting quiz no one could pass just to "show you that you don't know as much about Baptist history as you think").

Bill Pitts' prelim preparations were among the most useful work I ever did for myself, later calling on them in work with racial reconciliation and interfaith dialogue. Wally Christian's classes pointed me to books I would read and continue to read until the present. Jack Flanders class led me into love for the Fourth Gospel for the rest of my life. Naymond Keithley did the same in working with us on the Book of Romans.

My major professor, John Davidson, was mentor and teacher and personal friend. John was a genuine campus character. I will never forget his being threatened by a Baptist bureaucratic daddy whose daughter was upset because John threatened to flunk her for being chronically late. He swore to have his job, to which John happily replied, "I'm only two years from retirement and it'll take you five to get me fired. Meanwhile, if she's late tomorrow, she will flunk." She was never late again.

He had us in his home, gave us advice, and encouraged us. He also guided my foray to the boundary of psychology and theology. I "met" thinkers who have inhabited my thinking daily. Wally Christian, I am sure, was the recommendation that carried the day to get me the small church that enabled us to survive while in school.

But they also challenged us, pushed us hard, beyond what we thought was reasonable or humane. They demanded from us extraordinary and impossible levels of study and work, all the while trying to pay bills and stay sane. Depressions and dropping away happened. It was not for the faint of heart. But we learned to expect more of ourselves and our talents.

Our thinking changed forever, and even those of us who chose to go to the church and practical parish life rather than academia, would never be the same. We were theologians now, able to think and integrate intellectually at a level that would never have been possible otherwise. It gave me colleagues, friends and a network for life. Our particular slice gave people like Curtis Freeman, Hal Ritter, Robert Parham, Dennis Koger, Frank Wheeler, Lee Berg, Carey Newman, Glenn Jonas, Bob Weaver, and Rosalie Beck, Jim Johnson and Paul and Steve Sadler, among others.

The camaraderie among that group was a life-preserver. We would launch into a three hour bloodletting during a seminar until the presenter would slither out under the door, covered in red ink, then go off to have coffee and laugh for an hour after. It was a most extraordinary gift, and one we would not fully cherish until we discovered the rarity of such community in the rest of life.

We walked through the mutual suffering, learning from one another as much as the teachers. We ate meals together, played basketball, argued politics and watched the then-onerous Baptist battles over our futures.

We drove the worst looking cars on the campus, and only lived in Tidwell, the library and the student center. We inhabited many of the "training congregations" around the area who tolerated us preaching sermons from what we had just read and barely assimilated.

My studies were a journey in self-understanding. I am sure that what partly motivated me to come to Baylor was aspiration to find a career and be somebody in a world I admired. But what happened along the way was far greater than the reward of a degree. At the end, hood draped over me, library privileges ended and the responsibilities of life unavoidable any longer, I was changed by this marvelous intersection of extraordinary people, information and opportunity.

One last, very important memory I have is of family. Mine and many others. I knew many of my classmates' spouses through our friendships, and most of us have to admit that not only is a degree a tremendous and rare opportunity, but also a gift from others. Unless we came as a single person, and even then we knew support from people in our lives, we depended to a large extent on the encouragement and sacrifices of our loved ones to give us an extravagant gift of time and focus.

When Dr. Davidson died many years ago, my wife and I drove back to Waco to attend his service. As his service ended, I went to my teachers who were there and said, "Don't ever forget that what you do really matters to us." I hope those of you who are here now can know this to be so someday and be those people who inhabit your students' minds for the rest of their lives. No self-directed or online learning can ever replace a teacher. Only a teacher can show you, model for you, and push and pull on your mind until something new is born.

Now I look back with thankfulness. I didn't even begin to know, in the fall of 1979, what was given to me in the opportunity ahead. I didn't fully comprehend what it took to

get it, either by me or the people in my life. I didn't realize how it would enhance the rest of my life. But I do now.

Blake Burleson ('86)
Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies
of the College of Arts and Science
Baylor University

I began the Ph.D. in Religion in 1982 with a concentration in world religions under James Breckenridge. When I entered the program, there were only four or five of us working under Jim, as the world religions concentration had only recently been approved. The chair of the department at that time was Jack Flanders and Dan McGee was the graduate director. I served as Dr. Breckenridge's graduate assistant during my second and third years. During my fourth and final year, Glenn Hilburn, the new chair, gave me the opportunity to teach Old Testament and New Testament surveys while I wrote my dissertation. He told me in *pro forma* fashion that this was a one-year appointment and I should look for employment elsewhere upon graduation. As I write this reflection today from London where I am teaching world religions in the Baylor in Great Britain program, I realize that I've been teaching Baylor students now for three decades. Maybe I'll teach another decade or two. Inshallah!

I feel extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to spend a career at Baylor University. In looking back, I'm not exactly sure how it worked out this way since the rule is that you don't hire your own. My career as a senior lecturer and administrator at Baylor University has been most gratifying. To rise in the morning and pray, and then go to the campus to teach, and then on to the Dean's Office to do the business of the College of Arts and Sciences (in the Burleson building of all places) is a dream come true.

I am grateful to Jim Breckenridge for his patient encouragement throughout the graduate program, to fellow graduate student John Jauchen for his friendship and help, to Glen Hilburn and Dan McGee for wise counsel and support, to Gary Cook (who later became President of Dallas Baptist University) for my first administrative gig following graduation, to Herb Reynolds for my first full-time position at Baylor, and for Bill Cooper, Jim Vardaman, and Wallace Daniel for confidence in my administrative assignments. Any successes I've had as a teacher-researcher-administrator are, in large measure, due to an intellectual and spiritual birthing from mentors like Cooper, Breckenridge, McGee, Hilburn, Patterson, and Cresson who demanded my best, forgave my worst, and expected results even when I was not sure I could give them. I hope I have not disappointed. Because they passed the torch on to me, I've had the opportunity to serve with fellow world religions colleagues like John Jonsson, Clinton Bennett, Chris van Gorder, Scott Houser, and Candi Cann. Each have been a part of the legacy begun by Jim Breckenridge to teach our students about the world's religions within a Christian liberal education context. This has been exciting work and has led me to journey into the world of Jungian studies, African religions, African studies, spirituality, the wisdom traditions, contemplative pedagogy, and typology.

Today after class here in London, I talked with one of my students for over an hour about how God might be at work in other religions (besides her own). It was an interesting and stimulating conversation as she sought understand the particularity of her

faith and the universality of God's love. Like Jim Breckenridge, John Jonsson, and the many Christian scholars of the department, we still work on this important issue today in a world that sorely needs our students to move beyond parochial and shallow mindedness. Thanks be to God for the continuing work of the students, staff, faculty, and alums of the Department of Religion at Baylor University.

Blake Burleson

Tim Griffin ('88)

I started the program in 1980 while serving a congregation in Waco. I graduated in 1988, so I was around there for eight years. It was some of the best years of my life. I had a BD degree from the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and had some very good teachers there, but courses taught by Dr. C. W. Christian, my advisor, and Dr. Jack Flanders in New Testament and others were some of the best course in religion I ever had.

The education at Baylor proved invaluable in my preaching and ministry for the rest of my career. My PhD minor was history, which enabled me to teach American history at a community college in West Texas, which I enjoyed immensely, and helped supplement a minister's salary in a small town.

As a member of the Disciples of Christ I was in the minority as far as religious affiliation went, but I was always treated with respect. One of my fave memories involved the homecoming issue of *The Rope*, the scandalous newspaper put out by the secret Noze Brotherhood. They always had copies of *The Rope*, on the secretary's desk in the religion department office during Homecoming week.

Lastly, I want to say that the young people who were my fellow and sister student in the program were some of the finest Christian young people I was ever associated with. Thanks for letting me share.

Tim Griffin

David Crosby ('89)
Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church of New Orleans

I took my first religion course at Baylor as a freshman in the fall of 1971. It was Jack Flander's Old Testament Survey, using his own text, *People of the Covenant*, and it turned my spiritual and intellectual world upside-down. I did not realize then that the Baylor Ph.D. program was only six years old. I had the opportunity to meet and study eschatology under Ray Summers. I met Glen Hilburn when he served as interim pastor at a church in Bellmead in 1972. I ended up with an undergraduate major in religion and took courses with Bob Patterson, Dan McGee, Glen Hilburn, and Wally Christian.

I was a combative fundamentalist as an undergraduate. I did a 13-page review of Hal Lindsey's "The Late Great Planet Earth" for Bob Patterson just for spite and left a small blank on the 11th page of the outline where I invited him to check if he really did read it all. He announced to the class that he found this curious blank in one of the book reviews and that he put an "F" in the blank.

I know that the professors must have been surprised, for sure Dr. Patterson, when I applied for graduate work in the department in 1980.

Baylor's Ph.D. program in religion was the greatest learning experience of my life. The format itself gave me room to design a course of study that addressed my interests. Interaction with the diverse student body expanded my understanding of faith and church. The seminar format gave me both the opportunity to express my own point of view and the challenge of evaluating and critiquing that of my colleagues. I am deeply grateful for and indebted to Dan McGee, Bob Patterson, Bill Pitts, James E. Wood, and Wally Christian who were my major professors in the Ph.D. program.

Ray Higgins ('90)
Coordinator
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Arkansas

Baylor University was my first choice for a Ph.D. program in Religion. I was impressed with Baylor's academic standing, faculty in Religion, especially its Christian ethics professor, Dr. Daniel B. McGee, and its campus life.

I entered the program in January 1983 after working for two years in an internship with Foy Valentine at the SBC's Christian Life Commission. At the CLC, I worked with three Baylor Ph.D. graduates: Larry Braidfoot, Bill Elder and John Wood.

It was challenging and enjoyable to study with fellow Christian ethics majors Lee Berg, David Crosby, Javier Elizondo, Jim Johnson, Robert Parham, Neal Rodgers, Paul Sadler, and other religion program colleagues Mike Broadway, James Browning, Blake Burleson, Mike Fanning, Curtis Freeman, Gary Furr, Susie Jaynes, Glenn Jonas, Philip LeMasters, Carey Newman, Jim Perkins, Hal Ritter, Steve Sadler, Steve Spivey, Mark Waters, Tim Wagoner, Clint Walker, Ron Wilson, and Jeff Zurheide.

Dr. McGee's forte was teaching the skill of analyzing ethical issues from Christian and religious perspectives, along with using other academic disciplines. He was also a role model for being active in his profession, community, and church. He embodied the finest Christian virtues.

I enjoyed studying psychology of religion with John Davidson, theology with Bob Patterson, church history with Bill Pitts, and New Testament with Jack Flanders and Naymond Keathley. I chose educational psychology as my outside minor. Drs. McGee, Wally Christian, and William Hillis, M.D. supervised my dissertation—*The Purposes of Prenatal Diagnosis: A Christian Ethical Analysis*.

I was fortunate to move from Baylor to Southwestern Seminary to teach Christian ethics. During my seventh year I was awarded a sabbatical as a Visiting Scholar in the Divinity and Medical Schools at Vanderbilt University, and supported Robert Parham as he was launching the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville.

Following the unconscionable firing of President Russell Dilday, I left Southwestern to become the pastor of Second Baptist Church in downtown Little Rock, Arkansas. It was a pleasure and privilege to serve for a decade in this local church that models Christ-like values through its identity, history, mission and ministries within an urban, metropolitan location.

In January 2005, I became the Coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Arkansas.

Along the way, I have been given opportunities to teach ethics at Truett Seminary, Logsdon School of Theology, the Baptist Seminary in Mexico City, the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary, Memphis Seminary, Ouachita Baptist University, and the University of Pikeville. For thirteen years I taught part time on the medical humanities faculty at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

I am proud to be a Baylor alum, and am grateful for the significant role the Ph.D. program in Religion has played in my life and career in ministry.

Glenn Jonas ('90)
Chair, Department of Religion
Campbell University

I am not exaggerating when I say that the years I spent in the Religion Department PhD program at Baylor University were five of the happiest years of my life. I enrolled in the fall semester of 1985 and graduated in May, 1990. I felt a close sense of community with the fellow students in the program as well as with the faculty and staff of the Baylor Religion Department.

The first person I met in the Religion Department was Dan McGee. I came from Fort Worth down to Waco in fall, 1984 for an interview just after I submitted my application. He was very cordial. He talked with me candidly about the program, the expectations, and provided me with some general information about the university. He then took me to meet Bill Pitts, since I sought to do my major work in historical studies. From the moment that I met these two professors, I knew that Baylor was the place that would be the right fit for me. Just before I left, I told Dan, "If I don't get accepted to the program this year, my application will be the first you receive next year. Baylor is where I want to do my work."

I had no expectation that I would be accepted into the program. While I had a very respectable grade point average in both my undergraduate and seminary work, I had GRE scores that were very low. I have often thought that given the competition to get into the program today, I would not be accepted. The fact of the matter is that I have always considered myself fortunate that I was accepted in 1985.

Once I entered the program, I focused most of my work with Bill Pitts. I cannot imagine a better person to be my dissertation advisor. He was patient, yet demanding. He always had chapters back to me in a timely manner so that I could progress through the process as rapidly as possible. I could not have had a better experience. Glenn Hilburn was also quite helpful as my second reader. He always deferred to Dr. Pitts. But, I appreciated his candid appraisal of my work.

A word also needs to be said about John Wood, with whom I worked for three years as a graduate assistant. I had nothing but the utmost respect and appreciation for him. I enjoyed working with his classes. Particularly, I remember working with large Business Ethics classes that he taught. I checked roll for him and also helped with grading papers. I filled in for him on a few occasions when he had to be away. It was good experience.

Finally, I am appreciative to the Religion Department faculty for its help when it came time to recommend me for a faculty position. I joined the faculty of the Religion Department at Campbell University in 1994. Several Baylor faculty members were quite helpful in providing timely advice for the interview process as well as professional recommendations.

I will always be grateful for my time at Baylor University in the Religion PhD program. I celebrate the 50th anniversary of the program and consider myself a proud alumnus. I wish the program well during its next 50 years!

1991-2000

Vaughn Weatherford ('91)

I am thankful for the extraordinary privilege of taking part in the learning environment of Baylor's PhD program in religion. From the initial interview with Dr. McGee to the receiving of my graduation hood from Dr. Pitts, the experience was the most rewarding of my educational career. Baylor's graduate curriculum opened a new style of learning for me, providing the opportunity to pursue my interest in church history while continuing to prepare for ministry. The program allowed me to pastor the Gholson Baptist Church (now the First Baptist Church of Gholson), a wonderful congregation that granted me the time needed for graduate study and even endured my occasional Wednesday night lessons in Baptist history. I will always treasure the chance to experience Dr. Hilburn's theological history of the Catholic church, Dr. Burleson's lectures on comparative religions, and Dr. Pitts's seminars on the Reformation complete with an end of the semester book giveaway - I still have my copy of *The Agony and the Ecstasy*.

The information I acquired was significant, but pales in comparison to the relationships made. I will always remember studying (and commiserating) with fellow students on the challenges of locating and securing primary sources and the intricacies of inter-library loans. Why couldn't Al Gore have invented the internet fifteen years sooner? The availability of professors, especially Dr. Pitts's wise counsel, provided an exciting road map through the requirements and opportunities for study. Dr. Sloan, first as professor and then as the president of the university, was a key connection in the chain God used to bring me to my current pastorate, for which I am truly grateful.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to learn, grow, and prepare for the path God has allowed me to follow. May God continue to bless the department and the university as you impact the lives of students in the years to come.

Blessings,
Vaughn Weatherford



William (Bill) Carrell ('93)

Professor of Christian Studies and Director of Church Relations
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

Thank you for the opportunity to express my appreciation for the Baylor Ph.D. in Religion program and what it has meant to me. Indeed, I cannot imagine my life apart from my experience in the Baylor Ph.D. in Religion. Just getting into the program was a significant moment for me. It was also a momentous event for my young family as I packed up my wife and two young sons and moved back to Waco to spend the next six years with a near absentee father buried in Ph.D. work and in the pastorate of a local church. Graduation from the program was liberation certainly from the endless anxiety as a Ph.D. student but more importantly to the fulfillment of the calling of my life in teaching.

As I reflect on my experience in the Ph.D. program, I am especially thankful for my primary mentors, Wally Christian, Bob Patterson, Bill Pitts, Dan McGee, Robert Sloan, James Breckenridge, and Michael Beatty. As I grow older, I am increasingly aware of the fact that these teachers not only guided my education but also shaped how I think. My experience with these faculty members began when I came to Baylor as an undergraduate Religion major and continued a decade later when I returned for the Ph.D. program.

In regard to the shaping of my mind, one memory in particular stands out. Although I was a graduate assistant for Dr. Breckenridge, one day Dr. Patterson asked me to assist him when his regular grader was unable for some reason. As I sat in the back of Dr. Patterson's intro to theology class – the same class I had taken more than ten years earlier as an undergraduate – I was amazed at how much of what he was saying had become my own thoughts. Until that moment, I had not fully realized the power of education, and the memory of that experience has kept me going throughout my own teaching career. Every time I begin a course, especially with very young students, I am well aware that what I am saying is molding and shaping their minds in ways that they themselves may never fully comprehend or appreciate. This shaping of young minds is both the great privilege and grave responsibility of teaching. I am thankful that my mentors in the Baylor Ph.D. program took their responsibility so enthusiastically and seriously, which reminds me of one other fond memory.

In seminars, Dr. Christian sometimes would quote statements from former students that he found interesting or amusing. One of those Dr. Christian quoted more than once in my presence was from a student (I can't remember his name) who made the comment, "Sometimes I think we're building windmills in a land where the wind never blows." After Dr. Christian would recall that quote, he would smile and laugh in his jolly,

characteristic manner, but the poignant truth of that statement helped me (and I think Dr. Christian too) to take what we were all doing - theologians weaving language to somehow capture and explain God - with a "grain of salt." I have found, however, that sometimes the wind does blow. The Baylor Ph.D. in Religion was a "windmill" through which the wind blew to greatly enhance my life.



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Merrill H. Hawkins, Jr. ('94)
Professor of Religion
Carson-Newman University

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the creation of Baylor University's Ph.D. in Religion, I wish to offer my congratulations to the Department of Religion for reaching this milestone. I also want to acknowledge my deep gratitude for my positive experiences in the doctoral program at Baylor and for the role that this degree has played in my vocation since I graduated in 1994.

In my years as an undergraduate at Baylor from 1981-1985, my experiences in the classroom stand out as among my happiest and most fulfilling times from those days. My love for what I experienced as a student in the classroom continued when I entered the M.Div. program at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1987. At Southwestern, I was first exposed to the discipline of church history under Leon McBeth. Dr. McBeth's influence in and out of the classroom soon had its effect on me. It became clear to me that I wanted to pursue doctoral studies in American religious history and that I wanted to do so in a university program. Numerous people, including Dr. McBeth, encouraged me to apply to Baylor's program. I had the privilege of hosting Franklin Littell as a speaker at Southwestern at some point during those years, and he spoke highly of the program, as did quite a few other people I consulted. While I did not major in religion as an undergraduate, I took survey courses under Bob Patterson and John Davidson my freshman year (1981-1982) and found the academic study of religion to be quite stimulating and quite different from what I expected. I continued to take electives under Robert Sloan, Naymond Keathley, and Russell Lester, growing from all of them. These positive memories influenced my decision to include Baylor among a few places that I applied.

Fortunately, I was accepted into the program and entered during the fall semester of 1990. My years in doctoral study at Baylor University continue to be some of the most positive influences in my life personally and professionally. Each professor I had in each seminar shaped my research and my teaching in ways that remain with me to the present. To list the professors in the program who shaped me would require that I list every professor that I had: Glenn Hilburn, Glenn McGee, Randall O'Brien, Bill Bellinger, Jonathan Lindsey, and James Breckinridge provided me rich experiences in their classes. In my outside minor, I was shaped by Stanley Campbell and Gary Hull of the History Department. While I did not have Rosalie Beck as a professor, Dr. Beck was a reader of my dissertation and a member of the oral defense committee. We have continued to be close colleagues since that time. The time I was in the doctoral program at Baylor provided me not only a strong academic background to do my chosen vocation, it also

provided me with a strong group of relationships that are with me today. My closest friends and colleagues stem from that time in my life.

Chief among my influences stands my major professor, Bill Pitts. I had the honor of taking all of my history of Christianity seminars under Dr. Pitts, as well as serving as his graduate assistant for four years. Dr. Pitts taught me by words and deeds how to do the work of a historian of Christianity and how to be the kind of person that one should be in the academy. While my experiences in Baylor's program were overwhelmingly positive, the single most positive experience was my opportunity to work under the guidance of Bill Pitts. I shall forever be grateful for his influence, an influence made possible by his role in graduate program in religion. Many times, when I've wondered what life would have been if I had chosen to go to Florida State University, my other choice for doctoral studies, I always realize that selecting that path would have meant never knowing Ruth and Bill Pitts the way that I know them.

After receiving the Ph.D. from Baylor in 1994, I had the opportunity to join the religion faculty at Carson-Newman University as Assistant Professor. Now entering my 21st year on the faculty, I have been privileged recently to be promoted to Full Professor. My wife, Kimberly, who earned an M.S. in curriculum and instruction at Baylor during my time in the doctoral program, serves as Chair of the Department of Education. I serve as a member of a religion faculty with two other Baylor alumni, Christine Jones and Chad Hartsock, who are making their own strong contributions to CN and representing Baylor well. My twenty years on the faculty here have been the realization of a dream to work in higher education and Baylor University's doctoral program in religion made that dream a reality.

I extend my best wishes to the entire faculty of the Department of Religion on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the launching of the Ph.D. and I thank all of you for your role in continuing its work for the future.

Sincerely,
Merrill H. Hawkins, Jr.

David Lertis Matson ('94)

Professor of Biblical Studies

Pacific Christian College of Hope International University

To misquote Tertullian, what does Los Angeles have to do with Waco? The answer for my family and me is very simple: Baylor University. Ever since I made that initial inquiry back in the early Spring of 1988, Baylor has been an important part of our lives. The longer I listened to Dan McGee (then Chair of the Religion Department) graciously explain the Ph.D. program during a forty-five minute phone conversation, the stronger my conviction grew that the doctoral program in Religion at Baylor was the right fit for me. I would apply nowhere else.

The decision to attend Baylor, of course, was radical. I remember calling my wife Mary immediately after hanging up with Dr. McGee. "Honey," I said excitedly but tentatively, "I have some good news and some bad news. The good news is that I have found the program just right for me." "That's great!" came her reply. "Where is it?" she asked next. "Well, that's the bad news," I said. "It's in a place called Waco, Texas." Silence. What does Los Angeles have to do with Waco? Little did we anticipate that our third child, a daughter, would be born there.

Packing up and moving to Waco would require not only that my wife leave her employment but, more impactfully, that we leave all our family and friends in Southern California and move to a place some fifteen hundred miles away with absolutely no support-system. Having two small boys (ages three and one at the time) made our leaving especially difficult and tear-filled. Since the only recollection I had of Texas was that of an impressionable young lad travelling through north Texas (Dumas, I think it was), all I could envision were dust, cowboys, and tumbleweeds. Where in the world was I taking my wife and family?! Needless to say, Mary and I were pleasantly surprised driving from Dallas to Waco on our first visit to the campus to discover lots of green, an inviting community and, to our relief, electricity. We immediately knew that this was a place where we could raise our boys while I embarked on the most difficult and challenging chapter of my academic and professional life. And thus began our six-year wonderful stay in our transplanted home of Waco, Texas, and the Tidwell Bible Building of the Baylor University Religion Department in particular.

I have never regretted the decision to attend Baylor, either personally or professionally. To this day I think back on my Baylor experience with a great deal of personal satisfaction and pride, a pride that wells up every time we watch a Baylor football or basketball game on television and display our Baylor flag. Though we are back in Southern California, we are and will always be Baylor Bears. More importantly, that pride extends to every time I see a new publication from a Baylor professor or Baylor represented at a professional conference. If I have contributed in some small measure to that institutional pride through my own academic teaching and research, then I feel that I have at least done my part.

There were many things about the Baylor Ph.D. in Religion that appealed to me at the time—the quality of the faculty, the breadth of its program, its Baptist heritage and confessional context (though I am not a Baptist!), and, most importantly, its commitment

to the integration of faith and critical thinking. Having made my peace theologically with higher biblical criticism, I wasn't looking for a repeat of a semi-fundamentalist education. I remember continually pressing Dr. McGee on the phone, "But you utilize all the critical tools in the Bible classes, right?" He assured me that they did.

He was right. I came to Baylor essentially a biblical historian and left a narrative-critic, due mainly to the influence of Mikeal Parsons, my eventual dissertation advisor. Though my research interests in biblical studies continue to grow and evolve, Baylor gave me a solid foundation of scholarly endeavor that continues to impact my work to the present day. The Ph.D. program at Baylor, too, has continued to grow and evolve, as well it should. But I feel especially blessed that I was there at the time I was there; it was *teleios* in the "perfect" sense of the word.

And so I salute the Religion Ph.D. program at Baylor University for fifty outstanding years of high-quality doctoral instruction and preparation. It can only get better and better. I am so thankful that I could share in its wonderful history.

David Lertis Matson



Stacy L. Patty ('94)
Professor of Religion and Ethics
Director, University Honors Program

There are few endeavors that have paid as richly as has the Baylor Ph.D. Program in Religion. Having experienced two church firings, I as a pastor came to Waco literally with no other options. Within a year, a new ministry position came along in nearby Elm Mott, and the combination of doctoral study and congregational ministry brought a lively, positive, and challenging balance to the days. The times I spent in seminars, or the basement graduate student lounge, or sharing coffee with colleagues, or in that isolated carrel in the graduate school building brought rich discovery, cultivated disciplined study habits, and formed lasting friendships with fellow students and faculty alike.

As an ethics major, I worked closely with Dan McGee, who always was ready to provide direction and insight but never forced his will or agenda. He was hospitable and humble, contemplative and insightful, demanding and encouraging. I remember him more than his classes, which I take as a positive thing. Wally Christian's process theology course (oh, that P & R text!), Bill Bellinger's Old Testament theology study, Barry Harvey's postmodernism seminar, and James Breckenridge's World Religions courses remain the most memorable to me. Bob Patterson's famed book digests assignments, which I detested at the time, have proven influential as well. While I did not read every word of every book we discussed, I did gain broad knowledge of a very large corpus of classics. (I will come clean on one matter: The library copy of a certain volume of Barth's *Dogmatics* that I was assigned to present had been outlined and marked quite well. I remain indebted to the unknown student from earlier days.)

The program at Baylor prepared me well for a life of service in the university setting. In early years at Lubbock Christian University, I taught "everything except Bible," including Greek, church history, philosophy of religion, ethics, and world religions – and freshman Bible. I had been trained for a generalist career, and with the help of some very thorough course notes, I became a strong, popular, and very tired teacher. With a fifteen to eighteen hour per semester teaching schedule, research seemed impossible. So I turned to the seminar circuit, securing placements at AAR, NEH, and Lilly workshops, always believing the summers away would make research more possible and publications more likely. Instead, the opportunities opened doors into guild leadership and networks beyond my denomination and university. With the credentials and references of Baylor, I have experienced wonderful leadership opportunities with the American Academy of Religion Board of Directors, the Southwest Commission on Religious Studies, the Stone-Campbell Christian Scholars Conference, and the Rhodes Consultations workshops. Were it not for the generalist program, the encouragement from faculty like Bill Bellinger and Dan McGee, and the training that led me into the

academy, I am confident that I would not have enjoyed such a rich career of guild service.

Exposure beyond Lubbock Christian University and work with religion scholars from across the country, combined with an ever-narrowing teaching role (as specialists were added in most disciplines) led me to focus on world religions. Travels to Turkey and India occurred, and I began a more active involvement with interfaith dialogue, comparative theology, and the theologies of religious pluralism. My classes in religion – and occasionally ethics – receive positive reviews, and I speak about world religions frequently in community and church contexts. Again, were it not for the Baylor education, I would certainly not have been prepared to engage these important issues today.

Among the Church of Christ professors in American colleges and universities, a fair number received their doctorates at Baylor: Paul Pollard, Royce Money, Lynn McMillon, Chip Kooi, John Jackson, Les Maloney, Michael Martin, Jeff Cary, to name a few. I am pleased to join this list, and I am pleased to know – understanding the Baptist – Church of Christ history in many communities – that Baylor has had no small influence on the teaching of Church of Christ university students over the years. I am also honored to be named among the entire group of Ph.D. graduates, knowing the high academic quality and strong moral character of these women and men of faith.

Congratulations, Baylor Religion Department. To the next fifty years!

Stacy L. Patty

Jerry L. Faught II ('95)
Associate Professor of Religion
Wiley College

I arrived at Baylor in the fall of 1991 and graduated in May 1995. My four years in the program were exceptional. Some of my best friends I met at Baylor and we continue to communicate regularly.

I had my first seminar with Bill Pitts, who also served as my major professor. I felt insecure and anxious in the beginning, especially after I read the syllabus and saw how much reading we had to complete, but his positive, caring approach helped me gain confidence. Dr. Pitts has continued to maintain meaningful contact with me and other doctoral students over the years. When we met at academic meetings he frequently invited his former students to dinner and paid for it. He took a group of us to England for a week a few years ago. He wrote the Foreword to my book and assisted me greatly in locating funding for publication of the book. In the spring of 2015 I was honored to present a paper at two academic conferences in which Dr. Pitts and I were in the same session. I am only one of his many former students who revere him.

I had other wonderful professors at Baylor. John Jonsson taught me a great deal about African religions. Always personable, after I met him for the first time he saw me in the hallway at Tidwell and called me by name and shook my hand vigorously and said, "I'm happy you are here at Baylor and I'm excited to have you in my class!" I have tried to be this welcoming to my students. I loved his courses and enjoyed our frequent hallway conversations as well.

Glenn Hilburn, renowned for having the messiest of desks in two offices in Tidwell, was kind, welcoming, and affirming. He was student oriented. I learned a lot about Eastern Orthodoxy from taking his course.

I served as student assistant to Naymond Keathley and although I never had him as a professor I enjoyed serving as his student assistant. He was patient, kind, and caring. I remember teaching a few sessions of New Testament while Dr. Keathley observed me. I am certain that I did not perform well on those occasions but he offered a gentle, gracious critique.

I had one course with Mikael Parsons at the beginning of my doctoral studies. The course introduced me to Narrative Criticism and broadened my outlook on New Testament studies considerably. I enjoyed the way he conducted his seminars and was impressed with the number of publications Dr. Parsons had produced.

Bob Patterson taught me some great lessons on how to think theologically and introduced me to Process Theology. I am still trying to understand Alfred North Whitehead. Patterson told us several times that the "Ph.D. is a license to learn." That statement has stayed with me over the years.

Randall O'Brien's Old Testament Theology course was fun. He gave us bonus points for offering creative interpretations of Old Testament passages. He was friendly, personable, and pastoral.

I did not have Bill Bellinger, C.W. Christian, Dan McGee, and Alan Culpepper for a class but I visited with them outside of class and appreciated their kindness and willingness to take time to visit with students.

I could write so much more about my experience at Baylor but let me close with this statement. When I arrived at Baylor I was green. When I left Baylor I was green and gold. I am proud of the school and especially the professors in the Religion Department.

Sincerely,
Jerry L. Faught II

Robert L. Uzzel ('95)
Pastor, Wayman Chapel AME Church

I am a native of Waco, Texas and graduated from Waco High School on 28 May 1969. I received an Associate in Arts degree from McLennan Community College on 15 May 1971 and transferred to Baylor University that fall. I received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Baylor on 18 May 1973, with a double major in Religion and Sociology. In the Religion Department, I studied under the following professors: Drs. H. Wayne Pipkin, Dan McGee, C. W. Christian, Bob E. Patterson, and Ray Summers. I got a lot out of Dr. Summers' class on the Book of Revelation and have used material from his book *Worthy is the Lamb* in sermons and Bible lessons over the years. In 2012, I published a tribute to him on the 20th anniversary of his death. I recall how excited I was when he told me that Dr. Robert T. Miller of the Political Science Department wanted to talk with me about the Graduate Assistantship in Church-State Studies for which I had applied. I returned to Baylor in the fall of 1973 to begin work on my first graduate degree. I was the first person to start and finish the Master of Arts degree in Church-State Studies under Dr. James Leo Garrett, who remains a friend to this day. Dr. Garrett directed my thesis on "The Nation of Islam: Belief and Practice in Light of the American Constitutional Principle of Religious Liberty." Dr. Charles S. Edwards of the Political Science Department and Dr. Stanley W. Campbell from the History Department served respectively as second and third readers. I received this degree on 14 May 1976. Over the years, I have written a number of articles about both the Nation of Islam (Black Muslims) and its most important antecedent the Moorish Science Temple.

I was away from Baylor for ten years, holding a number of jobs with the state of Texas and serving as pastor of African Methodist Episcopal (AME) congregations in Dallas and Kaufman. But Baylor seemed to have a hold on me and, as I approached the age of 35, I felt that the strong need to pursue doctoral studies. On Thanksgiving Day 1985, I mailed in my application for Baylor's Doctor of Philosophy Program in Religion. A few months later, I was excited to receive my letter of acceptance. I began my studies in World Religions, with minors in Christian Ethics, Old Testament, and U. S. History in the fall of 1986. During the 1986-87 academic year, I served as graduate assistant to Dr. Dwight Baker, a visiting professor under whom I studied "Religions of Antiquity and the Near East" and "Judaism and Islam." In June 1987, I became chair of the Religion Department at Paul Quinn College, an AME school then located in Waco that moved to Dallas in 1990. I considered my teaching at Paul Quinn and my studies at Baylor to be complementary as I utilized material from my Baylor courses in my Paul Quinn lectures. I took graduate courses in Ethics under Dr. McGee and History courses under Dr. Campbell, under whom I had studied during my earlier time at Baylor. I also had classes under the following professors: Drs. Glenn Hilburn, James Breckenridge, James Kennedy, Rosalie Beck, E. Luther Copeland, Bruce Cresson, and Lyn Tatum. My dissertation on "The Kabbalistic Thought of Éliphas Lévi and Its Influence on Modern Occultism in America" was directed by Dr. John Jonsson, with Dr. James Kennedy serving as second reader and Dr. James E. Wood, Jr. from Church-State Studies serving as third reader. I received my Ph.D. on 13 May 1995. This day was doubly special due

to the fact that my oldest daughter Ericha received her B.A. degree in the same ceremony. After eleven years marked by numerous rejections letters, Cornerstone Book Publishers of New Orleans agreed to publish my dissertation in 2006. This—my third book—is entitled *Éliphas Lévi and the Kabbalah: The Masonic and French Connection of the American Mystery Tradition*.

There can be no doubt that I learned much about research and writing while in the Ph.D. program. Eakin Press of Fort Worth has published the following books that I have written: *Blind Lemon Jefferson: His Life, His Death, and His Legacy* (2002); *Prince Hall Freemasonry in the Lone Star State: From Cuney to Curtis, 1875-2003* (2004); and *The Durhams of Fairfield: An African American Genealogy* (2015). Copies of all of my books can be found in the Baylor Libraries.

In the 20 years since I received my Ph.D. at Baylor, I have taught a wide variety of courses in Religion, History, and Political Science at Paul Quinn College, Navarro College, Cedar Valley College, Mountain View College, Tarrant County Community College, Temple College, and Hill College. I have also served as pastor of AME congregations in Blooming Grove, Maypearl, and Fort Worth. Since 2002, I have served as pastor of Wayman Chapel AME Church in Ennis, Texas. I write a regular column in *The Ennis Daily News* about various subjects. This column has included memorial tributes to Drs. Jonsson, Baker, Copeland, Edwards, and Pipkin. Each year, I have several magazine articles published.

I will always be thankful for the education I received at Baylor, both at the undergraduate and graduate level. I hope the 50th anniversary of the Ph.D. Program is a great success.

Gary Martindale ('98)
Chair, Bible and Theology
Evangel University

Congratulations to all who are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Baylor's PhD Program in Religion!

The men and women in the PhD Program in Religion contributed much to my life and vocation. I am grateful for the invaluable investment professors such as Dr. William Bellinger, Jr., Dr. James Kennedy, Dr. John Johnson, Dr. Michael Parsons, and Dr. Robert Sloan made, not only to my academic and professional career but also to my ministry to students here and abroad. These people were exemplars, educators who joyfully embraced the ministry of teaching and did so in a pastoral manner. I observed them effectively helping students engage in the learning process. These mentors fed my hunger for knowledge, brought depth to my walk with Christ, and put me on the path to effective teaching.

I gained important knowledge and skills from each of the professors, but I also came away with a deeper understanding and a greater appreciation for the value of community. I readily recall time spent in the homes of professors, sharing food and fellowship. In my experience, there were two things that stood out with Baylor's PhD Program in Religion: academic excellence and community; each fueled the other. The students with whom I shared the scholarly enterprise enjoyed the journey and benefited from the privilege of belonging.

On the lighter side, one of my favorite moments occurred one day when I observed Dr. Kennedy standing in the doorway where Dr. Parsons was teaching. Dr. Kennedy yelled "liar," momentarily disrupting the ongoing lecture. I thought to myself, "how fun" and shortly thereafter asked Dr. Kennedy, my work-study director and mentor, if I could do that too. His reply: "Not until you have your degree." After graduating and joining the faculty at Evangel University, I figured that it was my turn. With strange excitement, I announced to one of my classes that I would soon pull that prank on one of my new colleagues, forgetting that his student assistant was in the course. She told him immediately with the result that he pulled the "liar prank" on me first. Alas!

Gary Martindale

Janeth Norfleete Day ('99)

Baylor's PhD Program in Religion wasn't what I thought I wanted, but it was exactly the program I needed. From the moment I set foot on Baylor's campus, it just "felt" right for me, even though I thought I preferred to study elsewhere. That feeling proved to be true over the course of my doctoral studies there, from the courses I took to the professors I studied with to the worldview supported by the administration. Entering any doctoral program as a mature adult, which I was, brought unique concerns and uncertainty, but Baylor's Religion faculty, and particularly Dr. Bill Bellinger, who was Director of the program at that time, made my age a non-issue. When I came to visit prior to admission, I was impressed by Dr. Bellinger's frank and open manner of discussing the pros and cons of Baylor's program in comparison with others.

Among particularly special memories are studying Psalms with Dr. Bill Bellinger, the Gospel of John with Dr. Alan Culpepper, and the Greek text of Acts with Dr. Michael Parsons. I've learned over the years that those people in our lives who push us to achieve the highest and best of which we are capable are the ones we remember across the years with gratitude and appreciation. Dr. Bellinger's knowledge and pedagogical approach supported and expanded the appreciation I already had for the Book of Psalms. Dr. Alan Culpepper's knowledge of John's Gospel is legendary, and his literary approach to that gospel opened my eyes to a new way of reading Scripture. Dr. Michael Parsons's courses on Luke-Acts and the literary study of the Gospels stimulated my interest in combining literary study with rhetorical and social-scientific approaches to enlarge upon the traditional historical-critical methods of examining biblical texts. Indeed, my dissertation research evolved from a paper I wrote in one of Dr. Parsons's seminars. Each of these professors upheld a high standard and helped me to stretch and grow under their tutelage.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to totally express my thanks to Baylor, the faculty of the Religion Department, and all those alumni and friends who provide support for doctoral students. I was fortunate to receive a significant stipend during my residency years and scholarship support during the years of writing my dissertation, thanks to donors to the program. In addition to the financial support, I have high praise for moral support I received from the faculty with whom I studied. They were more than simply leaders of seminars; they offered personal relationship and encouragement that were essential to my success. The willingness of Dr. Rosalie Beck and Dr. Heidi Hornik Parsons to serve with Dr. Michael Parsons on my dissertation committee provided me with the guidance I needed to explore and integrate research from their respective fields into the writing of my dissertation.

I was fortunate to receive a teaching position from my alma mater upon completion of the PhD coursework. Consequently, my first three years of teaching were especially rigorous, being done in accompaniment with dissertation research and writing. The Baylor Religion faculty was most considerate of my situation and worked with me to accommodate schedules and arrange deadlines. Throughout my years of teaching New Testament and Greek at Beeson Divinity School, I found the education I received at Baylor had prepared me for the challenges and research necessary to construct and teach any course required. Baylor was the answer to my prayer for the place I could get the

education I needed in an environment that would provide nurture and support for my desire to study the Bible both academically and confessionally.

Upon this occasion of the 50th anniversary of Baylor's PhD Program in Religion, I extend congratulations to the University for this notable milestone and offer my enduring gratitude for the privilege of studying there. I am honored to be a Baylor alum and graduate of this fine program.

Janeth Norfleete Day

Stan Harstine ('99)

Professor of Religion

Friends University

Wichita, KS

During my time in the Ph.D. program (1992-1999) the key ingredient was friendship. Because of the Baylor program's structure, friendships were formed around the conference and lounge tables with other sojourners in Theology, History, and Biblical Studies. As colleagues graduated, they moved across the country, and even borders, taking up residence in areas with diverse interests. The sharing of "what life is like" helped to prepare those left behind. These friendships also proved valuable during the ensuing years as we reconnected at regional (SWCRS) and national meetings.

One of the joys of the program since graduating has been sharing this mentoring aspect. Because Baylor encourages and enables Ph.D. students to attend professional meetings, I get to meet them and follow their studies and early career moves. I consider this valuable interaction between the Religion family to be the greatest advantage of the Program.

One of the more, shall I say interesting, experiences at Tidwell Hall everyone shared was riding the elevator to the fourth floor. One morning, Perry Stepp and I were already on the elevator when it stopped on the first floor. As the doors opened, the visage of Bill Bellinger appeared. His gracious nature was revealed as he politely passed on the opportunity to ride with Perry and myself!! Even the faculty didn't trust the elevator!

Stan Harstine

David Procter ('99)

Executive Pastor
Austin Baptist Church

My decision to apply for admission to Baylor's Ph.D. program was influenced by the good experience I had as an undergraduate at Baylor. I was a student at Temple Junior College when I felt God calling me to vocational ministry. I had already been accepted to The University of Texas and planned to transfer there in the fall of 1968 to major in chemical engineering. My pastor in Temple, Dr. R.B. Baker, a Baylor alumnus, suggested I at least consider Baylor. It was the world's largest Baptist university and it was close to home. He arranged for me to meet one of the Religion Department faculty, Dr. Cecil Sansom, in his home near the campus. I left the encounter with the conviction that I should enroll in Baylor and major in religion. I earned my B.A. in religion in 1970. The campus was still compact in those days; the new Moody Library seemed quite distant compared with the old Carroll Library. One of my new classmates was Joel Gregory, also a religion major. He helped me "learn the ropes" of the department, since he had been there two years already. He introduced me to other religion students, invited me to join the Baylor Ministerial Alliance, and I became involved in outreach at the church he pastored near the campus, Edgefield Baptist Church.

I continued my education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, earning my M.Div. in 1973. The opportunity to pursue further education at Southwestern was a possibility, but in 1966 Baylor had launched the only Ph.D. program in religion at a Baptist university, and Dr. Ray Summers' reputation weighed heavily in my decision. He was chair of the department, and I had taken a class or two taught by him as an undergraduate. Dr. Summers had taught New Testament at Southwestern for twenty-one years, and had served as dean of the School of Theology. Many of my teachers at Southwestern had been his students, and considered Dr. Summers the finest biblical scholar in Southern Baptist life. Additionally, I found it appealing to pursue graduate study in a university setting. In Baylor's program, I would be able to have a minor outside the religion department.

I applied for admission to the Ph.D. program and was approved in the spring of 1975. I began my studies in the fall. In October of that year, Dr. Summers was surprised with a party and the announcement of the publication of a festschrift in his honor. Baylor President Abner McCall and Executive Vice President Herbert Reynolds were present, along with the Religion Department faculty, students, and colleagues from other institutions. The book was entitled *New Testament Studies: Essays in Honor of Ray Summers in his Sixty-Fifth Year*. Dr. Summers seemed truly surprised and pleased. He cracked that the German word *Festschrift* means a book published in honor of someone after he has died! Dr. Summers kindly inscribed and autographed a copy for me, one of his newest students.

I was privileged to serve as a graduate assistant for Dr. Ed Dwyer. The assistantship provided a modest stipend and cancellation of tuition, which was a wonderful blessing for a graduate student! The faculty of the religion department in the years of my residency (1975-1978) included Professors Summers (Chair), Christian,

DalGLISH, Davidson, Dwyer, Flanders, and Garrett; Associate Professors Cresson, Hilburn, McGee, and Patterson, and Assistant Professor Breckenridge. I remember them all with gratitude; as the Bulletin of the Graduate School promised, it was study at the highest level in the university setting. Unlike Southwestern, the students in the Ph.D. program were from a wide variety of denominational backgrounds. From the first I came to appreciate the differing backgrounds, assumptions, and convictions they brought to the seminar papers and discussions.

An unexpected bonus of the Ph.D. program was my studies in the history department (my minor outside the department). Professor Robert Reid was the department chair. I knew nothing about him, but I learned that many students, from first-semester freshmen to graduate students, spoke of him with the greatest admiration and respect. So I made an appointment and drove down from Fort Worth to Waco on April 23, 1975, to make his acquaintance and ask about the history department curriculum. As I listened to the radio in my car, the disc jockey made the offhand remark that it was Shakespeare's birthday, and coincidentally the same date on which he died at the age of 52 (which I later discovered to be perhaps an unwarranted assumption, but it's a good story). When I found the offices of the history department in Tidwell Bible Building, Professor Reid introduced himself and offered me a chair. Then, like the true historian he was, he said, "Ah. April 23, Shakespeare's birthday." Instantly I replied, "And also the day of his death." For a moment, Professor Reid looked stunned, and then said, "I had forgotten that!" I will always remember that moment, and I will never know if he was just being kind, for in fact he possessed a legendary memory. A respectful connection was made that day; I enrolled in every upper level class that he offered: Greek history, Roman, history, and Medieval European history. I never had a finer teacher. I once asked him the secret of being an effective teacher. He replied that he continued to study his field every day, polished his presentations so they were fresh, and returned to his office following each lecture and gave himself a grade.

At the end of my last semester, I arrived for the final exam (I believe it was his class on Medieval European history), which from experience I knew would be challenging. I had no sooner taken a seat than Professor Reid walked over, smiled, and quietly said, "Mr. Procter, you are excused. You will not need to take this exam. Thank you and goodbye." It was my turn to be stunned. Years later at my preliminary examination orals, he was offered the opportunity to ask me anything about my studies in the history department. He rubbed his bald head in the familiar way, and declined to ask any questions, remarking only that I was a good student and had taken every course that he had taught.

Joel Gregory had also returned to Baylor for the Ph.D. program; I considered him to be the best student in the program. His papers and contribution to the discussions justify that assessment. He pastored Emmanuel Baptist Church (at 18th and Dutton) and invited me to serve on his staff, which I did for those three years. In fact, all four of the ministers were Baylor students; it is a wonder the church survived! Many Baylor students became members of Emmanuel, and in the providence of God, a freshman girl from Pampa, Texas named Selena Scoggin was one who became part of our church. One of my responsibilities at the church was our bus outreach program. Selena volunteered, and we spent several hours each Saturday knocking on doors in some of Waco's poorer neighborhoods inviting children to ride the bus to church on Sunday mornings. Our time

together led to friendship and then to courtship and engagement; I completed my resident studies in May and we were married in August of 1978. Selena is the best outcome of my studies in the Ph.D. program, without any question!

Service with Baptist churches delayed the writing of my dissertation; I took the maximum time to finish, but in 1985 the dissertation was completed and accepted, and I was granted a beautiful diploma. The title of my dissertation: *A Redaction-Critical Study of the Synoptic Gospels With Special Reference to Bultmann's Law of Increasing Distinctness*. My hope that the title alone would baffle the faculty may have been realized. Dr. Summers had by then retired and Dr. Jack Flanders was now the one who offered kind and helpful advice at every stage of the dissertation process. His support along with Selena's encouragement to "Finish It!" saw me through.

Our lives and times are truly in God's hands, and the Ph.D. program of the Religion Department has been a blessing to the world and God's work. It was a blessing to me, and a privilege to have been a part of it. I hope a new generation of students will carry on the honorable traditions of learning in the context of a great liberal arts university. Congratulations to the Department; the faculty and staff have been good stewards of what was entrusted to them.

I close with Thomas Aquinas' prayer for scholars:

Ineffable Creator,

You who are the true source of life and wisdom and the Principle on which everything depends, be so kind as to infuse in my obscure intelligence a ray of your splendor that may take away the darkness of sin and ignorance.

Grant me keenness of understanding, ability to remember, measure and easiness of learning, discernment of what I read, rich grace with words.

Grant me strength to begin well my studies; guide me along the path of my efforts; give them a happy ending.

You who are true God and true Man, Jesus my Savior, who lives and reigns forever.

Amen

2001-2015

Valerie Bridgeman ('02)

Associate Professor, Homiletics & Hebrew Bible
Methodist Theological School in Ohio

I didn't know I was suited for the work. But I met Bill Bellinger, Mikeal Parsons, and James Kennedy and, even though I wanted to do Womanist biblical interpretation, I knew I was in the right place. I found community, scholarly leadership and mentoring, and my own voice at Baylor. People "warned" me that the work I wanted to do was "too liberal" for Baylor. What I discovered was that Baylor is an academic setting that allows for exploration and questions. I am thankful for that. I am glad to be a Baylor alumna.

Best,
Valerie

John S. Vassar ('03)
Provost, Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Louisiana State University Shreveport

(At Least) Five Things I learned in the Department of Religion at Baylor

- **The Model of Professionalism**
I had the honor of serving as Dr. Bill Bellinger's graduate assistant for three years. From my perch in his office I observed him interact with all manner of beasts, students, faculty, staff, and administrators. In all interactions, whether jovial or contentious, his consistent demeanor and care for others set a mark for which I continue and strive. He became for me, the quintessential gentleman and scholar. With the benefit now of 15 years hindsight, he is all the more remarkable, and I am all the deeper in his debt.
- **The Priority of the Church**
One of the darkest days in my doctoral studies was getting a call from Purmela Baptist Church where I served as a rookie pastor. Bob Dyer, one of our three deacons and a wonderfully committed man of God, was killed during a flash flood while he worked on a sewer main across the Cowhouse Creek. I had a paper due the next day in Dr. Bob Patterson's Modern Theologians class. Well aware of the skepticism he might express, I shared with him the tragedy and he urged me to go to Purmela immediately. He taught me that Christian compassion and pastoral presence trumped theology on that day. An important lesson indeed.
- **The Power of Friendships**
I learned the power of friendships. Graduate school provides an introduction to the panoply of personalities that one encounters in academia. Friendships forged during the Baylor Doctoral programs with colleagues like David Moseman, Eddie Stepp, Travis Frampton, and Matt Kerlin have spanned the decades. As I did during our seminars, I often bounce ideas off of them, look toward them for wisdom, and seek their counsel.
- **The Gift of Failure**
Although everyone encounters challenges in graduate school, I confronted failure on occasions throughout my time at Baylor. The brilliant paper that was slapped around in a seminar, the stunning insight that failed to impress a freshman survey class, and the turning away from family to head to the library.
But my greatest failure was in not passing my preliminary exams on the first try. The crushing weight of that phone call, the painful process of communicating that news to my wife, family, and church was a tremendous

challenge. The soul-searching, the thought and prayer that went into the decision to continue the program and general feelings of loss were among the darkest I have ever encountered.

But I experienced significant grace during those difficult days as well. In the year I spent preparing for my second attempt I learned anew the value of community, of family, and of faith. I remember one of those life defining conversations with Dr. Naymond Keathley at Wendy's (he's a big spender) when he said "John, as challenging and terrifying as this is, it will be worth it. Trust me, you will succeed and it will be worth it." He was absolutely correct. Those words and that experience have helped frame a host of challenges and failures in the years since and I am (retrospectively) grateful for how that experience has shaped me.

- The Importance of Breadth in Learning
Looking at the doctoral program through the lens of 15 years past, I see now that one of the great strengths of the program is its broad design. Because it provides disciplinary depth beyond the field of Religious Studies, it presents numerous opportunities for employment. The skills I developed at Baylor (an ability to synthesize different perspectives, to write, to advocate for a particular reading of a text) have all proven invaluable in the classroom, in research, and in administration. The breadth of learning offered by Baylor resists the contemporary trend toward overspecialization and offers opportunities to collaborate, to broaden our communities, and to see how other disciplines can offer new perspectives on the field of Religious Studies.
- Errata
 - The finest meals in all the land could be found at Big Daddy's.
 - Never trust a furtive *patach*.
 - A few Bellingerisms:

Success in the doctoral program is 90% endurance and only 10% intelligence. (which is the only reason I completed it successfully)

Education is painful (Dr. Bellinger shared this in my first seminar, and then went on to reinforce this proverb at every opportunity).

Avoid the naked "this" (which is not as sexy as it may initially seem).

The PhD program in the Baylor Department Religion brings together a peculiar people at a particular time. I am grateful for the faculty, staff, and administrators who have served students so well over this half-century.

Travis Frampton ('04)
Professor of Biblical Studies, Logsdon School of Theology
Hardin-Simmons University

Upon the 50th anniversary of Baylor University's Ph.D. Program in Religion, I extend congratulations along with my deepest gratitude for the education I received as a doctoral student there during the mid-to-late 1990s. I am now in my sixteenth year as a professor of biblical studies at Hardin-Simmons University. Any success I have had as a teacher during the course of that time is a testimony to the profound influence professors at Baylor had upon me—both inside and outside the classroom. Three faculty members immediately come to mind.

If I am successful in reading biblical texts, with eyes to see and ears to hear, intensely curious, and inspired with wonder, Jim Kennedy is there. I have yet to come across as skilled a reader and interpreter of Scripture as he. Dr. Kennedy taught me to find my own voice and to trust it.

If I am at all a compassionate co-learner with my students, walking alongside them, never belittling or intimidating them as they struggle framing their own questions, Bill Bellinger is there. Although I am still learning how to become a teacher, over the last two decades I have tried to emulate him as an apprentice would a master teacher. As a commemorative gesture, I sign letters to my students with his preferred valediction: cordially. Dr. Bellinger taught me the importance of being “warmly receptive, welcoming, and heartfelt.”

Finally, if I am at all successful as a professor, teaching by word and by example, with dignity and a dose of good humor, a consummate encourager of the dreams and aspirations of my students, then Naymond Keathley is there. His impact upon my career and my life cannot be measured. Two lessons I learned from him are noteworthy. Although he never articulated them explicitly, he nevertheless expressed them. First, if you cannot laugh at yourself and your theology, then you take yourself and your theology too seriously. Second, the way you interpret the Bible will affect the way you treat other people. Dr. Keathley taught me *how to profess* that which is most important.

Baylor's Ph.D. Program in Religion prepared me well for a career in higher education. I believe that when it comes to the classroom I am a composite of previous teachers. Whenever I read texts with intense curiosity, or treat students cordially, or profess by example, then I allow the influence that Baylor has had upon my life to manifest itself.

Again, congratulations for reaching this milestone and achieving fifty years of success as a doctoral program. Here's to fifty more.

Cordially,
Travis Frampton

Edward W. Watson ('05)
Professor of Biblical Literature and Practical Theology
Graduate School of Theology and Ministry
Oral Roberts University

When I think back on my time at Baylor, I feel very grateful for the opportunity that I received by being a part of the Ph.D. program in Biblical Studies (1997-2005). I was there during a transitional time when the program began a renewed focus in academic scholarship. Although this transition brought with it many growing pains for me and my colleagues, I know that we are all grateful for the new heights that Baylor achieved as a result. My courses with Drs. Talbert, Parsons, and Keathley were both challenging and thrilling at the same time. I am also forever grateful for the opportunities that were afforded me for publishing, presentation, and teaching while I attended Baylor. These helped to prepare me for my future work in biblical studies, the classroom, research, and administration.

I was also involved in the early stages of the teaching program with “super sections” with Dr. Parsons. This was a wonderful opportunity for me to lecture, give exams, and experience overseeing a class. I cannot express how this opportunity helped to prepare me as a future professor.

Additionally, one of the greatest things that I remember about my time at Baylor was the comradery that I experienced with my colleagues in the program. My friendships with other students were certainly what provided strength for me to carry on at times. In particular, my friendship with Marty Culy, which began on the very first day of orientation, has developed into a brotherhood that I will have the rest of my life.

When I left Baylor in 2001 and was hired to teach New Testament at Oral Roberts University, I found myself very prepared for what was in front of me. My research for prelims served as the basis for many lectures down the road and helped to facilitate advanced research in varied areas. Additionally, my dissertation, which was overseen by Drs. Dowd and Talbert, pushed me to a higher quality of research as evidenced by its publication by Edwin Mellen Press (2008). Once again, I am grateful for the excellence of the education that I received at Baylor.

I want to say “Thank you” to the Ph.D. program in Biblical Studies.

Happy 50th Anniversary!
Edward W. Watson

Kilnam Cha ('06)
Assistant Professor of Bible
Abilene Christian University

I have my dream job at my dream school, Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas! I do what I love to do, i.e., teaching the Bible to young people in and outside classrooms, and I work with wonderful colleagues who appreciate me very much. Thank God and Baylor!

When I was applying for Ph.D. programs, Baylor was not my first choice. Retrospectively, however, Baylor was the best choice for me. Three reasons stand out: Baylor Ph.D. program's focus on educating generalists, its theological diversity in Old Testament studies, and its generous financial support, which needs no further explanation.

Baylor was the answer to my prayer. Baylor's generalist training was not only what I wanted but also what I needed for my teaching career at Cascade College, a small Christian college in Portland, Oregon. Due to Cascade's small faculty size I taught all the Old Testament courses, a couple of New Testament courses and even a course on world religions, and I loved every bit of my teaching load. That was exactly what I wanted to do. I still do basically the same at ACU, except my teaching focus is on one specific area of Old Testament studies, the Prophetic Literature. I also teach OT and NT survey courses and Abrahamic Faiths, i.e., course on Judaism, Islam and Christianity. I love teaching these general education Bible courses, and Baylor's Ph.D. program prepared me well for my vocation, and I am forever grateful for that.

I am very satisfied with my M.Div. training, and I respected my professors who were excellent scholars and men of faith. But theologically they were all alike, strongly historical-critical oriented. On the other hand, the Old Testament faculty at Baylor during my residency there from 1998 to 2004 was theologically diverse, representing all three interpretive camps: Dr. Bruce Cresson with his interest in archaeology belonged to the author-oriented, historical-critical camp, Dr. James Kennedy championed to represent the reader-oriented camp, and W. H. Bellinger Jr., formerly form-critic, was in the middle, close to the text-oriented camp. This theological diversity collectively was most helpful for me to form my scholarly identity and confidence. I am grateful to all of them and to Baylor. And special thanks goes to Bellinger who was my dissertation chair and also the director of the program at the time, whose mentoring continues even after graduation as some of us continue to get together and fellowship at annual SBL meetings.

Again, I am grateful to Baylor and pray for the continual success of its Religion Ph.D. program that it will become the first on the list of numerous current and future students.

Sincerely,



Kilnam Cha

Bryan C. Hollon ('06)
Director, Center for Christian Faith & Culture
Associate Professor of Theology
Malone University

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Hearty congratulations to all of the professors, staff, and students who are and have been associated with the Ph.D. program in religion at Baylor. I have very fond memories of my time there and am happy to share some of those with you all.

Incidentally, I graduated from Baylor with a B.A. in Religion in 1991. After enrolling at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1998 with the intention of pursuing doctoral studies, I had no thought of returning to Baylor for a second degree. This was not due to any negative perceptions about the program. Rather, it seemed wise to add a little diversity to my resume, so I applied to quite a few other institutions with the hope of beginning a program on the east coast or in the UK in 2001.

However, my father-in-law died unexpectedly in my final year of seminary, so Suzanne and I began to look more closely at doctoral programs closer to her mother who lives in Dallas. I was very close to Dr. Jim McClendon at that time, and he urged me to return to Baylor in order to study with some of his close friends there. In his mind, the Baylor program was excellent and getting better, so I took Jim's advice and have never regretted that decision.

When I arrived back in Waco in the fall of 2001, Baylor was very soon to announce the 2012 Vision, and the ambition of that vision made for a stimulating intellectual environment. Truett seminary was growing; the Institute for Faith and Learning was hosting conferences and bringing first rate scholars from around the globe to campus; the great texts program was in development; the philosophy program was expanding, and new faculty were being added to the department of religion. These, and countless other developments around campus were, in my mind, essential ingredients for the cultivation of an academic environment suitable for doctoral studies. They added an intellectual culture to Baylor that supplemented seminars and stimulated the kinds of ongoing conversations that help doctoral students grow very quickly.

Many of my fondest memories of Baylor revolve around conversations with fellow students in our homes, at local pubs, and especially in the basement graduate lounge of Tidwell. It was there that we really got to know each other and where the discussions begun in seminars were extended. I still keep in touch with many of my classmates from those years, and this is, no doubt, one of the greatest personal blessings that I received from Baylor.

However, it was the professors, more than anything else, which made a lasting and positive difference in my life. I was very fortunate to serve as Ralph Wood's graduate assistant for two years and as his co-teacher for one more. As his graduate assistant, I had a little desk in his two-story office where I was responsible for assisting him as book review editor of PRS, for reviewing drafts of the books he was writing at the time, for keeping track of his rather incredible filing system, and for promising that I

would never repeat the many conversations I heard over speaker phone as the Sloan administration fell into crisis. Above all, however, Ralph drew me into a life-long love of the kind of catholic theology for which he contends with great passion. I caught the vision and have spent more than a decade spreading it to my own students.

Barry Harvey has been equally influential in my life and has, like Ralph, inspired my love of the great tradition. Although Ralph first introduced me to Henri de Lubac, I continued to read the great Jesuit theologian with Barry who helped me put de Lubac in conversation with other important theologians and to think carefully about the place of *ressourcement* in the 21st century. Barry was an excellent mentor and dissertation supervisor. Although I've heard others complain about the dissertation process, I can honestly say that it was a breeze for me under Barry's direction. Since leaving Baylor, he has continued to mentor me and encourage my scholarly development by inviting me to edit a series of books titled *Free Church, Catholic Tradition*.

Although Barry and Ralph had the greatest influence, the whole faculty was good to me. I was fortunate to spend quite a bit of time with Dan Willians and Mikeal Parsons, since I occupied a little office on the sixth floor of Tidwell during my final year of dissertation writing. Each of them was kind, hospitable, and encouraging. Likewise, I have fond memories of my interactions with Bellinger, Burnett, Beck, Kennedy, Patterson, McGee, and others.

Having glanced at the faculty roster before writing this message, I am amazed how much the program continues to grow and grateful that the value of my degree ascends with the program.

Congratulations on 50 years! I pray God's grace and blessing on the program during the next 50 years.

Sincerely,
Bryan Hollon

Chad Hartsock ('07)
Assistant Professor of Religion
Carson-Newman University

The Baylor Religion PhD program was a meaningful season of life for me. In most ways, I was just lucky to be in the program at all, and I always had a lingering sense of survivor's guilt over the numerous seminary classmates who were smarter than me and better students than me but who never got into a doctoral program. That alone inspired a sense of gratitude in me and pushed me to become a worthy student within the program.

In reflecting on the significance of the program, there are a number of things I could point to. The relationships with classmates were certainly significant. We played together, we suffered together, we did family and church together in many cases, and the community was significant. The "grad lounge" became a thing of legend! Some of us even still play fantasy football together, 10 years later and scattered all across the country. The relationships mattered.

For me, the learning mattered the most. I am not sure I would say that about my other two academic stops, but it was certainly true of the PhD program. I knew when I started the program that I had a tremendous knowledge deficit that had to be overcome. On the first day, I vividly recall Charles Talbert handing us the famed bibliography—so thick it would build both knowledge and biceps. Someone timidly asked "we are supposed to read all of this?" Dr. Talbert said in a way that all of us quickly learned was not a joke, "this is a place to start." I spent my entire first year trying to survive seminars and colloquium, and mostly trying to get my head around what others kept calling "the methodology," a term I had heard before but to which I had never really been forced to attend. And I didn't get it at all. I was limping through classes trying to do work that was good enough, but it certainly did not yet fit what others were doing or what the professors were seeking. I have a very vivid memory, however, of a spring lunch (2nd semester) at Big Daddy's, a lunch that permanently changed things for me. One of our classmates had just been whooped pretty badly in colloquium, and as we talked through what amounted to a therapy session, suddenly the light came on and for the first time, I understood what the professors were asking us to do. I suddenly understood what this literary and rhetorical approach to the New Testament was about, and I understood what audience and comparative materials had to do with reading the New Testament, and it was almost to the level of an academic Damascus Road. From there, I have no idea if I ever wrote good papers, but I at least understood what we were doing, it fit me well, and it changed the way that I read, understood, and taught the Bible. For lots of reasons, I really miss Big Daddy's.

Teaching was also a significant piece of the program for me. Working as the graduate assistant for Mikeal Parsons helped me tremendously. I learned from his research (even found my dissertation topic that way), and I learned from watching him teach undergraduates. I learned even more when he turned me loose and told me I had the next month of lectures in his Christian Scriptures class. On the other side of course work, having the chance to teach my own classes for several semesters was significant for me too. That experience helped me find my own classroom voice, once which has been

refined since then but which was given the freedom and safety to play and experiment under live conditions. I also remember obsessively checking the online reviews of our courses that the students would write, desperate to figure out if I was really any good at this or if I was merely fooling myself. That classroom was a gift, and one that required much courage on the part of the Religion Department.

For a significant lunch with friends, I am grateful. For learning that changed me, I am grateful. For the chance to teach and to learn how to teach, I am grateful. And for professors patient enough to let me figure it out, I am grateful.

Sic 'em, Bears!
Chad Hartsock

Alicia Myers ('10)

Assistant Professor of New Testament and Greek
Campbell University Divinity School
Buies Creek, NC

In the summer of 2006 my husband, Scott, and I packed up our things and moved from Durham, NC to Waco, TX to begin the next stage of my educational career. We spent the next five years in Waco before moving for a short stint to Dayton, OH at United Theological Seminary (2011–2014). I'm now starting my second year as Assistant Professor of New Testament and Greek at Campbell University Divinity School in Buies Creek, NC.

I'm extremely grateful for the years spent at Baylor. It was the perfect environment for me to study—a great combination of academic rigor and spiritual awareness that never displaced the importance of theological significance even in the most advanced research. Dr. Charles Talbert always reminded us that when we lost sight of the theological implications of New Testament study we turned our exegesis into a game rather than a service for believers. Talbert's commitment to thinking through these theological dimensions continues to shape my work in the classroom, in church settings, and in publications. That his commitment was shared by the entire faculty at Baylor, and exemplified every Sunday at Lakeshore by those with whom I was blessed to worship, has been a source of assurance and strength when life and research has stretched me, my family, and my students. Drs. Bill and Libby Bellinger have forever enriched not only my spiritual life, but that of my husband, Scott, as well. We are so thankful for them!

After graduating from Baylor in 2010 and beginning my career as a full-time faculty member in 2011, I have continued to benefit from my Baylor connections. I look forward to SBL each year to catch up with as many Baylor folks as I can and always enjoy our Baylor University New Testament dinners. While we are all spread far and wide (thankfully because we are employed!) it is refreshing to catch up with everyone's adventures. Dr. Mikeal Parsons has been a wonderful counselor for these first few years out of Baylor's program, offering advice on publication ventures and being a sounding board for figuring out the transition from graduate student to faculty person.

Standing on this side of the journey, I know that I was fortunate to attend Baylor. The encouragement to present and publish throughout my time there prepared me to continue publishing now and enabled me to make connections to hold leadership positions in the guild. But aside from academic accomplishments, the faculty, staff, and students at Baylor were all so genuine and faithful. It was a competitive but also encouraging place, and one that never overlooked spiritual components even when theologies differed. Happy Birthday to all and thanks!

Alicia Myers

Mario Escobedo II ('11)

What I most value about my experience in the Baylor Religion PhD program is the rigor with which colleagues and professors alike engaged the biblical text. That rigor becomes contagious rather quickly. I readily admit that in the first year of my program there were a number of times when I felt I was out of my league. Yet, it did not take long for the academic rigor I observed in my professors and peers to spark in me a desire to sharpen my own academic skills. Being around brilliant minds, hearing insightful comments on matters theological and biblical awakened in me a want to contribute to the conversation. After all, I was accepted to the program not only to benefit from others, but also to make contributions of my own to the academic community of which I was now a part. All of my doctoral seminars, each unique because of its professor and its particular blend of participants, contributed in their own way to sharpening my exegetical skills. As my skills sharpened my confidence increased. I cannot pinpoint exactly when it happened, but at some point I no longer felt as if I was out of my league. It may have taken some time, but I grew into the program. I have my professors and peers to thank for this growth.

Drs. Bellinger and Kennedy were the first to contribute to my growth. Their expertise and love for the Hebrew Bible made indelible impressions on me. Dr. James Nogalski arrived at Baylor at just the right time. There is no doubt in my mind that the timing of his arrival was divinely appointed. Although I was never in a doctoral seminar with him, Dr. Nogalski happily agreed to be my dissertation advisor. For the three years of my seminar work I read books and articles by Dr. Nogalski, admiring his extensive knowledge of the Book of the Twelve; his passion for this body of Hebrew literature was all the more evident. What an honor for me, then, to be guided in my dissertation by the man whose research and writings helped form so much of what I come to know and love about the Twelve.

What I learned at Baylor gives me confidence to this day as I stand before a congregation every Sunday to present God's word. I know I have been expertly trained by some of the world's foremost scholars whose academic excellence is surpassed only by their love for God's word and for God's people. The Baylor Religion PhD placed in my hands the tools I would need to rightly divide the word of truth; to grapple with the intricacies of Scripture and to present them to others in ways that edify them. I am proud to be among those who are graduates of the Baylor Religion PhD.

Timothy A. Brookins ('12)
Assistant Professor of Classics
Houston Baptist University

Baylor was just what I needed...

to learn humility;
to overcome my prejudices;
to discover the benefits of dialogue;
to see things in a new way;
to open my mind;
to see that from uncertainty comes growth;
to discover that the truth is not something we possess, but something we look for;
to overcome my fear of uncertainty;
to learn that God is infinitely bigger than I could imagine.

Oh, and I also learned the "chiasm." ☺

Eric J. Gilchrest ('12)
Assistant Professor and Dept. Head
Judson College
Marion, AL

As I sit in my office, I look around me to find that though I have been gone from Baylor for years, Baylor has not left me. I look at the books on my shelves and find physical remnants of my time there. Pulling down a commentary on Matthew, for example, I find my handwriting scrawling notes in an attempt to prepare for a class with Charles Talbert.

As I scan my office further, I look under my desk to find boxes of class notes stashed away for that rare moment when I might need them. I open those boxes to find notes and papers and photocopied articles that bring back a flood of memories of my years shaped by great teachers, like reading Galatians with Sharyn Dowd or talking about physiognomy with Mikeal Parsons.

As I glance at the bottom of a shelf to my right, I see an oversized book with green binding. Though everyone else who walks in the room quickly glances past this plain-looking book, when I see it, I swell with pride. It recalls for me endless hours of work. Finding a secret spot in the library. My favorite chair in Panera. A booth in the Dancing Bear. Emails back and forth with Lidija Novakovic, my mentor.

I look to my right to see, hanging on a hook, my unmistakably green regalia. Herff Jones tells me that my tassel is made of gold bullion, but I have my doubts. Nevertheless, when I don the gown of my alma mater, I am filled with pride that the diploma hanging on my office wall says *Baylor University*.

Other Baylor paraphernalia also mark my office: a football schedule, a bobble head of the Baylor bear mascot, a mug, and a pen that I haven't used for some time. But these are mere markers of something more. They are an outward expression of six life-changing years. They represent the community that shaped me during those years as a scholar, a professional, and a teacher. The names above represent a small, however important, part of that community which is made up of many professors, colleagues, and friends. Thank you, Baylor. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Roy Millhouse ('12)
Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies
Sterling College
Sterling, KS 67579

Congratulations to Baylor University's Religion Department on the fiftieth anniversary of the Ph.D. program! As a proud graduate, I look back on my time at Baylor with fond memories of a time of great challenges and accomplishments that serve as a steady reminder of what it means to pursue excellence as a biblical scholar. I am grateful for the opportunity to put some of those reflections into words in celebration of 50 years of Baylor's in Ph.D. Religion.

I left Baylor a very different person than when I first arrived, a testament to God working in my life through my mentors and colleagues. I am grateful for all of those in the Religion Department who went out of their way to help me to succeed. I count it as a special privilege to have studied under people who have had a profound impact upon me. I will never forget Dr. Sharyn Dowd working hard to help me succeed in my early days on campus, Dr. Charles Talbert pushing me to read the text closely and strive for excellence as a scholar, Dr. Mikeal Parsons modeling scholarship at the highest level in the service of the church, and Dr. Lidjia Novakovic stepping into a difficult situation and helping me to reach the finish line. Most of all, I recall the times spent in Dr. Randall O'Brien's office, talking about life, ministry, and scholarship. Dr. O'Brien modelled scholarship with a pastoral heart, something I have worked hard to emulate in my own career and ministry. I was often amazed at his irenic and humble spirit, whether in the classroom, meeting with students, or dealing with the highest levels of administration. He did all of this while remaining firm to his convictions and devoted to his Savior. While I rarely attain such a spirit in my own dealings, I often hear myself giving counsel that reflects time well-spent with Dr. O'Brien.

Perhaps my biggest regret was not spending more time in the grad lounge! I still count my colleagues from my days at Baylor as friends and I enjoyed very much the camaraderie and the spirit we all fostered. Today, I enjoy the little ways I am able to keep in contact with some and I love hearing what is going on everyone's life, amazed at the twists and turns our various journeys have taken on the way. Knowing how well we were trained and the integrity of my colleagues, I have no doubt that God will continue to use us in many ways to serve his church.

When I first arrived on the campus of Baylor University, troubled times seemed to abound. By the time I graduated, there was an entirely different spirit and unbridled optimism for the future. Indeed, the campus *looked* different by the time I left and is more stunning today. Little did I know how quickly Baylor would rise and, especially, how high! Through it all, I found the Religion Department to be a place of stability. I would like to think all of us in the Religion Department played a positive role in the difficult times and I know Baylor Religion shines brightly in these heady times.

Today, I proudly display my Baylor colors and allegiance at any opportunity—even though I live in another part of Big XII country! It is my heart-felt conviction to

represent Baylor University, the Religion Department, my mentors, and my colleagues in a manner that reflects well upon all. Thank you, Baylor Religion, for the role you played in making me the scholar, professor, and minister I am today.

Baylor Proud!
Roy Millhouse

Matthew A. Rothaus Moser ('13)

Visiting Assistant Professor
Loyola University Maryland

Congratulations to Baylor University's Religion PhD program on its 50th anniversary. The most fundamental thing that I learned as a Theology student at Baylor had to do with the nature and the task of Theology itself. While all of my professors challenged my understanding of Theology, it was my two major advisors, Peter Candler and Ralph Wood, who left an indelible mark on the way I study and teach Theology.

At Baylor I was constantly reminded that Theology is not a safe, comfortable academic career. Theology is not something that we do in order to receive a paycheck each week. Theology isn't principally a career, an object of study, or even a mode of knowledge. Theology, I learned, is about life. It is a (perhaps *the?*) way of living, existing, and being in this world in relation to God. Theology demands every bit of us — mind, imagination, emotion, body. Theology speaks every language: the language of the scholastics, the poets, the painters, the novelists, the film-makers, the gardeners, the beer-brewers, the parents of children, the lovers, and the saints at prayer. At Baylor, I came to see more clearly than ever before that Theology is a social and holistic discipline. It is about all of *us* and about *all* of us.

At Baylor, I was formed as a theologian and as a Christian. Let me give one example. After months in Scotland, my dissertation director, Pete Candler, finally returned to Waco. He and I met to discuss my dissertation. But at that meeting, we did not discuss my dissertation at all. Instead, Pete asked me this question: "How are your prayers?" His point was that my dissertation could not be the fruit of some discrete, isolated and academic part of myself. My dissertation and my life need to be in harmony. Pete wanted me to be a *theologian* and not only a *scholar*. He formed me to see that it was necessary that my Theology speak with the language of the academy, but also with the language of my entire life.

At Baylor I learned that theology is an art, a practice, and a science of *wisdom* — wisdom, not in the sense of a collection of knowledge and information *about* theology, but wisdom in the sense of *c'hokma*, "skill." At Baylor, I learned to ask with TS Eliot

*Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?*

Theology, I learned, is not primarily about information. It is about wisdom and life. I think that he understands his role as a teacher of theology not simply to impart information but to lead the reader towards a certain form of life. This theological life is about being formed by, in, and for the *c'hokma* required by those who, in the early days of the Covenant, were called to craft the tabernacle. At Baylor I came to see that Theology is the art of dwelling in and contributing to the house of God. And this house is built, not by disembodied intellects in an ivory tower, but by the full-spectrum of human creativity. The challenge that I received at Baylor was not simply to "integrate"

my faith and my learning, but to see that the two are one. This is the vision of Theology that I have carried into my own teaching. This is the legacy that Baylor's Religion PhD has in my life. For it, and for those of who imparted this vision to me, I am grateful. Congratulations again, Baylor Religion department, on developing a PhD program that holds together cutting-edge scholarship, the integration of faith and learning, and the love of God. That is an all too infrequent accomplishment in the Academy. May you continue to thrive for many more years into the future.

Richard Brumback ('14)

I expected to be challenged academically. In fact, I welcomed it. I once commented to my advisor, Dr. Daniel Williams, that I wanted to complete a dissertation that “had teeth”—that made an original contribution of some true significance to the academy. By the time I was in the heart of the project, I wondered if I had made a serious blunder by even thinking about teeth. While the final degree to which the dissertation attained my professed goal will be adjudicated largely by others, I have no doubt that completing such a demanding program, from coursework to dissertation, has helped to mold me into a more exacting scholar and researcher. And I have no doubt that the knowledge base, critical thinking skills, and precision of expression refined during the program will enable future scholarly success as well. It is because of this rigorous training that I find myself more capable of critiquing and engaging with the work of other scholars.

While the coursework and dissertation occupied my thoughts upon entering the Baylor program, my reflections on the years of doctoral study include a number of unanticipated elements that enriched my experiences and undoubtedly those of my classmates as well. From my initial discussions with Dr. William Bellinger about the department and the application process, to the continued interaction between faculty, staff, and students, I have remained grateful for the collegial atmosphere characterizing the department. Although academic standards remained elevated, it was apparent that we were all seeking success and achievement, and that we were hoping for these for our colleagues as well. I experienced students who enjoyed the brief moments of recreation and laughter together, and then who shared class notes and helped one another improve papers and projects through thoughtful, constructive criticism. We students benefitted from the feedback generously given by professors, themselves busily engaged in their own endeavors, when we were preparing conference presentations and papers to be submitted for publication. Whatever successes we achieved in these venues during our Baylor years were certainly aided by the private mentoring of our professors.

One other unanticipated aspect of the department that I came to appreciate in short order was the amicable relationship between the academic experience and personal faith. It was encouraging to see that professors and students alike could profess their own religious beliefs while continuing their studies and investigations. I am doubtful that such irenic relations between personal religious activity and the classroom exist in all departments of religion. At Baylor, it is customary.

In short, this Ph.D. program has been one of the most challenging and simultaneously rewarding endeavors I have ever undertaken. It is not for the faint of heart, but for the individual seeking an entrance to the academy at the top level, I cannot imagine this experience being surpassed at another institution. I am profoundly grateful to Baylor and the Religion Department.

Courtney Pace Lyons ('14)
Assistant Professor of Church History
Memphis Theological Seminary

I was raised in a Southern Baptist church, and from within that tradition, I discerned my call to ministry, which meant that I would have to leave. But God was faithful to guide me to Truett Seminary, to Dr. Ruth Ann Foster. At Truett, I explored possible graduate programs and received multiple encouragements to attend Baylor. As I was debating between programs, the spouse of an alum told me, "Whatever it costs you, go to Baylor to learn from Bill Pitts." Ultimately, I chose to attend Baylor because I wanted to be formed by professors who would mentor me to excel as a scholar and a teacher.

In 2008, I began doctoral studies in church history, specializing in social justice movements in American religion, particularly race and gender. Throughout my studies, the department and graduate school generously supported conference and research travel, and I had opportunity for mentoring relationships with multiple faculty members. More than once, a faculty member whose class I had never taken was willing to review something I had written, demonstrating the commitment of the faculty to support graduate student research and professional development. (I am particularly grateful to Rosalie Beck, Beverly Gaventa, Bruce Longenecker, David Whitford, Mike Parsons, and Natalie Carnes in this regard.) Through the process of finding a job, I have realized even more fully how important and exceptional the teaching colloquy experience has been. Religion graduate students are not thrown into the classroom; we are given time to hone our knowledge, to study pedagogical best practices and learn the craft of teaching from excellent teachers, and offered opportunity to teach with the support network of faculty mentors alongside of us. The combination of these avenues of support created a vibrant, nutrient-rich environment for graduate students to blossom.

When a program teaches its students to engage in furthering the discipline, it is possible...and likely...that students will come up with ideas that demand changes. The more I studied gender, the more unrest I felt about inequities in the graduate student experience for young women. The department backed me completely when I pursued parental leave support for graduate students (the policy passed and became effective Fall 2011!) and when I advocated for lactation space on campus (opened Fall 2012!). And in my leadership of the New Student Experience courses for first-year students, it was no surprise that the Department of Religion (kudos to Eric Holleyman, Doug Weaver, Joe Coker, Blake Burleson, Dennis Horton, Jonathan Tran, and Bill Bellinger) has continued to be supportive of Baylor's new initiatives, even when doing so meant changing, stretching the budget, creating new programs and partnerships, and consistently going above and beyond to support excellent teaching.

As if that weren't enough, the people in the department have cultivated an exceptional community of support for each other. When someone has need, the community springs into action, sharing meals, books, research findings, wisdom, and compassion. When my son was unexpectedly born during a conference in Boston at 35 weeks, the department overwhelmed us with two weeks of meals delivered to our home

each day. Fellow students Anna Sieges and Kim Bodenhamer watched my son while I was in seminar. Lisa Long was faithfully stocked with squeezey-bears to share with my son when we visited her office, and Joyce Swoveland with candy. As I have continued to serve the department now as a single mother, I have been deeply touched by their thoughtfulness to provide childcare for evening programs so that I can fully participate. And when I received a basically perfect job offer but couldn't accept because of the geographic restriction in my divorce, Doug Weaver and Bill Bellinger spent the better part of a day sitting at the courthouse to testify on my behalf. When our department says that they will invest deeply in you throughout your career, they mean it. My life came apart during my graduate program, and I could not have asked for a more supportive community of faculty and fellow students than have blessed me at Baylor.

Most of all, thank you to Doug Weaver, my doktorvater, ministry colleague, baseball buddy, partner in Glee, faithful and punctual editor of papers, straight shooter, and most dear friend. Do you remember when you almost lost it trying to climb with us to the top of St. Paul's Cathedral in London? And the look on your face when I drank grape juice from a wine glass in class the day we talked about Prohibition? Or how I dressed Stanley in a Red Sox onesie the first time I brought him to visit campus? Remember that time my class pranked your REL 1350 class with a dance number in Bennett Auditorium? Or that time we gift-wrapped your office? Glory! I will never know how to thank you for all that you've done for me, but I hope to make you proud.

In so many ways, my ministry experience has driven me to my research questions, and my research questions have driven me right back to ministry. This beautiful complexity provides both push and pull, but mostly reminds me to pray often. I am proud of my degree, the wisdom of the faculty it represents, and the challenge it continues to offer me to pursue excellence in teaching and research. Sic'em!

Courtney Pace Lyons