

# Alums in Ministry

## ALUM PERSPECTIVES

### The Mark of a Great Teacher

**W**HEN TOM MCDANIEL GAVE HIS Founders' Day address, an event which also served to recognize his 50-year affiliation with Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and his retirement from its faculty, Tom spoke with affection about his pastor and mentor, Rev. Clifford Meeden. It may well have been that close and caring relationship with Rev. Meeden that helped to condition Tom's heart for teaching. I once asked Tom why he was not more demanding on the students in his classes. He just smiled and said, to the best of my memory, "Most of my students are going to go on to be pastors and not Semitic scholars. I only hope to give them the tools to enable them to approach the text and scholarship with more understanding."

It was a wonderful treat, on Founders' Day, to learn that several alumni/ae have published a *festschrift* in his honor (see page 15). It is nice to know that Tom worked with scholars, but that in the main he helped students like us—people who, in studying for a sermon, take out the Hebrew Bible and lexicon to see if the Hebrew word used here is the same one used in another passage. Most of us will never have Tom's

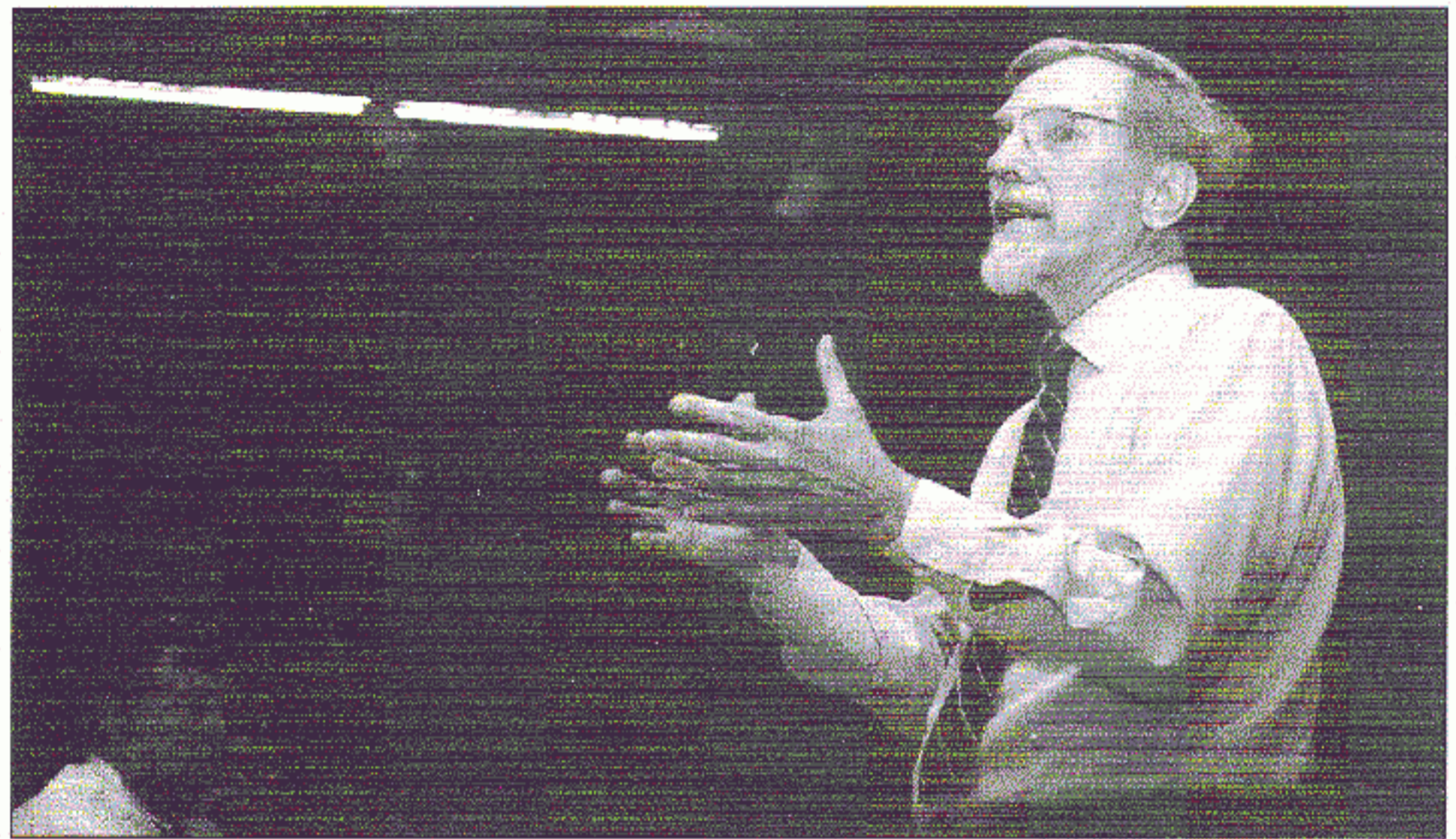


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facility with language, but we are fortunate enough to have been mentored by one who loved both scripture and student.

*Frederick K. Weimert, '77*

**D**R. MCDANIEL WAS A GREAT teacher. Not only did he educate me in the Old Testament, theology and the Hebrew language, he also touched my personal life. He encouraged me to believe in myself and directed me onto a path where I experienced things I never could have imagined. For me, his demeanor of humility and sincerity was the power of encouragement for my determination to do my best.

Out of the many lessons Dr. McDaniel taught me, there is one that I reflect upon frequently—that is to remain calm and peaceful while your faith is being tested. I have been truly blessed to have experienced this Christian giant, for his unconditional way of teaching has given me new life and has put me on the path of a new beginning.

*Henry (Hank) Baldwin, '99*

**D**R. TOM MCDANIEL'S PEACE-LOVING spirit has blessed me and I have benefited from his teaching in essential

ways. By modeling a truthful and gracious approach to God's Word, he has given me vision and tools to study the Hebrew Scriptures in ways consistent with how I am coming to understand God at work in the world and in my own life.

In the past, I sometimes allegorized Old Testament stories in order to derive spiritual meaning or principles in keeping with my own ideas of a faithful life. I have come to realize, however, that if someone reduced down the substance of my years of living—days that have included bewilderment, faith and determination—to symbolic meaning, I would feel profoundly ignored and invalidated.

Dr. McDaniel's insistence that believers reckon with the humanness of our predecessors in their faith journeys, and their modes of discerning, telling and transmitting truth, has provoked me to be an involved pathfinder in understanding God's will for human lives. I am indebted to Dr. McDaniel for this gift of wisdom to lead a more honest and "dove-like" life while possessing a more wholesome and winsome faith. As I think he would have it, I will seek to repay the debt in love to those whom God loves.

*Diane M. Vescovi, M.T.S. student*

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