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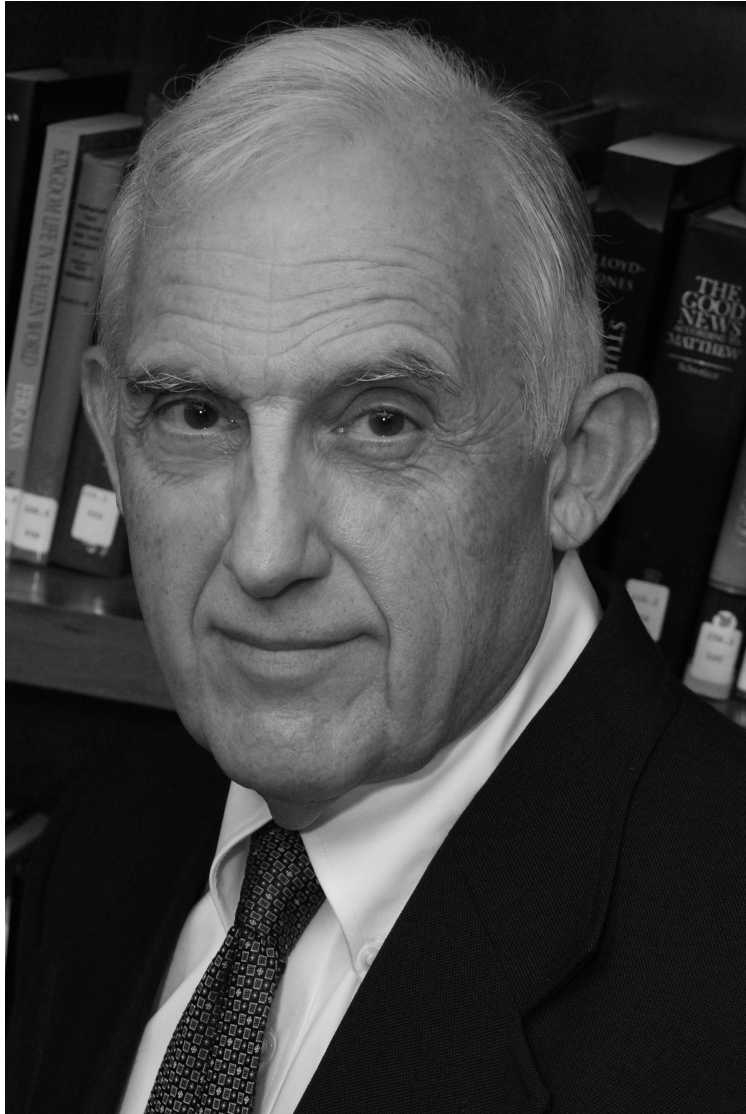
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**Photograph by Kay Taylor*

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My Pilgrimage

Michael Robbins Weed

Christianity and the Restoration tradition influenced all of my growing-up years. My parents had both worked in downtown Austin off Congress Avenue on East 9th Street, my mother at the Firm Foundation publishing house and my father as a draftsman at nearby Miller Blueprint. They married in 1935 and attended University Church of Christ, where my father was baptized. My brother, Maurice, Jr., was born in 1939; I was born in 1941. My father, mother, and brother were all powerful formative influences on me, and my close friendship with my brother continues to this day.

During World War II, my father built buildings for the government. Our family, including my mother's father, a widower, lived in Ogden, Utah; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Lompoc, California. In Lompoc I recall German prisoners of war, accompanied by military police, trading finger-gun shots with my brother and me in a grocery store.

Before afternoon naps, Mother read to us from Hurlburt's Bible Stories. I remember my grandfather saying his prayers aloud on his knees beside the bed at night. At church, it was not uncommon for men to kneel beside the pew during prayers. Once, during a sermon, I remember answering a rhetorical question regarding whether one could stay home from church and be

pleasing to God with a bold “NO!”—to the amusement of the congregation and to my subsequent embarrassment.

After the war, we returned to Austin and attended what was then the University Church of Christ. It was there that I was baptized along with neighborhood friend Daniel Showalter by his grandfather and our family friend, G. H. P. Showalter, in 1953. My family later attended the Northside (now Hyde Park) church, where my father served for many years as an elder and Bible class teacher.

In 1959 I graduated from Austin High School and entered the University of Texas. Two years later I transferred to Abilene Christian College (now University). There I studied under J. W. Roberts, LeMoine Lewis, Neil Lightfoot, J. D. Thomas, Carl Spain, Bob Johnson, Tony Ash, and Abraham Malherbe. It was at ACC that I met longtime friends Allan McNicol and James Thompson.

In 1965 I married Mary Elisabeth (Libby) Summerlin, whom I had met in 1963 on the steps of University Avenue Church in Austin and whose brother Phil had been my good friend in Abilene. I remember in the summer of 1966 attending a “brush arbor” meeting with Libby and my parents where the “river road” from Austin intersects the road from Elgin to Bastrop. Reuel Lemmons was the speaker.

In 1966, while serving as Director of the Bible Chair at the University of Arizona in Tucson, I completed a thesis on The Centrality of *Heilsgeschichte* in the Theology of Oscar Cullmann, a topic suggested by Abraham Malherbe, for my master’s degree from ACC. The next fall I entered Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. At APTS I studied church history under E. T. Thompson, who had been a chaplain in World War I and who reportedly woke up the student dorm at 6:00 every morning with a recording of Beethoven’s 9th Symphony. I also studied under Eugene March, Prescott Williams, and the inimitable Stuart Currie, who greatly influenced my pilgrimage and who later pointed me to Emory University.

During the summers of my APTS years, I worked at Sweet Publishing Company. Upon my graduation from APTS, I spent one year as an editor of adult education material at Sweet, publishing a volume in the Living Word Commentary Series on Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. It was during that year that our daughter Susan was born; it was also at this time that I met Wendell Willis and worked with him on several publishing projects. Also at Sweet in these years were David Stewart, Floyd Rogers, and Jerry Tindel, all of whom have been important influences in my life. Libby and I attended Brentwood Church of Christ at this time, and our association with this congregation has continued since then with the exception of the years I studied at Emory University in Atlanta.

In 1971 I entered Emory University's Graduate School of Religion and was a student there for three years, completing course work in ethics. There I studied under E. Clinton Gardner, Theodore Weber, Jackson Carroll, and James T. Laney, a former missionary to Korea who later became president of the university. Dr. Gardner served as adviser for my dissertation on Conscience in Protestant Ethics. Our son Jonathan was born during those years.

Our family of four returned to Austin in 1974, at which time I joined the faculty at the University Avenue Church's Bible Chair. On completion of my dissertation, I received the Ph.D. in Ethics from Emory University in 1978. We continued to worship with the Brentwood congregation, which became Brentwood Oaks in 1981 with a move to a new site. I was privileged to serve as an elder for this congregation for some twenty years.

Over time, the UT Bible Chair became the Biblical Studies Center, an accredited degree-granting institution through Abilene Christian University. The school eventually received independent accreditation as Austin Graduate School of Theology. My service with AGST has continued for thirty-eight years, during which I have benefited from association with many fine colleagues, including Tony Ash, Pat Harrell, Gary Holloway, Rick Marrs, James Thompson, Paul Watson, and David Worley.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my years at Austin Grad has been teaching and working with students and then later hearing from them as they go on to preach, teach, and live Christian lives. Another has been my work with *Christian Studies*, through which the school has consistently sought to show the practical side of theological study in the life of the church.

Throughout these years, my family has been a continual blessing to me. My wife Libby has been a source of constant support and encouragement. Our children, Susan and Jonathan, and their spouses, Pat Womack and Amber Richter Weed, are reasons for daily thanksgiving. And our grandchildren—Mary, Hannah, and Daniel Womack and Luke and Natalie Weed—give us great joy and hope for the future.

I move to emeritus status with confidence that Austin Grad is in excellent hands. Its president, Stan Reid, is a man I have greatly admired since he preached at the Northside church where my parents worshiped, and I believe that the school will continue to flourish under his leadership. The other members of the administration and the board are faithful Christians for whom I have immense respect. I hold in high esteem my faculty colleagues Allan McNicol, Mark Shipp, Jeff Peterson, Todd Hall, Daniel Napier, and Keith Stanglin.

I pray that our Father will continue to guide and bless Austin Graduate School of Theology as it moves toward its second century of faithful service.

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