

SOUTHERN SEMINARY



We are **SERIOUS** *about the* **GOSPEL**

We Meet to Part, but Part to Meet



**Soldiers of Christ, in truth arrayed,
A world in ruins needs your aid:
A world by sin destroyed and dead;
A world for which the Savior bled.**

Basil Manly Jr., one of Southern Seminary's quartet of founding professors, famously wrote the hymn that was sung at the seminary's first commencement in 1860 – and at every commencement ceremony thereafter.

The hymn is a stirring example of powerful hymnody, affirming the purpose for which Southern Seminary was established. It is also a poignant and emotion-laden song that reflects the heart and soul of this seminary as a Gospel institution.

Every verse speaks to the very essence of Southern Seminary's heart and mission, but the final verse contains words that dare the Christian's eye to remain dry.

"We meet to part, but part to meet, when earthly labors are complete, to join in yet more blest employ, in an eternal world of joy."

I have now presided at 36 Southern Seminary commencement ceremonies, watching thousands of Southern Seminary graduates receive their diplomas and go out into the world, ready to fulfill the Seminary Hymn's affirmation of the Great Commission: "His Gospel to the lost proclaim, good news for all in Jesus' name."

I shake the hand of each graduate

as I place the diploma in eager hands. The experience is more emotional than I had anticipated, and it grows more emotional for me with each commencement ceremony.

It is those words of the closing verse that are so present in my mind. "We meet to part, and part to meet, when earthly labors are complete." Those words are so true, and so powerful. They express the truth exactly as we witness students come and graduates go. We meet to part – Southern Seminary exists to prepare ministers and missionaries who will go, to serve Gospel churches and to take the Gospel to the nations. But we also part to meet. There will be a time when we are all together again – not just the graduates of one Southern Seminary class or graduation, but of all generations. And that great assembly will include all the redeemed of all the ages, men and women from every tongue and tribe and people and nation.

The past few weeks have reminded us of how short our lives and ministries can be, and of how hard it can be to part. We experienced the death of Professor Chip Stam after a long battle with cancer. His memorial service in Alumni Memorial Chapel was a triumphant celebration in light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Shortly thereafter, we experienced the deaths of a student and a student wife, along with news of others who soon expect to end their earthly pilgrimage.

We meet to part, and part to meet. The graduates of Southern Seminary now number in the tens of thousands. The students now enrolled at Southern Seminary represent 25 percent of all Southern Baptists enrolled in any seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. We have these students only for a time, but that time is precious and important.

The reality of that parting

underscores the importance of what happens in every classroom, every lecture, every hallway conversation. I am so thankful for what God has allowed Southern Seminary to become – a place where thousands of God-called ministers of the Gospel come together in order to be readied to go out into the world.

In other words, to meet in order to part, and to part in order to meet once again. That is the mission of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, as expressed in the poetic words of the Seminary Hymn.

The annual Southern Seminary Alumni and Friends Reunion in Phoenix, Ariz., is a great event, and I look forward to seeing many of you there. But that event is only a foretaste of that greater reunion yet to come.

Our great confidence is that God will use Southern Seminary and the graduates of this institution for the cause of the Gospel and the display of His glory. Thousands of those who have graduated from this seminary, along with scores of faculty, have gone to be with the Lord after lifetimes of devoted service. Just this past year, several hundred more have graduated and gone out into the world.

As our reunion in Phoenix comes to an end, we will do what we do at every commencement – we will sing together our Seminary Hymn. And then we will do what Southern Seminary folk do. We will go out to serve the cause of the Gospel . . . until we meet again.

Sincerely,
R. Albert Mohler Jr.



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On the Cover



This image represents the direct, forthright and resolute stance Southern Seminary takes concerning the seriousness of the Gospel.

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FACULTY, STUDENTS PRESENT PAPERS AT REGIONAL MISSIOLOGY MEETING

By Josh Hayes

Missions and scholarship – Southern Seminary is a firm believer in both as evidenced by the institution’s presence at the 2011 Southeast Regional Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS) meeting March 25-26, 2011, in Conyers, Ga.

Carrying the theme “Urbanization: Mission in the Context of the City,” the event featured paper presentations from the following SBTS faculty and students: Troy Bush, J.D. Payne, Jeff Walters, William Brooks, Anthony Casey and Matthew Pierce.

Payne, associate professor of church planting and evangelism and director of the Center for North American Missions and Church Planting at Southern Seminary, is EMS vice president for administration.

“It was a great meeting, with several excellent presentations,” Payne said. “I was very delighted to see the number of presenters from Southern Seminary sharing their research findings. I hope we will have even more from SBTS in the future.

“We presently reside in an urban world, but historically evangelicals have not done a great job effectively engaging the cities with the Gospel and seeing the multiplication of disciples, pastors and churches. The cities pose numerous challenges, and the papers presented this year were based on cutting-edge missiological research to help us better understand how to be on mission in our urban world,” Payne elaborated. ➤

For those interested in learning more about the Evangelical Missiological Society, information is available at www.emsweb.org



SOUTHERN SEMINARY NAMES NEW DEAN OF BOYCE COLLEGE

By SBTS Communications

Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. announced the appointment of Dan DeWitt as the new dean of Boyce College, April 19, 2011. DeWitt replaces Denny Burk who is stepping down in order to expand his primary calling of writing and teaching.

DeWitt, who speaks widely concerning issues related to Christianity, apologetics and youth culture, has served as vice president of communications at the seminary and as lead pastor of Campus Church, the campus ministry of Highview Baptist Church to the University of Louisville. Prior to his work at SBTS, DeWitt served as student pastor of Judson Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn.

“Dan DeWitt brings a considerable skill set, tremendous commitment, and precisely the kind of background and leadership we need as we look to

the future,” Mohler said.

Burk, who became Boyce’s dean in 2008, will remain as a full-time faculty member at Boyce College and Southern Seminary. He said his decision to step down from day-to-day administrative responsibilities would enable him to complete several research projects in New Testament interpretation and to get back to his first vocational love: classroom teaching.

“It has been the thrill of a lifetime to serve as dean of Boyce College,” Burk said. “But my administrative duties have left little time for teaching and writing. I am profoundly grateful to Drs. Mohler and Moore for allowing me to take up a regular faculty position so I can finish several book projects I’ve been putting off for the last three years.”

Russell D. Moore is dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration.

DeWitt earned both the master of divinity and doctor of education degrees from Southern Seminary. He and his wife, April, have been married nearly 10 years and have three children, Isaiah, Micah and Josiah. ➤

SCHOOL OF CHURCH MINISTRIES ADDS TO MUSIC FACULTY

By Emily Griffin

At the spring meeting of the Board of Trustees, Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr., and School of Church Ministries (SCM) Dean Randy Stinson announced that the SCM will welcome two new faculty members, June 2011.

Joe Crider, current professor of music and humanities and associate dean for the College of Arts and Sciences at Liberty University and minister of music at First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., will join the SCM faculty as professor of music and worship leadership.

Also joining the SCM faculty as assistant professor of music and worship leadership is Chuck Lewis, who currently serves on the faculty of Palm Beach Atlantic University and as worship pastor at First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach, Fla.

Mohler and Stinson shared that both men bring many years of experience from both the classroom and the local church.

“Joe Crider and Chuck Lewis are men who understand our vision of not merely training musicians but training pastors who lead worship. Not only are these men currently leading very effective worship ministries in the local church, but they are committed to spending the next decades of their ministry training up the next generation of worship pastors,” Stinson said. ➤

COPPENGER DEBATES UNIVERSITY ATHEIST

By Andrew Walker

An unlikely pairing of Christians and atheists gathered at the University of Louisville and collaborated on an unlikely event, Wednesday, March 23. Mark Coppenger, professor of Christian apologetics at Southern Seminary, and Avery Kolers, atheist professor of philosophy at the University of Louisville, participated in a public debate sponsored by Highview Baptist Church’s Campus Church and the UofL Society of Secular Students. Discussion focused on an issue that has plagued philosophy since the beginning: Can man be good or understand what is good without the concept of God?

With atheism surging in popular

good illustration of the healthy sort of dialogue we believe is possible. We have very different conclusions, but we are able to participate in meaningful dialogue nonetheless,” said Dan DeWitt, then pastor of the Campus Church.

“I think there is a real hunger for hearing honest dialogue, for hearing ‘your guy’ mix it up with ‘our guy’ on big issues. There’s so much sophistry and blather in the world that a sustained, thoughtful and clear discussion on important matters is attractive,” Coppenger agreed.

Asked what he thought was the most compelling argument for God’s necessity in understanding morality, Coppenger suggested that only a theistic worldview supplies answers to life’s most important questions.

“The Christian account of morality answers the great concerns that other systems only narrowly fix themselves

“I think there is a real hunger for hearing honest dialogue ... There’s so much sophistry and blather in the world that a sustained, thoughtful and clear discussion on important matters is attractive.”

culture and represented by opinionated spokesmen, the atmosphere of debates concerning fundamental issues of existence are hardly known for their civility. Yet, participants in the two-hour event walked away with a sense of respect for each other’s argument.

“The co-sponsorship of this event between the Society of Secular Students and Campus Church is a

upon – the sense of duty, the order of nature, the testimony of the heart, the cause of altruism, the hope of paradise, the enjoyment of life, the ache for transcendent wisdom, the cry for justice, the need for universal standards and so on.” ➤

Audio is available at www.theolatte.com/2011/03/good-without-god



SOUTHERN SEMINARY DEDICATES TOWERY PLAZA

By Emily Griffin

As part of the spring Board of Trustees meeting, Southern Seminary dedicated The Towery Plaza, named in honor of longtime seminary benefactors Ken and Joanne Towery of Louisville. Towery Plaza will host seminary and student life events, provide space for students and faculty to fellowship and add to the ambiance of Southern’s campus.

Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. spoke at the April 19 dedication ceremony, thanking the Towerys for their faithful support of the seminary.

“Generation after generation the Lord has blessed Southern Seminary with people who make a decisive difference,” Mohler said. “Ken and Joanne Towery are today making a decisive difference for the students and faculty of this campus.”

Mohler acknowledged that while the Towery Plaza was not in the master-plan for campus development, the Lord blessed the seminary with a couple who were willing to make a financial commitment in time of need. In 2010, a retaining wall located between Norton Hall, the seminary’s iconic 1926 landmark, and the seminary lawn collapsed. Excavation of the fallen wall revealed that water damage was threatening the integrity of Norton Hall and that sewage system upgrades were mandatory.

The Towerys committed to funding the required repairs and also providing additional assets for the seminary to create a usable, outdoor space. The result is Towery Plaza, 13,500 square feet of usable space outfitted with wireless Internet and electricity.

“We are honored to be a part, just a small part, of this glorious campus,” Ken Towery said.

Jason Allen, vice president for institutional advancement and executive director of the Southern Seminary Foundation, said, “Ken and Joanne Towery radiate a love for Southern Seminary and the students who study here. The Towerys’ partnership with Southern Seminary goes far beyond their financial support. It is impossible to conceptualize the Southern Seminary family without thinking of Ken and Joanne Towery. We are honored to have their name permanently affixed to such a prominent location on campus.”



The Towerys

Ken and Joanne Towery of Louisville, Ky., have long been supporters of Southern, serving as members of the Southern Seminary Foundation.



13,500

square feet of usable space



10,250 lbs
of natural cut
Indiana limestone



Reuse of
9,000
original, hand-cast clay
brick pavers



795
square yards of
Kentucky Bluegrass sod



Custom-designed
water feature weighing
2,862 lbs

MOHLER SAYS ALL OF OT BEARS WITNESS TO CHRIST

By Josh Hayes

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, asserted that the Old Testament in its entirety bears witness to Jesus Christ, at The Gospel Coalition's national conference, April 2011.

"We do not look back to the Old Testament merely to find the background to Christ and His ministry, neither only for references and anticipations of Christ; we are to look to the Old Testament and find Christ – not here and there, everywhere," he said.

Mohler delivered the message, "Studying the Scriptures and Finding Jesus," during the event's first plenary session. Fitting with the conference's theme, "Preaching Jesus and the Gospel from the Old Testament," Mohler's address focused on John 5:31-47.

Mohler explained to the 5,000-plus attendees inside Chicago's McCormick Place convention center that preaching Jesus from the Old Testament will help churches avoid turning their young congregants into those who hold to "moralistic therapeutic deism," mentioning the research published by sociologist Christian Smith regarding the sub-Christian beliefs of many of the young people attending evangelical churches.

"To many preachers and to all too many Christians, the Old Testament is a foreign book," Mohler said, going on to explain that all of its content is meant to cause readers to yearn for Christ, helping people to realize that all of the Scripture testifies of Jesus. ➤

Video for Mohler's address is available at The Gospel Coalition Web site, thegospelcoalition.org

"... I believe that God created gender to really mirror who He is. Gender — who we are as male and female — puts God on display."

KASSIAN TALKS AT TGC ABOUT THE GENESIS OF GENDER

By Emily Griffin

Mary Kassian, author and distinguished professor of women's studies at Southern Seminary, gave a breakout session at The Gospel Coalition national conference in Chicago, April 2011.

In her presentation "The Genesis of Gender," Kassian discussed several unique markers of manhood and womanhood as presented in Genesis 2.

"We need to teach children from a very young age that being a man means something different from being a woman," Kassian said of the need for Christians to share the biblical

understanding of gender.

"While stereotypes come and go, and culture comes and goes, there is eternal meaning to manhood and womanhood that far supersedes us."

Kassian spoke from Genesis 2, noting that the differences between men and women ultimately illustrate the idea that gender is not arbitrary; rather gender is something that has existed since the time of creation for a very specific purpose.

"I believe that God created gender to really mirror who He is. Gender — who we are as male and female — puts God on display. Who we are and how we relate as male and female is a parable that tells a very important story about the Lord." ➤

Conference media is available at The Gospel Coalition Web site, thegospelcoalition.org



SOUTHERN SEMINARY ANNOUNCES THREE NEW ENDOWMENTS

At The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Spring 2011 meeting of the Board of Trustees, the seminary announced three new endowments that will significantly help SBTS understand, teach and spread the Gospel for many years to come.

JENKINS CENTER FOR THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM

A major new endowment will establish a center for the Christian understanding of Islam at Southern Seminary. In addition to researching Islam, the center will host conferences concerning the Muslim faith.

“Why would Southern Seminary establish a Christian center for the study of Islam? The answer is actually quite simple. Every Christian ministry needs to have an understanding of Islam in order to be a faithful witness to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to understand the mission field that is not only out there in the world, but here in our own neighborhoods. For the foreseeable future, Islam is going to be the major worldview competitor to Christianity. I am pleased about the establishment of this new center and I look forward to its influence on the Christian world far beyond the campus of Southern Seminary,” **said R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary.**

Benefactor

Bill and Connie Jenkins of New Albany, Ind., will fund the new center.

“Bill and Connie Jenkins are quite literally a Godsend to us. As God always does, at the same time He surfaced the need for the Center for the Christian Understanding of Islam, He also raised up Bill and Connie Jenkins to meet this need. We are grateful for their sacrificial partnership with Southern Seminary and their desire to see this generation of students and servants of Christ equipped to engage the Muslim faith,” **said Jason K. Allen, vice president of institutional advancement at SBTS.**

DUKE K. MCCALL LECTURESHIP AND CHAIR OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Southern Seminary announces the establishment of the Duke K. McCall Chair of Christian Leadership and the McCall Leadership Lectures. The inaugural lecture will take place on the 60th anniversary of McCall's election as president of Southern Seminary.

“It is historic and a matter of great satisfaction that we are able to honor Duke K. McCall as the seventh president of this institution.

We are especially pleased to have this gift that will establish an endowed chair of Christian leadership. Duke K. McCall is synonymous with Christian statesmanship and leadership. He has left a decisive mark, not only at Southern Seminary, but New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and the SBC Executive Committee and throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

We look forward to hearing the leadership lectures in the fall with Dr. Robert Sloan as the first lecturer,” **said R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary.**

Benefactor

Dr. and Mrs. Duke K. McCall and the McCall Family Foundation offer the new chair and lectureship.

“The gift from Dr. McCall and the McCall Family Foundation is in many ways poetic. Not only did Dr. McCall devote the lion's share of his vocational ministry to Southern Seminary, but he continues to be a blessing to students at Southern nearly 75 years after he first came as a student. This gift further underscores the historic relationship between the McCall family and Southern Seminary,” **said Jason K. Allen, vice president of institutional advancement at SBTS.**

BEVIN CENTER FOR MISSIONS MOBILIZATION

The seminary will add the Center for Missions Mobilization with funding from Matthew and Glenna Bevin of Louisville, Ky.

“This new center will allow us to equip the students of this seminary with a set of global skills so they can be mobilized at any point in their ministry for service anywhere in the world. This is now the expectation of the business community. It is being woven into the architecture of MBA degrees and training for business professionals and executives. Given the mandate for the Great Commission, it is far more important and urgent that Christian pastors have the ability and the expectation to have a global impact and to be ready for deployment at any moment,” **said R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary.**

Benefactor

Matthew and Glenna Bevin of Louisville, Ky. endowed the new center in honor of their late daughter, Brittney.

“Matt and Glenna Bevin are dynamic followers of Christ who believe deeply in the Great Commission. Through endowing the Bevin Center for Missions Mobilization they are literally putting their money where their heart is – taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations.

Not only will these funds rightly honor their daughter's heart for missions, the endowed center will also, we pray, be used by God to harness Great Commission passion on this campus and to channel that energy most effectively to the nations,” **said Jason K. Allen, vice president of institutional advancement at SBTS.**



COPPENGER AND MARTIN WILL LEAD NEW SBTS NASHVILLE

By Aaron Cline Hanbury

Southern Seminary plans to launch a major expansion of its Nashville, Tenn., extension center. In order to establish a more permanent presence in Nashville, SBTS professors Mark T. Coppenger, professor of Christian apologetics, and George H. Martin, M. Theron Rankin Professor of Christian Missions, will relocate from the seminary’s main campus to the new Nashville campus.

“It has become clear to us that the need for theological education in Nashville and within its driving radius is greater than we ever understood.”

“It has become clear to us that the need for theological education in Nashville and within its driving radius is greater than we ever understood,” Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. said. “In response to that need, we are moving in a big way

toward the establishment of a fully operational campus in Nashville.”

In his new role, Coppenger will act as vice president for extension education and director of the Nashville program. In addition to moving his classroom from Louisville to central Tennessee, Coppenger will conclude his current pastoral ministry in Evanston, Ill.

“What a privilege for Sharon and me to lift up the Kingdom work of Southern Seminary in Nashville, and to do so along with George and Donna Martin, with whom we’ve already partnered in missions halfway around the world,” Coppenger said. “It’s a homecoming for me, for I was a faculty child at Belmont, a graduate student at Vanderbilt and an employee

of the SBC Executive Committee. We love the people and work at Evanston Baptist and at Northwestern, but we’re excited by this new calling.”

More information about the development of SBTS Nashville will be available online at www.sbts.edu

MOORE PROMOTES ADOPTION PRIORITIES AT TGC

By Aaron Cline Hanbury

Russell D. Moore, dean of the School of Theology senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary, co-led a breakout session about the doctrine and practice of adoption at the national meeting of The Gospel Coalition, April 2011. Moore offered the session in conjunction with Voddie Baucham, pastor of preaching at Grace Family Baptist Church, Spring, Texas.

Moore began by noting that “adoption is always in the context of tragedy,” referring to the requisite circumstances leading to parentless children: rape, abandonment, death or physical abuse. He reminded the packed room that the Gospel itself comes in the context of Adam’s tragic fall. God brings His children into His family in response to this tragedy.

Christians then, reflecting God’s actions, should respond to earthly tragedies in the same manner.

“Just as we evangelize because we’ve been evangelized, we adopt because we’ve been adopted,” said Moore, providing the Gospel-saturated relationship between the doctrine and the practice of adoption.

In turn, earthly, physical adoption teaches Christians – and the world – about spiritual adoption.

“As we learn to love the orphan and the widow, we learn to care for the spiritual orphan and widow.”

Conference media is available at The Gospel Coalition Web site, thegospelcoalition.org



SBTS PROF DIES AFTER FOUR-YEAR BATTLE WITH CANCER

By Aaron Cline Hanbury

“He who influences the thoughts of his times, influences all the times that follow. He has made his impress on eternity.”

Hypatia of Alexandria didn't say these words about Southern Seminary's late professor, Carl "Chip" Stam. But her statement seems appropriate.

Southern Seminary mourns the loss of Stam, one of her most beloved professors, who passed away May 1. Stam battled an aggressive form of non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma since Spring 2007. Born March 10, 1953, he died at age 58.

Stam came to Southern in 2000 to serve as professor of church music and worship. He also became the founding director of the seminary's Institute for Christian Worship. Spring 2009, Stam received tenure. During his time at the seminary, Stam also conducted the seminary's oratorio chorus. Stam also conducted the Kentucky Baptist Men's Chorale for more than 10 years. Beginning 2002, he served Louisville's Clifton Baptist Church as the minister of music and worship.

"Chip Stam was such a great gift to Southern Seminary and to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ," said Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. "He was a gifted musician, as indicated by all of his musical accomplishments. But Chip Stam was so much more. He was a warm and faithful friend, an energetic faculty member and a wonderful worship leader. To know Chip Stam was to know a warm-hearted artist with a deep commitment to Christ."

Randy Stinson, dean of Southern Seminary's School of Church Ministries, said of Stam, "Chip Stam was a Gospel witness from beginning to end. He taught us how to live and maybe more importantly, he taught us how to die.



His impact on students at SBTS will reach generations with the Gospel as we worship the Lord Jesus in spirit and in truth. He will be greatly missed."

Before coming to Southern Seminary, Stam was pastor of worship and music at the Chapel Hill Bible Church in Chapel Hill, N.C., from 1991-2000, where he also conducted the Chapel Hill Carrboro Community Chorus and directed music for The Raspberry Ridge: The Chapel Hill String Camp. From 1981-91, he was the director of choral music at the University of Notre Dame.

Stam, who earned both the bachelor of arts and master of music at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and pursued additional studies elsewhere, also served as the national chair for American Choral Directors Association's Repertoire and Standards Committee for Music and Worship. He conducted numerous all-state choirs and festival choruses, and served on the advisory councils for *Reformed Worship* magazine and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.

Beginning in 1995, Stam published a Web-based weekly devotional that shared interesting and challenging quotes about the nature of worship and prayer in the life of the Christian church, *Worship Quote of the Week*.

"Chip mentored countless pastors and musicians from a distance through his *Worship Quote of the Week*, which has been an indispensable resource from my earliest days in ministry to the present," said Lange Patrick, music and worship pastor at Louisville's Highview Baptist Church. "Chip Stam not only knew God and loved to praise Him, but his passion for Christ was equally matched by the integrity of his life."

Stam is survived by his wife of 35 years, Doris, and their three children: Michael, Martin and Clara.

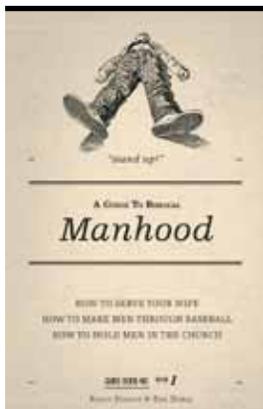
"Chip inspired us all through his life, but he taught us even more about trust in Christ in the course of his illness and in the grace and trust in Christ he revealed until his death," Mohler said of Stam's battle with cancer. "Chip Stam will be sorely missed, and we grieve with his faithful wife, Doris, and his entire family. I am so thankful for all the lives touched by Chip Stam through his teaching at Southern Seminary and far beyond. His teaching legacy is in those students and in the worship they lead."

Hypatia's words certainly apply to Stam: "He has made his impress on eternity." ➤

A GUIDE TO BIBLICAL MANHOOD

(SBTS Press 2011, \$5.99), Randy Stinson and Dan Dumas

Review by Aaron Cline Hanbury



Southern Seminary recently published *A Guide to Biblical Manhood*, the first edition in a series of guidebooks coming from the newly established SBTS Press.

January 2011, Randy Stinson, dean of SBTS' School of Church Ministries, and Dan Dumas, senior vice president for institutional administration at Southern Seminary, taught a course about biblical masculinity. The content

of *A Guide to Biblical Manhood* came from that course. Series editor Steve Watters organized the guidebook into four sections: "Lessons in Manhood," "A Godly Husband," "A Godly Father" and "A Godly Leader." In the following excerpt, the authors explain their motivation for producing this resource.

More information about the guidebook series is available at press.sbts.edu

Stinson and Dumas write:

"Ultimately, however, we wrote this book because we believe that biblical manhood has to lead to urgency for the sake of the Gospel. We need men who will shoulder the weight of manhood as God designed it, who will live it out day to day but will incline their manhood toward the Gospel. It is the Gospel that saves men – as Jesus

replaces their sin and rebellion with his righteousness – and it's what makes it possible for men to be redeemed in their masculinity and to serve God with all of their manhood. And it's for the sake of the Gospel that redeemed men have a new commission for their leadership – to proclaim the good news and make disciples. Instead of compartmentalizing the Gospel, redeemed men are to

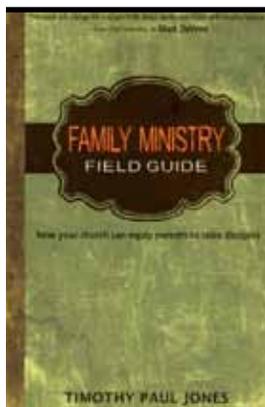
see it intersecting with their life at work, in their marriage and with their kids. And pastors who understand this intersection as well shouldn't see cultivating redeemed men as a distraction from the Gospel but see it as a primary front for advancing the good news. The Gospel needs of our world today provide unlimited opportunities for both men and women to serve. But so many of

the needs – in rapidly growing urban centers, among unreached people groups and so on – require a kind of courage, toughness and self sacrifice, that God gifted men to bring. And so we pray this book will admonish, encourage and instruct you to be a man of God who is a doer of the Word for the sake of the Gospel."

FAMILY MINISTRY FIELD GUIDE: HOW THE CHURCH CAN EQUIP PARENTS TO MAKE DISCIPLES

(Wesleyan Publishing House 2011, \$17.99), Timothy Paul Jones

Review by Aaron Cline Hanbury



What family ministry in a local church should look like is one thing. What family ministry actually looks like is something else entirely. In an effort to explain and then bridge this ominous gap, Timothy Paul Jones, associate professor of leadership and church ministry at Southern Seminary and editor of the *Journal of Family Ministry*, offers church leaders, parents and all Christians a *Family Ministry Field Guide*.

Jones' newest book flows from the premise that God designed the family to be the primary unit of discipleship. The church finds its place, then, as it equips parents to function as biblical disciplers of their children. So Jones explains why churches need to equip families for discipleship and how to do so.

Complete with “sketch the situation” boxes to help readers think through current, potential and ideal characteristics of local church family ministry, Jones organizes *Family Ministry Field Guide* book into three major sections: the nature of the gap, the motivations for moving toward a “family equipping” ministry and the how-to for getting there.

Jones' fast-paced, pithy writing presents the theologically significant issue of educating and nurturing children in the Gospel in a highly practical, down-to-earth fashion. Readers will find *Family Ministry Field Guide* a helpful tract for developing a faithful local church family ministry.

Jones writes:

“Now, in a growing movement in churches throughout the world, ministers are suddenly turning to these parents and shouting, ‘it’s time to engage!’ The problem is that many of them don’t know how or why, and part of the reason is

because we as church leaders aren’t quite sure either.”

“God’s creation and humanity’s fall have positioned parents as providers and disciplinarians. Through redemption and consummation, parents are called to become disciple makers

as well. Because God has chosen to place particular children in close proximity to us, these disciple-making processes should begin with our own children.

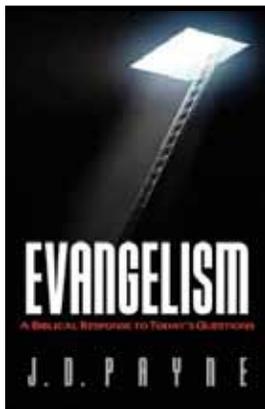
“God’s calling does not end with the rehearsal of the gospel in our own households, though,

the proclamation of the gospel that begins in our households should spill out beyond the confines of our homes, into our communities, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. ... And it all begins when parents begin to see who their children really are.”

EVANGELISM: A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO TODAY’S QUESTIONS

(Biblica Publishing 2011, \$17.99), J.D. Payne

Review by Andrew Walker



In *Evangelism*, J.D. Payne, associate professor of church planting and evangelism at Southern Seminary, writes a primer about the most pressing questions facing today’s missions culture.

Written clearly and concisely, Payne’s book is arranged in 33 thought-provoking questions that address the full gamut of issues surrounding missions. Readers will find answers to questions ranging from the most basic – “What is Evangelism, Anyway?” – to the more uncomfortable – “Does a Loving God Send People to Hell?” – to the most theologically complex – “What is the Role of Free Will in Salvation?”

Purposefully not providing the “how to” of evangelism, Payne states his objective clearly: “This book attempts to establish certain parameters for evangelism by answering questions, with the understanding that within those parameters you will be sharing your faith in a way that is contextually relevant.”

Readers will find the book engaging and approachable, full of pastoral wisdom on a topic that we’re often afraid to admit is intimidating. And that’s the entire purpose of the book – to remove the obstacles that hinder believers from engaging in evangelism both informatively and joyfully.

Payne writes:

On the fear of offending people... “We simply have to accept the fact that some people will become offended at the message we bring. Yet we must make certain that we do not react by cowering in fear and ceasing to

intentionally share the love of God with others. I believe Satan has tempted many of us, myself included, to give in to the sin of fear – and many times we unfortunately follow Satan’s desires. We must repent of such sin and call on the Lord to empower us, remembering that he

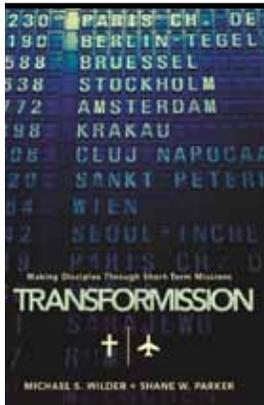
has given us a spirit ‘not of fear but of power and love and self-control.’”
—
On the difficulty of children who die and the mentally disabled... “... another matter to consider in relationship to this question is that of the capacity of the child or mentally disabled person to

respond to the gospel. In other words, unlike the man on the island, these individuals would not be able to repent and place faith in Jesus even if they were presented the clearest plan of salvation before their death.”

TRANSFORMATION: MAKING DISCIPLES THROUGH SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

(B&H 2010, \$19.99), Michael S. Wilder and Shane W. Parker

Review by Andrew Walker



Aren't short-term mission trips just church-oriented vacations meant to intensify one's guilt about his or her possessions and privilege in the world?

Backed by new research, Wilder and Parker present the case for the significance of the short-term mission trip in the lives of Christian youth. The authors suggest that sharing Christ's life with others in the context of mission not only benefits the recipients but transforms those doing the sharing.

A theological and practical assessment of the short-term mission trip, the book is structured in three parts and serves as a manual and field guide for equipping youth ministers and others to re-think how short-term missions are completed. The authors first state the larger purpose of the mission trip by placing it in biblical

and theological context. The second portion of the book explores how transformation occurs by overcoming barriers and inconsistencies of transformation. Finally, in section three, the authors provide the "I.D.E.A."—an acronym for influencing, developing, engaging and assessing Christian youths in the practice of short-term missions.

The book is well organized, but also replete with data and research on trends in today's mission culture. Perhaps you're a youth minister grown accustomed to or lethargic about youth mission trips. If so, this book represents the starting point to invigorate your ministry and to explore how discipleship and evangelism become not mutually exclusive, but mutually cohesive.

Wilder and Parker write:

"The phenomenal truth is this: As we actively participate in spreading the story of Christ's redemptive work, we are also somehow transformed in the process."

"From our biblical understanding, our research, and our experience, we are convinced that God is doing something remarkable in the lives of students and their adult leaders as they

actively participate in short-term missions. Our conviction is that short-term mission is one way God is taking the gospel to the nations and, concurrently, transforming the individual participants."

"May you be found as one who 'attempts great things' and 'expects great things.'"

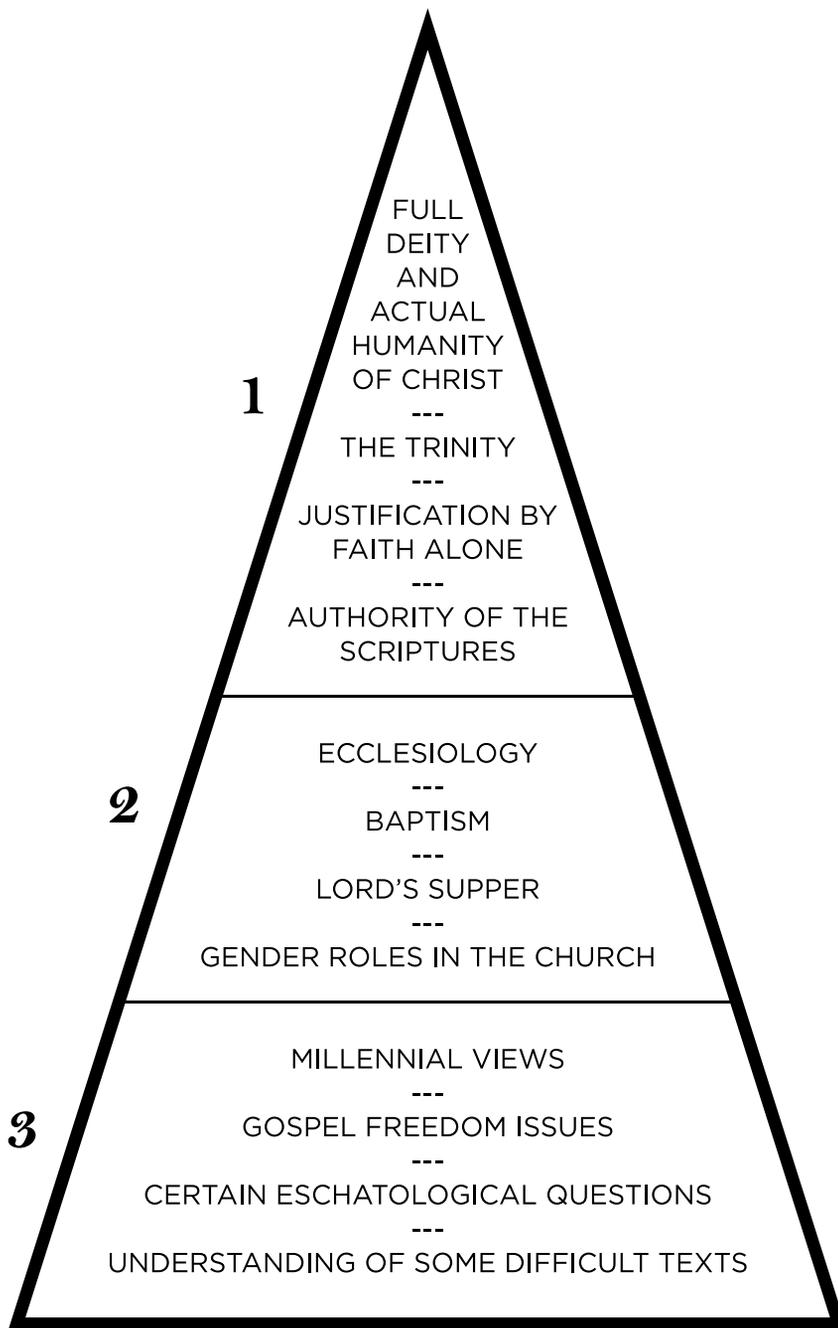
TAKING THE GOSPEL SERIOUSLY: MOHLER'S THEOLOGICAL TRIAGE

By Aaron Cline Hanbury

A visit to a local emergency room alerted R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, to the priority-assigning procedure known as triage – the filter by which hospital staff determines relative severity of a patient’s emergency. And this process provided him with an intellectual tool “most helpful for fulfilling our theological responsibility.”

“Today’s Christian faces the daunting task of strategizing which Christian doctrines and theological issues are to be given highest priority in terms of our contemporary context,” Mohler writes. “This applies both to the public defense of Christianity in face of the secular challenge and the internal responsibility of dealing with doctrinal disagreements. ... God’s truth is to be defended at every point and in every detail, but responsible Christians must determine which issues deserve first-rank attention in a time of theological crisis.”

Toward that end, Mohler suggests a “theological triage” for sifting through the various doctrinal issues surrounding evangelical Christianity. Paralleling the three triage categories, Mohler offers three “levels of theological urgency, each corresponding to a set of issues and theological priorities found in current doctrinal debates.”



1 First-level issues, as Mohler presents them, are those on which Christianity stands or falls, the denial of which results in the loss of the Christian faith;

2 Second-level issues often cause division and heated disagreement, the denial or affirmation of which result in the forming of denominations and separate churches; and

3 Third-level issues bring up questions of discussion and certain but tame disagreement, the denial or affirmation of which still allows close fellowship, even within the same church body.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL? THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR MARK DEVER

In our church in Washington, I always ask our prospective members to tell me the gospel in one minute or less. How would you do that? What would you say the message is?

Here's what I understand the good news to be: the good news is that the one and only God, who is holy, made us in his image to know him. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him. In his great love, God became a man in Jesus, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of all those who would ever turn and trust in him. He rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted Christ's sacrifice and that God's wrath against us had been exhausted. He now calls us to repent of our sins and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into a new life, an eternal life with God.

Now that's good news.

The above excerpt is from pages 42-43 of Mark Dever's The Gospel and Personal Evangelism (Crossway). Dever is senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., the executive director of 9Marks and the author of multiple books.



FROM MICROSCOPES TO MATERNITY: MAGNUSON PRESENTS HIS FACULTY ADDRESS

By W. Hank Balch

At his faculty address, March 9, 2011, Kenneth Magnuson, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Seminary, discussed the dizzying array of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) such as invitro fertilization (IVF), artificial insemination (AI) and surrogacy and the manner in which such technologies impact the moral decisions of Christian couples and pastors dealing with infertility.

explicitly addressed in Scripture.

Where then is a Christian pastor or couple to begin a moral reflection and deliberation of assisted reproductive technologies? "One's judgment about ARTs," argued Magnuson, "depends on one's view of marriage and procreation, and ultimately on one's worldview." For Christians there must be a framework of biblical understanding to provide moral guidance.

Magnuson went on to provide moral contours for examining the ethical "goods" of certain ARTs, as well as to evaluate the various "threat levels" that can be present with particular assisted reproductive technologies and practices.

Magnuson reminded his audience that the heart of the moral evaluation of ARTs is biblical discipleship and a "call to the

"One's judgment about ARTs depends on one's view of marriage and procreation, and ultimately on one's worldview."

"What is the path of discipleship for infertile couples, and how should pastors and friends counsel them?" Magnuson asked the faculty and students gathered to hear his address in Southern's Broadus Chapel. "Moral obligation in Christian ethics is fundamentally related to discipleship," he explained, and this is especially true with issues such as IVF not

church, to be a place of consolation and encouragement, so that infertility may turn out to be not meaningless suffering, but an opportunity to receive and to be an agent of God's grace." ➤

The SBTS Resources page provides audio and video for Magnuson's address, "Children Technically: Moral Conceptions of Procreation, Marriage, and Assisted Reproduction," at www.sbts.edu/resources

RE:INVENT— A
CONFERENCE
FOR YOUTH
MINISTRY LEADERS
NOVEMBER 4-5, 2011

By Troy Temple

“The speed of cultural change has decreased the span between major cultural shifts. What once was a 20 year gap is now a 3-4 year gap.”

These words echoed throughout Heritage Hall on the campus of Southern Seminary, Wednesday, April 27 2011, as Walt Mueller, author, researcher and founder of the The Center for Parent/Youth Understanding addressed faculty, students and guests. He pulled back the curtain on the current state of youth culture. I am often asked, “What is so different about today’s teenagers?” Most people acknowledge that technology has shaped youth culture in significant ways, but they fail to connect the speed of technology with the ever-changing landscape of youth culture and its impact on their worldview and their faith.

New vocabulary has emerged as we now use terms such as “emerging adults,” “prolonged adolescence” and “delayed adulthood.” Those who have been engaged in local church ministry over the past decade have experienced a major shift in the way we reach teenagers with the good news of Jesus Christ, the Gospel. Teenagers are expected to act more mature than they are. They are expected to look as good as they can. This age aspiration that young people find themselves swimming in has them wired with media connections to celebrities and peers in ways we have never seen. And they are supposed to do that while staying connected to everyone in their sphere of relationships via electronic gadgets and digital applications that make the information of their lives instantly available to anyone listening.

Teenagers also see the world differently and that includes their faith and spirituality. That is why The International Center for Youth and Family Ministry at Southern Seminary is excited to host a premier conference for pastors of youth ministry and their volunteer leaders. Youth culture is always changing.

“Most people acknowledge that technology has shaped youth culture in significant ways but they fail to connect the speed of technology with the ever-changing landscape of youth culture and its impact on their worldview and their faith.”

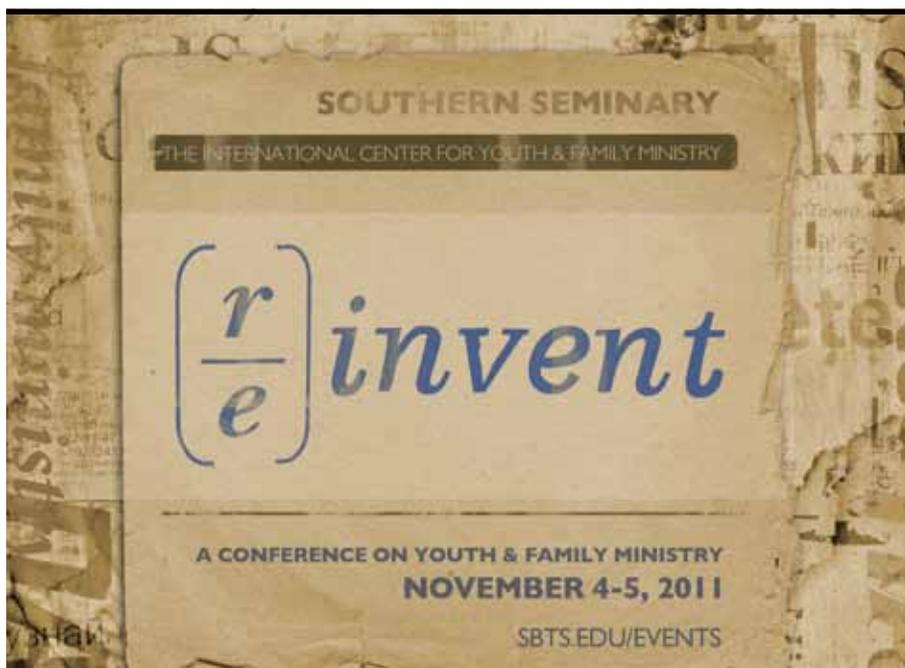
That means youth ministry is always changing. Our mission has remained the same, but our approach has been driven to find new ways to connect and grow teenagers to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

re:Invent will encourage and inspire youth ministry leaders to re-tool their ministries for radical youth ministry. Main stage sessions will blend challenging messages from veteran, nationally recognized youth ministry leaders such as Wayne Rice, Walt Mueller, Mark DeVries and Jim Burns including a panel discussion and engaging worship from Kristian Stanfill.

On Saturday, the conference will include two breakout sessions with youth pastors from around the country as well as the faculty of Southern Seminary’s International Center for Youth and Family Ministry and the School of Church Ministries.

It’s our desire to help youth pastors recruit, train and place youth leaders and then give them ministry opportunities to reach and disciple teenagers. re:Invent is designed for youth pastors to bring key leaders and be challenged and equipped to lead teenagers effectively to be growing disciples of Jesus Christ. Mark your calendars now. ➤

Troy Temple is associate director of The International Center for Youth and Family Ministry as well as associate dean for masters studies and associate professor of youth and family ministry at Southern Seminary.



THE POET, THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE PREACHER

By Dan DeWitt

He sits with furrowed brow, raised fist and relaxed chin as he contemplates the fate of the world.

Who is this man with such a perplexed posture?

Today he is better known by his nicknames the Thinking Man or The Thinker, but he was created as The Poet. His profile has been popularized in art for decades. The sculpture was a part of a larger work commissioned by the French museum, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, in the late 19th century. The statue symbolizes Dante as he contemplated his *Divine Comedy*. Sitting upon his stone chair, the fortified writer would forever consider the eternal judgment of God and the destiny of the souls of men.

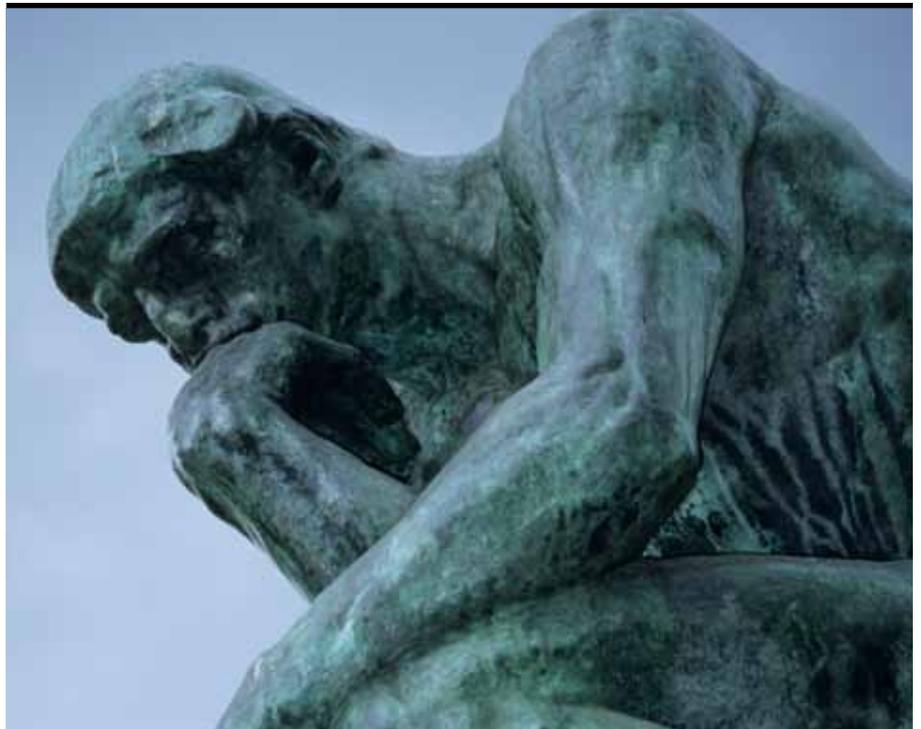
Many universities display replicas of this famous statue, making The Poet a symbol of the academic tradition and an icon for modern day philosophy. The first sculpture made from the original cast in Paris was displayed at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. This statue was then given to the city of Louisville, Ky., where it is now displayed in front of Grawemeyer Hall on the campus of the University of Louisville.

I have spent many hours on that campus, and I frequently pass the famous statue.

The Poet helps me keep our ministry in perspective. We are not called merely to engage the intellectual culture of the academic community, but to warn men and women of the impending judgment of God.

In recent days God's eternal judgment has become a subject of scrutiny and attack. In my experience working with students on a secular campus, I can understand why. I can empathize with the inner pull to make the Gospel more palatable for a postmodern audience. Yet The Poet provides a somber reminder.

The Gospel contextualizes hell. To



separate the doctrine of hell from the redemptive narrative of Scripture betrays our calling and empties our message. If there is one thing I've learned from working with skeptics, it's that they won't stand for a lack of authenticity or tolerate a person skirting around controversial topics.

The famous entertainer Penn Gillette, from the act "Penn and Teller," provides a powerful illustration of this point. Penn recounts his experience after a show when a Christian man gave him a Bible in an attempt to share the Gospel with him:

"I believe he knew I was an atheist, but he was not defensive. He looked me right in the eyes. He was truly complimentary. It didn't seem like empty flattery. He was kind and nice and sane. He looked me in the eyes and talked to me and gave me a Bible. I've always said I don't respect people who don't proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe that there is a heaven and hell and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward ... how much would you have to hate someone to not proselytize them? How much do

you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them about it. I mean, if I believed beyond the shadow of doubt that a truck was coming at you and you didn't believe it and that truck was bearing down on you, there's a certain point where I tackle you. And this is more important than that.

Penn is right. This is far more important than that. Sharing the Gospel with skeptics is not for the faint of heart. But neither is the Great Commission. The cross calls us to a radical commitment to unbelievers.

The next time I drive onto the university campus I will look to the stone man neither as philosopher, nor as poet, but as a preacher reminding me of eternal judgment and the dire need for faithful Gospel proclamation. Now this is certainly something worth thinking about. ➤

Dan DeWitt is dean of Boyce College, the undergraduate school of Southern Seminary. Prior to becoming dean, he served as vice president of communications at Southern Seminary and as lead pastor of Campus Church, Highview Baptist Church's campus ministry at the University of Louisville.

RINGING GOSPEL LIBERTY:

SOUTHERN ALUMNUS CHURCH-PLANTS IN RELIGIOUS PHILADELPHIA

Although Philadelphia is a very religious city, Aaron Harvie says it is religiously far from Jesus. In addition to planting and pastoring Riverside Community Church, Harvie mentors church planters in the Philadelphia area.



NAME: Aaron J. Harvie

FACEBOOK: Aaron Harvie

TWITTER: aharvie

WEB SITE: www.riversideconnect.com

HOMETOWN: Lebanon, Ohio

DEGREES: M.Div., Southern Seminary (Pastoral/Higher Education emphasis, 1998); D.Min., Westminster Theological Seminary (project phase)

EXPERIENCE: God called me to the ministry as a teenager, and I served several churches while in college and in seminary. I went straight from Southern to plant a church in the Philadelphia area.

FAVORITE ICE CREAM: Ben and Jerry's Cherry Garcia

FAVORITE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION: Anything fast

FAVORITE HOBBY OR PASTIME: Great coffee, movies and golf

FAVORITE PLACE FOR A DATE: Steven Starr restaurants here in Philly

WHY I TAKE THE GOSPEL SERIOUSLY: Jesus is our only hope. Tim Keller writes, "A gospel is an announcement

of something that has happened in history, something that's been done for you that changes your status forever." The Gospel of Jesus does this and more. Jesus changes us for Him forever, and because I take Jesus seriously, I take His Gospel seriously.

THREE ITEMS TO HAVE ON A DESERT ISLAND (EXCLUDING THE BIBLE): A satellite phone, a solar-powered Kindle, Bear Grylls (he seems to be able to survive anything!)

WHAT I WANT MY TOMBSTONE

TO READ: "As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness." Psalm 17:15

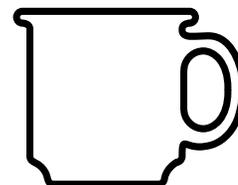
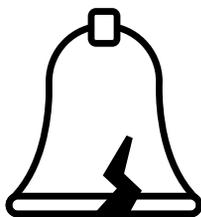
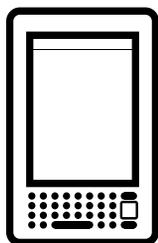
RADIO STATION PRESENTLY ON YOUR DIAL: ESPN 97.5

MOST RECENTLY READ MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Russell D. Moore's "Arousing Ourselves to Death"

WHAT THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HAS TAUGHT ME ABOUT THE GOSPEL: Philadelphia is a city with a great history, even a special Gospel history.

Philadelphia has taught me to protect the Gospel. Never assume once the Gospel takes root that it will flourish without careful attention to disciple people. Philadelphia is a very religious city but one that is religiously far from Jesus. The best picture of this is at 4th and Arch streets. On this corner, a building once stood for George Whitefield to preach the Gospel. Within a generation, on this very site the Unitarian Church formed.

INTERESTING FACTOID: I have lived all over the States. I was born in Dallas, grew up in Ohio, finished high school in Southern California, went to a small Southern college in Arkansas and now live just outside Philly. I have lived in diverse places and am continuously amazed with the presence of God.



OF RACE, RECONCILIATION AND WILDCATS:

FOUR-TIME GRADUATE OF SOUTHERN WRITES ABOUT THE GOSPEL'S SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR RACIAL RECONCILIATION

A New Testament professor at Campbellsville University, Jarvis Williams has published academic work about Pauline literature, Christ's atoning death, salvation and historical and exegetical studies. His book, *One New Man*, analyzes Christ's work to reconcile sinners from every race to God and to one another.

NAME: Jarvis J. Williams

HOMETOWN: Red Fox, Ky.

CURRENT RESIDENCE: Louisville, Ky.

DEGREES: B.S., Boyce College (2000); M.Div., Southern Seminary (Biblical and Theological Studies, 2003); Th.M., Southern Seminary (New Testament Greek Exegesis, 2004); Ph.D., Southern Seminary (New Testament Theology w/ double minor in Biblical Greek and Biblical Hebrew, 2007)

EXPERIENCE: Assistant professor of New Testament and Greek at Campbellsville University (2008 - present); and visiting professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern Seminary (2007 - present); interim pastor of preaching at New Salem Baptist Church (2007) and at Kenwood Baptist Church (2009), both in Louisville, Ky.; and Sunday School teacher at Clifton Baptist Church (2003 - present)

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD: Orlando, Fla. I absolutely love the weather and the ethnic diversity there.

ACADEMIC WORK: My scholarly research and publications focus on Romans; Paul's atonement theology and his soteriology; soteriologies and atonement theology in early Judaism; ethnic identity formation and

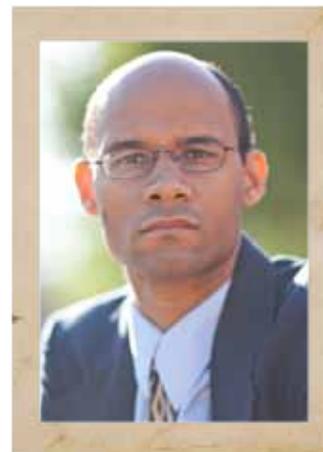
the Bible in early Judaism and early Christianity; and 2 and 4 Maccabees' influence on early Christianity. I am currently writing a book about the extent of the atonement in Paul's theology, a book about the background influences behind Paul's theology of atonement and a book about the Bible and ethnicity.

MOST INFLUENTIAL AUTHORS AND PROFESSORS: Tom Schreiner has influenced me more than any other NT scholar on the planet. In addition to Schreiner, Doug Moo and Simon Gathercole have influenced me as well as Martin Hengel, J.W. van Henten, Mark Dever and John Piper.

FAVORITE HOBBY: Spending quality time with my wife, Ana, and our two-year-old son, Jaden

WHY I TAKE THE GOSPEL SERIOUSLY: I take the Gospel seriously because it's the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes, to the Jew first and to the Greek.

HOW MY BOOK TAKES THE GOSPEL SERIOUSLY: My new book, *One New Man: The Cross and Racial Reconciliation in Pauline Theology*, takes the Gospel seriously in that it argues that sin is the fundamental reason humans need to be

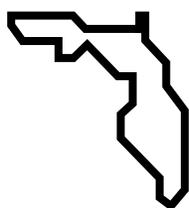


reconciled first to God and second to one another, that Jesus is God's provision for racial reconciliation, and that Jesus actually accomplished both vertical and horizontal reconciliation of those for whom He died. Therefore, the only way to reconcile sinners to God and to one another is to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples so that they would repent and believe the Gospel and be saved. In addition, my book suggests that racial reconciliation is central to the Pauline Gospel and that racial reconciliation is much deeper than and much different from ethnic diversity.

WHAT I WANT MY TOMBSTONE TO READ: Psalm 42:5 "Hope in God!"

MOST RECENTLY VISITED WEB SITE: The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

INTERESTING FACTOID: I'm a member of the American Academy of Religion, the Evangelical Theological Society, the Institute for Biblical Research and the Society of Biblical Literature, and I absolutely love University of Kentucky basketball.



CONTEXTUALIZATION BY DECONTEXTUALIZATION:

STUDENT BLUEGRASS BAND TAKES GOSPEL OVERSEAS

The Long Run Players share the message of Christ in international contexts by performing the American folk culture commodity of bluegrass music. Rather than contextualizing the Gospel, as their professors would have them, the group offers all-over cultures a strong-dose taste of the Gospel in decidedly American garb.

BAND NAME: The Long Run Players

PLACE OF ORIGIN: Louisville, Ky. (SBTS Campus)

NAMES AND DEGREES (SBTS): Cameron Beckerdite (M.C.M, 2011); Jeff Gayhart (Ph.D, 2014); Paul Martin (former student); Sarah Morrison (M.A., 2011)

WHY WE FORMED THE GROUP: The band started as part of a school mission trip to help church planters in Newfoundland, Canada, with outreach and evangelism.

MISSIONS HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE: Short-term trip to Newfoundland, Canada (Summer 2008); semester trip to Taipei, Taiwan, with IMB (Fall 2009); concerts throughout Eastern United States promoting missions (2010); short-term trip to Portugal and the Ukraine to work with IMB missionaries (Summer 2011)

WHY BLUEGRASS?: The initial idea for bluegrass came because the music would fit in well in Newfoundland. We think it works well for missions because bluegrass is a uniquely American art form that naturally includes Gospel music. The Gospel

and bluegrass fit together naturally – it’s authentic.

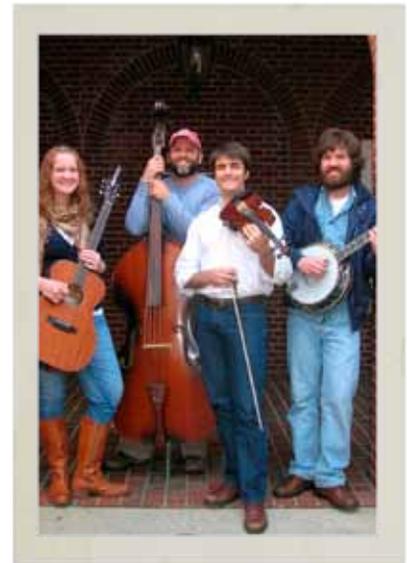
FAVORITE PLACE FOR MISSIONS: Every place we have been has been a blessing and we’re excited about the next trip.

FAVORITE ETHNIC FOODS: Taiwan had a lot of food that we fell in love with like black pearl milk tea, dumplings, su gee do, beef noodles and mango bing sha.

FAVORITE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION: Trains – subways and bullet trains

FAVORITE CHEAP HOBBY OR PASTIME: Besides music, going to night markets with friends.

WHY WE TAKE THE GOSPEL SERIOUSLY: We know that God commands every follower of Christ to “go and tell.” We also believe God gifts each of His children in different ways to bring Him glory. So, we want to use the gifts and talents God gave us to tell the world about Christ. Bluegrass music will not last, but the eternal impact of The Long Run Players will last. Our musical legacy will not be in Grammys or hit songs but in brothers and sisters



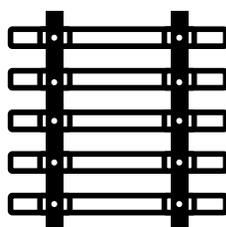
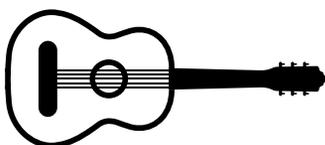
in Christ. Jesus is their only hope. We must go and tell them.

MOST WELL KNOWN SONGS: “Old Home Place,” “I’ll Fly Away,” “Orphan Girl” and “I Saw the Light”

MOST RECENT TRIP: We played four shows in North Carolina and South Carolina in churches and another venue. We were there to promote international missions with a focus on our upcoming trip to Europe.

MOST RECENT TOURIST ATTRACTION VISITED AS A GROUP: Cloud Gate (a.k.a. “The Bean”) in Millennium Park, Chicago

SOMETHING INTERESTING ABOUT US: None of us plays our original instrument. Cameron (fiddle) is a piano player; Paul (banjo) is a guitar player; Jeff (mandolin) is a guitar player; and Sarah (guitar) is a piano player.



FROM MANHATTAN TO SMOKETOWN:

BOYCE STUDENT BRINGS THE GOSPEL TO BEAR ON RAP, URBAN MINISTRY, BASKETBALL AND MARRIAGE

Upon hearing that the Louisville neighborhood, Smoketown, was among the most dangerous neighborhoods in the nation, humanities major Alex Medina sought ways to develop relationships with young men living in the area in effort to reach them with the Gospel. Presently focusing on his studies, Medina promotes the Gospel by working as a music producer for well known Christian rappers.

NAME: Alex Medina

HOMETOWN: New York City

DEGREE: B.S., Boyce College (Humanities w/ minor in Biblical Counseling, 2013)

EXPERIENCE: My local church, Primera Iglesia Bautista Hispana de Manhattan (First Hispanic Baptist Church of Manhattan), affirmed my gifts and cultivated my desires to preach and teach the word of God. Beginning in 2003, I served 4-5 years with a hip-hop ministry called Truce, under the umbrella of Nicky Cruz Outreach. In 2009, I joined Reach Records on two national tours serving in various ways.

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD: I want to say an exotic island in the Caribbean, or London, but in all reality my favorite place in the world is home.

CURRENT MINISTRY: Currently I am studying at Boyce College, serving at my local church and working as a music producer for artists like Lecrae, Trip Lee, Flame and others. Soon after my wife, Eli, and I arrived in Louisville, we heard that Smoketown is listed as the 14th most dangerous neighborhood in the country. Wednesday evenings I began heading over to Smoketown, along with fellow students, to

play basketball and become involved in the lives of some of these young men. By God's grace we were able to start building relationships with some of the men living in the area.

FAVORITE RESTAURANT: Anywhere that makes authentic Dominican food

FAVORITE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION:

Traumatized by the 15-hour drive from New York City to Louisville, I would have to go with the New York City subway.

Favorite hobby or pastime: Basketball and photography

WHY I TAKE THE GOSPEL SERIOUSLY: I take the Gospel seriously because my life hinges on its being true. To quote C.S. Lewis, "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance." As I write this, I am very aware of two things: the sinfulness of my heart and the perfect righteousness of Jesus which is mine because of His life, death and resurrection. I sit here as a man with no weight of guilt, no need of earning forgiveness and no future condemnation. Rather, I am free of all charges, accepted by God and living towards a future hope.

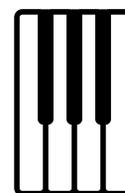
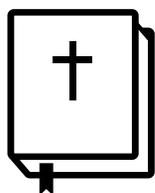
WHAT I WANT MY TOMBSTONE TO



READ: Something along the lines of "Disciple of Jesus Christ, faithful husband and father. He now sees in full what he only saw in part."

MOST RECENTLY PLAYED OR MOST PLAYED ON MY IPOD: The City Harmonic, and music from Tedashii's new album *Blacklight*

WHAT MARRIAGE TEACHES ME ABOUT THE GOSPEL: Tim Keller calls marriage "Gospel reenactment." It has been exactly that. Marriage has been a means of learning of and living out the reality of God's love and pursuit of a sinner like me. Marriage has taught me that love and leadership are costly. Marriage has given me an arena to love a sinner covenantally and sacrificially, as Christ has. It leads me to worship God for His longsuffering and patience and to plead with Him to conform my heart to His.



SBTS FACULTY MEMBERS REFLECT UPON GOSPEL ENCOUNTERS

1

Mark Coppenger, professor of Christian apologetics

Around used bookstores, I'm like an addict in needle park, and Evanston is full of these establishments. I love one in particular. As you walk in, just to the right, stand shelves offering really good books for only a few dollars.

During these past years, I've tried to insinuate the Gospel into any number of conversations with the owner – in discussing certain books for sale, in commenting on my work at Southern, in testifying to God's grace in my life, in showing him the Gospel summary on the back of my church business card and in sharing a copy of an Evanston Baptist Church evangelistic outreach piece, one that draws clear Gospel statements from street namesakes in Evanston, a city which was once a Methodist Zion.

In recent days, anticipating a move to Nashville, I've spoken more pointedly about his need to accept Christ. And I've been thinning out my library a bit, handing him, without charge, books I don't need. I do it in gratitude for his store's blessing on my life, but mainly in hopes that he will see a measure of Christian freedom and joy in my own life, which might "adorn the teaching of God our Savior" (Titus 2:10).

2

Gregory Wills, professor of church history; associate dean of theology and tradition for the School of Theology

I phoned a close relative recently to inquire whether he had sought

forgiveness of his sins. Many times in the past I had prayed for his conversion. Many times at family gatherings and visits I had made plans to urge him to seek forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Somehow he always managed to turn the conversation in another direction. Somehow I managed to let him.

I was recently convicted that my failure was blameworthy. So I called him on the phone. I would not wait until I saw him in person. There would be no more delay.

After a few minutes of conversation, I asked him about forgiveness of his sins. There ensued the briefest witnessing effort in history. If I'd known that I would have opportunity for only one sentence, I would have spoken of Christ crucified for the salvation of all who believe in Him. He halted me at one sentence however. "I don't want to talk about that," he said firmly. "May I ask," I replied, "why you don't want to talk about it?" "You may ask" was all he would say.

I was surprised by his attitude. He will talk engagingly about everything under the sun. But not this. Not God. Not Jesus. Not forgiveness or faith. I shouldn't have been surprised, for the word of the cross is folly to those outside of Christ.

I will try again nevertheless, for the word of the cross is also the power of God unto salvation.

3

Bill Henard, assistant professor of evangelism and church growth

I love Ephesians 4:32, which says, "Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another." Though specifically aimed at believers, kindness should move beyond just Christians. Paul also speaks of God's kindness in showing us His grace (Eph 2:7).

In applying these truths to my

witness, I have discovered that one of the most effective means for sharing my faith comes through the simple act of being kind ... being nice to people. I travel frequently for the seminary, teaching at our extension centers. Travel opens many doors for meeting new people, especially those hostile toward Christianity. Kindness becomes a key component for moving conversations from the secular to the spiritual. Sometimes the rental car is wrong, the hotel clerk is slow, or the flight attendant runs out of Diet Coke (God forbid!). Kindness crosses those barriers. Individuals expect rebuke and demand. Kindness softens the heart.

I have watched as a hostile hotel clerk over time requests prayer, a fellow traveler asks how I keep from losing my temper, or a rental car employee responds positively to Jesus, all because of kindness. To be a Great Commission Christian demands that God constantly remind me of my priorities, even if it means drinking apple juice on the airplane.

4

Timothy Beougher, Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth; associate dean and director of research doctoral studies for the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism

An evangelism concept that I try to emphasize to my students is, "never say NO for someone else." If persons say "NO" to Jesus, that is one thing – but don't you say "NO" for other people by assuming they will not be interested in spiritual things and not sharing the Gospel with them.

I recently had the privilege of seeing an elderly man profess faith in Jesus. I shared the Gospel with this man before – many years ago – and he gave an emphatic "NO"

1



2



3



4



5



6



when I urged him to respond to the Gospel message. God opened up an opportunity for me to talk with him last month. Because he gave such a strong “NO” answer many years before, part of me assumed he would say “NO” again. But the Spirit of God had been at work in his heart – and he put his faith and trust in Christ. While I had prayed for him to understand and respond to the truth, it honestly was a prayer of “I believe – help my unbelief.”

Sometimes we professors need to listen to our own lectures.

Jesus said “The sower went out to sow,” not, “The sower went out to inspect the soil – and where he thought he found good soil he sowed the seed.” We are called to be sowers of the Gospel seed, not soil inspectors.

5

George Martin, M. Theron Rankin
Professor of Christian Missions;
associate dean of the Billy Graham
School of Missions and Evangelism

You never know what sort of experience you’ll have in a taxi. Teaching in New York City several years ago, I explained to my LaGuardia Airport taxi driver exactly where I needed to go in midtown

Manhattan. Upon hearing my Florida cracker accent, he exclaimed, “Oh, got a Billy Bob in the car today!” It was an interesting ride into Manhattan that afternoon.

Just a week or so ago, via taxi, I found myself re-routed to Cincinnati. Jumping into the airline-provided taxi, I glanced at the driver’s name placard – interesting name, which told me much about the driver with whom I would ride for an hour and a half. As my new West African acquaintance and I talked, the differences in his hope and mine became startlingly clear. Mine was a sure and certain hope because of what Jesus has done. He heard the Gospel, and I encouraged him to believe. Stepping out of the car at the airport, I promised to pray for him, that the Lord would open his eyes and draw him to the Savior. Still I pray for him, knowing that “the Gospel is the power of God for salvation” (Rom 1:16).

6

J.D. Payne, associate professor of
evangelism and church planting

When it comes to following the Lord in obedience in this area, I have found there are three regular practices that

I try to implement into my lifestyle. First, every morning during my devotion time with the Lord I request that He would provide me with an opportunity that day to share the Gospel with someone. Second, I have learned that intentionality is the key. If I am not being intentional about preaching the Gospel in the highways and hedges, as I go throughout the day, then I rarely do share my faith. Finally, I go through my day with “Great Commission eyes,” looking for opportunities to share with others. For example, as I meet a server in a restaurant, someone at the grocery store or encounter a new next-door neighbor, I am immediately looking and praying for an opportunity to share the good news. A great evangelist of yesteryear once said that every time he met someone he either saw an “S” or an “L” on his or her forehead. The “S” stood for “Saved” and the “L” for “Lost.” He assumed that everyone he met had an “L” written across his or her brow, unless he knew for certain that they were followers of Jesus. Seeing people from this perspective is something that I have practiced for several years.

Special thanks to Mark Coppenger for compiling evangelism accounts from Southern Seminary faculty members.

Why So Serious?

Taking the Gospel Seriously
Demands Taking **Hell** Seriously

By R. Albert Mohler Jr.





The edition of TIME magazine timed for Easter Week features a cover story about the controversy concerning Rob Bell and his new book, Love Wins. Interestingly, the essay was written by none other than Jon Meacham, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author and former editor of Newsweek – TIME’s historic competitor. Meacham helpfully places Rob Bell in the larger context of modern theology, even as he offers a basically sympathetic analysis.

In what may be the most telling portion of the article, Meacham writes the following:

Is Bell’s Christianity — less judgmental, more fluid, open to questioning the most ancient of assumptions — on an inexorable rise? “I have long wondered if there is a massive shift coming in what it means to be a Christian,” Bell says. “Something new is in the air.”

Like Brian McLaren, who argues for “a new kind of Christianity,” Rob Bell now openly wonders “if there is a massive shift coming in what it means to be a Christian.”

“Something new is in the air,” Bell says. Actually, arguments for

universalism and the denial of hell — such as those made in Bell’s *Love Wins* — are anything but new. The real question is now whether the church has sufficient biblical conviction to resist this doctrinal seduction. Otherwise, it may well be that Rob Bell’s “massive shift” is the shape of things to come.

One of the most pressing questions in all of the controversy concerning Bell is this: “Whatever happened to hell?” What has happened so that we now find even some who claim to be evangelicals promoting and teaching concepts such as universalism, inclusivism, postmortem evangelism, conditional immortality and annihilationism — when those known as evangelicals in former times were known for opposing those very proposals? Many evangelicals seek to find any way out of the biblical doctrine that is marked by so much awkwardness and embarrassment.

Nonetheless, I want to make clear that we are not having this discussion because we find a ripe target in Rob Bell for a juicy conversation. We would not be having this discussion, for instance, if the perennial opponent to historic Christianity John Shelby Spong wrote another book; he has virtually denied almost every doctrine

and is identified so closely with progressive, liberal theology that I am not worried about the prospect of evangelicals suddenly carrying around his books.

Rob Bell is a different story, however. He has a tremendous influence, especially with younger evangelicals, which is why we must talk about this. We must talk about this because we are very concerned about the loss of the Gospel — not just getting a doctrine wrong, but the loss of the Gospel itself.

The answer to the questions surrounding the doctrine of hell must be found in understanding the impact of cultural trends and the prevailing worldview upon Christian theology. Ever since the Enlightenment, theologians have been forced to defend the very legitimacy of their discipline and proposals. A secular worldview that denies supernatural revelation must reject Christianity as a system and truth-claim. At the same time, a secular worldview seeks to transform all religious truth-claims into matters of personal choice and opinion. Christianity, stripped of its offensive theology, is reduced to one “spirituality” among others.

All the same, there are particular doctrines that are especially odious and repulsive to the modern and postmodern mind. The traditional doctrine of hell as a place of everlasting punishment bears that scandal in a particular way. Those Friedrich Schleiermacher called the “cultured despisers of religion” especially despise the doctrine of hell.

With *Love Wins*, Bell moves solidly within the world of Protestant Liberalism. His message is a form of liberalism arriving late on the scene. As a result, the burden of defending and debating hell now falls to us as confessional evangelicals committed to the authority of Scripture — the last people who think the reality of hell matters.

Still, how is it that so many evangelicals, including some of the most respected leaders in the movement,



“Is Bell’s Christianity — less judgmental, more fluid, open to questioning the most ancient of assumptions — on an inexorable rise? ‘I have long wondered if there is a massive shift coming in what it means to be a Christian,’ Bell says. ‘Something new is in the air.’”

now reject the traditional doctrine of hell in favor of annihilationism or some other option? The answer must surely come down to the challenge of theodicy — the challenge to defend God’s goodness against modern indictments.

The challenge of theodicy is primarily to defend God against the problem of evil. The societies that gave birth to the decades of megadeath, the Holocaust, the abortion explosion and institutionalized terror will now demand that God answer their questions and redefine Himself according to their dictates.

In the background to all this is a series of interrelated cultural, theological and philosophical changes that point to an answer for our question: What happened to evangelical convictions about hell?

The first issue is a changed view of God. The biblical vision of God has been rejected by the culture as too restrictive of human freedom and offensive to human sensibilities. God’s love has been redefined so that it is no longer holy. God’s sovereignty has been reconceived so that human autonomy is undisturbed. With Bell, one sees an embrace of an

understanding of human autonomy that is far outside the bounds of the Calvinist-Arminian debate, and for that matter, historic orthodoxy. In recent years, others have redefined God’s omniscience to mean that God perfectly knows all that He can perfectly know, but He cannot possibly know a future based on free human decisions.

Theologian Geerhardus Vos warned against abstracting the love of God from His other attributes, noting that while God’s love is revealed to be His fundamental attribute, it is defined by His other attributes, as well. It is quite possible to “overemphasize this one side of truth as to bring into neglect other exceedingly important principles and demands of Christianity,” he stressed. This would lead to a loss of theological “equilibrium” and balance. In the specific case of the love of God, it often leads to an unscriptural sentimentalism whereby God’s love becomes a form of indulgence incompatible with His hatred of sin.

Extending this argument further, it would surely be easier to persuade secular persons to believe in a God who would never judge anyone deserving of eternal punishment than it would to persuade them to believe in the God preached by Jonathan Edwards or Charles Spurgeon. But the urgent question is this: “Is evangelical theology about marketing God to our contemporary culture, or is it our task to stand in continuity with orthodox biblical conviction — whatever the cost?” As cited earlier, modern persons demand that God must be a humanitarian, and He is held to human standards of righteousness and love. In the end, only God can defend Himself against His critics.

A second issue that has contributed to the modern denial of hell is a changed view of justice. Retributive justice has been the hallmark of human law since pre-modern times. This concept assumes that punishment is a natural and necessary component of justice. Nevertheless,

retributive justice has been under assault for many years in western cultures, and this has led to modifications in the doctrine of hell.

The utilitarian philosophers, such as John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham argued that retribution is an unacceptable form of justice. Rejecting clear and absolute moral norms, they argued that justice demands restoration rather than retribution. Criminals were no longer seen as evil and deserving of punishment but were seen as persons in need of correction. The goal — for all but the most egregious sinners — was restoration and rehabilitation. The shift from the prison to the penitentiary was supposed to be a shift from a place of punishment to a place of penance, but apparently no one told the prisoners.

C. S. Lewis rejected this idea as an assault upon the very concept of justice. “We demand of a cure not whether it is just but whether it succeeds. Thus when we cease to consider what the criminal deserves and consider only what will cure him or deter others, we have tacitly removed him from the sphere of justice altogether; instead of a person, a subject of rights, we now have a mere object, a patient, a ‘case’.”

Some theologians question the moral integrity of eternal punishment by arguing that eternal torment is no fitting punishment for temporal sins. The traditional doctrine of hell argues that an infinite penalty is just punishment for sin against the infinite holiness of God. This explains why all sinners are equally deserving of hell apart from salvation through faith in Christ.

A third shift in the larger culture concerns the advent of the psychological worldview. Human behavior has been redefined by the impact of humanistic psychologies that deny or reduce personal responsibility for wrongdoing. Various theories place the blame on external influences, biological factors, behavioral >



determinism, genetic predispositions and the influence of the subconscious — and these variant theories barely scratch the surface.

The autonomous self becomes the great personal project for individuals, and their various crimes and misdemeanors are excused as growth experiences or “personal issues.” Shame and guilt are banned from public discussion and dismissed as repressive. In such a culture, the finality of God’s sentencing of impenitent sinners to hell is just unthinkable.

A fourth shift concerns the concept of salvation. The vast majority of men and women throughout the centuries of Western civilization have awakened in the morning and gone to sleep at night with the fear of hell never far from consciousness — until now. Sin has been redefined as a lack of self-esteem rather than as an insult to the glory of God. Salvation has been reconceived as liberation from oppression, internal or external. The Gospel becomes a means of release from bondage to bad habits rather than rescue from a sentence of eternity in hell.

The theodicy issue arises immediately when evangelicals limit salvation to those who come to conscious faith in Christ during their

earthly lives and define salvation as anything akin to justification by faith. To the modern mind, this seems absolutely unfair and scandalously discriminatory. Some evangelicals have thus modified the doctrine of salvation accordingly. This means that hell is either evacuated or minimized. Or, as one Catholic wit quipped, hell has been air-conditioned.

These shifts in the culture are but part of the picture. The most basic cause of controversy over the doctrine of hell is the challenge of theodicy. The traditional doctrine is just too out of step with the contemporary mind — too harsh and eternally fixed. In virtually every aspect, the modern mind is offended by the biblical concept of hell preserved in the traditional doctrine. For some who call themselves evangelicals, this is simply too much to bear.

We should note that compromise on the doctrine of hell is not limited to those who reject the traditional formulation. The reality is that few references to hell are likely to be heard even in conservative churches that would never deny the doctrine.

The revision or rejection of the traditional doctrine of hell comes at a great cost. The entire system of theology is modified by effect, even if

some revisionists refuse to take their revisions to their logical conclusions. Essentially, our very concepts of God and the Gospel are at stake. What could be more important?

The temptation to revise the doctrine of hell is understandable. But it is also a major test of evangelical conviction. This is no theological trifle.

Those of us who believe that salvation is by grace alone should understand the importance of realizing that we are not having this conversation or taking our particular stance upon the truth because we are smarter than Rob Bell. It is because, by the grace and mercy of God, we are constrained by truth and we are a part of a community of confessing believers who, by the grace and mercy of God, will hold each other accountable to the Gospel.

As we hold to the “faith once for all delivered to the saints,” we want to be as absolutely sure as possible that we are preaching the Gospel the way Christ and the apostles preached it. Thus, when we have a conversation like this, we are really saying to the world and to the larger community of Christians that if anything we have said or affirmed is in any way sub-biblical, aberrant or can be improved in how we are saying it, we hope people will love us enough to tell us. And I want to love Rob Bell in the right sense by pointing out where I think he is in error as well as by praying for him and for those who will read *Love Wins*.

Our responsibility is to present the truth of the Christian faith with boldness, clarity and courage — and defending the biblical doctrine of hell in these times will require all three of these virtues. Hell is an assured reality, just as it is presented so clearly in the Bible. To run from this truth, to reduce the sting of sin and the threat of hell, is to pervert the Gospel and to feed on lies. Hell is not up for a vote or open for revision. ➤

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



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The following feature articles by Russell D. Moore, Dan Dumas and Jason K. Allen were originally delivered as sermons at the Southern Seminary Foundation Board Spring 2011 retreat in Destin, Fla.

As for Me and My House: Taking Gospel Parenting Seriously

By Russell D. Moore



Last year my wife and I went to the emergency room several times – and all with one child, our oldest son, Benjamin. One time he fell out of a tree. One time he climbed up the bricks that were coming out of the house next to us, all the way up to the second floor, and he tumbled down off that. Another time he made a ramp, and while riding a bicycle holding two Super Soakers, he went off the ramp and ended up with a severe concussion.

Finally, the fifth time was one night at home. My wife, Maria, wanted some ice cream and she asked Benjamin to grab some for her from the freezer that is in the garage. Benjamin made his way to the garage, and while he

was barreling out there in the dark, he somehow knocked over a glass vase, smashed it into a thousand pieces and cut his foot in just the right way so that we had to return to the children's hospital emergency room.

The first several times I was really sympathetic with Benjamin, praying with him and patting his head, telling him that everything would be all right. By the fifth time, I was irritated with him.

When we pulled into the garage at 3:30 a.m., I saw a broken vase and some bloody footprints. But the bloody footprints went from the vase to the freezer and then back around into the house. I was in a quandary: How do I express to Benjamin that this was

reckless and foolish while at the same time commend him for carrying out his mission even when he was hurt? I still haven't figured exactly how to find the right balance, but that is part of the problem when one is trying to raise a household in a fallen world.

We have to not only teach the right things and discourage the wrong things, but much of parenting and equipping other people for parenting is about seeing a balance as well as seeing an underlying fabric of everything that is going on. This means sometimes there is simultaneous commending and rebuking. The reason for that is exactly what the Lord Jesus is pointing out in Matthew 7:7-11:



Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Jesus says you have a situation in which your household is not just about order. Households are not merely about behavior. They are not even merely about training up and

preparing people for the lives that God has for them. The households themselves are pointing and speaking to something about the Gospel. This is exactly what the apostle Paul says to the church in Ephesians 3:15. He writes of God the Father, “From whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.” Here and everywhere else throughout the Scripture there is the reminder that human parenting, and especially human fathering, points and shows something of what it means to know God and who God is.

This is one of the reasons that in the Scripture the words given for households and for parenting are not simply given to parents. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is not addressed as

a personal and private letter to those who have children in the home right now. It is addressed to the entire church at Ephesus.

Parenting and raising children is a task for the entire church, and since that is the case, we must understand where that connection point is between our households and the Gospel. Jesus shows us here in this teaching and then also in the rest of His life. As we look at Jesus’ life and teaching, we should notice four factors that are crucial for us to understand.

The first of these is identity. Jesus is teaching and He is telling people about the fact that you can trust God. God is not playing games with >D

you. God is not neglectful of you: “If you ask,” Jesus says, “you will receive; if you seek you will find; if you knock, the door is going to be opened to you” – and He says that you already know this: “How many of you, even those of you who are evil, give good gifts to your children?”

He also uses the phrase “if your son.” This is significant because Scripture makes the issue of household identity consistently throughout the pages of the Bible. There is a difference between the way that a person responds to the outside world and the way that he responds to his or her household. The writer of Hebrews, for instance, says you do not discipline those who are not your children (see Heb 12:3-11).

The issue of fatherhood is an issue of belonging. This is exactly what Jesus is showing and modeling in His own life, starting with the very beginning of His ministry. When Jesus is baptized, what happens at the moment of that baptism? There is a voice coming from the sky, which says to Jesus, “You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

This is significant because it has everything to do with our salvation. If God is not Father to Jesus where Peter can confess in Matthew 16, “You are the Christ, the son of the living God,” then you and I are hopeless.

The Book of Hebrews says that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers (Heb 2:11). The apostle Paul says that the entire point of salvation is that we would be conformed to the image of Christ so that He might be the firstborn of many brothers (Rom 8:29). Everybody in Jesus’ hearing would have understood this kind of identity because you were identified with your father and with what he did. Sonship was part of your identity.

If we are to raise up our children and influence other children in our churches, communities and neighborhoods who will be able to understand what it means to identify with God as Father through the Gospel of the Lord

“The household allows for recognizing fatherhood, and therefore recognizing Kingdom, and therefore recognizing inheritance and therefore recognizing the Gospel.”

Jesus Christ, we must equip parents, teachers and workers to demonstrate what it means to affirm that kind of identity. Permissive parenting does not do this. Any child can recognize what it means to be left to oneself. Children are designed for the Hebrews 12 pattern, to see and understand that “if I am not disciplined, then I am not really yours.” You learn to be able to recognize that in the Gospel by the Gospel tutorial that goes on in households.

The second issue is provision. Jesus says, “If your son asks you for bread, will you give a stone?” Jesus shows us that part of what it means for God to be Father is seen in the way a human parent provides for children. This is why later the apostle Paul writes to Timothy, “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim 5:8).

Paul uses really strong language: They are worse than an unbeliever. Why? Because the father who will not provide for his children is preaching a false gospel. He is showing something about God that is not true, that you cannot count on God to provide for you. Jesus says what you see is a little picture of God the Father in the father who is laboring in order to feed his children. This is why Jesus says worry and anxiety are counter to the Gospel (Matt 6:25-34). Every time I

worry about the future I say that I do not have a Father who knows exactly what I need and will give me exactly what I need. It is a questioning of the fatherhood of God.

The third issue is protection. Jesus presents here the issue of danger: “If your son asks you for a fish, are you going to give him a snake, are you going to harm this child?” Of course you are not going to harm a child. There is a sense of security that is present in a child who is learning to become dependent, learning to sense this kind of security that comes from a father.

What do the satanic powers want to do with this? They want to subvert this security either with a sense of under-protection or with a sense of over-protection. How does God protect? Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 10:13, “God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape.”

Parents then who leave open the possibility for their son to view pornography on the Internet paint an inaccurate picture of God – a God who does not protect, a God who does not deliver, a God who is not mighty to save. You begin to learn an accurate picture of God with the protection and the security that comes from an earthly father who will not put you in danger when you are in need of deliverance.

The fourth issue is inheritance. Jesus says, “If you as fathers will do this for your children, how much more will your Father give you all good things?”

In contemporary American culture, we do not often think about inheritance. An inheritance in our minds is something from very wealthy people who leave behind a trust fund for their children, or we think of inheritance as a kind of extra benefit.

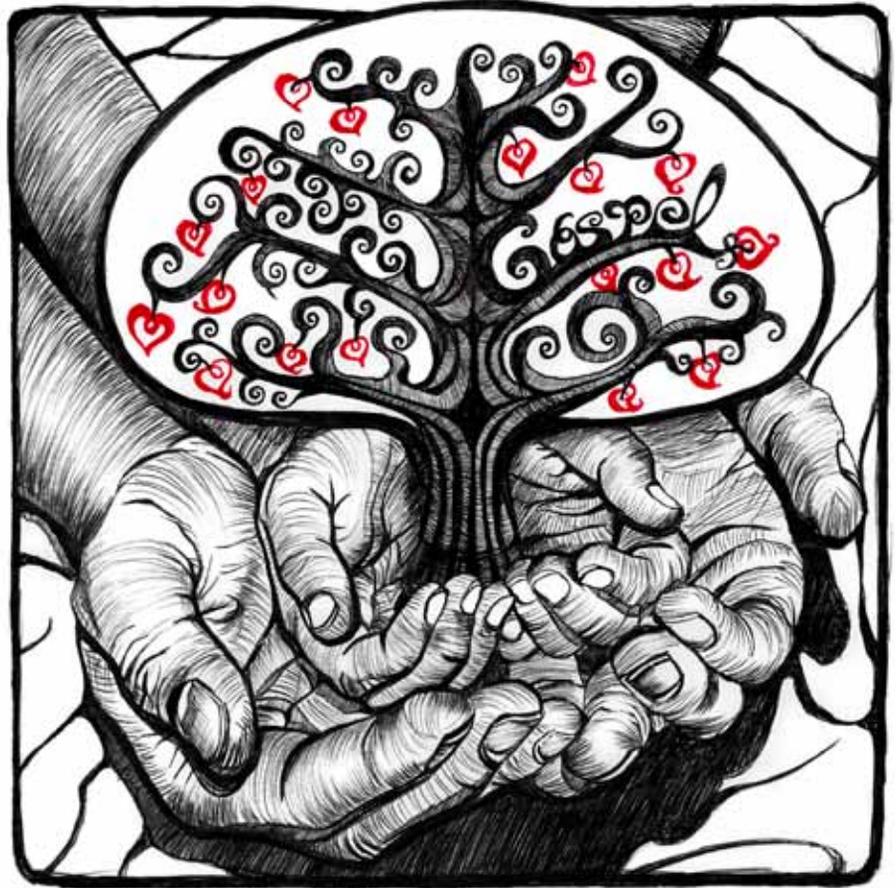
This is not the case for the people who hear Jesus. It is not the case for the people who hear the apostles. For them, an inheritance is the very thing

that connects them to their ancestors and to their descendants. It is the engine of survival, the business that a grandfather passes on to their father and then onto them. It is the business that you are going to pass on to your son, who will then pass it on to your grandson and so on.

That's the reason why when Jesus tells the story of the prodigal son who comes to his father saying, "Give me my inheritance now," everyone standing around would have been in shock. The son here is not only cutting himself off from his father, he is ending his family line. He is saying to his father, "I do not care about your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. I instead care about feeding myself in prostitutes and riotous living."

Scripture says that in our homes we are to learn and see what it means to receive an inheritance. In our homes, we are to learn and see what it means to be prepared for the life to come. Your inheritance is not just something you receive out there in the future. Jesus says that if you're faithful in small things, you will then be given authority over many things (Matt 25:21, 23). We prepare the next generation to see this by preparing them to see themselves as part of the small economies in the household and in the church.

Having a child take out the garbage is not just helping around the house. Having a child who knows it is his responsibility every other day to clean out the hamster cage is not just to ensure a clean hamster cage. These teach the child to participate in something, to be useful in something that ultimately is going to be part of his life. The same thing is true in the church. You cannot simply hire out all of the responsibilities that take place within the church because Jesus has gifted every member of the body to function together. With these giftings and ministries, Jesus is preparing and equipping us to rule the universe. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:2 that "the



saints will judge the world." You are going to govern the world, Paul says to them, and you cannot even conduct your church business meetings without fussing and fighting with one another.

The household allows for recognizing fatherhood, and therefore recognizing Kingdom, and therefore recognizing inheritance and therefore recognizing the Gospel.

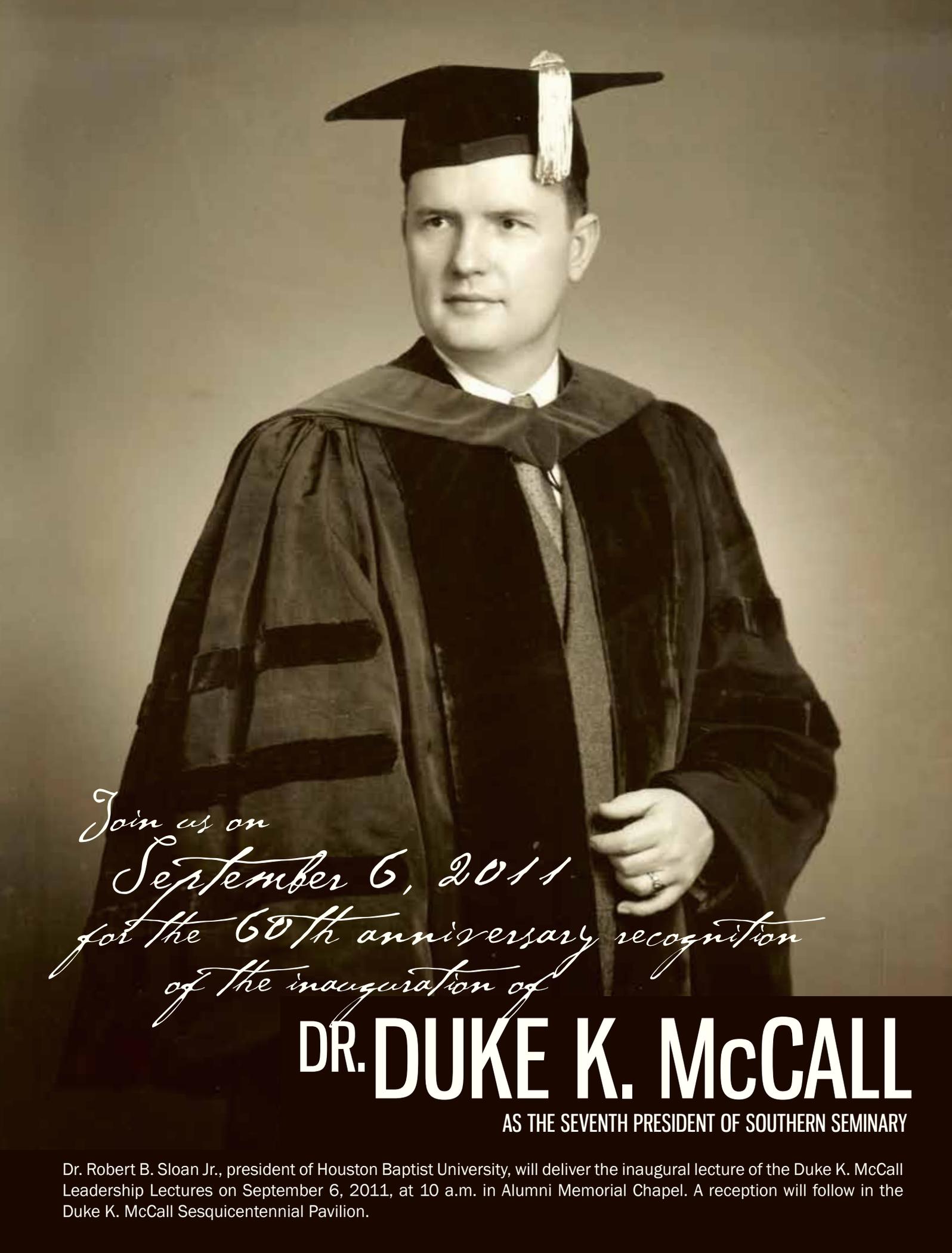
Every single household is showing and demonstrating one of two realities: a God who identifies with His people, provides for His people, protects His people and gives His people a future; or a god who ignores his people, who gives no future for his people and will grind his people to bits.

As a result, in households that would never see themselves as Unitarian, there exists proclamation of a fluffy Unitarian god. In households that would never see themselves as

Muslim, there exists proclamation of Allah. These households do not intend this, but this is the picture of God presented. You can have this, or you can have the God of Jesus Christ who shows up not only in teaching, who shows up not only in preaching, who shows up not only in family worship, but who shows up wrestling on the floor and playing baseball and in the emergency room, living life together.

This is what it means to be a father. This is what it means to belong. This is what it means to have provision. This is what it means to be protected. This is what it means to have a future. And this is what we want people to see ultimately in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. ➤

—
Russell D. Moore is dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary.



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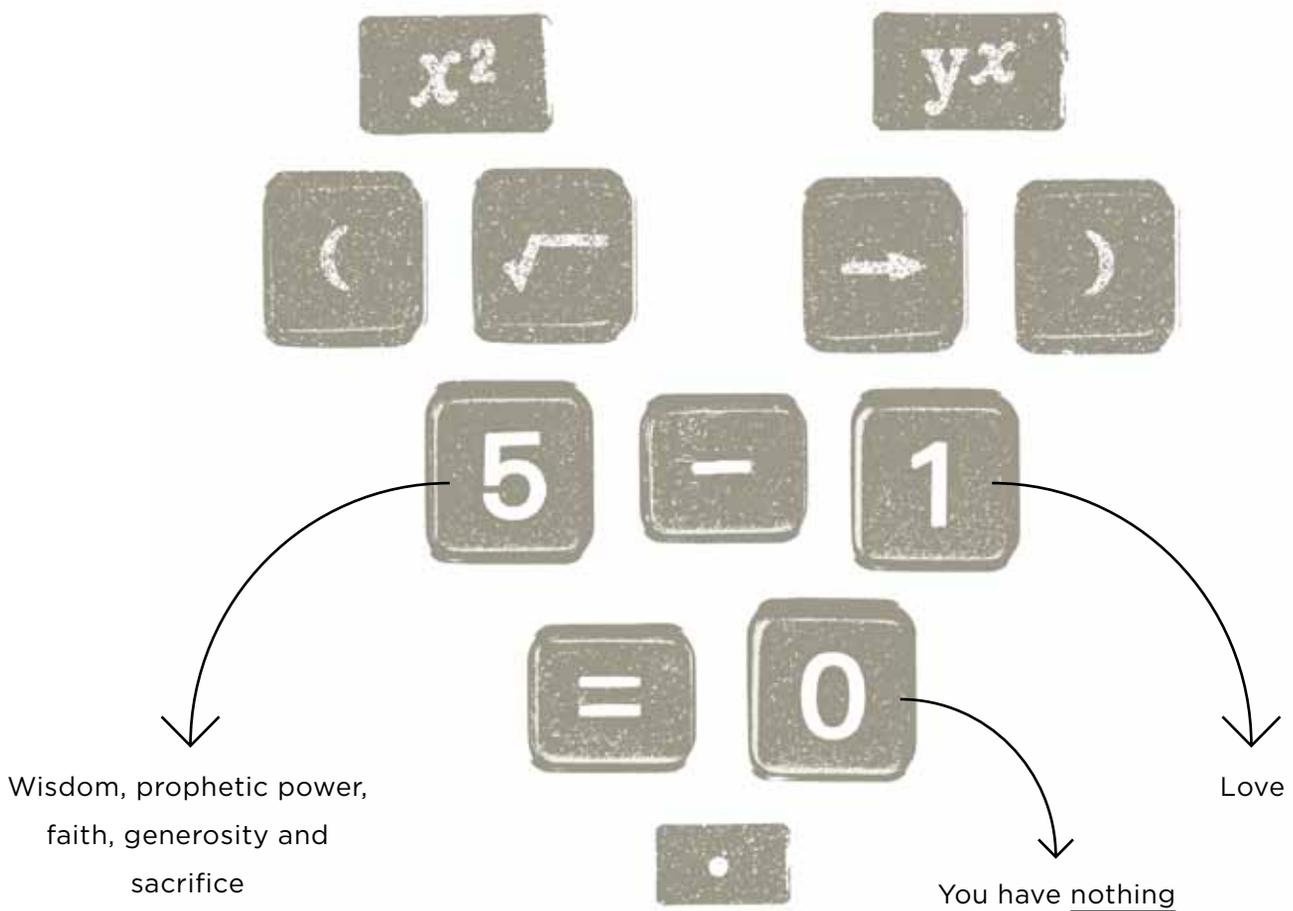
AS THE SEVENTH PRESIDENT OF SOUTHERN SEMINARY

Dr. Robert B. Sloan Jr., president of Houston Baptist University, will deliver the inaugural lecture of the Duke K. McCall Leadership Lectures on September 6, 2011, at 10 a.m. in Alumni Memorial Chapel. A reception will follow in the Duke K. McCall Sesquicentennial Pavilion.

The Gospel and Adjusted Math:

Taking Gospel Love Seriously

By Dan Dumas



Perennial Bible scholar D.A. Carson, calls it “divine mathematics.” And that sounds about right to me. Although the New Testament is not a mathematics textbook, when it does speak to the issue it doesn’t follow conventional theorems or formulas. Under normal convention, five minus one equals four – obviously. Not necessarily so with God’s math.

Look at 1 Corinthians 13:1-3:

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing (1 Cor 13:1-3).

Paul presents five specific gifts. Subtract love, and he concludes that equals zero. Paul presents an example of divine mathematics: Five minus one equals zero. It doesn’t follow conventional wisdom, but is wisdom supreme?

The Corinthians had a problem – okay, a lot of problems. Perhaps the most ominous issue was that they had big heads and little hearts. You remember the Ephesians had the same problem. They were steadfast, always toiling and doctrinally accurate – a church many of us would hasten to join. But Jesus accuses them of leaving their first love. This is exactly the case in Corinth.

From 1 Corinthians 1:7, we see that the Corinthian church lacked no gifts. But the church didn’t couple the gifts with grace. The church did not understand what New Testament love looks like. The Corinthian church didn’t understand that the Gospel calls believers to love one another.

In response, Paul crafts 1 Corinthians 13. This is a profound chapter, and probably the most important chapter on Gospel love in the New Testament. Jesus said we are to love one another, and God takes love seriously. And He expects Christ’s followers to demonstrate what it means to love one another.

We know that God commands us to love. The question is, “How?” And this question is the subject the first section in 1 Corinthians 13 addresses. The reader should think through what this Gospel love looks like. How does love impact the believer’s life?

Remember Paul also said that the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5). And so it’s my case that one of the chief implications of the Gospel is the expectation for us daily to represent what it means to love one another.

Paul takes five highly esteemed gifts, creates hypothetical scenarios and then applies an identical principle to each. He looks at the top five things prized in Corinthian culture. He brings them to the forefront and he creates these hypothetical situations, areas that are matchless in value. He uses the word “if,” and it’s interesting why

he uses that word. He is creating the hypothetical and trying to get you to pause and think about this topic of love. So he’s saying, “Just suppose for a minute,” and he repeats it with each of the five (see graphic below).

We like to use these verses at weddings as a kind of biblical mushy talk, but I think that’s missing Paul’s point. He makes these statements to correct and instruct the Corinthian church as to the importance of Gospel-centric love. Love is the implication of God’s love shed in the believer’s heart. Every single day of our lives, God expects us to live out this personal self-sacrificing, living-for-others kind of love.

Jesus said that same thing in John 13, “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, when you have love for one another” (v. 35). We preach the Gospel with our lives when we love one another, and when we have that kind of affection and understanding and deep love. It affects everything we do. Paul strongly emphasizes the necessity of this love because of the confusion and misinterpretation surrounding the gifts in the Corinthian church.

A man or a woman with great gifts, a supreme intellect, an ultimate giver, is nothing without love. So if I write the greatest article in history, but I do it without love, Paul says it profits nothing.

Five minus one equals zero when God does the math, because He sees the heart. Without love, all we do is offend others. Without love, I’m nothing. Five minus one equals zero. ➤

1.

If I speak eloquently, but do not have love, then I have become a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal.

2.

If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, but don’t have love, then I am nothing.

3.

If I have great faith, but do not have love, then I am nothing.

4.

If I give all my possessions to feed the poor and do not have love, then it doesn’t amount to anything.

5.

If I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, then it profits me nothing.

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Gospel Gravity: Taking the Lost Seriously

By Jason K. Allen

Many of us remember 1992 for its presidential election. Then-President George H. W. Bush ran for re-election against a young governor from Arkansas, Bill Clinton. Then Texas billionaire Ross Perot entered the fray. Perot chose as his running mate Vice Admiral James Stockdale. Stockdale came into the vice presidential debate ill-equipped. He began his opening comments with remarks that have lived on in political lore and satires for many years: “Who am I? Why am I here?” He became something of a parody himself. Nevertheless, the questions that he raised are questions we would do well to ask ourselves repeatedly: “Who are we?” “Why are we here?”

Romans 10 helps answer these questions. After just a glance at the chapter, one can see this is unlike any other passage. It is filled with extremes, tensions, dilemmas, questions and answers. Romans 10 presents sweeping claims, direct appeals and bold assertions as the apostle Paul confronts his readers with the fact that the Gospel is more than a study to consider. Rather, it is a message to believe, to defend, to spread, to proclaim and to take into all the world.

Romans 10 possesses a sense of Gospel gravity – a weightiness about the Gospel, even a burden for the Gospel. Paul begins in verse 1, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.” He says, “For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.” Paul, who is a thoroughgoing Jew, a “Hebrew of Hebrews” many passages tell, uses the word “brethren” not to refer to the Jewish people but to those in Rome who are believers in Christ. And now those distant from him are the Jewish people, those who are Paul’s countrymen. But he says >□





“Most people reading this article are likely not universalists. However, when we live as those unmotivated by the gravity of the Gospel, we send signals of a functional universalism.”

his heart's desire is unto God for their salvation. Paul elaborates thoroughly and critically in Romans 9 about God's work in this shifted paradigm.

Israel's rejection of Christ did not diminish Paul's sense of obligation, but rather in an almost obstinate way, the more hardened their hearts were, the more his passion and desire grew to win them for Christ. The more persistent they become in their rejection, the greater and heavier and weightier the sense of gravity in his heart.

The Jewish people were God's chosen people, not to limit God's promises to themselves, but to be a conduit for blessing to the nations. However, they mishandled this task. They handled it inappropriately and irresponsibly, rejecting the promises of God as well as His Messiah. They spurned the divine stewardship. But still, Paul's heart is for them.

Like Paul in Romans 10, we must have a Gospel gravity pulsing through us. This comes through understanding one word: “lostness.” Whenever we diminish or fail to think rightly and intentionally about the lostness of others, we have a lightened sense of burden for others.

I recently had a conversation with an executive in the Disciples of Christ denomination, one of the more liberal denominations in America. We talked about the nature of his denomination's mission work. He said they seek to build shelters in the Caribbean. At that point, I asked him a

direct question: “Does any of that entail seeking to make converts?” He replied, “You know, it really doesn't.”

I responded, “So you're telling me all this effort is simply to give people a pat on the back, food for their belly and perhaps a roof over their heads with no sense of pointing them to Christ?” “That's right,” he answered. As our conversation progressed, I could not resist asking him, “Why are you not Habitat for Humanity that happens to meet under a steeple?” He then said to me, “That's a really good question.”

I was a bit surprised with the candidness with which he acknowledged my assertion. Even though many of us subscribe to a more conservative theology, we too must guard our ministry from becoming “Habitat for Humanity that happens to meet under a steeple.” Rather, we must be people who understand lostness and feel the weight of Gospel gravity.

Most people reading this article are likely not universalists. However, when we live as those unmotivated by the gravity of the Gospel, we send signals of a functional universalism. The Gospel is a call for every Christian to engage lostness, for every church to repel lostness and for every true Christian institution to engage lost people.

Preachers, missionaries, ministers and believers should collectively, send, go and equip for the great work in Gospel gravity. Why are we here? Who am I? The great questions Stockdale asked must always inform our mission.

Recently, I flew back from California. Commotion started on the plane toward the back as I noticed the flight attendants had not been serving drinks. Instead they were scurrying back and forth more and more aggressively. One of the flight attendants had an oxygen tank running toward the back of the plane. Another, with a panicked look on her face, asked over the P.A. system, “Do we have a doctor or a nurse onboard?”

I'm thinking someone has passed out on this plane. This great sense of concern trickled throughout the plane. People shut down their movies and closed their books, and there was no giddy laughter. It's like the whole plane dialed into this drama.

So as we came into Memphis to make an emergency landing, there was a lot of intensity. We came into the airport runway landing strip and there were four or five EMS trucks there beside us. The plane door opened, and some men came rushing in. The person about whom they were concerned turned out not to be that sick at all. I noticed from the very minute the men rushed onboard that the passengers grew less concerned. There was less energy, less movement and less sense of drama – less gravity.

When all of that initially happened, I felt an uptick in my heart, a great sense of Gospel gravity and urgency. A couple of people near me heard me mention that I am a pastor, so they began asking me questions. But as soon as everyone saw this was not a high-level emergency, they went back to giddiness, back to fun, back to books, back to movies.

Here's what struck me. I felt my heart change: “I'll get back to my work that previously occupied my time on the plane.” “I'll put on my headphones so I can ignore the people around me.” “I just hope to get out of Memphis in time to see my kids before they go to bed.” “Let's get back to life as usual.”

My mind went from that scene to Romans 10, which tells us there must be no such thing as “life as usual.” There must be no such thing as endless giddiness. Eternal realities are always hanging imminently before us. We must be people who understand who we are and why we are here. We must be people of Gospel gravity. ➤

Jason K. Allen is vice president for institutional advancement at Southern Seminary and executive director of the Southern Seminary Foundation.

Simply Profound Yet Profoundly Simple



“We must have a robust and confident grasp of God’s Word and be ready to field the questions of modern man.”

A paradox, author G.K. Chesterton quipped, is “a truth standing on its head waving its’ legs to get our attention.” In the Bible such paradoxes abound. Paradoxically, Jesus is both God and man, and, paradoxically, the Bible came from both human inscription and divine inspiration. One such paradox, or seemingly contradictory truth, is rooted in the Gospel itself – the Gospel message is simple yet profound.

The Gospel is a simple enough to be comprehended by a child, understood by the illiterate and conveyed by those lacking formal education. In fact, at times in the New Testament the apostle Paul, an educated man, seems to revel in the Gospel’s relative simplicity. To the church at Corinth, he chided the Jews who desired authenticating signs and the Greeks who searched for wisdom. On the contrary, to the Corinthian believers Paul purposed to “know nothing among you except Christ and Him crucified.”

At the same time, the Gospel is a profound message. Paul was the church’s most accomplished theologian. Paul penned some 13 New Testament letters explaining and applying the Gospel.

Moreover, the Pauline epistles both insist and assume believers to be students of Scripture, equipped and equipping others to defend the faith. In many ways, the New Testament as a whole is one large project in documenting, defining, and defending the Gospel.

In the 21st century, just as in the first century, the simple Gospel message saves. Yet the 21st century also brings with it a season of unique evangelistic challenge. In past generations, the great enemy of the Gospel was apathy among unbelievers, and much of evangelism was oriented toward persuading the hearers to respond to the Gospel message they knew and acknowledged but had not yet personally embraced. Evangelism focused more on exhortation to believe the Gospel than an explanation of the Gospel.

Contemporary believers can no more assume modern man is predisposed to believe our antiquated Gospel message than we can assume an ancient man would be predisposed to believe in modern medicine. God’s people must not settle for only a rudimentary knowledge of God’s saving message. Rather, we must have a robust and confident grasp of God’s Word and be ready to field the questions of modern man.

Southern Seminary stands at the intersection of this Gospel paradox. We have thousands of students whose lives have been transformed by the simple message of Christ and now have been called to take that message to the ends of the earth. Graduating ministers who are passionate to proclaim the Gospel is most important, but equipping these same students through rigorous theological education to explain and defend Gospel has never been more important. This is a sacred stewardship.

In Paul’s day and in ours, the Gospel is indeed a paradox. In its own way, to paraphrase Chesterton, the Gospel stands on its head, waves its legs and demands our attention. This is a paradox worth embracing, celebrating and advancing together.

Jason K. Allen,
vice president for
institutional advancement

Elaine and Darrell Cook:

Proving that giving is a lifestyle

By Emily Griffin

More than 30 years ago Elaine and Darrell Cook came to believe that giving is more than the act of writing and mailing a monthly check. Rather, they came to live by the idea that giving is a lifestyle.

A career business executive, Darrell taught Sunday School in his Birmingham, Ala., church for 30 years and for the past eight years he has been a faithful member of the Southern Seminary Foundation Board.

“We have found that Southern Seminary has been a good place to invest our money,” Darrell said. “Over the years we have personally invested in several young men at the seminary, and we’ve found that Southern is a great place to invest in for training Baptist pastors and missionaries.”

As a couple the Cooks

made it a priority to carve out time for short-term mission trips and have financially supported mission trips when possible.

In 2003, as Darrell approached age 60, the couple accepted an invitation to a three-day meeting of the International Mission Board (IMB). Throughout the meeting they heard accounts of missionaries across the world going to great lengths to share the Gospel with the lost. As they heard stories of achievements, they were also made aware of the need for additional IMB funding and manpower across the globe.

“Halfway through that meeting we heard that some missionaries were having to step away from their main focus and dedicate energy to some administrative tasks — and

they needed to get back to their focus,” Darrell said in a 2007 Southern Seminary chapel service. “I looked at my wife and said, ‘I could do that job.’ From that time on we began to pray individually and together and the Lord clearly revealed that we needed to go. I was 60 years old! In a matter of months I took early retirement and we said goodbye to three beautiful daughters and three beautiful grandchildren and we were off to our orientation with the IMB in Richmond, Va.”

With no interest in a traditional “retirement,” the Cooks took part in the IMB’s Masters Program designed for those 50 years old or older with no dependent children who are available to make a two-or-three-year commitment to serve overseas utilizing the

maturity, skills and experience they have gained over their lifetimes.

As orientation came to a close, the Cooks assumed they’d be doing some sort of administrative work overseas, but at the time there were none of those jobs available. An acquaintance challenged the Cooks prayerfully to consider church planting. Soon the Lord provided an opportunity for church planting and the Cooks headed overseas to serve the Tswana people of Rustenburg, South Africa.

“We spent six months in Rustenburg working with the people in the towns, villages and squatter camps,” Darrell recounted. “After about six months there was a need for an IMB treasurer in the big city Johannesburg, South Africa. Since that was in my skill set, we



took that job and moved to Johannesburg.”

In Johannesburg the Cooks observed the effects of extreme wealth and extreme poverty and the vast lostness of South Africa’s third largest city.

“In South Africa a lot of people think they are Christians – it is a cultural thing – but just like it is in America, cultural Christianity isn’t exactly biblical Christianity.”

As a treasurer for the IMB, Darrell joyfully related to 100 missionaries, taking care of their finances and fuel, rent and medical bills. Darrell’s night and weekend responsibilities brought him equal joy.

“The most exciting thing was that on the weekends, for the last year and a half, I was the pastor of a very diverse local church,”

Darrell said. “When I say diverse I mean Indians, Africans, refugees from Zimbabwe, even little grey-haired, white ladies. We had a very meaningful job with the IMB but then we were involved in hands-on ministry in this suburban church.”

As the Cooks’ time in South Africa neared a close, Elaine encouraged her husband to consider enrolling in seminary once they returned to their Alabama home. The Cooks live only a short drive from Beeson Divinity School, on the campus of Birmingham’s Samford University.

“Within six months of us moving back to Birmingham I was a full-time student at Beeson Divinity School. And one of the exciting things was that within a year after that,

I was called to pastor a small church just outside of Birmingham,” Darrell said.

For nearly a year Darrell has served as pastor of Dogwood Grove Baptist Church in Adger, Ala., about an hour from the Cooks’ home. The church received the Cooks warmly and Darrell rejoices that the church family receives the Word of God.

This spring the Cooks have served the communities of Alabama and Georgia that were devastated by the string of tornadoes that struck in April.

“The Cooks are exemplary Christian individuals,” said Jason Allen, vice president for institutional advancement and executive director for the Southern Seminary Foundation.

“They have rerouted their lives for more direct Gospel service. Not only are they steadfast and generous supporters of Southern Seminary but they also demonstrate for our students what faithful Gospel service looks like, evident by their time and energies on the mission field. We thank God for Darrell and Elaine and their faithful Gospel witness.”

“We’ve placed Southern in our will, as well as the IMB,” Darrell said. “One of the things that Baptists do right is what I like to call the ‘three-legged stool.’ That is when the seminary and the church relate to missions. Those three components are what it takes to carry out the Great Commission.” ➤

Stand With Us in a Serious Way



“The Gospel testimonies that emanate from this campus and around the world in the lives of our students and alumni are truly a beacon of hope and a cause for continued optimism.”

Jesus asked, “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”

This question should alarm us. The answer seems promising when surveying the trends of Christianity in the Global South or seeing the seriousness of the young students God is bringing to the campus of Southern Seminary. With these in view, we find hope. The answer to Jesus’ question can simultaneously have a discouraging outlook when reading articles about the death of Christianity in the West or the rise of Islam throughout the world’s population. So what are we to do?

As this issue of the *Southern Seminary Magazine* makes clear, this institution is serious about the Gospel and we seriously believe it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. And to this end we labor and strive with hope.

I find hope when I hear the testimony of a broken marriage repaired by the Gospel or a young man rescued from the terrors of addictions. My faith is strengthened when I see God’s grace in the lives of young children who come to faith through the godly example and witness of their

parents. There is also great joy in sending off hundreds of graduates a year to every corner of the globe to equip the saints for the work of ministry. The Gospel testimonies that emanate from this campus and around the world in the lives of our students and alumni are truly a beacon of hope and a cause for continued optimism.

But our Gospel seriousness will always encounter great opposition. Jesus even promised that His followers will endure hardship, and even hatred, for His name’s sake. There is always the temptation to lose heart, but we know we face opposition as a people of faith.

So, will Jesus find faith on the earth when He returns? Luke explains that Jesus was telling the preceding parable to the effect that they ought to pray and not lose heart. With God’s grace Southern Seminary will continue to pray, find strength of heart, and carry out the task of theological education that God has called us to undertake. There is no more strategic endeavor than training the next generation of pastors and church leaders and I want to remind you that we cannot do it alone.

Today, just as Southern Seminary is serious about the Gospel I am asking our friends and alumni to stand with us in a serious way. For the sake of the furtherance of the Gospel and on behalf of our students, I ask that you consider making a donation today to the Southern Seminary Annual Fund. Every dollar that is given to the Southern Seminary Annual Fund is a dollar we do not have to charge our students. I hope you will stand with us. For your convenience, we have enclosed an envelope that allows you to join our work as the Lord leads you.

Thank you for all you do to support and uphold the work of this institution. Thank you for making Southern Seminary a place of great hope. We ask that you continue to pray for us as we pray for you and together await the return of the Son of Man.

Sincerely,
R. Albert Mohler Jr.

You don't have to read many studies to realize that an alarming number of students who were active in church youth groups in high school quit attending church while in college.

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