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## **The preacher’s responsibility: frame a biblical understanding of the Christian life**

**P**reaching — the practice of exposing God’s Word to God’s people — has fallen on hard times. On the one hand, the large number of evangelical pastors I know who remain committed to faithful biblical exposition greatly encourages me. These men know the purpose and the power of preaching God’s Word. On the other hand, the number of influential voices within evangelicalism suggesting that the age of the expository sermon is dead gravely concerns me. These voices avoid the preaching of a biblical text. They fear the confrontation that comes with expositing biblical truth, and believe it has nothing to say to us today. They are voiceless voices.

Preaching God’s Word is the heart of Christian worship. Moreover, preaching God’s Word is worship. Therefore, the norm of our worship must be the Word of God, the Word that he himself has spoken. This is what we mean when we say “*sola scriptura*.” Our preaching can only have a voice if it is rooted in the Scriptures. Scripture itself sets the terms, and so we must turn its pages to learn how God would have us preach — how God would have us worship.

It is crucial for the preacher to understand that his preaching is not without purpose. The purpose of preaching is reading the Word of God and then explaining it to our people so that they understand it. This is the heart and soul of preaching. Simply put, the purpose of preaching is reading the text and explaining it — reproving, rebuking, exhorting and patiently teaching from the text of Scripture. If you are not doing that, then you are not preaching.

sin and teaching an understanding of the Christian life rooted in God’s Word — all to the bringing of Christians to maturity in Christ Jesus. The preacher instructs the people of God about the Word of God and applies that Word to their lives. This is his responsibility.

I am thankful that Southern Seminary is committed to training men who will preach God’s Word with this kind of voice and purpose. I am glad to know that we are preaching on purpose and not training voiceless voices.

Be praying for those entrusted to preach the Scriptures. Pray that they would proclaim Christ, reveal sin and apply God’s Word. Pray for those pastors who have gone out from Southern Seminary. Pray that they would faithfully enrich and guard their flocks with the authority, truth, and hope of God’s

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***Our preaching can only have a voice if it is rooted in the Scriptures. Scripture itself sets the terms, and so we must turn its pages to learn how God would have us preach — how God would have us worship.***

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We must also understand that the preacher’s purpose is not for his own benefit, but for the benefit of the church. We minister for the sake of our congregation, just as Paul ministered for the sake of his (Col 1:24). Our calling to preach is a calling to serve and love others by proclaiming Christ, exposing error and revealing

Word. Pray for your own pastors. Pray that they would preach God’s Word for your benefit and your maturation in the Lord Jesus Christ. I know I am.

Thank you for all you mean to Southern Seminary. Remember that we are located at 2825 Lexington Road in Louisville, Ky., and that you can always visit us online at [www.sbts.edu](http://www.sbts.edu).

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 Contributing Writers: Matt Damico;  
 RuthAnne Irvin  
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**EMAIL:** communications@sbts.edu

**CALL:** 1-800-626-5525, ext. 4000

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## News



R. Albert Mohler Jr. at the dedication ceremony of the Jenkins Center for the Christian Understanding of Islam with Connie and Bill Jenkins (center), benefactors for the new center, and Mary Mohler (right)

## In new center dedication, Mohler describes urgency for a Christian understanding of Islam

The leadership of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary opened and dedicated a new academic center for the study of Islam, Feb. 13.

“I am very, very excited about the Jenkins Center for the Christian Understanding of Islam,” said Mohler, who is president of the seminary, during a chapel service immediately preceding the dedication. He said that faithfulness to the Great Commission requires ministers to study this rival religion, and “not merely to understand Islam as others might seek to understand it, but to achieve a Christian understanding of Islam.”

The dedication of the new center coincided with the seminary’s annual Great Commission Week. The four-day event included panel discussions with veteran missionaries and church planters, outreach “excursions” in the Louisville, Ky., community and evangelistic training sessions.

According to Mohler, the Jenkins Center for the Christian Understanding of Islam, named for donors Connie and Bill Jenkins, will lead Southern Seminary — and the broader evangelical academy — in studying and engaging Islam through the lens of the Christian gospel. And while he affirmed the value and even necessity of studying Islam through secular and Islamic scholarship, the primary concern of the center is engagement, including evangelism and apologetics.

Randy Stinson, senior vice president for academic administration and provost at the seminary, explained that

a group of fellows who are “experts in the area of Islam” will lead the Jenkins Center through research, seminars and writing.

“Not only will they be able to help believers understand various global events from a Christian perspective, they will be producing articles, books and other resources for the church,” Stinson said. “They will also host conferences, roundtable discussions and summits with Islamic scholars from around the world.”

The center opens with four fellows, two of whom cannot be announced for security reasons related to their work. The other two, J.D. Greear and Michael Youssef, are scholars who live and minister in the United States.

Greear, who is lead pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, N.C., studied Islamic theology during his doctoral work at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and served as a missionary among Muslims prior to pastoring in the United States.

The Egyptian-born Youssef is an author, founding rector of the Church of the Apostles in Atlanta, Ga., and founder and president of Leading The Way, a worldwide media ministry. Originally, the seminary planned for Youssef to present the inaugural Jenkins Center lecture in conjunction with the center’s launch. However, inclement weather prohibited his traveling to Louisville. Youssef will give the inaugural lecture at a later date.

The Jenkins family attended the center dedication chapel service and the ribbon-cutting ceremony. During a reception immediately following, members of the seminary community expressed thanks to the family.

—AARON CLINE HANBURY

[The Jenkins Center website provides information about and resources for the engagement of Islam at jenkins.sbts.edu.](http://jenkins.sbts.edu)



## Mohler to BYU: religious freedom threat growing

Speaking for the second time in less than 100 days at Brigham Young University, Southern Baptist leader R. Albert Mohler Jr. told students and faculty at the school, “We may go to jail sooner even than we thought,” recalling his concern about the threat to religious liberty raised in an October appearance at the Mormon-owned school.

“I am not here because I believe we are going to heaven together, but I do believe we may go to jail together,” said Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, at an Oct. 21 address at the Latter-day Saints’ premier educational institution, named for Mormonism’s second president.

Delivering the Feb. 25 Forum Lecture about human dignity, human rights and human flourishing at the Marriott Arena on the BYU campus, Mohler expressed deep concern about the rapid change in values held by Americans.

“The most fundamental values of civilization itself are threatened, and we are witnesses to one of the most comprehensive and fast-paced moral revolutions ever experienced by humanity,” he said. “The velocity and breadth of this revolution are breathtaking, and the consequences are yet incalculable.”

American society is “dismantling the very structures that have allowed for the enjoyment and preservation of human liberty and respect for life,” Mohler asserted.

Mohler traced the state of American culture that has been undermined by the rise of secularism, decrying the devaluing of human life, the loss of human rights and undermining of the family and marriage upon which human flourishing is based.

According to *Deseret News*, Mohler addressed 2,731 faculty and students at the BYU forum. —JAMES A. SMITH SR.

The manuscript of Mohler’s address is available at his website, [AlbertMohler.com](http://AlbertMohler.com).

## Southern Seminary Communications team wins graphic design awards for fourth year in a row

For the fourth year in a row, Southern Seminary’s Office of Communications received awards from the Louisville Graphic Design Association. At the December 6, 2013 LGDA 100 Show, the seminary’s graphic artists received five awards.

“The mission of Southern Seminary has attracted a talented creative team committed to producing innovative communication materials,” said Steve Watters, vice president for communications at the seminary, who leads the office. “It’s a testimony to their commitment that Southern’s work should not only be recognized by an organization as prestigious as LGDA, but that the gospel-centered materials Southern submitted should be recognized so highly, including the Best in Show award.”

Of the six compositions the office submitted, five won. The design team received the highest available award, the Best in Show award for the 2013-14 *Southern Seminary Viewbook*. The office also received a gold award for the design and layout of *The Call to Ministry* journal; a silver award for DVD packaging of “Don’t just stand there: say something,” the 2013 convocation address by Southern Seminary president R. Albert Mohler Jr.; and bronze awards both for a Women at Southern booklet and photography from a recent study tour to Israel. Southern’s photographer, Emil Handke, also won a “people’s choice” award for a portrait submitted as a personal entry.

—AARON CLINE HANBURY

More information about the LGDA is available at [lgda.org](http://lgda.org).



## Geoffrey Dennis, former publishing executive, named development vice president at Southern Seminary

Geoffrey Dennis, a former executive with evangelical publisher Crossway, will become vice president for development at Southern Seminary, school officials announced Jan. 6.

“Southern Seminary is very pleased to have Geoff Dennis joining our development team in this crucial new capacity,” said president R. Albert Mohler Jr.

“The appointment of a vice president for development to work alongside Craig Parker, our vice president for institutional advancement, represents a great step forward for Southern Seminary in our effort to serve the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention and to meet Southern Seminary’s needs in one of the most God-blessed moments of our history. Geoff brings great skills and deep commitments to this new task and I am very glad to welcome him as a crucial member of the Southern Seminary leadership team.”

Dennis, who began his new duties Jan. 1, worked for the last 23 years in various capacities at Crossway, a leading evangelical publisher based



information technology, operations, human resources, fulfillment, finance and literature ministries. During his tenure on Crossway’s Publishing Committee, Dennis was involved in the strategic development, market positioning, production and distribution of the *English Standard Version Bible*, first published in 2001, and the award-winning *ESV Study Bible*, published in 2008.

Dennis said, “I have a deep passion for effective Christian ministry that serves the body of Christ, a commitment to the application of sound

ministry of Southern Seminary and its remarkable history of serving God’s people since 1859. It will be an honor to serve the Lord — as well as students, faculty and staff — through the exceptional ministry of Southern Seminary for many years to come.”

Parker, who leads the seminary’s development program, said Dennis will be an important asset to the development team as the school is experiencing a “wonderful season of growth.”

He said, “Geoff is a proven leader who possesses professional skills and experience that are second-to-none. Geoff’s accomplishments are significant, but you do not have to be around him long to recognize that he is also a man of great spiritual maturity, warmth and relational gifting.”

Dennis earned a bachelor of science degree in business management from National Lewis University in Chicago and a master of arts degree in theological studies from Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill.

He and his wife of more than 20 years, Allison, are parents to four children. Dennis has served in various church capacities, including as elder, worship leader and small group leader.

—JAMES A. SMITH SR.



The appointment of a vice president for development represents a great step forward for Southern Seminary in our effort to serve the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention and to meet Southern Seminary’s needs in one of the most God-blessed moments of our history.

in Wheaton, Ill. He served most recently as executive vice president, chief operating officer and associate publisher with oversight of advancement, sales and marketing, digital and

business practice in the ministry environment and desire for the effective use of digital technologies to extend ministry reach and impact. I have great appreciation for the mission and



## Mohler, with Prager and Douthat, discusses ‘faith and freedom’

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, joined nationally syndicated radio show host and conservative pundit Dennis Prager and *The New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat for the event, “Faith and Freedom in the Public Square,” Jan. 28, at the seminary’s campus.

The trio of public intellectuals engaged in a frank, wide-ranging

since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973.”

But, according to Mohler, the major difference in today’s socio-religious world compared to that of the previous generation — the biggest shift — is a move away from a wide, almost requisite, acceptance of religion in all facets of public life.

After nearly two hours of conversation that covered topics from civil rights to party platforms, the three men received questions from the audience. Questions and answers ranged from the “loss of God” in public discourse to conservative involvement in pop culture, from the so-called cultural “war on men” to same-sex marriage.

“

According to Mohler, the major difference in today’s socio-religious world compared to that of the previous generation — the biggest shift — is a move away from a wide, almost requisite, acceptance of religion in all facets of public life.

and often entertaining two-hour discussion of secularism and shifting morality in America.

Mohler pushed back against the idea that everything has changed since the culture wars of recent decades, saying that “the culture wars are over, except for where they’re not.” He noted specifically that the issue of abortion is today “more divisive than at any point

The event emcee was Warren Cole Smith, associate publisher and vice president of *WORLD* magazine, who introduced the panelists and moderated the question and answer portion of the evening. *WORLD*, the largest Christian news magazine in the United States, co-sponsored the event with Hashtag Productions. —AARON CLINE HANBURY



## Work, economics initiative at SBTS receives grant

A new academic initiative at Southern Seminary to foster a theology of work and economics among students and faculty received a major grant from the Kern Family Foundation, seminary officials announced recently.

The initiative will sponsor conferences, workshops, faculty retreats and discussion groups “aimed at equipping students to understand some basic principles of economics, business and entrepreneurship, the biblical and theological principles that ground and shape a theology of work and how the intersection of faith, work and economics relates to ministry in the church and through the church to the community,” said Kenneth Magnuson, director of the initiative and professor of Christian ethics at the seminary.

Faculty, students, pastors and denominational and business leaders are projected participants in the initiative’s activities and programs.

The initiative is a program of Southern Seminary’s Carl F.H. Henry Institute for Cultural Engagement in partnership with the Center for Gospel and Culture at Boyce College, the undergraduate school of Southern.

David Kotter, a New Testament doctor of philosophy student at Southern who has extensive background in business in America and Europe with Ford Motor Company, is the associate director of the initiative. Kotter is also a senior research fellow for the Institute for Faith, Work and Economics in Washington, D.C., and teaches business, entrepreneurship and economics at Indiana Wesleyan University.

Topics for future events will include: how Christian virtues should guide work and economics; the purpose, meaning and dignity of work; gospel transformation in businesses, communities and economies; and vocation, calling and stewardship in all of life, Magnuson said. —JAMES A. SMITH SR.



# MASTER PLAN

## And in with the new: Mullins Complex renovations continue into the spring semester

The spring season brings a fresh change in weather and atmosphere, and for Southern Seminary, this spring brings more changes to the heart of its campus. While the temperatures rise, the historic Mullins Complex rids itself of the old and replaces it with the new.

Two years ago, Southern Seminary's Board of Trustees approved a strategic plan to address the campus's \$52 million of deferred maintenance. The master plan will restore areas of campus that need renovation. Many of Southern Seminary's brick-with-white-trim buildings have not received updates since the seminary relocated from its downtown location to its present campus in 1926.

In an article about the master plan in *Southern Seminary Magazine* last year, seminary president R. Albert Mohler Jr. said he did not "want to turn over this campus to the next generation as a time bomb about to detonate. ... In spite of all its beauty and all of its utility, there are some things that are ticking as some of these buildings approach their 90th year."

Leadership of the seminary designed the master plan to renovate specific buildings that need updating, including the Mullins Complex, which includes Mullins, Whitsett, Sampy and Williams halls. These buildings, along with several other campus projects like the relocation of Boyce College, encompass the first of the plan's three phases.

The three phases will occur during the next eight years.

Boyce College will move to the heart of Southern Seminary's campus with a new, state-of-the-art facility for housing, administrative offices, classrooms and recreation space. Architects designed the repurposed buildings with more accessibility and modern amenities for students and staff.

Today, the Mullins Complex is still under significant construction. The process began in December, 2013, when all Boyce College and Southern Seminary students moved

out of the complex for the winter holiday and several offices surged to Rankin Hall, part of Boyce College's current campus. Construction workers disassembled walls and gutted the building to put in new framework for new walls and doors. As of late February, the building's windows are almost all replaced and, in March, workers will install sheetrock as the next step to a renovated facility.

Also in March, according to Andy Vincent, vice president of operations at Southern Seminary, and Robert Konemann, seminary operations project coordinator, workers will hang drywall and possibly begin interior work like hanging door frames, ceiling grids and light fixtures.

Site work — ramps, exterior painting and remodeling — will begin on the building in the next few months, including handicap ramps and completed windows.

The construction on the Mullins Complex will continue



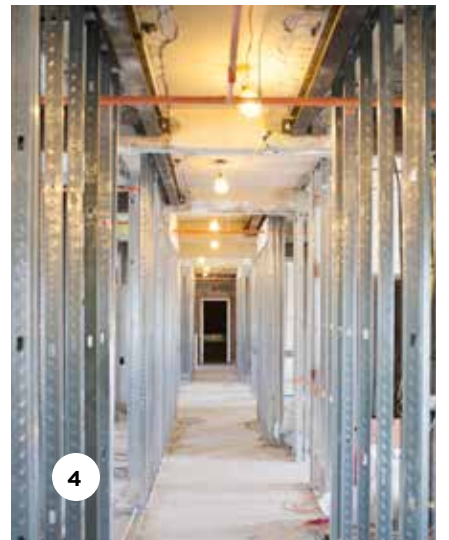
Boyce College will move to the heart of Southern Seminary's campus with a new, state-of-the-art facility for housing, administrative offices, classrooms and recreation space. Architects designed the repurposed buildings with more accessibility and modern amenities for students and staff.

until mid-July, when all of Boyce College's administrative offices will move into the renovated space and settle in for a new academic year. The seminary will celebrate a grand opening at the beginning of the fall 2014 semester.

So as the spring brings fresh breezes and blooms, it also brings changes to Southern Seminary's historic campus as the Mullins Complex construction continues.

—RUTHANNE IRVIN





Photos 1 and 3: Workers demolish Mullins' walls and clear classrooms in order to install framing. Photo 2: The exterior of Mullins during the clean out and demolition process. Photo 4: Workers install framing in order to build walls.

## Events



For Great Commission Week, the seminary displayed the airplane used in the film, *The End of the Spear*, about martyred missionaries in Ecuador.

## Students called to ‘count the cost’ during Great Commission Week

Southern Seminary’s annual Great Commission Week encouraged students to “count the cost” of missions and ministry during the four-day event, Feb. 10-13.

Aaron Harvie, church planting mobilization strategist with NAMB and instructor of church planting, preached about depending on God in Tuesday’s chapel.

“When coming to the Great Commission, it is easy to react by thinking that it is impossible, that we aren’t equipped or that we’re not ready,” said Harvie who, prior to coming to Southern Seminary, successfully planted a church in Philadelphia, Pa. “And, humanly speaking, the Great Commission is impossible.”

He emphasized that God is the one who works in ministry, not humans. He then applied this to church planting.

Preaching from Joshua 1, Harvie offered encouragement for those who feel ill-equipped for fulfilling the Great Commission, telling his story as a new church planter in Pennsyl-

vania and how God worked despite often discouraging circumstances.

“We do not plant churches; God plants churches,” he said. “The Lord is with us and he can empower us to cross cultures and bring the gospel to unreached people. And our reaction should be to believe in the power of God and to go.”

This year’s Great Commission Week also included afternoon “excursions” to local ministries in Louisville, Ky. Groups of students visited the University of Louisville’s Baptist Campus Ministry; New Breed Church, a recent church plant in Louisville’s west end; Scarlet Hope, a ministry to women in the adult entertainment industry in Louisville; Jefferson Street Baptist Center, a local homeless shelter that offers hope to Louisville’s homeless; and Refuge Louisville, a ministry that partners with local churches to reach out to internationals in the city through English as a second language and citizenship classes.

The seminary hosted panel discussions with guest speakers and seminary faculty. Monday’s panel, “Increasing Our Evangelistic Effectiveness in Today’s Culture,” featured dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry, Adam W. Greenway, seminary profes-

sor Timothy Beougher, local church planter T.J. Francis and Steve Rice, team leader for church revitalization in the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Tuesday’s panel, “Trends in Effective Church Planting,” featured the seminary’s Harvie, Greenway, Randy Stinson, senior vice president for academic administration and provost, and Jim Stitzinger, director of the Bevin Center for Missions Mobilization.

Jeff Walters, missions professor at Southern Seminary and Freddy T. Wyatt, former pastor of the Gallery Church in New York City, spoke during Wednesday’s panel discussion, “The Best of Times, the Worst of Times: Opportunities and Challenges in Urban Missions.”

In addition to these discussions and excursions, the women’s fellowship, Koinonia, made gift bags for Scarlet Hope during their event.

To close the week, students were invited to a viewing of *The End of the Spear*, a movie that tells the story of five missionary martyrs, including Jim Elliot and Nate Saint, who died bringing the gospel to the Quichua Indians in Ecuador. —RUTHANNE IRVIN AND NOAH WRIGHT

Audio and video from chapel services are available at [sbts.edu/resources](http://sbts.edu/resources).



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## In latest Alumni Academy course, Timothy Paul Jones addresses family ministry

The call to disciple the next generation belongs to parents, said Southern Seminary professor Timothy Paul Jones during the most recent Alumni Academy course, Jan. 9-10.

Jones, who in addition to his role as professor of leadership and church ministry, is the author of *Family Ministry Field Guide: How the Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*, which provided much of the content and structure for the two-day course.

Recognizing the gap that exists between what Scripture demands of parents and what is actually happening in the homes of Christian families, Jones encouraged those in attendance — which consisted primarily of pastors and youth ministers — to teach the parents in their churches, especially the fathers, how to disciple their children according to the expectations that Scripture places on parents. The way to do this is to create a ministry driven by grace, rather than a ministry driven by prescription.

The importance of grace in family ministry is why, Jones said, the instructions given to parents in Deuteronomy 6 did not work.

“Deuteronomy 6 is not wrong, but it’s not enough, because it’s not the whole story,” Jones said. “Jesus delivered all that God’s law and justice demanded,” Jones said. Pastors, preachers and youth ministers should not, then, “proclaim Deuteronomy 6, saying ‘Do this, do this, do this,’ without also turning towards Christ, in whom all is done already.”

On the other hand, Jones urged those in attendance to avoid telling church members that “whatever you’re doing [in family worship] is okay,” but rather that God has provided means — through the church, the Spirit and the Scriptures — to pursue faithfulness in raising children.

“We want to proclaim to our people the fullness of the story that is centered in one God, a story of grace and a story that’s passed from generation to generation,” Jones said. “That’s the big picture of what we want to happen in family ministry.” —MATT DAMICO

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The next scheduled Alumni Academy course will feature Boyce College dean Dan DeWitt teaching through his forthcoming book, *Jesus OR Nothing*, May 22-23, 2014. More information about Alumni Academy is available at [events.sbts.edu](http://events.sbts.edu).



## Mohler, Sills encourage college students toward missions

A new conference that drew 3,600 college students, held Dec. 27-30, 2013, in Louisville, Ky., featured Southern Seminary’s president R. Albert Mohler Jr. and missions professor M. David Sills.

Leadership of Cross Conference — Kevin DeYoung, Mack Stiles, David Platt, David Sitton, Thabiti Anyabwile and John Piper — shaped Cross 2013 around the theme “missions exists because worship doesn’t,” from Piper’s popular book, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, in order to encourage students toward missions work to the unreached people groups of the world.

Mohler led a breakout session about Christians ministering to people in cities, “Mud Huts and Mass Transit: The Urban Future of Missions.”

Christians going into cities, Mohler said, is an issue of obedience, not only for missionaries, but for Christians who will strengthen church congregations.

“We are obeying two simultaneous and cooperative loves when we love our neighbor and love God because Christ himself, the second, is derivative of the first,” Mohler said about Christians who will minister in cities. “And the mission of obedience is obedience to God but also obedience to brokenheartedness when we see the need of the gospel all around us.”

Sills, A.P. and Faye Stone Professor of Christian Missions and Cultural Anthropology and director of intercultural programs for the seminary’s Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry, led a breakout session about working with mission agencies.

Plenary speakers were Piper, DeYoung, Platt, Stiles, Matt Chandler, Anyabwile, Richard Chin, Conrad Mwebwe, D.A. Carson and Michael Oh. In addition to Mohler and Sills, breakout speakers included Mark Dever, Ligon Duncan, Gloria Furman and others. —RUTHANNE IRVIN

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Audio and view from the conference are available at [crosscon.com/resources](http://crosscon.com/resources). The 2015 Cross Conference will take place again in December.

## Southern Seminary hosts historic Spanish-language conference

Southern Seminary's 9Marks at Southern conference looked and sounded different this year, as the seminary hosted its first-ever conference entirely in Spanish. A Feb. 27 Hispanic pastors' conference ran in conjunction with the annual two-day 9Marks conference for pastors. Miguel Núñez, Dominican pastor, author and host of a popular TV show, broadcast in 20 countries, spoke at the conference, along with other pastors.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said the Hispanic pastors' conference pointed to the need and desire for outreach to the Hispanic and Latino communities.

"Southern Seminary was honored and extremely pleased to host this conference for Spanish-speaking pastors, and we were quite honestly overwhelmed with the turnout," Mohler said in an interview about the new addition to the regular 9Marks conference. "It went far beyond anything we could have imagined. It just points to the need for Southern Baptists particularly, and evangelicals more generally, to have an intensive, strategic outreach to the Hispanic and Latino community."

The Hispanic pastors' conference coincided with this year's 9Marks at Southern conference. The event focused on pastors and their understanding of biblical theology. Pastors need to understand the different parts of Scripture in order to know the whole of Scripture and to know God accurately, according to speakers at the Feb. 28-March 1 event.

Speakers included 9Marks founder and senior pastor of Capitol Hill

Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., Mark Dever; Mohler; G.K. Beale, professor of New Testament and biblical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa.; David Helm, lead pastor of the Hyde Park congregation of Holy Trinity Church in Chicago, Ill.; Christian hip-hop artist Shai Linne; and Michael Lawrence, senior pastor at Hinson Baptist Church in Portland, Ore.

More than 130 participants from across the U.S. attended the Hispanic pastors' conference, which featured several prominent Hispanic pastors, including Núñez and Juan Sánchez.

The seminary streamed the conference live online to more than 800 online viewers from countries like the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Spain, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Peru, Canada, Ecuador, Sweden, Uruguay, Brazil, Netherlands, Australia, India, Norway, Paraguay, Singapore and Bolivia.

Núñez, senior pastor of the International Baptist Church in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, led a plenary session emphasizing the first "mark" of a healthy church, according to the 9Marks formula, which is biblically-based, expository preaching.

He expounded on the need for preaching in churches that is not divorced from the text or man-centered, but God-centered and gospel-saturated. Christians are sustained and grown through God's Word, he said, which is why biblical preaching is essential to a healthy church.

The event also featured several other speakers and panel discussions, including Southern Seminary missions professor M. David Sills. Attendees received a copy of the newly released Spanish language edition of *A Guide to Expository Ministry*, published by SBTS Press. —RUTHANNE IRVIN AND JAIRO NAMNÚN



Audio and video from both the Spanish-language conference and the English-language conference are available online at [sbts.edu/resources](http://sbts.edu/resources).





## Mohler: Scriptural authority, the gift of salvation are inextricable

The authority and inerrancy of Scripture is necessary to understand the gift of salvation, said The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president R. Albert Mohler Jr. during the spring 2014 convocation address, Jan. 28.

In his address, “If You Do Not Believe His Writings, How Will You Believe My Words?” — The Authority of Scripture and the Gift of Salvation,” Mohler said, “Scriptural authority and the gift of salvation are inextricable. We cannot have one without the other. We cannot be a gospel people without also being a Bible people.”

In John 5:39-47, Jesus confronts the Pharisees who seek to understand the Scriptures, yet do not believe Moses’ words in the Old Testament, so they do not see Christ or truly believe the Word of God, Mohler noted.

“They [the Pharisees] are missing the point,” Mohler said. “They are diligently studying the Scriptures because they think that in them they have eternal life. But they’re missing the fact every single word of Scripture, specific here to the Old Testament, bears witness to Christ.”

And, he said, if all of Scripture bears witness to Christ, the result is an inability for Christians to have faith in Christ without confidence in the Scriptures and its authority in their lives. Jesus’ question, “If you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” formed Mohler’s argument. If the Bible contains errors, according to Mohler, then the gospel’s trustworthiness is questionable.

Mohler briefly reviewed the history of the debate about the authority of Scripture, beginning with the Enlightenment and its turn from the authority of Scripture to

the rationality of the mind. From the Enlightenment he talked about the rise of Protestant liberalism in the 20th century, mentioning Southern Seminary’s turn from liberalism in the 1970s and 80s to its commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture.

Mohler said that, despite the victories won in the battle for inerrancy, “How can so much be gained so quickly to be lost?” noting today’s generation as the most confused about this doctrine.

Still, said Mohler, the primary issue is reading the Bible to see Christ.

Mohler said he hoped students would never miss the point of their study of Scripture: “Christ, and the point of the text is the gospel, who Christ is,” he said.

“Our affirmation of the Scriptures can be no less than our

“

Scriptural authority and the gift of salvation are inextricable. We cannot have one without the other. We cannot be a gospel people without also being a Bible people.

affirmation of the gospel because we have no knowledge of the gospel, we have no power of the gospel, we have no concept of the gospel, we have no message by which to teach and preach and share the gospel if it is not the direct, trustworthy, true revelation of God in the Scriptures,” Mohler said.

—RUTHANNE IRVIN

Audio and video from Mohler’s address are available at [smts.edu/resources](http://smts.edu/resources).

## Inerrancy: a modern definition of an historic view: R. Albert Mohler Jr. discusses *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Below, R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Joseph Emerson Brown Professor of Christian Theology, discusses the new book, *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*, to which he contributed, with Southern Seminary Magazine contributor Matt Damico.

**MD:** Why is this book necessary?

**RAM:** Well, on the one hand, it's necessary because the issue of inerrancy is never a settled issue; it's never going to go away. It comes part-and-parcel with the modern world. Modernity itself presents a set of issues that are going to have to be answered one way or another. Thus, we'll land either in the affirmation of inerrancy or in some other place. I think inerrancy continues to be a defining issue for what evangelical integrity requires.

Also, there is utility in a five, or multiple-view book like this. Zondervan's been doing this for some time, other publishers have had a similar format. I found, as a theology student when they first started coming out, that these were very helpful ways to get at issues, some better than others. I do not believe this one accomplished all that I had hoped it would accomplish, by means of having multiple views, but I still think it's good to have a debate in a book.

**MD:** What do you mean when you use the term "inerrancy"?

**RAM:** Vocabulary is always a problem. That's true in international diplomacy; it's true in labor contracts; it's true in the making of legislation; and it's true in theology as well. That's why, for instance, the Chicago Statement [on Biblical Inerrancy] emerged in the 1970's at a specific moment when definition was badly needed.

This book is not just about inerrancy; it is specifically addressed to

Statement articulates the historic view of the church?

**RAM:** This whole idea of it being modernistic is a canard; it's cute, but it's not all that meaningful. It is entirely true that the doctrine of inerrancy as it is described and defined in the Chicago Statement was not necessary until the advent of modernity. We should be unembarrassed by that.

In other words, there is no way to escape the modern age; we are chronological creatures, and here we are. Part

There is no way to escape the modern age; we are chronological creatures, and here we are. Part of what it means in this generation to give a reason for the hope that is in us is to answer the questions that this age is asking, and in the modern age, questions about the veracity of divine revelation are inescapable.

the Chicago Statement and revisiting that question. I believe the Chicago Statement very accurately described inerrancy. There are new issues to be addressed, but I would not take away anything the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy achieved with that.

**MD:** Some people accuse the Chicago Statement of being too modernistic. How well do you think the Chicago

of what it means in this generation to give a reason for the hope that is in us is to answer the questions that this age is asking, and in the modern age, questions about the veracity of divine revelation are inescapable. So, I'm not embarrassed at all to say that inerrancy is something that is found in the modern age in terms of its codification. I'm also quite bold to say that if you look at the history of the church, you

will not find something less than an affirmation of inerrancy, you'll find the assumption of inerrancy.

When I teach historical theology or do a doctoral seminar on it, one of the main things I stress is that in all of theology there is a tension between what can be assumed and what must be articulated. At various points in church history and in various contexts, you could assume certain things, therefore they were not articulated.

That's the same reason why, for instance, the modern issues of sexuality require new confessional responses from the church. It's not that the church has changed its mind, much less innovated on the issue, but when the Baptist Faith and Message was passed in 1925 no one was talking about homosexuality as an open question; the same thing was even true in 1963. But in 2000, when the Southern Baptist Convention revised the Baptist Faith and Message, we had to talk about it because the age and the context demanded an answer. The same thing is true with inerrancy.

So, if the accusation is that inerrancy in its defined form in the Chicago Statement is intellectually situated in the modern world, we simply have to plead guilty because we also are intellectually situated in the modern world. The interesting thing is that the people who make that accusation are also living in the modern world. And thus, they also have to give some answer. So, if their answer isn't inerrancy, their answer is something else. If someone from the 15th century comes to interrogate me on inerrancy, I've got bigger problems than defining inerrancy. The people who are talking about inerrancy are 21st-century people, who also have to deal with the same thing. So, it's an observation, but it's a canard. It's a way of distracting the conversation.

**MD:** What are the consequences of denying inerrancy?

**RAM:** Well, the first consequence is that, if we deny inerrancy, we are denying something that Scripture, I believe, very clearly claims of itself. The con-



sequences are also an inevitable loss of biblical authority and a necessary redefinition of the inspiration of Scripture. Where you have a verbal plenary understanding of inspiration, you almost always have an affirmation of inerrancy. Where you have a rejection of inerrancy, it's very hard, then, to square that rejection of inerrancy with a plenary and verbal inspiration.

**MD:** What's the importance of inerrancy for a pastor maintaining a robust pulpit ministry?

**RAM:** It makes all the difference in the world. It may not appear at first that it necessarily would, because there are a lot of preachers in this day and age who reject the inerrancy of Scripture

and still feel like they have something to say. No doubt, they still have something to say, but that's really not the issue. The issue is: what are we able to tell people the text of Scripture is and what is its demand upon us? The question is not whether the preacher has something to say, but whether God is going to say something through the preacher and through his Word. And, if the preacher has any question whatsoever about the truth status of the Word of God, it will inevitably shift to the preaching. The shift from "I'm going to preach the Word" to "I'm going to find something in this witness worthy of my attention and preaching." And, at the end of the day, that makes all the difference in the world.



## Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy

(Zondervan 2013, \$19.99), J. Merrick, Stephen M. Garrett and Stanley N. Gundry, eds.

Ever since Jesus said Scripture cannot be broken, and Paul said the Scriptures are “God-breathed,” the Christian church has believed the Bible to be more than mere historical record or an ancient collection of writings from different cultures and eras. There has been less consensus, though, about the best way to describe and define the truthfulness of Scripture.

Zondervan’s recent book, *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*, addresses the question of the “doctrinal rationale ... and Scriptural warrant” of the term “inerrancy” as a means of defining the Bible’s truthfulness.

The book’s contributors are R. Albert Mohler Jr., Peter Enns, Michael F. Bird, Kevin J. Vanhoozer and John R. Franke. The assignment for each contributor was to discuss inerrancy — along with corollary topics like the doctrine of inspiration and the nature of truth — in direct reference to the 1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (CSBI).

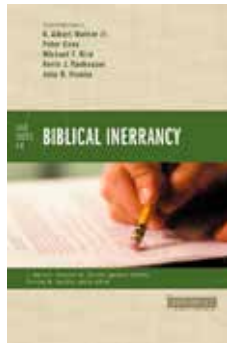
Mohler defends “classic inerrancy,” in which he claims that “when the Bible speaks, God speaks.” His view “flows from three major sources — the Bible itself, the tradition of the church and the function of the Bible within the church.” Mohler argues

not only for the validity of inerrancy — particularly as the CSBI articulates it — but that “the affirmation of the Bible’s inerrancy has never been more essential to evangelicalism.”

The difference between the book’s contributors is not whether they believe the Bible is true, but what they mean by affirming the Bible’s truthfulness, the relationship between truth and history and the best way to articulate and define the truth status of Scripture.

Some contributors make their case more convincingly than others, and some affirm the Bible’s truthfulness with significant qualifications or, perhaps more accurately, significant redefinitions. Christians who want to affirm, with Jesus, that “thy word is truth,” should seek to articulate the Bible’s

truthfulness in the most robust and unashamed terms possible. Reading *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy* can be instructive, by way of both positive and negative example, for how to do that well. —REVIEW BY MATT DAMICO



### Excerpts from R. Albert Mohler Jr.’s chapter in the book:

## 1

“In affirming that the Bible, as a whole and in its parts, contains nothing but God-breathed truth, evangelicals have simply affirmed what the church universal has affirmed for well over a millennium — *when the Bible speaks, God speaks.*”

## 2

“Without a total commitment to the trustworthiness and truthfulness of the Bible, the church is left without its defining authority, lacking confidence in its ability to hear God’s voice.”

## 3

“The argument for the total inerrancy of Scripture flows from three major sources — the Bible itself, the tradition of the church, and the function of the Bible within the church. Each source is important, and the case for inerrancy is a cumulative argument that begins and ends with the obvious point that if the Bible is not inerrant, it is something far less.”

## 4

“The incarnate Christ was fully God and fully human, but his humanity was without sin. Just as theologians have for centuries argued over whether Jesus *could not* sin or merely *did not* sin, theologians may argue whether the Bible *cannot err* or merely *does not err*. But the end result is the same in any event — Jesus did not sin and the Bible is without error.”

—From his response to Peter Enns

# ***The pure flame of devotion: the history of Christian spirituality***

(Joshua Press 2013, \$44.99),

G. Stephen Weaver Jr. and Ian Hugh Clary, eds.

*The pure flame of devotion: the history of Christian spirituality*, a collection of essays in honor of scholar, historian and Southern Seminary professor of church history and biblical spirituality Michael A.G. Haykin, is “more than a *festschrift*, it is intended to serve as a model for students and educated laypeople for how to approach the history of Christian spirituality,” write editors G. Stephen Weaver Jr. and Ian Hugh Clary.

The collection of essays includes four sections that each address a period or important figure in the history of the church and Christian spirituality. Authors of the essays, including Southern Seminary’s Donald S. Whitney, Thomas J. Nettles and others like Carl Trueman and Peter Beck, cover the history of the

church fathers to the middle age, the Reformation and Puritanism, evangelicalism and modernity and Baptist history in the four parts of *The pure flame of devotion*.

Weaver, Haykin’s current research assistant and pastor of Farmdale Baptist Church in Frankfort, Ky., and Clary, former research assistant to Haykin, compiled the essays in honor of Haykin’s many years of scholarship in Baptist history and spirituality.

The book is meant to help students and others “use historical resources for spiritual benefit,” reflecting Haykin’s method.

“This is an approach to church history with an eye to issues of spirituality that emphasizes how today’s Christians can cull ancient sources for their spiritual enrichment and encouragement as they seek to live their lives under the direction of the Holy Spirit,”

writes Weaver.

The editors call Haykin a “historian of the Spirit,” saying that “he truly embodies the spirit of this volume. His piety is the same piety as those Spirit-filled men and women who walk the pages of church history.”

Weaver and Clary chose contributors who each are experts in their field. The 23 chapters

are carefully written with extensive research and with the reader’s application of the information in mind. Readers will not only glean historical insights about the history of Christian spirituality from *The pure flame of devotion*, but will also benefit from the pastoral approach of each chapter.

—REVIEW BY RUTHANNE IRVIN



## Excerpts from the book:

### 1

“If the most basic element of the church is the presence of God mediated by his Word, then the most important person in the church in terms of function is the preacher and, at the risk of tautology, the most important task he performs is that of preaching.”

—Carl Trueman, in his essay, “Martin Luther: preaching and Protestant spirituality”

### 2

“The contemplation of death necessarily involves the contemplation of affliction in this life. As a young editor, Boyce could write about the “Blessedness of Affliction” to prompt his readers to consider “how truly blessed are those who suffer under the afflicting hand of God.”

—Thomas J. Nettles, in his essay “The piety of James Petigru Boyce”

### 3

“The Bible, Edwards reasoned, was a jewel to be enjoyed daily not a trinket to be marvelled at once then cast aside.”

—Peter Beck, in his essay, “A resolved piety: living in light of eternity with Jonathan Edwards”

## ***Risky Gospel: Abandon Fear and Build Something Awesome***

(Thomas Nelson 2013, \$15.99), Owen Strachan

In the first three chapters of his new book, *Risky Gospel: Abandon Fear and Build Something Awesome*, Owen Strachan builds a compelling case that the Bible demands Christians to live committed and purposeful lives for Christ, taking risks to advance the gospel through Spirit-empowered dependence on God.

And Strachan doesn't leave the reader wondering what to do next. The next six chapters present a blueprint for how to "build something awesome," and apply the principles for risk-taking and boldness to the rest of life.

These chapters address how to build a disciplined faith, a worship-oriented family, a meaningful vocation, local church involvement, an evangelistic witness and a public witness. Strachan laces each of these chapters with illustrations and anecdotes that make *Risky Gospel* an easy, conversational read and he includes a number of practical helps for the reader.

*Risky Gospel* presents a grand vision for normal life. A committed and vibrant Christian faith does not always mean that one enter full-time ministry or global missions — though, as Strachan acknowledges, those are high and necessary callings.



The book will cause the reader to question just how strongly idols of comfort, safety and ease have taken hold of his or her life and decision making. And Strachan encourages readers to remove these idols and replace them with a commitment to live "in such a way as to advance the gospel so people are saved and transformed by Christ," even in trial.

The book closes with a chapter-long meditation on risk and the cost of discipleship. What Strachan acknowledges is that, while the cost of following hard after God is great, the risk is, in fact, not.

"Following Jesus by seeking to invest the gospel he has given us in this world is not a risk," Strachan writes. "All the force of Trinitarian power is behind us. Serving Christ in whatever calling he gives you is the surest work you can undertake in the world, because the kingdom of God will win and the gates of hell will not overcome it." —REVIEW BY MATT DAMICO

### Excerpts from the book:

## 1

"Jesus came to embolden us, not to anesthetize us. This is true of God all throughout the Bible. ... Moses didn't lead Israel from a throne, with palmetto branches cooling his tan skin, but marched them through a desert, only to drop dead at the end. ... The call of God often causes drama. It's a sacrificial call, not a self-serving one. And it transforms us, but not in the neat and comfortable way we might expect. You follow God, and you just might get asked to walk in the wilderness. For forty years."

## 2

"This duty [to love our neighbor] also has a public dimension. In other words, we don't only talk to individuals in confidence about biblical truth and wisdom. We don't only love in private, in other words. We love our neighbor in *public*. There's this whole public world in which we are driven by Scripture to participate. Different terms relate to what we're calling our 'public witness': the government, our nation, our society, even global issues. One of the nicest phrases that captures these realms is the 'public square.'"

## 3

"For a good number of us, life will not be inscrutable, topsy-turvy, and incomprehensible. Many of us will experience God working out his will as meaning a quiet and 'normal' life. This will involve building a career. I want to say, very clearly, that such an existence is not sub-Christian or bad. It is good."





## A grand vision for the Christian life: Owen Strachan talks about *Risky Gospel*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In what follows, Owen Strachan, assistant professor of Christian theology and church history at Boyce College, discusses his new book, *Risky Gospel: Abandon Fear and Build Something Awesome*, with Southern Seminary Magazine contributor Matt Damico.

**MD:** Why did you write *Risky Gospel*?

**OS:** Evangelicals want their own Christian version of a “gospel Snuggie.” We’re tempted today, at the very least, to want everything to be nice, neat, clean, easy and comfortable.

This spirit has very much affected the evangelical church. I looked at myself and I looked at my peers and I thought, “This is a problem; something is off.” And that became especially

clear when I was reading through the parable of the talents in Matthew 25 and reading about how Jesus commends this righteous servant who goes at once and makes more talents. Now, when you work off of the parable of the talents, oftentimes as a Christian, you apply it to money management or financial stewardship. That’s fine, but in that parable and in other places in Scripture, as I was studying it for my own personal benefit, I came to see that, really, that’s a way of life that Jesus is giving us. He’s outlining a mentality that I think many of us have lost in wanting endless ease and comfort to be ours.

**MD:** What does it look like for a Christian to live fearlessly for God?

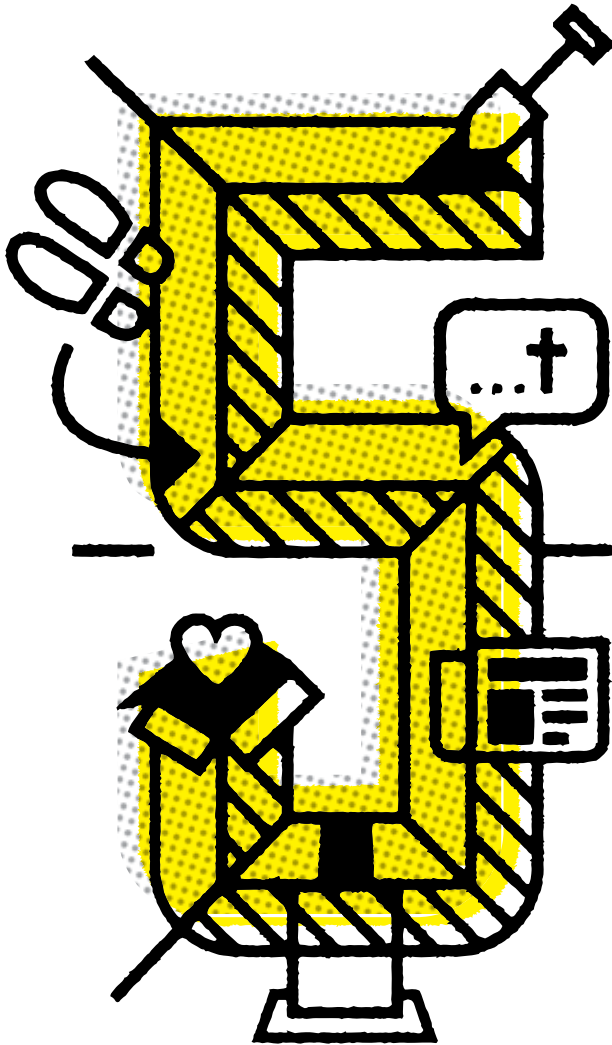
**OS:** Christians can live fearlessly whether they’re staring down terrorists who want to kill them, or whether they are staring down bills that are looming over their head. Christians can fundamentally view life in gospel-driven terms and see Jesus as the point

of all things, and that understanding can infuse all of their daily labor with purpose, and meaning and value.

Too many of us still fall into this trap, where we think that if we’re not in full-time ministry, if we’re not sharing the gospel this very instant, then we’re not doing ministry and we’re not glorifying God.

If you are going to work and you are pouring your energy into that and you’re trying to make God look big and great by the way that you labor, you’re living a life of gospel risk. If you are at home and you’re changing the diapers and you’re caring for the kids and you are answering the thousandth question of the day about when there’s going to be a snack, and you’re laboring that way day after day, you are leading a life of gospel risk. If you’re a student, and you’ve got all these exams and all these papers and things to do and books to read, but you’re taking it on because you want to think better and you want to take dominion for Jesus, again, you’re leading a life of gospel risk.

## Thoughts



## moves to integrate theology into your ministry

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Hershael W. York is Victor and Louise Lester Professor of Christian Preaching at Southern Seminary and senior pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, Ky.*

### 1) Saturate your preaching and conversation with Bible truth.

If, as Paul says, those Old Testament stories were given to us as examples, then we should use them that way. When

you are addressing deacons, elders, students or any group in the church, learn to work in Bible narratives and show how they apply to everyday life and decisions.

### 2) Address the situations that everyone is talking about.

Do not, in the name of being faithful, stick to your preaching plan so rigidly that you fail to speak truth into significant events that shock or affect the sensibilities of your congregation. The death of a local teenager, the closing of the town's largest employer or a 9/11-type national tragedy all demand biblical answers to the questions in everyone's mind. Show them how the Word of God addresses those types of events and how the gospel is the ultimate need.

### 3) Make them fall in love with Jesus.

Being in ministry means learning to live with the disappointment of people. Sometimes you will genuinely let them down because of your shortcomings and failures, and sometimes they will have unrealistic expectations. If you build your ministry on yourself and on your abilities, this disillusionment — both yours and theirs — will be crippling. If, on the other hand, you show them that Jesus is the only one who never disappoints, that our hope is in him and that he alone is our standard and our strength, then their hope rests on Christ alone. Talk constantly about Jesus, about his attributes and about his grace and truth. We see more of God's glory in Christ than Moses ever saw on Sinai. Jesus is lovely and he is ours.

### 4) Pivot to the gospel.

Just as all the Scripture ultimately relates to Christ, so does all of life and knowledge. Ministry is usually done in the context of hurt, tragedy, sin and sin's effects. In every one of those situations, comfort the hurting with soothing words of genuine pastoral affection, but find the way to turn toward how the gospel addresses this kind of situation with redemption, salvation, forgiveness and the resurrection.

### 5) Stay there.

If you want a church to be saturated with truth, then stay there and walk through life with them. It takes time to lay the foundation, and more time to build the superstructure. Plant your life. Show them what a gospel-centered marriage and family looks like. Preach the Word — both testaments, law and gospel, all genres, creation, fall, longing, fulfillment, consummation. They won't get that strategic grasp of the scriptures from six consecutive pastors, but they might from one who stays and lives life in community with them.

## Wellum on preaching and teaching from the whole Bible

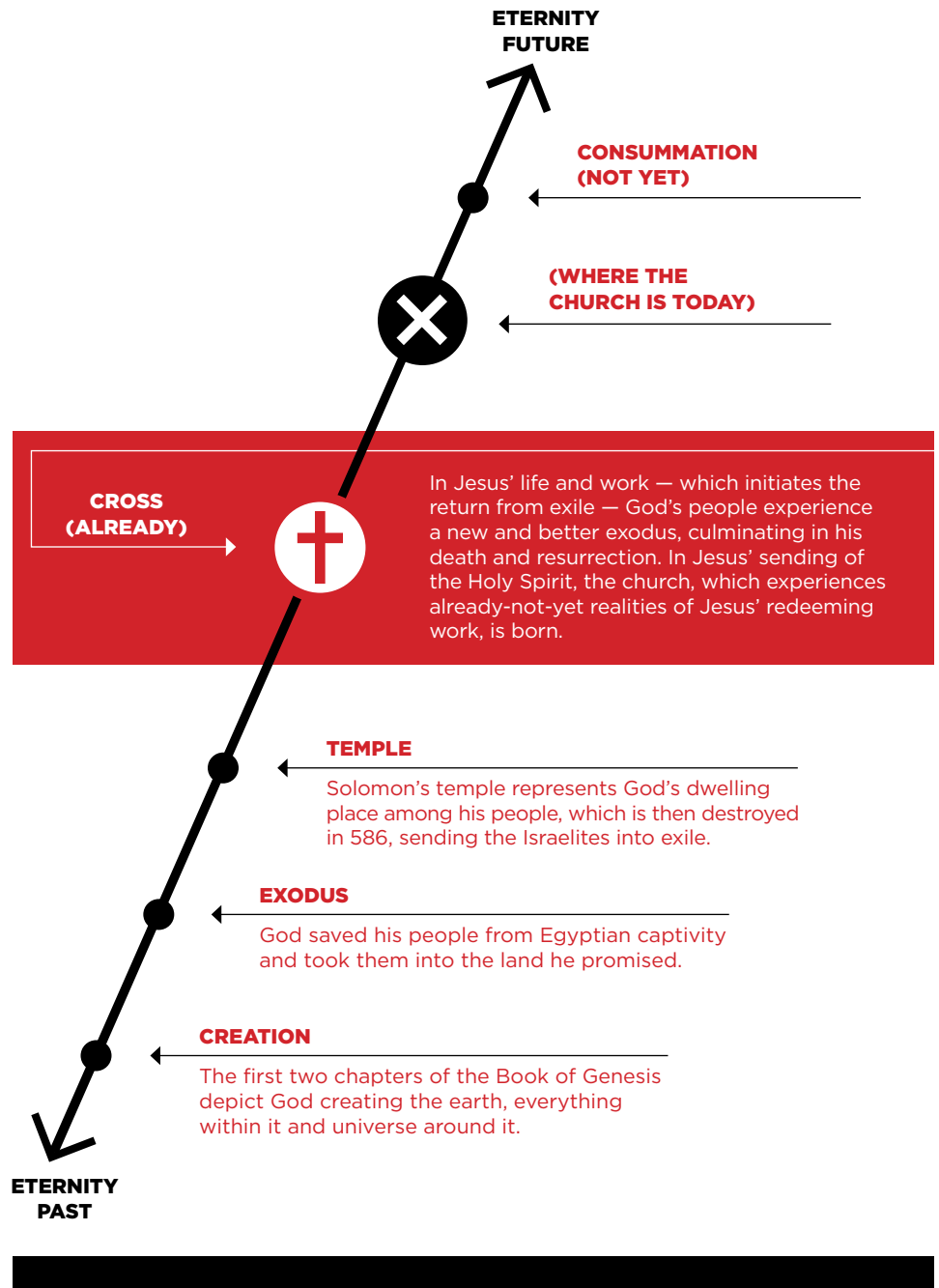
“Often in our teaching of the Scripture, whether that teaching is to children or adults, we divorce the biblical stories from both their immediate context and the overall storyline of Scripture. We do a great job of teaching moral lessons but too often we fail to teach how these stories fit in terms of the overall plan of God centered in the gospel. Biblical theology seeks to remedy this failure by helping us to think in terms of a ‘whole-Bible’ theology. It seeks to counter the growing biblical illiteracy in our day by returning us to the Scripture in all of its beauty, depth and breadth. It seeks to help us read all of Scripture in light of the ‘big picture’ in order that we may better preach, teach, and live out God’s Word in our daily lives.”

—STEPHEN J. WELLUM, PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AT SOUTHERN SEMINARY, IN SOUTHERN BAPTIST JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY, VOLUME 10; NUMBER 2

## A graphic of the storyline of the Bible

God created all things good, but Satan deceived mankind into sin, as a result of which God pronounced curses, curses he would later promise to overcome when he blessed Abraham. The prophets said that the restoration and fulfillment of the promises would be

according to the pattern of the events of the exodus. That prophesied new exodus and restoration was fulfilled in what Jesus did, culminating in his death and resurrection, and we await his return for the consummation of all things. —JAMES M. HAMILTON JR.





# Are You Ready for Gospel Ministry?

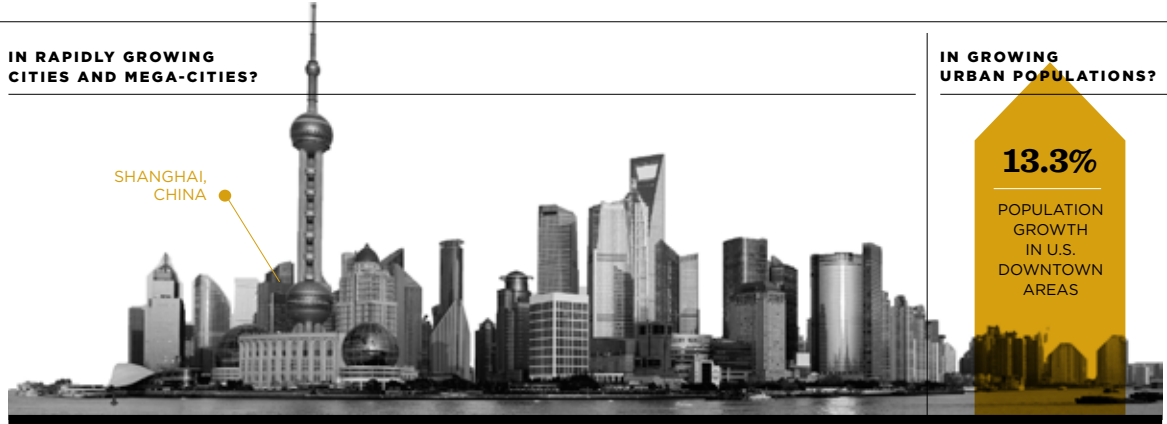
WHERE THE POPULATION IS EXPLODING?

2050



By 2050 the population of sub-Saharan Africa will grow by almost a billion.

IN RAPIDLY GROWING CITIES AND MEGA-CITIES?



80% of the world's people live in cities. By 2025, there will be 27 cities of at least 10 million people.

IN GROWING URBAN POPULATIONS?

13.3%

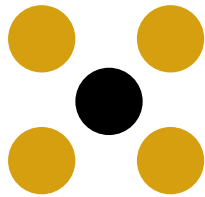
POPULATION GROWTH IN U.S. DOWNTOWN AREAS

WHERE THE GOSPEL IS NOT PROCLAIMED?



43% of the world's people groups remain unreached.

TO THE GROWING NUMBER OF "NONES"?

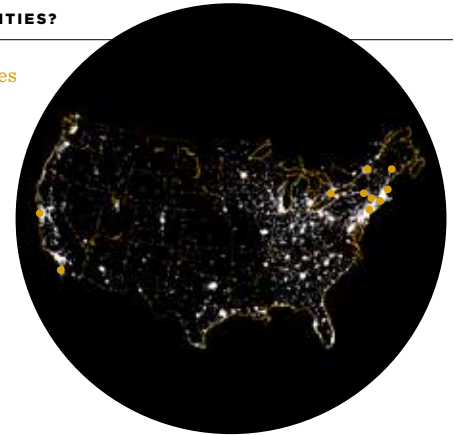


One-fifth of the U.S. public — and a third of adults under 30 — are religiously unaffiliated today.

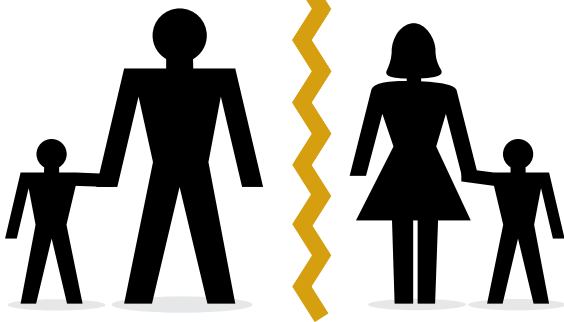
TO "POST-CHRISTIAN" U.S. CITIES?

Most post-Christian U.S. cities according to Barna:

- Albany, N.Y.
- Boston, Mass.
- Buffalo, N.Y.
- Burlington, Vt.
- Hartford, Conn.
- New York, N.Y.
- Portland, Maine
- Providence, R.I.
- San Diego, Calif.
- San Francisco, Calif.



IN THE MIDST OF DEVOLVING FAMILY STRUCTURES?



Barely half of U.S. adults are married — a record low — and one in three children in the U.S. live without a father.

IN THE FACE OF A SEXUAL REVOLUTION?

50%

Over half of Americans now approve of same-sex marriage.

WITH FEWER RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES?

2.2

Billion

More than 2.2 billion people live in countries where religious liberties are declining.



FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

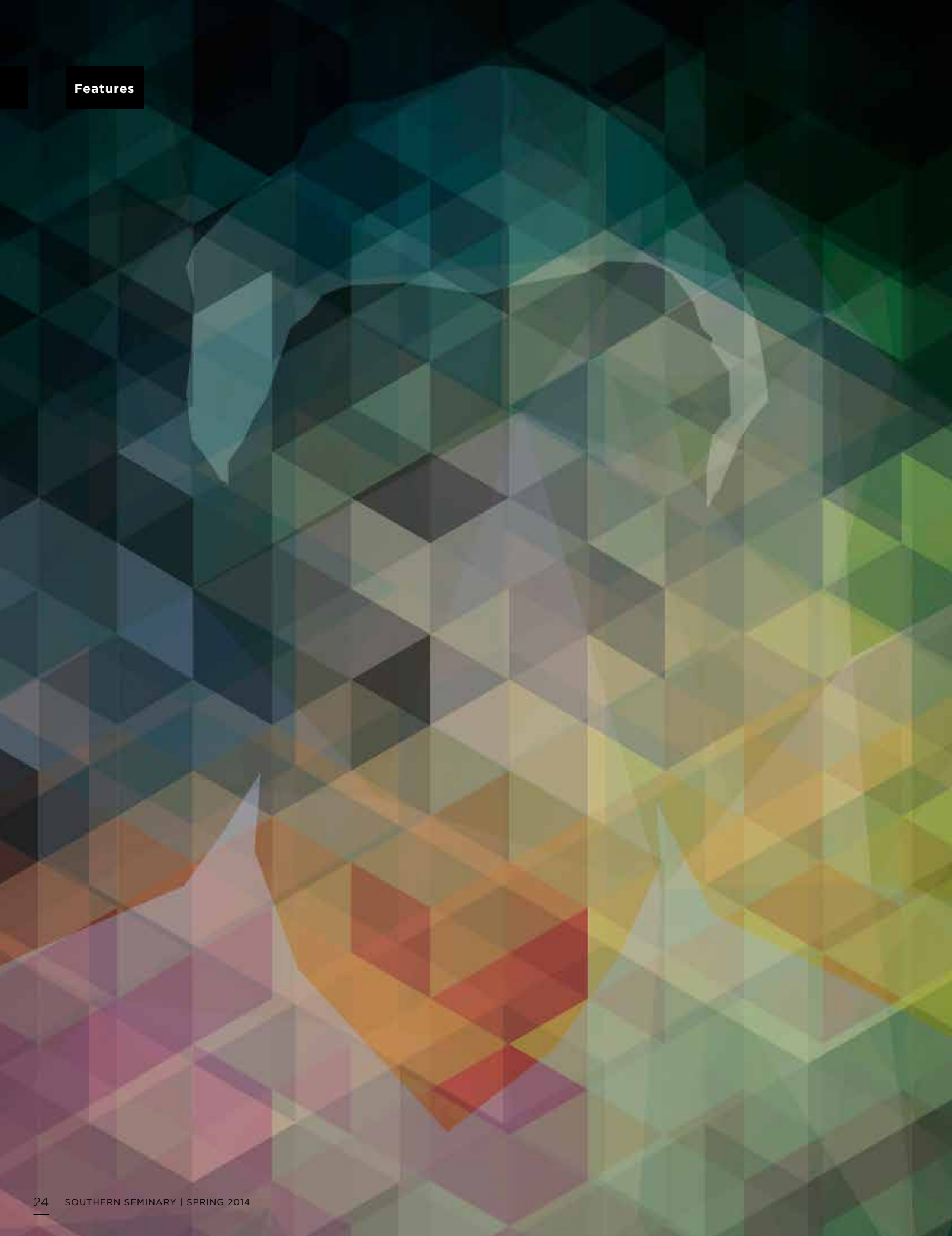
# THE BRIEFING

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# The pastor: Every church's theologian

By R. Albert Mohler Jr.

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*Every dimension of the pastor's calling is inherently  
and inescapably theological.*

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**E**very pastor is called to be a theologian. This may come as a surprise to some pastors, who see theology as an academic discipline taken during seminary rather than as an ongoing and central part of the pastoral calling. Nevertheless, the health of the church depends upon its pastors functioning as faithful theologians — teaching, preaching, defending and applying the great doctrines of the faith.

The transformation of theology into an academic discipline more associated with the university than the church has been one of the most lamentable developments of the last several centuries. In the earliest eras of the church, and through the annals of Christian history, the central theologians of the church were its pastors.

This was certainly true of the great Reformation of the 16th century as well. From the patristic era, we associate the discipline and stewardship of theology with names such as Athanasius, Irenaeus and Augustine. Similarly, the great theologians of the Reformation were, in the main, pastors such as John Calvin and Martin Luther. Their responsibilities often ranged beyond those of the average pastor, but they could not have conceived of the pastoral role without the essential stewardship of theology.

The emergence of theology as an academic discipline coincides with the development of the modern university. Theology was one of the three major disciplines taught in the medieval university. Yet, so long as the medieval synthesis was intact, the university was always understood to be in direct

service to the church and its pastors.

The rise of the modern research university led to the development of theology as merely one academic discipline among others — and eventually to the redefinition of theology as “religious studies” separated from ecclesiastical control or concern. In most universities, the secularization of the academy has meant that the academic discipline of theology has no inherent connection to Christianity, much less to its central truth claims.

These developments have caused great harm to the church, separating ministries from theology, preaching from doctrine and Christian care from conviction. In far too many cases, the pastor's ministry has been evacuated of serious doctrinal content and many pastors seem to have little connection to any sense of theological vocation.

All this must be reversed if the church is to remain true to God's Word and the gospel. Unless the pastor functions as a theologian, theology is left in the hands of those who, in many cases, have little or no connection or commitment to the local church.

The pastoral calling is inherently theological. Given the fact that the pastor is to be the teacher of the Word of God and the teacher of the gospel, it cannot be otherwise. The idea of the pastorate as a non-theological office is inconceivable in light of the New Testament.

Though this truth is implicit throughout the Scriptures, this emphasis is perhaps most apparent in Paul's letters to Timothy. In these letters, Paul affirms Timothy's role as a theologian — affirming that all of

Timothy's fellow pastors are to share in the same calling. Paul emphatically encourages Timothy concerning his reading, teaching, preaching and study of Scripture. All of this is essentially theological, as is made clear when Paul commands Timothy to "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you" (2 Tim 1:13-14). Timothy is to be a teacher of others who will also teach. "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2).

As Paul completes his second letter to Timothy, he reaches a crescendo of concern as he commands Timothy to preach the Word, specifically instructing him to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and

**In reality, there is no dimension of the pastor's calling that is not deeply, inherently and inescapably theological. There is no major question in ministry that does not come with deep theological dimensions and the need for careful theological application. The task of leading, feeding and guiding the congregation is as theological as any other vocation conceivable.**

instruction" (2 Tim 4:2). Why? "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths" (2 Tim 4:3-4).

As Paul makes clear, the pastoral theologian must be able to defend the faith even as he identifies false teachings and makes correction by the Word of God. There is no more theological calling than this — guard the flock of God for the sake of God's truth.

Clearly, this will require intense and self-conscious theological thinking, study and consideration. Paul makes this abundantly clear in writing to Titus, when he defines the duty of the overseer or pastor as one who is "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:9). In this single verse, Paul simultaneously affirms the apologetical and polemical facets of the pastor-theologian's calling.

In reality, there is no dimension of the pastor's calling that is not deeply, inherently and inescapably theological. There is no problem the pastor will encounter in counseling that is not specifically theological in character. There is no major question in ministry that does not come with deep theological dimensions and the need for careful theological application. The task of leading, feeding and guiding the congregation is as theological as any other vocation conceivable.

Beyond all this, the preaching and teaching of the Word of God is theological from beginning to end. The preacher functions as a steward of the mysteries of God, explaining the deepest and most profound theological truths to a congregation which must be armed with the knowledge of these truths in order to grow as disciples and meet the challenge of faithfulness in the Christian life.

Evangelism is a theological calling as well, for the very act of sharing the gospel is, in short, a theological argument presented with the goal of seeing a sinner come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to be a faithful evangelist, the pastor must first understand the gospel and then understand the nature of the evangelist's calling. At every step of the way, the pastor is dealing with issues that are irrefutably theological.

As many observers have noted, today's pastors are often pulled in many directions simultaneously — and the theological vocation is often lost amidst the pressing concerns of a ministry that has been reconceived as something other than what Paul intended for Timothy.

The managerial revolution has left many pastors feeling more like administrators than theologians, dealing with matters of organizational theory before ever turning to the deep truths of God's Word and the application of these truths to everyday life. The rise of therapeutic concerns within the culture means that many pastors, and many of their church members, believe that the pastoral calling is best understood as a "helping profession." As such, the pastor is seen as someone who functions in a therapeutic role in which theology is often seen as more of a problem than a solution.

All this is a betrayal of the pastoral calling as presented in the New Testament. Furthermore, it is a rejection of the apostolic teaching and of the biblical admonition concerning the role and responsibilities of the pastor.

Today's pastors must recover and reclaim the pastoral calling as inherently and cheerfully theological. Otherwise, pastors will be nothing more than communicators, counselors and managers of congregations that have been emptied of the gospel and of biblical truth. ➤

*R. Albert Mohler Jr. is president of Southern Seminary*



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A FORUM

Members of the Southern Seminary faculty are at the forefront of contemporary discussions of biblical theology, both within academia and the local church. Since 2010, faculty members have published three works of full-Bible biblical theology, and at least three more books within the discipline. In what follows, those members, each of whom publish, teach and supervise in the area of biblical theology, answer questions about the storyline of the Bible and how that story connects and affects the life of the church.

**What unique emphases or conclusions about the biblical storyline grow out of your approach to biblical theology?**

**THOMAS R. SCHREINER:** One feature of my book [*The King in His Beauty*] is the emphasis on both the human and divine author. The goal is to read the message of the Old Testament in its historical context. For instance, what are the distinct contributions of Leviticus, Lamentations and Luke? At the same time, I try to read the Old Testament as the New Testament authors read it. The historical voice of the biblical writer is attended to and respected, but at the same time the canonical voice of the divine author is also heeded. I don't limit myself to what Leviticus means within the ambit of the Pentateuch, but also ask what it means in light of the revelation that has come in Jesus

Christ. Such an attempt does not nullify the historical meaning of the book. In fact, I spend most of my time on the former, while also considering the contribution the book makes now that the Christ has come.

**JAMES M. HAMILTON JR.:** I contend that the center of biblical theology, the big idea shared by every single biblical author, the dominant reality in their lives and writings, is that everything exists to display God's glory, to show his goodness, and that goodness is most clearly seen in God's just judgments that bring into sharp relief the beauty of his mercy.

I think we get to this conclusion by seeking to understand the biblical authors themselves. The goal is to understand their interpretive perspective, and the glory of God in salvation through judgment is the centerpiece of that perspective.



**Duane Garrett, John R. Sampey**  
Professor of Old Testament Interpretation and professor of biblical theology



**Peter Gentry**, professor of Old Testament interpretation



**James M. Hamilton Jr.**, associate professor of biblical theology



**Thomas R. Schreiner**, James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation and professor of biblical theology



**Brian J. Vickers**, associate professor of New Testament interpretation and biblical theology



**Stephen J. Wellum**, professor of Christian theology

### STEPHEN J. WELLUM, SPEAKING FOR PETER GENTRY AS WELL:

It is best to view the discipline of biblical theology as a hermeneutical discipline which allows us rightly to interpret and apply God's Word on its own terms. Scripture, as a Word-Act revelation, is God's own interpretation of his mighty actions through human authors, and it is crucial to interpret Scripture in such a way that we do justice to the parts in light of the whole canon and discern God's own terms for unfolding his redemptive plan centered in Jesus Christ.

It is my conviction that the backbone of the entire metanarrative of Scripture is the unfolding biblical covenants culminating in the coming of Christ and the new covenant era. What this entails for biblical theology is that in order to be truly biblical, we cannot "think God's thoughts after him" unless we carefully unpack the storyline of Scripture by unpacking the biblical covenants starting with creation and Adam, and seeing how all of God's purposes are centered in Christ as our new covenant head.

### How does biblical theology help the church understand the Old Testament and its role in the canon of Scripture?

**DUANE GARRETT:** Biblical theology, if properly executed, forces the Bible reader to grasp two realities when wrestling with an Old Testament text. First, one must determine what that text meant to its original audience or first readers in the context of Israelite history. If we have an interpretation of a text that radically differs from how they would have understood it, something is wrong.

Second, one must determine how the

text relates to the broader areas of theology and, where appropriate, to a New Testament fulfillment. This means that one must show continuity and fulfillment between how an Old Testament text is used in its original setting and how it is used in the New Testament. Furthermore, by giving the reader a kind of mental framework, a broad conceptual understanding of how the Bible works, biblical theology enables integration of the Old and New Testament.

### How does biblical theology shape specific, individual doctrines?

**BRIAN J. VICKERS:** Biblical theology shapes doctrine(s) by exploring how a particular doctrine arises and develops across the whole canon of Scripture. For instance, Genesis 15:6 says that "Abraham believed God and it (his faith in God and his promise) was counted to him for righteousness." That's the first time the word "believe" is used explicitly in the Bible, and it's coupled with the word "righteousness." Righteousness refers, on one level, to what God requires of his people, but God counts Abraham to be righteous by faith, not by doing acts of righteousness. As one reads further in the canon, the relationship between believing and righteousness progresses and develops and then, the New Testament writers, building on the Old Testament, show that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham and that it is only by believing in him that people are declared to be righteous before God — that is, justified.

By exploring how both ideas are understood across the canon, biblical theology gives us a fuller understanding of how justification arises organically in the Bible, and so gives us a comprehensive basis for formulating and stating the doctrine.

### Why is biblical theology valuable for the church?

**SCHREINER:** If Christians don't understand the already-but-not-yet, then we won't and can't understand the Scriptures. For example, when the kingdom comes in Jesus' ministry, the dead are raised, demons are cast out and the sick are healed. Satan's kingdom is overthrown. The Gospel writers clarify that victory over sin and Satan is due to Christ's death and resurrection. But what does this mean for us today if the kingdom has come? After all, sickness is rampant, death seems to reign over all and Satan is alive and well on the planet earth. The answer is the already-but-not-yet. The kingdom has come in Jesus, and, among other things, the gift of the Spirit demonstrates that the kingdom has come. And yet there is an eschatological proviso. Christ is risen, but we await the day of our resurrection, the final day when disease, demons and death are no more.

The already-not-yet teaches us that we won't obtain complete and final victory over sin during this life. Perfection won't be ours until the day of resurrection, and so we are called upon during this present evil age to fight against sin, to wage war against it, realizing at the same time that we won't be entirely free from it. The already warns us against passivity; the not yet reminds us that we are not all that we want to be or will be.

**HAMILTON:** Biblical theology is valuable for the church because the prophets learned to interpret earlier Scripture from Moses, then (on the human level) Jesus learned to interpret the Old Testament from Moses and the prophets, and then Jesus in turn taught his disciples to interpret the Old Testament the way that





Moses, the prophets and he himself understood it. In their writings to the church, the authors of the New Testament are inspired by the Spirit of God to teach the church how to understand Scripture and life the same way that Moses, the prophets and Jesus understood Scripture and life. This is their interpretive perspective. This is what the biblical theologian (i.e., Christian) seeks to understand and embrace.

Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). The church needs biblical theology to understand the Bible, to be sanctified in the truth.

**WELLUM AND GENTRY:** Given that biblical theology is a hermeneutical discipline which seeks to understand rightly the whole counsel of God, it is essential for the life and health of the church. If we are going to fulfill the commands of our Lord to take the gospel to the nations and to disciple people to obey all that our Lord has commanded, if we are going to apply all of Scripture to our lives so that we are thoroughly equipped for every good work, if we are going to help people know sound doctrine and keep them from being tossed back and forth with every wind of doctrine, then we must know how to read and apply the entire canon of Scripture rightly.

To be sure, biblical theology is not an end in itself; it is a means to the larger end of knowing the Triune God and his Word, and rightly discerning how to put it together in our theological thinking and daily lives. Faithfulness to our

Lord and Savior requires living under and in light of God’s most holy Word, and biblical theology is necessary in order to achieve this end.

#### **How can pastors effectively use biblical theology in their ministries?**

**VICKERS:** Because pastoral ministry is essentially the ministry of God’s Word in all sorts of circumstances and contexts, biblical theology is an essential tool for carrying out the work of ministry. Take the example of preaching — as the pastor goes about his weekly work of sermon preparation, biblical theology can help him keep an eye on the whole canon while working in the details of a particular text. It also frees him up to preach each text on its own terms, rather than feeling the responsibility of giving a full theological presentation of any and every doctrine connected to his text. Informed by biblical theology, the pastor is aware of what the rest of Scripture says about the issues he is dealing with in a single text, and that helps him hear the particular voice of his text. It also serves as a guide to connecting a text to the larger framework of Scripture, as he works through the textual, covenantal and canonical contexts of each text.

**GARRETT:** The value of biblical theology, in Old Testament studies, is that it draws the preacher or Bible teacher to make real connections between the Old Testament and the Christian life. For example, Leviticus 11 gives the kosher

dietary rules for Israel. What are we to make of this? We might give the rules a facile, moralizing interpretation, such as, “The Israelites avoided eating pork, and we should avoid sin.” We might create a fanciful allegory from the kosher rules, ascribing good or bad meanings to the clean and unclean animals. Most often, Christians simply ignore kosher legislation, treating it of historical interest only. A proper biblical theology would consider what the kosher laws meant in ancient Israel, how those principles (but not the specific rules) transfer forward, and carefully relate Old Testament kosher to what the New Testament says about food.

**HAMILTON:** Pastors can and should use biblical theology to understand the Bible in their own devotional reading of it, in their proclamation of it in preaching, in their explanation of it in teaching, in their application of it in counseling and in their incarnation of it in living. We need biblical theology for everything entailed by pastoral ministry. We need biblical theology to know how Jesus and the apostles, Moses and the prophets understood the Bible and life to walk with God. And we want to understand the Bible and life the same way they did, that we might walk with God as they did.

The biblical authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit. We are not. So our interpretations aren’t inerrant and infallible as theirs were. Still, we want to learn how to live and how to read the Bible from the biblical authors themselves. That’s what biblical theology is all about. ➤

# ‘Doing theology’ on Capitol Hill

PASTOR MARK DEVER SAYS THEOLOGY IS ‘INSEPARABLE’ FROM CHURCH LIFE

By Tom Strode

WASHINGTON — Mark Dever arrived on Capitol Hill in 1994 to pastor a church of primarily 70- to 90-year-old people that was weary after nearly a half century of decline and weighed down with pouring its limited funds into the maintenance of a block of real estate.

It also had a deeper problem.

Members of the church “were kind of a-theological, I would say,” recalled Matt Schmucker, the lone staff member at the time who remains today at Capitol Hill Baptist Church (CHBC), in a recent interview for *Southern Seminary Magazine*. “They knew they should be conservative. They knew they should look to the Bible. But at the same time there seemed to be this disconnect between what the Bible said and how they lived it out.

“They looked like the rest of America in many ways, except maybe they didn’t drink and smoke the way the rest of America did.”

Nearly 20 years later, the difference is greater than a membership dominated by 20 and 30 year olds instead of 70 to 90 year olds.

“We’re full of sinners ... but I can also say we are a people that is marked out and holy and distinct, and there’s a bright line now generally between the people known as Capitol Hill Baptist Church and then the people around us,” said Schmucker, who is also executive director of the semiannual conference, Together for the Gospel.

In the intervening two decades, “the Word has done everything,” he said. “It has made us. It has brought life, and it has reshaped us and it has united us and made us distinct.”

That began with the preaching of the Word.

“Mark just kept going to the Scriptures, going to the Scriptures, going to the Scriptures for instruction,” Schmucker said.

He would “point out how Christians are called to live together and to live distinctly from the world,” Schmucker said. “And that’s what we vastly needed to hear. ... The sin that was in this church looked a lot like the world, and Mark was — through preaching expositionally — calling the church to look different.”

For Dever, preaching was the major part, though not the only one, in helping the church grow theologically.

“The gospel is theology,” Dever said. “Everything we’ve talked about from Scripture is theology.

“So I understand when I preach I’m doing theology. When I pray, I think I’m doing theology. When we read Scripture, we’re listening to the raw material of theology. When we sing hymns, we’re singing theology. So I think theology is inseparable from what we’re about as a church, especially when we assemble.”

Instead of theology “being some exotic spice that some people add to their churches to give it a special, extra kick, it is that without which there is no meal,” he said. “There’s just no church there. There’s no meat.”

Dever, a former chairman of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Board of Trustees, sees the inseparability of the church and theology in Eph. 3:10-11, which says that “through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.”

He said, “So it seems that in God’s decision to have his justice met by his mercy in Christ and to have the proclamation of



**I understand when I preach I'm doing theology. When I pray, I think I'm doing theology. When we read Scripture, we're listening to the raw material of theology. When we sing hymns, we're singing theology. So I think theology is inseparable from what we're about as a church, especially when we assemble.**

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that be at the core of the center of the life of the local church, the local church then naturally and necessarily becomes the center of the display of God's glory and his attributes, his characteristics."

Dever — with degrees from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Southern Seminary and the University of Cambridge — prepared for more than a decade to do theology in an academic setting. He preached one Sunday in 1993 for the Capitol Hill church and was "ambushed" by God. For his wife, Connie, and him, it was "a subjective sense of God's call on my life," he said of his change in plans to become pastor.

He began his pastorate by preaching expositionally and has continued to do so — with rare exceptions. He "slowly but surely turned up" the "content density of the sermons," Dever said. "I think I deliberately worked on the sermons knowing this is a believing church but it hadn't been maybe that well-taught of a church, that well-disciplined of a church."

He also was "giving away lots of books, encouraging people to read and using Wednesday night Bible study to do more

teaching," he said. He prayed and evangelized. "I love telling non-Christians the gospel," he said.

"In God's kindness, we saw some early conversions and slowly but surely people started visiting," Dever said.

Now, the church building, located just four blocks from the U.S. Supreme Court Building, is filled for corporate worship, and several other churches in the Washington, D.C., area are thriving as revitalizations or plants with pastors, members and funds provided by CHBC.

Dever and the church provide other opportunities for growth in understanding the Bible and its theology outside the Sunday and Wednesday gatherings.

On Sunday morning, the church offers "core seminars" on such subjects as Old Testament, New Testament, systematic theology, apologetics, missions, spiritual disciplines, marriage and money. For children, the church uses a six-year systematic theology curriculum, *Praise Factory*, which is written by Connie Dever.

Mark Dever, meanwhile, reads aloud Richard Sibbes, a 17th-century English pastor, and other theologians at "theology breakfasts" to all members who wish to attend.

"We've seen Mark kind of squeeze theology into the diet through more than merely Sunday morning preaching," Schmucker said.

For Leia Joseph, the past five years at CHBC as first a single, now wife and mother, have produced "exponential" growth in her understanding of the Bible and the benefit of participating in a "special community of discipleship undefined by life-stage."

"[I] never sat under teaching that so specifically disciplined





Washington in 1994. He said he was “blown away by the preaching. I simply had never heard expositional preaching, and it changed my life.”

He served as a pastoral assistant and elder at the church before attending Southern Seminary, where he earned both a master of divinity and doctorate. Since 2008, he has been senior pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Sandy Springs, Ga.

“Over the years, I came to appreciate Mark’s unique gifts more and more,” Menikoff said. “However, the lesson that stuck with me more profoundly than any other lesson was simple: God uses his Word to build his church. I left convinced that I didn’t have to have Mark’s gifts to be a ‘successful’ pastor. I simply needed to love God’s Word and teach it as clearly and lovingly as I knew how. The rest is up to God. Is there a better truth for a pastor to cling to?” ➤

*Tom Strobe is a writer based in Washington, D.C., primarily reporting for Baptist Press and the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.*



my heart to truly understand how all of the Scriptures point to Christ,” Joseph said. “This understanding has ignited a greater hunger to be in the Word, to grow in my understanding of it and to share this with others.”

Dever and the church also have invested in the lives of future pastors, as well as other churches and their pastors.

Led by Dever and Schmucker, the church started 9Marks in 1998 to help build healthy churches and equip church leaders. In addition to producing books, articles, book reviews and a bi-monthly e-journal, 9Marks conducts conferences nationally and internationally and, three times a year, the church hosts 9Marks Weekenders, intensive Thursday-to-Monday training for pastors and church leaders.

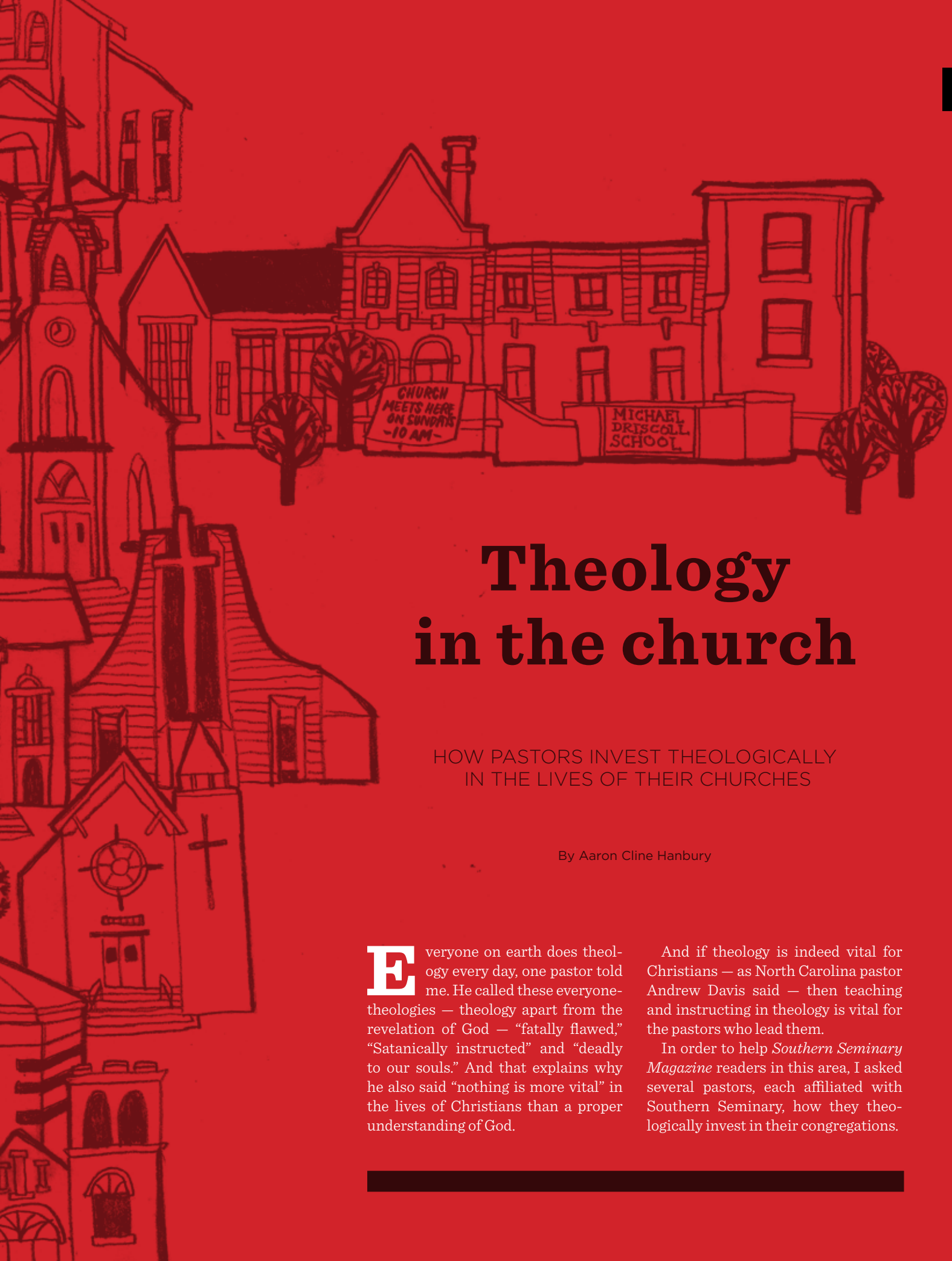
The church has interns and pastoral assistants to whom Dever devotes large amounts of time and attention. Each year, two groups of interns from throughout the United States and around the world spend five months at CHBC learning from Dever and others.

The church and Dever also host meetings, typically monthly, of the Columbia Baptist Ministers’ Association, which consists of Southern Baptist pastors from the D.C. area. Helping pastors and future pastors is the responsibility of churches, Dever said.

“Pastors need to know what a church is, and pastors need to teach others what a church is,” he said. “That’s theology. They need to know that from the Word. They need to teach that from the Word. We want to help pastors do that.”

Aaron Menikoff is one of those pastors who benefited from being part of CHBC and having Dever take him “under his wing.” Menikoff began attending CHBC upon his move to





# Theology in the church

HOW PASTORS INVEST THEOLOGICALLY  
IN THE LIVES OF THEIR CHURCHES

By Aaron Cline Hanbury

**E**veryone on earth does theology every day, one pastor told me. He called these everyone-theologies — theology apart from the revelation of God — “fatally flawed,” “Satanically instructed” and “deadly to our souls.” And that explains why he also said “nothing is more vital” in the lives of Christians than a proper understanding of God.

And if theology is indeed vital for Christians — as North Carolina pastor Andrew Davis said — then teaching and instructing in theology is vital for the pastors who lead them.

In order to help *Southern Seminary Magazine* readers in this area, I asked several pastors, each affiliated with Southern Seminary, how they theologially invest in their congregations.

### Theology for the pastor(s)

Davis, the senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Durham, N.C., described theology in the life of a local church as the shaping of a “city of truth” in the hearts of church members, recalling the words of the prophet Zechariah about Jerusalem.

“Elders in a local church are predominantly called to ‘feed the sheep’ by giving Christ’s followers a steady diet of healthy Bible teaching,” said Davis, who preaches to around 450 people every Sunday. “As the elders model careful handling of the text, they will not only be feeding the flock with healthy spiritual food week-by-week, but they will also be teaching the flock to feed themselves every day in their own quiet times.”

Davis, who earned a doctorate from Southern Seminary in 1998, explained that local churches should use “regular structures of theological instruction woven into the basic life of the church,” including “deep, textual sermons,” “excellent Sunday school offerings” and “*ad hoc* Bible studies throughout the week,” as well as small group-type meetings.

Another pastor, Juan Sanchez in Austin, Texas, echoed Davis’s sentiment about the role of church leadership. He said that theology in the life of a local church begins with the pastor.

“I think of myself as a pastor, who must, by the nature of shepherding, be a theologian,” said Sanchez, who holds master of divinity (1999) and master of theology (2002) degrees from Southern Seminary and is currently pursuing a doctorate. “And so it’s not the fact that I am pursuing a Ph.D. that makes me a theologian; it’s the fact I am a shepherd that makes me a theologian.”

Sanchez, who began serving the 400-attendee High Pointe Baptist Church in Austin in 2005, said that pastors “by nature” do theology when they apply the Bible to situations like suffering and complex issues such as divorce.

### Theology for the congregation

Developing theological interest within a congregation, for Aaron Menikoff, senior pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Sandy Springs, Ga., means allowing those — particularly men — drawn toward theology to find a place to exercise that interest within the body.

Before Menikoff arrived at Mount Vernon, functions for men — for those not in staff or deacons roles — tended toward programmatic-type events, like men’s breakfasts and father-son retreats. And even while he remains convinced about the benefits of those kinds of events, Menikoff thinks that they “fail the church in theological growth.”

And he sees theological growth among members as urgent as the existence of the church itself.

“If we can’t teach members of our churches why they believe what they believe, eventually they’ll choose not to believe it. And then the church will be gone. Perhaps, that sounds melodramatic, but I think when you see so many dying churches, maybe it isn’t melodramatic,” said Menikoff, a master of divinity (2002) and doctor of philosophy (2008) graduate of Southern Seminary.

Menikoff observed that the church didn’t offer young men interested, for example, in the kingdom of God, a channel to explore and exercise that interest. They needed either to enter full-time ministry or wait until an older deacon vacated a years-long Sunday school teaching position.

So a few years ago, Menikoff and the leadership at Mount Vernon, which averages around 330 people on Sundays, began creating opportunities for men to teach and lead in the church. First, they changed their church structure to an elder-led model. Menikoff said changing their model allowed younger men in the church to see important roles in the church for “godly men who know the Word.”

The church also created rotating



Sunday school classes in which teachers commit to teach for 18 weeks at a time. These teaching opportunities, said Menikoff, like the apostle Paul instructs Timothy, entrust reliable men with the gospel.

Menikoff plans also to start inductive Bible study training to equip women to teach other women at Mount Vernon.

Another pastor with whom I spoke focuses particularly on theological development through the lifespan of church members. To help ensure youth and children receive a theological grounding, Bill Haynes and the leadership of Grace Baptist Church in Somerset, Ky. — two of whom are alumni of Southern Seminary: Todd Meadows (doctor of ministry, 2013) and Scott Gilbert (master of divinity, 2006; currently pursuing a doctor of philosophy) — teach through a structured curriculum.

“We have a comprehensive strategy for our youth and hopefully for preparing each one of them for college,” said Haynes, a member of the Southern





Seminary board of trustees since 2005.

High school students at Grace Baptist, a church with around 350 attendees on a given Sunday, study systematic theology during ninth and 10th grades, and then apologetics during their final two years. In children's ministry, fourth graders learn about the doctrines of salvation and sanctification, fifth graders about the names of God and sixth graders about God's providence. On Wednesday nights, the children rotate through three months each of choir, learning about missions and "Kids 4 Truth," a curriculum about truth.

Haynes, who is the founding senior pastor of Grace Baptist, told me theology is "vital" to how people formulate their lives, which is why the church invests in theological training.

"I personally believe the statement that goes, 'Orthodoxy makes orthopraxy.' Our practice grows out of our theology, and unless we have a sound theology, we won't formulate our lives properly," he said.

### **Theology for the erudite and upwardly mobile**

The three and a half year-old church plant, City on a Hill Church outside Boston, Mass., sits in one of the most fast-paced and secular regions of the United States. And the congregation includes members studying at Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Boston College.

City on a Hill's lead pastor, Bland Mason, learned early on that the busyness of many of his members, "whether they are a Harvard Medical School student or a hedge fund manager," offers unique challenges. And the Boston culture causes many members' study or work hours to range significantly and drives "intense" competition in their fields. So, Mason said, in order to reach and serve his people, City on a Hill weaves "theological education into the rhythms members already practice," such as community groups and worship gatherings and then looks for "strategic opportunities to equip

them further in specific ways."

Each week, the preaching at City on a Hill is deeper theologically than many congregations would endure. Since most people in worship gatherings hold, or are working on, graduate degrees and advanced study, they are accustomed to listening critically and processing big ideas, Mason said.

In addition, City on a Hill offers occasional "equipping classes," which "last for a few hours and involve diving into topics like the gospel and sexuality, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and spiritual warfare," said Mason, both a master of divinity (1997) and doctor of philosophy (2005) graduate of Southern Seminary.

Mason and the church's leaders also train members to engage unbelievers by providing opportunities to gather with non-Christians in a public place to discuss theology.

"These events will last approximately an hour and delve topics such as science and theology, the divinity of Jesus and 'What is justice in God's eyes?'" he said. "We will provide further study material for those who attend and will encourage our people to read ahead and follow up with the non-Christians they brought."

Mason, who, in addition to his ministry at City on a Hill, is the chaplain for Major League Baseball's Boston Red Sox, said that "theology frames out a person's worldview and every moment of every day is lived either consistent with this gospel framework or in conflict with it."

As Davis told me, Christians cannot integrate their lives and doctrine with perfection; they must continue to grow in their theology. And, if Christians must continue to grow in theology, then pastors must continue to teach theology to them. ➤

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*Aaron Cline Hanbury is managing editor of Southern Seminary Magazine.*

# A natural integration of biblical truth, life and ministry: A report from the School of Theology

By RuthAnne Irvin with Aaron Cline Hanbury

**W**hen, last summer, Gregory A. Wills became the new dean of Southern Seminary's School of Theology, he assumed leadership of a school "already in excellent shape" with a "fine faculty, an extraordinary, a remarkable faculty."

Wills' task, then, was not to reinvent the seminary's oldest and central school. Instead, he looks to build on the foundation of his predecessors in order to "find ways to take a good thing — a great thing — and make it even more effective."

Wills, in an interview with *Southern Seminary Magazine* writers, described this as making "necessary changes" in order to "improve the way that [the school] helps students to equip themselves" for faithful gospel ministry. He and his faculty will continue "finding ways for them to grow, not just in knowledge and scholarship or understanding the Scriptures, but in applying that to their own lives," he said.

One of the immediate ways the School of Theology is taking "a good thing" and making it more effective is offering two new doctoral degree programs within the discipline of biblical theology, both of which represent "a formalizing of the interests and emphasis" already present in the seminary's classrooms.

"We are able to produce programs like this that are compelling not just because of what biblical theology is now, but because we've got these scholars here who are world-class, who are doing a great deal of publishing and scholarship in this area," he said.

"We already had professor [James M. Hamilton Jr.] teaching biblical theology, and all of our professors, in one way or another, are doing biblical theology," Wills said, referencing

recent works of full-Bible biblical theology by professors Hamilton, Peter Gentry (along with systematic theology professor Stephen J. Wellum) and Thomas R. Schreiner. These new degree options are "a fine-tuning and formalizing of interests we already had and things that the biblical studies faculty were already doing."

Beginning in fall 2014, the seminary will offer biblical theology programs at both doctor of ministry (D.Min.) degree and doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) degree levels. The D.Min. is a non-residential professional degree for ministers with at least three years of experience. The Ph.D. is a research-based terminal degree, and the most advanced degree within American higher education.

"The approach we take to the Bible makes all the difference in every area," Wills said, explaining the significance of the seminary's investment in biblical theology. "We tend to read the Bible to find out what place Christ should have in our lives, how Christ fits into our story. But biblical theology reminds us that that's not really the question; the question is not how Jesus fits into our plans, but how we fit into his."

Wills said that biblical theology reveals how the Bible fits together and how each part also relates to each other part and how each part relates to the whole.

"Biblical theology is fundamentally important because it does not let us forget our place in God's story," he said. "He is accomplishing a mighty work through Christ Jesus and we have our place, each one of us in that story and what God is doing and what God is accomplishing. Of course, putting it this way, putting the importance of biblical theology this way is saying that the Bible is a living and active sword of the Holy Spirit ...

“Putting it this way reminds us that the Bible, as an active document and as an active weapon of warfare, reminds us that we are at war and biblical theology doesn’t let us forget that the overarching story of Scripture is the story of redemption of a fallen race through Christ Jesus that is an ongoing warfare and has a consummation in the eschaton,” he said.

And both new programs, Wills said, will help equip students to serve the church.

“We designed this program to equip both teachers and ministers of the gospel, whether he is a pastor or a minister or missionary or evangelist,” he said.

Scholarship for the sake of the church is something with which Wills himself, as an elder at the Louisville, Ky.-area LaGrange Baptist Church, is familiar. He said his deanship combined with local church “makes perfect sense” because theological scholarship and Christian ministry work together. And this, Wills said, is a defining characteristic of the faculty across the School of Theology.

“We have a faculty that understands the natural integration of biblical truth and Christian life and Christian ministry,” he said. “These are not uneasy partners but rather these are natural partners.”

And a major goal for Wills moving forward is to further encourage the faculty to “do what they do to the best of their ability and to the greatest effectiveness possible.” He hopes to encourage and continue to sustain professors in their work, supporting them in whatever ways necessary.

In fact, the heart of the seminary’s faculty is what excites him most about the future of Southern Seminary’s School of Theology.

He said, “The fact that we have this incredible faculty of remarkable scholars who are themselves kingdom workers and are seeking ... to produce kingdom warriors, that’s what excites me.”

—  
*RuthAnne Irvin is a news writer for Southern Seminary Magazine; Aaron Cline Hanbury is managing editor.*



# A historical theologian for the church

NETTLES TO RETIRE AFTER ALMOST 40 YEARS OF TEACHING

By Jeff Robinson



**A**t the conclusion of the spring 2014 semester, Thomas J. Nettles, who has served as professor of historical theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary since 1997, will retire from full-time teaching after 38 years in the classroom.

“I have taught areas which I have thought are important and even critical for the health of Christianity and for the health of Baptist churches. I have tried to teach things that I felt had been ignored or represented in a wrong way,” Nettles recently told *Southern Seminary Magazine*. “So I think that is what has driven me to be an advocate of things that some others are not advocating. I have sought to help students become better pastors by helping them to understand the critical truths that churches have been built upon in the past.”

I had the privilege of studying under Nettles for eight years, first as a master of divinity student and then during my pursuit of a doctor of philosophy degree in historical theology. Fourteen years after I first met Nettles, he remains my mentor and dear friend today.

My wife and I moved to Louisville, Ky., in late 1999, not knowing a single person. We began attending LaGrange Baptist Church with the Nettles and it wasn't long until they essentially adopted our family. During our time at the seminary, God gave us four children and the Nettles were the first besides us to hold each of them.

Before joining the faculty at Southern nearly 17 years ago, Nettles spent 21 years at Southwestern, Mid-American Baptist Seminary and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Donald S. Whitney, now a fellow professor at Southern Seminary, was also a student of Nettles' at Southwestern and has since developed a decades-long relationship with him.

“Tom has shepherded me countless times, both when I was pastoring and during the past nineteen years as a professor,” Whitney said.

“On so many occasions when I was burdened, I made my way to Tom's office, where he always welcomed me,



listened as long as I needed to talk, offered counsel and prayed with me.”

Nettles’ students can attest that his classroom is a place of joy and song. A gifted singer, Nettles often breaks spontaneously into a song or hymn. He is legendary for a particular song, as Whitney recounts.

“No matter how many classes you have had with Tom Nettles, you’ve never really had him as a professor until he has sung in class ‘Ya Got Trouble’ from *The Music Man*, a musical in which he played the lead when he was in college,” he said.

During his four decades in the classroom, Nettles has served as a spiritual father to many sons.

Tom Ascol, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Fla. and chairman of Founders Ministries, is one such son. When he was a student at Southwestern in 1979, he first met Nettles. In the years since, their families have developed a deep and intimate friendship. Nettles nearly took a pastoral position at Grace in 2007, but decided to remain at Southern.

“Tom has a pastor’s heart and considers his teaching ministry to be pastoral work,” Ascol said. “He has encouraged me countless times through the years by giving me biblical counsel, offering needed but at times unwanted rebuke and correction and challenging me to think more biblically and carefully about knotty pastoral issues.”

Tom Hicks, who serves as a pastor of discipleship at Morningview Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala., studied under Nettles as both a masters and doctoral student in the early to late 2000s. Hicks and Nettles have developed a deep friendship over the years.

“Dr. Nettles has been faithful to shepherd students both inside and outside of the classroom,” he said. “I remember that he often began classes by reading Scripture and having prayer. He would then sometimes lead the class in singing an old hymn. After singing, he would show how rich theology and worship had been tightly interwoven.”

Nettles, however, never planned on becoming a seminary professor.

After high school, Nettles attended Mississippi College, a Southern Baptist school, and then moved on to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Nettles entered seminary during a tumultuous time in the Southern Baptist Convention. Controversy over the question of the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture was stirring. The Lord would eventually insert Nettles and a fellow Southwestern student, Russ Bush, into the front lines of this denominational battle.

During his second year as a master of divinity student at Southwestern Seminary, Nettles accepted the challenge of a moderate professor to defend biblical inerrancy in a class session. The experience was pivotal to his ministry future.

Nettles eventually completed a doctor of philosophy degree in historical theology, still at least partly convinced that his future lay in the pulpit of a local church.

But in 1976, Southwestern hired him to a tenure-track teaching position in the history department. In 1980, Moody Press published a landmark study on the historic Baptist view of Scripture, *Baptists and the Bible*, co-written by Nettles and his friend Bush. The book crystallized and strengthened the case for inerrancy as they showed how thoroughly Baptists expressed their adherence to that fundamental doctrine in the past.

In addition to *Baptists and the Bible*, he has written numerous important books on Baptist ecclesiology, catechisms and the place of Calvinism in Baptist history.

“Tom Nettles is a formidable scholar,” said historian Gregory A. Wills, dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary. “His *Baptists and the Bible*, co-authored with Russ Bush, and *By His Grace and for His Glory*, have had wide influence and established him as a Baptist scholar of the front rank.

“His recent biographies of James P. Boyce and Charles H. Spurgeon are remarkable achievements. The breadth of his command of the his-



**While divine providence changed Nettles’ ministry path from the pulpit to the classroom, legions of students have benefitted from his approach to teaching and writing church history that has edified hearts as much as it has trained minds.**

torical documents of the church across 2000 years has amazed me many times. Most impressive, however, is the fact that his scholarship has always been in the service of the church’s gospel mission,” Wills said.

Among the best-known of his other books is a study of the doctrines of grace in Baptist history, *By His Grace and for His Glory*. In the same way he and Bush showed the ubiquitous nature of adherence to inerrancy in our Baptist forebears, Nettles argued exhaustively that Baptists are in fact theological heirs of the Protestant Reformation.

While divine providence changed Nettles’ ministry path from the pulpit to the classroom, legions of students have benefitted from his approach to teaching and writing church history that has edified hearts as much as it has trained minds.

“I have always wanted what I’ve done to be serviceable to the church,” Nettles said. “I’ve wanted it to be something that can be taken by our students who are going into the pastoral ministry and be used for the glory of God and the clarity of the gospel and the good of their churches.”

*Jeff Robinson is elder of preaching and pastoral vision at Philadelphia Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. In 2008, he finished his doctorate in historical theology under the supervision of Thomas J. Nettles.*

## Seminary mourns deaths of alumni, former leadership, early African-American graduate



HULL

**WILLIAM HULL (1954, 1960)** (1930-2013) the seminary's first provost and former dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary, died Dec. 10, 2013 from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, according to a press release from Samford University.

"Bill Hull was a gifted scholar and a born leader, and he stood as a giant in his generation of Southern Baptists," said R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of the seminary. "He was a dedicated professor and a gifted administrator, who helped to define the roles of dean and provost at Southern Seminary."

Hull taught New Testament at the seminary for 17 years, during which time he served as dean of the School of Theology and provost. In 1975, he became the pastor of First Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., and in 1987 he became the provost at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

Hull earned a bachelor's degree from Samford University in 1951, and then bachelor of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from Southern Seminary.

He was a widely published and cited author of works on theological and preaching matters.

He leaves behind his son, David Hull, and his daughter, Susan Hull Walker. His wife, Wylodine, died in 2012.



HICKS

**WADE BRYANT HICKS (1950, 1956)** (1925-2014) retired professor of missions at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, died Jan. 12, 2014. He was 88.

"Bryant Hicks was a man of deep passion and great energy, who shared that passion and energy with his students," said R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of the seminary. "He helped to shape a generation of Southern Baptist missionaries. He was also a man of great kindness and collegiality. Our hearts go out to his wife Peggy and the entire Hicks family. The Southern Seminary family is praying for them."

Hicks, a United States Navy veteran and member of Louisville's Lyndon Baptist Church, taught at Southern Seminary for more than 40 years, as a full-time

faculty member from 1965 until 1993, and then as a senior professor from 1994 to 2006. In 1983, he assumed an endowed professorship as the M. Theron Rankin Professor of Foreign Missions.

Before joining the seminary's faculty, Hicks was a missionary to the Philippines for 10 years with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Before that, from 1950 to 1955, he pastored Buck Run Baptist Church near Frankfort, Ky.

Hicks earned a bachelor's degree from University of North Carolina, and master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southern Seminary.

Hicks leaves behind his wife, Peggy G. Hicks; son, Wade B. Hicks Jr. (Marian); daughter, Bonnie Hicks Ginter (Brownie); son, Lee Greene Hicks (Debbie); brother, Robin Hicks (Julia); eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



GOATLEY

**W.H. GOATLEY SR. (1956)** (1930-2014) found a place of service, and came to know

servicing as pastor of the First Baptist Church, Eminence, Ky., to be God's will for his life. He was called to serve as pastor February 14, 1958 and retired Oct. 31, 2003. He joyfully served as pastor emeritus until his departure from this life on Jan. 2, 2014. He was 84.

As a young man, he acknowledged his call to ministry and was licensed and ordained at Zion Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., under the pastorate of Dr. D. E. King. In preparation for God's call in his life to the gospel ministry, he was among the first African-Americans to matriculate at and graduate from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary after the abolition of the "Day Law," which prohibited black and white students from attending classes together in Kentucky. He graduated from the seminary in 1956 and later received an honorary doctorate degree from Simmons Bible College.

Born to John and Effie Goatley on March 10, 1930, he was preceded in death by his parents, his siblings (Olivia, John, Clifford and Eugene), his first wife of 41 years (Lillian) and his foster daughter (Shirley Duncan). Rejoicing in his life are: his wife, Verlene; sons Wilbert, Jr. (Dionne) and David Emmanuel (Pamela) and many other extended family members.

*The Goatley family provided this obituary.*

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**REBEKAH HANNAH**

Southern Seminary ('10)  
M.Div. School of Theology

When Rebekah Hannah decided to attend Southern Seminary, it was because of the biblical counseling program.

"I wanted to be in a place where I could learn how to use the sufficiency of Scripture to help hurting people," she said.

Now, having graduated with a master of divinity in biblical counseling in 2010, she's doing just that. Hannah currently serves in a variety of roles, including working long-distance with seminary professor Stuart Scott and 180 Counseling and Education and as a women's ministry fellow on the campus of Columbia University in New York City.

"Seeing God act as redeemer in people's lives is an absolute privilege," said Hannah. "Counseling others with God's Word is one of the best things you could ever do."

Hannah's time at Southern Seminary gave her a strong theological basis that she uses to counsel women on a daily basis.

"Dr. Stuart Scott was particularly influential," she said. "He modeled so well how to counsel through idols of the heart and healing for the hurting."

With the training she gained at Southern, Hannah plans to continue her counseling ministry, seeing God glorified as his people grow in their relationship with Christ.

She said, "Learning how to apply what seminary teaches outside of the classroom is where you truly grow to be more like Christ and learn how to have a truly effective ministry."



**BOBBY JAMIESON**

Southern Seminary ('13)  
M.Div. School of Theology

**I'm a member of Third Avenue Baptist Church here in Louisville**, where I lead a home group and preach and teach occasionally. Vocationally, I serve as assistant editor for 9Marks, writing and editing resources that try to give pastors a biblical vision for the local church. Once in a while I get to preach and teach at other churches on behalf of 9Marks.

**The best gift I've received from seminary is a deeper, fuller toolbox for interpreting and teaching the Bible.** Professors such as Schreiner, Gentry, Hamilton, Wellum, and Pennington have taught me how to read the Bible as it wants to be read. So every time I approach the text of Scripture, whether for devotional reading or teaching or writing a book like this, I'm using tools that Southern professors have helped me hone.

Not only that, but the professors I've had at Southern model the conviction that fruitful ministry is founded on faithful theology. The main point of my book is that sound doctrine is for sound preaching, sound worship, sound discipling and sound evangelizing. So many professors I've studied under model these things not only in their classroom teaching, but also in their ministry to the church and their personal lives as Christians.

In the immediate future, **I plan to begin a Ph.D. in New Testament at Cambridge this fall.** After that, I hope to pastor a local church and continue writing and teaching as the Lord gives opportunity.



**CALVIN WITTMAN**

Southern Seminary ('03)  
D.Min. School of Theology

**What is your current place of ministry and how long have you been there?**

I am in my 15th year as pastor of Applewood Baptist Church.

**How did your theological education (in general), and Southern Seminary (in particular) aid your ministry?**

The D.Min. at Southern Seminary was, by far, my best seminary experience. It grew me as a preacher and as a pastor and gave me some wonderful new friends. One of the reasons I chose Southern Seminary was because of Dr. Albert Mohler, our president. Getting to know Dr. Mohler has been a life-enriching experience. He is one of the great Christian statesmen of our day and those who study at Southern will benefit from his leadership.

**What advice would you give those training for ministry now?**

If you are looking to become a better preacher and gain a deeper understanding of God's Word, I believe Southern Seminary can do for you what it has done for me.



## The life of Gideon sets ‘benchmark’ of God’s faithfulness

From where Garrett Milner sat in the delivery room, he could see and hear the doctors. One asked, “What’s the heart rate?”

The other replied, “I don’t hear a heart rate.”

Minutes earlier, on Oct. 19 of last year, nurses at Louisville, Ky.’s Norton Suburban Hospital rushed Milner’s wife, Leigh, into the operating room for emergency cesarean section surgery. She experienced a pregnancy condition — as rare as about one out of 200 pregnancies — in which the child loses his or her oxygen supply. And, in the case of Leigh and Garrett Milners’ 30-week-old son, Gideon, he couldn’t breathe for almost five minutes.

The baby boy emerged breathless and blue-colored. Leigh Milner, who spent the previous seven weeks on mandatory bedrest after her water broke only 23 weeks into pregnancy, asked her husband to pray for their son.

“It was a sweet moment of prayer, just to lean into God’s providence and sovereignty in all this,” Garrett Milner later remembered. “But, I didn’t think Gideon was coming out of it.”

Doctors attempted three different times to resuscitate him before he finally started breathing on his own.

Leigh Milner said about that moment, “I fully believe that the Lord answered our prayer.”

After doctors revived Gideon, he stabilized in the following hours while in the hospital’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Still, the Milners later learned that the hospital staff doubted that Gideon would live through the night. But, despite the bleak circumstances of Gideon’s birth, he continued to progress and grow. And, for the remainder of Gideon’s time there, the nurses referred to him as a “miracle.”

This was one of those moments where the hand of God was so evident in the way he cared for us through the church, in the way he preserved our son’s life, in the way he made the lips of non-believers in the hospital declare his name because of what he did. It’s one of those benchmark moments that we’ll always have.

Leigh and Garret Milner, both natives of Texas (The Woodlands and Katy, respectively), met during their junior years as students at the University of Texas A&M in College Station, where they both taught English to international students through Baptist Student Ministry. They married in the summer of 2010, following their graduations. And for two years after that, Garrett Milner served as an associate pastor at First Baptist Church of Bryan, Texas, near College Station.



In the fall of 2012, the Milners moved to Louisville to attend Southern Seminary, where Garrett Milner is now a master of divinity student, with the goal of serving as missionaries overseas.

The Milners chose the name “Gideon” — which means “mighty warrior” — from the Book of Judges, chapter six, where God chooses an unassuming man and uses him to defeat the Midianites with an army of merely 300 men.

“Looking at his circumstances, I can’t think of a more fitting name for this child,” said Garrett Milner. “He’s overcome huge odds, and God has definitely shown his miraculous power through the prayer of his people surrounding this whole situation.”

After eight weeks in the NICU, Gideon arrived at his home on the south side of Louisville a week before Christmas day. And Leigh and Garrett Milner see God’s faithfulness in preserving the life of their son as a marker of God’s faithfulness.

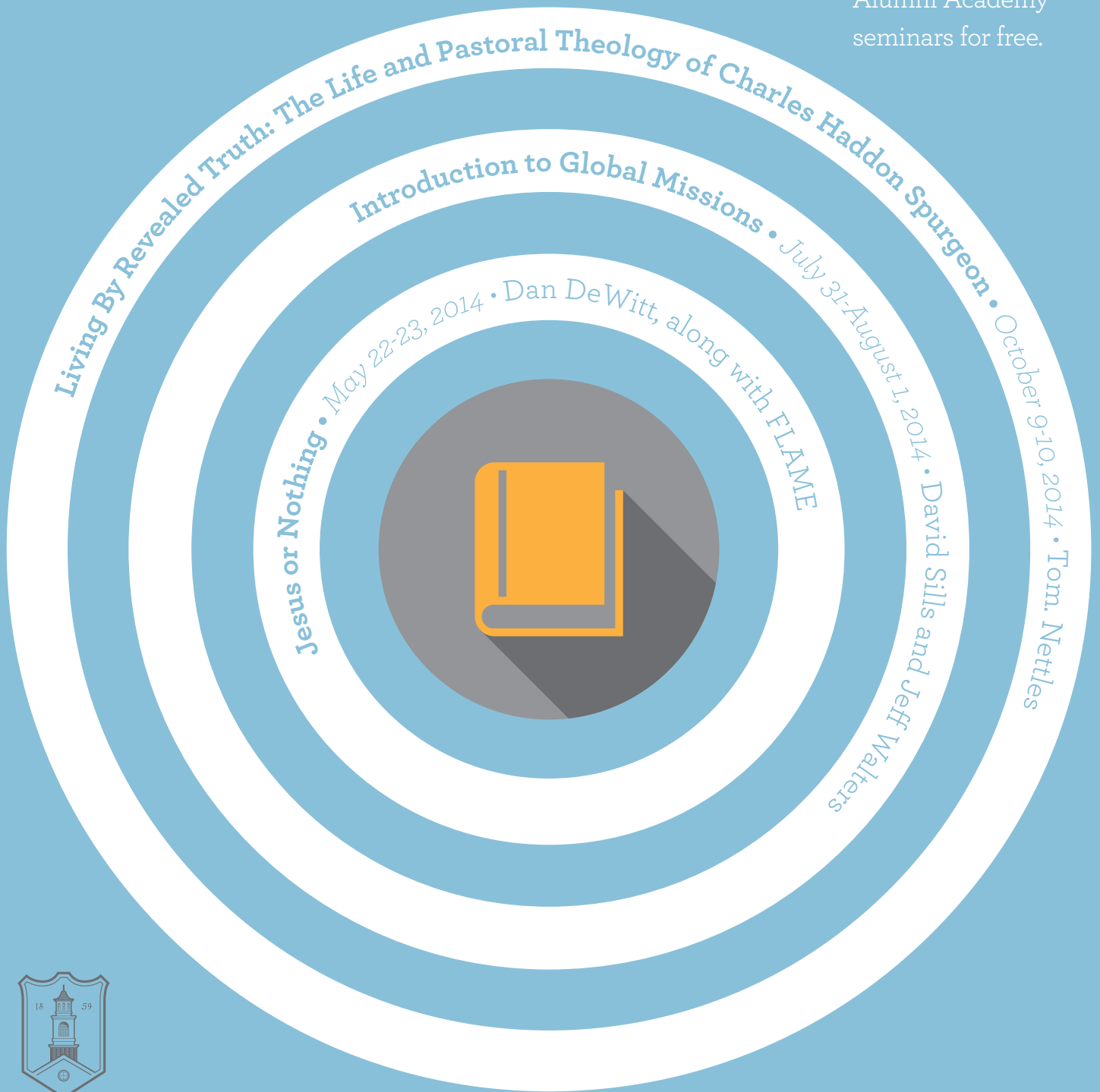
“This was one of those moments where the hand of God was so evident in the way he cared for us through the church, in the way he preserved our son’s life, in the way he made the lips of non-believers in the hospital declare his name because of what he did. It’s one of those benchmark moments that we’ll always have. And if there’s ever a time when we’re tempted to doubt, we’ll be able to look back and say, ‘You were faithful in this,’” said Garrett Milner.

“This is always going to be there for us to say, ‘God is faithful; he is good; he is merciful to us.’” —AARON CLINE HANBURY

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## Amber and Ken Singleton Faithful stewards



**K**en and Amber Singleton's connections to Southern Seminary did not begin when they joined the Foundation Board in 2006. Instead, their lives intertwined with the seminary beginning in 1993.

Amber Singleton was born and raised in Little Rock, Ark. She grew up attending First Baptist Church of Little Rock. There, she met Ken Singleton in the church's youth group. The two started dating while they were both in high school and married their senior years of college.

After graduating, Ken Singleton wanted to begin medical school, but due to the school's enrollment at the time, he joined the United States Navy as a naval flight officer. The Singletons' first permanent base assignment was in Maryland. While in Maryland, the Singletons met several Christian couples who encouraged their faith. Ken

Singleton began to work two weeks away and four to six weeks home.

During this time, a friend introduced him to several sermons of an influential theologian. These sermons stirred in Singleton a desire to study Reformed theology further on his own.

Eventually, several years later, Ken Singleton was completing medical school through the military. They joined a Presbyterian church in Jacksonville, N.C., during their last military assignment. The leadership at the church asked Singleton to become an elder, which caused him to study the doctrine of infant baptism.

As a Baptist, Ken Singleton knew little about the doctrine of infant baptism — the practice of baptizing children to include them in the Presbyterian church. Baptists believe that the Bible teaches baptism is by immersion and may only occur after a person becomes a

Christian and desires to join the church.

At the time of Ken Singleton's study, Amber Singleton's father, Orman Simmons — a member of Southern Seminary's Foundation Board — knew about Ken Singleton's struggle to understand infant baptism. He asked the seminary's new president, R. Albert Mohler Jr., if Ken Singleton could contact him with questions. After a phone conversation with Mohler and after reading seven books, Ken Singleton decided not to accept the elder position. He said Mohler was "instrumental" to his growth and understanding this doctrine during this time.

In 2006, the Singletons, now members of The Bible Church of Little Rock, joined Southern Seminary's Foundation Board. Several years after joining the board, one of their nine children, Seth, moved to Louisville, Ky., to study worship and pastoral ministry at Boyce College, the seminary's undergraduate school. Their son-in-law, Douglas Allison, who is married to Cammie, attends the seminary, too.

The way the seminary trains students encourages the Singletons. Amber Singleton said they are confident in Southern Seminary's commitment to "biblical integrity," and they know the seminary trains men and women to carry out the Great Commission competently.

"We are encouraged with the way Southern equips, teaches and trains theologically sound expository preachers, biblical counselors, worship pastors who lead worship and also pastor and send out biblically grounded missionaries," Amber Singleton said.

The Singletons' connections to the seminary stretch back to 1993, and they continue to serve the seminary community today. They're grateful for the Mohlers' service to the seminary and for their friendship.

"We are so grateful for the sacrifices the Mohlers and their children have made as Dr. and Mrs. Mohler oversaw the return of the seminary to biblical integrity and continue to guard that integrity to this day," Amber Singleton said. —RUTHANNE IRVIN



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## From the Foundation



**Craig Parker** is the vice president for institutional advancement and executive director of the Southern Seminary Foundation.

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## Southern's campus as a means of equipping

**T**he campus of Southern Seminary is one of our greatest assets. When visitors see our campus, a consistent refrain is just how beautiful this plot of ground under these Beech Trees is. However, we all know that assets age and must be maintained. Our campus has served us well since 1926, and in 2012 the Board of Trustees approved a far-reaching master plan to bring the facilities up to 21st-century standards.

Work is under way to begin the first phase of these upgrades to help us better execute the mission God has given us. The primary component of this phase is the Mullins Complex, which is currently undergoing renovation, and will be open this August.

One of the major factors of this first phase is Boyce College. With the developments of the master plan, the campus of Boyce College will join the campus of Southern Seminary in the renovated Mullins Complex. This combination of Boyce College and Southern Seminary ensures a high level of integration between the two and allows for continued growth at Boyce College.

The second phase of the master plan will include renovation of our campus library, increased space for parking on campus and other upgrades to our campus.

Each of these elements, along with the others not mentioned here, are mere aids in fulfilling the task the Lord has given us to train gospel ministers for faithful service in the local churches and mission fields of the world. This campus is not an end unto

The only way for Southern Seminary to live out its vision and to fulfill the calling that God has given is through the dedication, sacrifice and commitment of partners like you. Southern Seminary has the right faculty, a growing enrollment and an improving campus. One of our greatest assets, though, is a community of alumni and friends who believe in the vision of this school and are committed to support our mission.

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***This campus is not an end unto itself, but a means to that end of equipping the current generation — and of putting Southern in a position to train future generations — for a lifetime of faithful ministry as pastors, missionaries, leaders, teachers and any call God has placed on their lives.***

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itself, but a means to that end of equipping the current generation — and of putting Southern in a position to train future generations — for a lifetime of faithful ministry as pastors, missionaries, leaders, teachers and any call God has placed on their lives.

There are exciting years ahead. Let me invite you to lock arms with us as we seek to serve the Lord Jesus Christ by preparing faithful servants and positioning ourselves to do that for a long time to come.





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2825 LEXINGTON ROAD  
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