

# SOUTHERN SEMINARY

## A CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM





# The Southern Seminary Luncheon

at the Southern Baptist Convention

Wednesday, June 12 | 12 p.m.  
Grand Ballroom B | Level 3  
George R. Brown Convention Center  
Houston, Texas  
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THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



## **An understanding of Islam: an imperative for ministers**

**S**ome time ago, I was able to visit the personal library of President Thomas Jefferson, prominently displayed within the Library of Congress. As president, Jefferson had to deal with the challenge of the Barbary Pirates. In a letter displayed among the books, Jefferson wrote of these pirates as “Hindoos.” Jefferson, probably the most cosmopolitan of the nation’s founders, was not fully aware that Hindus and Muslims are not the same.

Evidently, one could be among the most educated and knowledgeable Americans of that day without knowing much of anything about Islam. That is no longer the case.

The rise of Islam as a major challenge for the Christian church did not await the 21st century, but this century will be marked by the most sustained confrontation between Christianity and Islam of the modern age. Christianity, Islam and western secularism represent the three great rival worldviews of our age. Each is fighting for the souls of men and women in the 21st century, and the spiritual stakes could not be higher.

Islam was not included within the curriculum of Southern Seminary in 1859. Even if it had been included, it is hard to imagine who would have taught that subject. Now, more than a century and a half after the seminary’s

founding, it is impossible to imagine how a minister of the gospel can be trained and prepared for faithful service without a knowledge of Islam and the challenge it represents.

For this reason, the Jenkins Center for the Christian Understanding of Islam represents a central dimension of Southern Seminary’s future. Thanks to the generosity of Bill and Connie Jenkins, this center will bring front-line exposure to Islam right into the heart of the seminary’s academic programs. The very newness of this pioneering approach points to the vast new challenge that Islam represents — not just on the mission fields of the world, but

Islam that is theological and missiological and grounded in apologetics, not just a knowledge of Islam as a system of belief and practice. This edition of the *Southern Seminary Magazine* introduces many of the most crucial issues that frame such an approach. We thank God for this new initiative, and look forward to the adventure of seeing it fully launched.

As the 2012-2013 academic year draws to a close, I am very thankful for what God makes possible on this campus. This has been a remarkable year, and we look forward to a year of great promise ahead. We are advancing with the master plan and the development of the campus. We look forward to a whole new army of students to arrive in the fall. The blessing of the Lord is evident in a brave new budget increase and the further expansion of academic programs and Southern

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### ***Ministers of the gospel need to develop an understanding of Islam directly tied to the concerns of the gospel.***

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right here on the fields of ministry and mission in North America.

Crucial to this new program is the development of a Christian understanding of Islam. We can learn much from secular sources and from Muslim authorities, but the minister of the gospel needs to develop an understanding of Islam that is directly tied to the concerns of the gospel. In other words, a pastor should have a knowledge of

Seminary’s reach around the world.

We saw hundreds of young ministers of the gospel and missionaries set loose at graduation, deployed to the uttermost parts of the earth. We watch them go with lumps in our throats and gladness in our hearts.

And so they go ... Soldiers of Christ, in Truth Arrayed. The world will soon know who they are — and whose gospel they bring.



# Features

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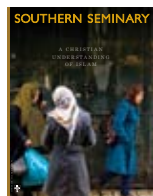
## 34 Business as mission

The marketplace opens up avenues for the spread of the gospel around the world. *By Aaron Cline Hanbury*



## 40 Southern Baptist statesman and Southern Seminary president, dies at 98

Duke K. McCall, Southern Seminary's seventh president, left behind a legacy of leadership. *By Gregory A. Wills and Aaron Cline Hanbury*



**On the cover**  
 During a recent trip to Jerusalem, *Southern Seminary Magazine's* Emil Handke photographed a small marketplace near the Western (Wailing) Wall in the Old City.

In Short	News 4	Events 8	Reviews 14	Thoughts 20
SBTS announces formation of new school and expands budget	. . . . .4			
ERLC elects SBTS dean as new president	. . . . .5			
Father of seminary president dies, calls attention to faithful service	. . . . .6			
Mohler suggests 10 books for pastors	. . . . .7			
Southern Seminary launches 1937 Project	. . . . .8			
SBTS and Boyce host preview conferences	. . . . .10			
Mullins lectures focus on relationship of media and preaching	. . . . .11			
TGC features SBTS leadership, faculty	. . . . .12			



**30 Ten things every Christian should know about Islam**

A veteran missionary shares from his 20 years of experience in a Muslim-majority country. *By Zane Pratt*



**24 A picture of Islam**

The *Southern Seminary Magazine* team presents a look at the growing global imprint of Islam.

**26 The challenge of Islam – A Christian perspective**

Islam represents a challenge, not just on the mission fields, but also on the fields of ministry in North America. *By R. Albert Mohler Jr.*



**36 Formation of new school and new academic leadership**

Southern Seminary announces Randy Stinson and Gregory A. Wills as new academic leadership. *By Aaron Cline Hanbury*

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Gentry, Wellum present a covenantal reading of Scripture .....	13
Review of <i>A Guide to Evangelism</i> .....	14
Review of <i>Flourishing Faith</i> .....	16
Brand talks about Baptists working .....	17
Review of <i>Justification by Grace through Faith</i> .....	18
Vickers suggests the everyday answer to legalism .....	19
The work of Christ and an identity of relentless evangelism .....	20
How should Christians talk to members of world religions .....	21

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<b>People</b>	
Alumni updates .....	42
Alumni & student profiles .....	44
Donor profiles .....	46

## News



## Southern Seminary announces formation of new school, names new academic leadership and expands budget

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary announced the formation of a new school, named new academic leadership and approved an expanded budget at the spring meeting of its board of trustees, April 16, 2013.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: An extensive look at the new school and leadership appears on pages 36-39]

Beginning in August 2013, the seminary will launch a new school: the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry. This school, which combines the current Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism, established in 1994, and the School of Church Ministries, 2009, will serve students of both international and domestic missions, church planting, worship leadership and both local church and educational leadership.

The seminary will retain all faculty in the current Graham School and School of Church Ministries. The school will name a dean of the new Graham School in coming months.

Up until June 1, Russell D. Moore served as the seminary's lead academic officer under the president as well as dean of the School of Theology. On March 26, 2013, trustees of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention elected Moore as its next president. In light of Moore's recent election, seminary president R. Albert Mohler Jr. named Randy Stinson

as senior vice president for academic administration and Gregory A. Wills as dean of the School of Theology. Mohler also announced Matthew J. Hall as vice president for academic services.

Trustees voted to approve a budget for the 2013-14 academic year that represents a 3.3 percent increase from 2012-13.

Mohler said of the school's fiscal health: "We are thankful for God's continued blessing on Southern Seminary in terms of enrollment, the support of our donors and most importantly the support of Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program. We are proud and thankful to be a Cooperative Program ministry of the Southern Baptist Convention and we are very thankful at this time to be able to move, as in previous years, into an expanded budget."

Trustees approved the promotion of both Adam Greenway and Heath Lambert to associate professorships, and Robert L. Plummer to a full professorship. The board also granted sabbatical leave for professors Timothy K. Beougher and Bruce A. Ware.

Before concluding their meeting, trustees honored the late Rick Byargeon, a trustee of the seminary who died April 4, 2013, approximately 150 days after doctors diagnosed him with cancer.

Byargeon was most recently the senior pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Ruston, La. Before that, he served as a pastor in other churches and on the faculties of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1993-1999; 2003-2005) and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (2001-2003). Southern Seminary trustees will present a framed set of resolutions in Byargeon's honor to his widow, Jonann, and their son, Will. — AARON CLINE HANBURY



## ERLC elects SBTS dean as new president

The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission's board of trustees elected Russell D. Moore as its next president, March 26. Moore is currently dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary.

Moore, 41, will be the eighth president of the entity charged by Southern Baptists to address moral and religious freedom issues. With a background in government, the pastorate and seminary training, he

husband and father and a convictional, committed Baptist. His excellent academic preparation, combined with his keen mind and his tender heart for God and his people, make him a person uniquely suited to serve our Savior and Southern Baptists in this crucial role at such a critical moment in our nation's history."

Moore will begin his new responsibilities June 1. At that time, Land will become the entity's president emeritus, an honor bestowed on him by trustees in September.

Moore has served since 2004 as dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic admin-



I pray for God's grace to lead the ERLC to be a catalyst to connect the agenda of the kingdom of Christ to the cultures of local congregations for the sake of the mission of the gospel in the world.

already is well-known as a commentator from a Southern Baptist and evangelical Christian perspective on ethics, theology and culture.

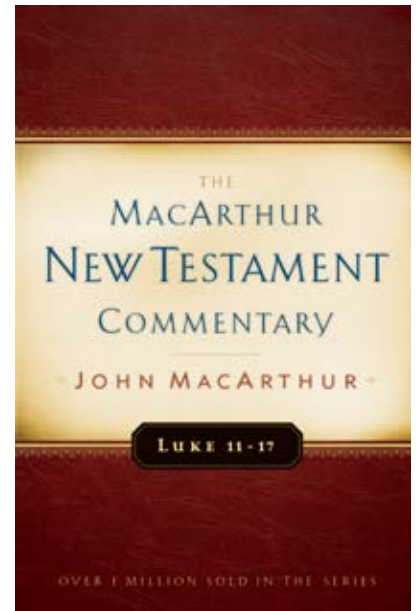
He will succeed Richard Land, who will retire upon the completion of 25 years leading the entity.

"I am delighted that the Holy Spirit has led the ERLC's trustees to Dr. Russell Moore as the commission's next president," Land said. "Dr. Moore is a godly Christian minister, a devoted

administration at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He joined the faculty in 2001 as professor of Christian theology and ethics and continues in that role. Moore will remain on faculty as distinguished professor of Christian ethics.

— BP AND SBTS COMMUNICATIONS

*Tom Strode, who is the Washington bureau chief for Baptist Press, contributed to this article.*



## MacArthur dedicates new commentary to Mohler

John MacArthur dedicated his newest Bible commentary to R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary. MacArthur, who is senior pastor of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, Calif., presented *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Luke 11-17* to Mohler on March 8, 2013, at the annual Shepherd's Conference at Grace Community.

On the inside of the book, MacArthur writes: "Dedicated to Albert Mohler, a treasured friend and trustworthy voice of clarity in confusing times. I love his unapologetic commitment to the authority of Scripture, courageous leadership, untiring zeal, and faithful devotion to the truth — written and incarnate. He is that rare combination of intrepid intellectualism and passionate love for the Lord (not merely academic curiosity) who, by his influence, has galvanized a generation of preachers who share his convictions." — SBTS COMMUNICATIONS

*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Luke 11-17 is available at most major Christian bookstores.*

## Richard Albert Mohler Sr., father of seminary president, dies, calls attention to faithful service

He was a deacon and youth Sunday school teacher whose legacy includes 40 years of faithful service in his local church and raising up one of the nation's most influential evangelical leaders.

Richard Albert Mohler Sr., 76, died Monday, March 18, 2013, after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage in his Deerfield Beach, Fla., home. He died in an area hospital that evening with family gathered at his bedside.

A native of Plant City, Fla., Mohler Sr. leaves behind his wife of 55 years, Janet Johnson Mohler; four children, Richard Albert Mohler Jr. of Louisville, Ky., Jan Mohler Knight of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., Lee Mohler of Boynton Beach, Fla., and Mark Mohler of Melbourne, Fla.; and seven grandchildren.

A retired store manager for Publix Supermarkets, Mohler Sr. was recently honored as deacon emeritus — “deacon for life” — at First Baptist Church of Pompano Beach, Fla., where he and his family became members in 1972. His son, Mohler Jr., delivered a sermon at the tribute service for the honored deacon in January 2013.



came to regard Mohler as a “mentor and source of godly advice.” It is “a rare gem for a church to have someone like Dick Mohler,” the pastor said.

The funeral, held March 21, drew a large crowd to remember Mohler Sr.’s life, including prominent Southern Baptist leaders Chuck Kelly, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological

Paige Patterson.

Mohler Jr. emphasized the perfect goodness of the heavenly Father by comparing it to the goodness of his earthly father Mohler Sr., which extended beyond his own children to the children of the church.

Mohler Jr. noted that, two years ago, he spoke on the topic of death to biblical counselors using Psalm 116:15 as his Scripture text: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

“Brothers and sisters, I want you to know even more I believe [Psalm 116:15] now,” Mohler said in the conclusion of his eulogy. “And thus, I can tell you how proud I am to be Richard Albert Mohler Jr., and how thankful I am to be gathered here with you this day with my dear mother, with my wife and children and with my family to say, it is well with my soul.”

And certainly precious is the life, and death, of Richard Albert Mohler Sr. — CRAIG SANDERS, WITH REPORTING FROM JAMES A. SMITH SR. AND AARON CLINE HANBURY

“  
The Lord allowed me the joy of having young men show up at the seminary I’m privileged to serve who told me, “Your dad taught me in middle school and had a massive impact on my life.”  
— R. Albert Mohler Jr.

First Baptist pastor Ron Harvey noted Mohler’s longtime service as a Sunday school teacher for middle and high school boys. Remarkably, the youth consistently remained quiet during his lessons because of their high level of respect for him. Harvey, who arrived in Pompano Beach eight years ago, said he

Seminary; Jason K. Allen, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and former chief of staff for Mohler Jr. at Southern Seminary; Ken Whitten, pastor of Idlewild Baptist Church in Lutz, Fla.; and Dorothy Patterson, wife of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary president



## Mohler suggests 10 books for pastors

Recently, R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, published a list of 10 books he thinks every pastor should read in 2013. Mohler's list appears in the March-April issue of *Preaching Magazine*.

1. *The Juvenilization of American Christianity* (Eerdmans), Thomas E. Bergler;

2. *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Crossway), Gregg R. Allison;

3. *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Baker Academic), Jonathan T. Pennington;

4. *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (InterVarsity Press), Graeme Goldsworthy;

5. *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton University Press), Peter Brown;

6. *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010* (Crown Forum), Charles Murray;

7. *The Intolerance of Tolerance* (Eerdmans), D.A. Carson;

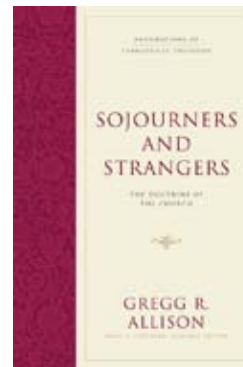
8. *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics* (Free Press), Ross Douthat;

9. *God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Crossway), Gerald Bray;

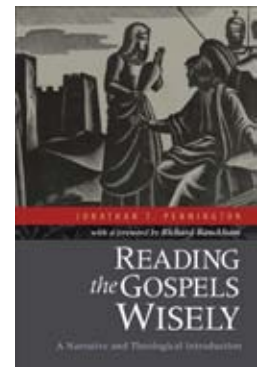
10. *Delighting in the Trinity: an Introduction to the Christian Faith* (InterVarsity Press), Michael Reeves.



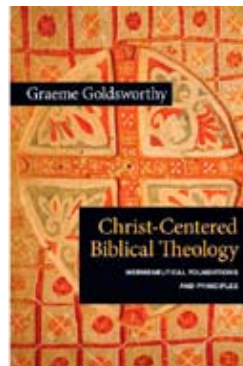
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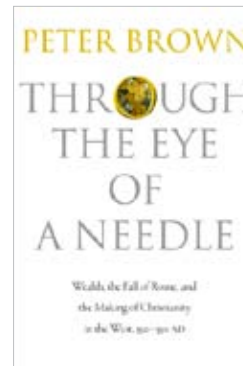
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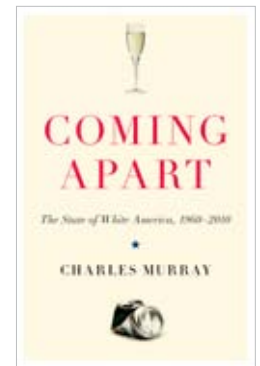
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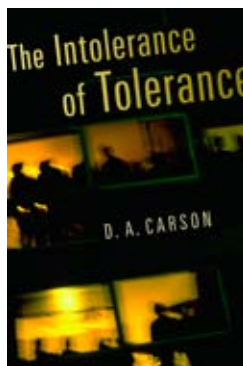
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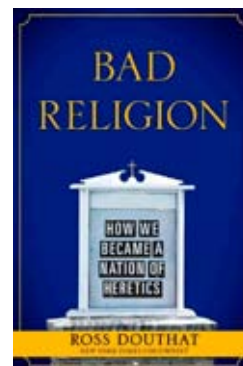
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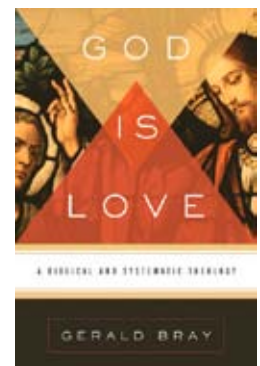
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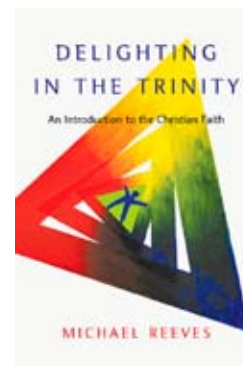
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## Events



## Southern Seminary hosts inaugural 1937 Project

From Heritage Hall to the unorganized closets of a pregnancy center and homeless shelters, the Southern Seminary community served the City of Louisville, Ky., during the first annual 1937 Project event, April 20.

The year of 1937 brought tragedy to Louisville, when the Ohio River overflowed, flooding many buildings, homes and offices all across the city. Neville Miller, the city mayor at the time, lost his offices due to the flood. Southern's then-president, John R. Sampey, offered parts of the campus to the mayor and his staff while the city recovered from the greatest flood in American history to that point. The mayor used the seminary president's office until he could return to city hall.

During the flood of 1937, students shared the gospel with those they helped. In that same spirit, Southern Seminary reached out to Louisville through the 1937 Project, an annual initiative to help the city, share the gospel and build up local churches through strategic projects.

The first annual 1937 Project deployed 175 Southern Seminary volunteers, including staff, students, families and even several preview day students into various Louisville sites, including A Woman's Choice Resource Center, Scarlet Hope ministries, Jefferson Street Baptist Center and other organizations and churches around the city. Volunteers worked roughly 490 hours at the different sites, serving the city and ministering to the people of Louisville through their projects.

The 1937 Project coincided with Louisville's city-wide "Give a Day" initiative.

Louisville's current mayor, Greg Fischer, commented about Southern's involvement with the "Give a Day" event through the 1937 Project, saying he was encouraged by the school's involvement once again with serving the city selflessly and faithfully.

"It was great to see so many volunteers from Southern Seminary doing such great work. They are poignantly tied to the history of community service because of the organization and aid provided during the devastating 1937 flood," Fischer said.

Marilyn Colyer, director of A Woman's Choice Resource Center, noted

the selfless attitude of the students who volunteered at the center.

"What a great group of people with servant's hearts," she said. "They worked hard and had a wonderful attitude as a team. Sometimes this ministry is very difficult, and they brought a ray of sunshine to our benevolence closet."

1937 Project director and research assistant to the director of the Bevin Center, Garrett Milner, explained the reason behind the project and its goal of reaching the city while preparing for ministry.

"Partnering with the city has provided Southern with strategic relationships around Louisville, and it has also allowed students and faculty to rub shoulders and apply theological training outside of the classroom," he said. "Our hope is that ministry leaders in training can use this model as a template for gospel service in their own churches and communities."

The next 1937 Project event will be April, 2014. — RUTHANNE IRVIN

More information about the 1937 Project is available at [www.sbts.edu/current-students](http://www.sbts.edu/current-students) or by contacting Garrett Milner at [gmilner@sbts.edu](mailto:gmilner@sbts.edu)



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## SWI Seminar Saturday prepares, encourages ministers' wives

Marriage is a ministry, according to a group of ministers' wives. On March 9, Seminary Wives Institute (SWI) hosted its annual Seminar Saturday event to encourage and further prepare women in ministry. SWI, which Mary Mohler began in 1997, gathers wives of Southern Seminary students to study various topics, ranging from evangelism and prayer to Baptist beliefs and mentoring.

For the 2013 Seminar Saturday, 160 women chose from 11 session options hosted by speakers such as Aaron and Allison Harvie, Steve and Candice Watters, Garnetta Smith, Tom and Diane Schreiner and others.

The Watterses, founders of Focus on the Family's Webzine, *Boundless*, led a session titled "Parenting as Discipleship." The talk focused on the parent's job to disciple through instruction and example, with the heart as the starting point and Christ's glory as the goal.

"Your primary job as parents is to prepare your children for judgment day," they said.

The Schreiners led the session, "Trusting God in Suffering." The couple spoke to the women about truths that have helped them during a season of suffering after Diane Schreiner's recent bicycle accident. Three aspects of faithfulness the Schreiners stressed are (1) immersion in the love of God, (2) rootedness in the sovereignty of God and (3) trust in God's promises.

"You must know your Bible before these things happen. One thing that sustained us was that God loves us. God's plans and purposes will prevail, and nothing is random to God," Tom Schreiner said.

The next Seminar Saturday will take place March 8, 2014. — RUTHANNE IRVIN

More information about SWI or women's events at Southern is available at [www.sbts.edu/women](http://www.sbts.edu/women)



## Woman's Auxiliary hosts annual spring brunch

Southern Seminary's Woman's Auxiliary hosted its annual brunch, April 29, 2013. Ladies from 14 Louisville, Ky.,-area churches gathered to award scholarships and to fellowship with each other.

Each year the auxiliary encourages and equips young women to continue their training for ministry.

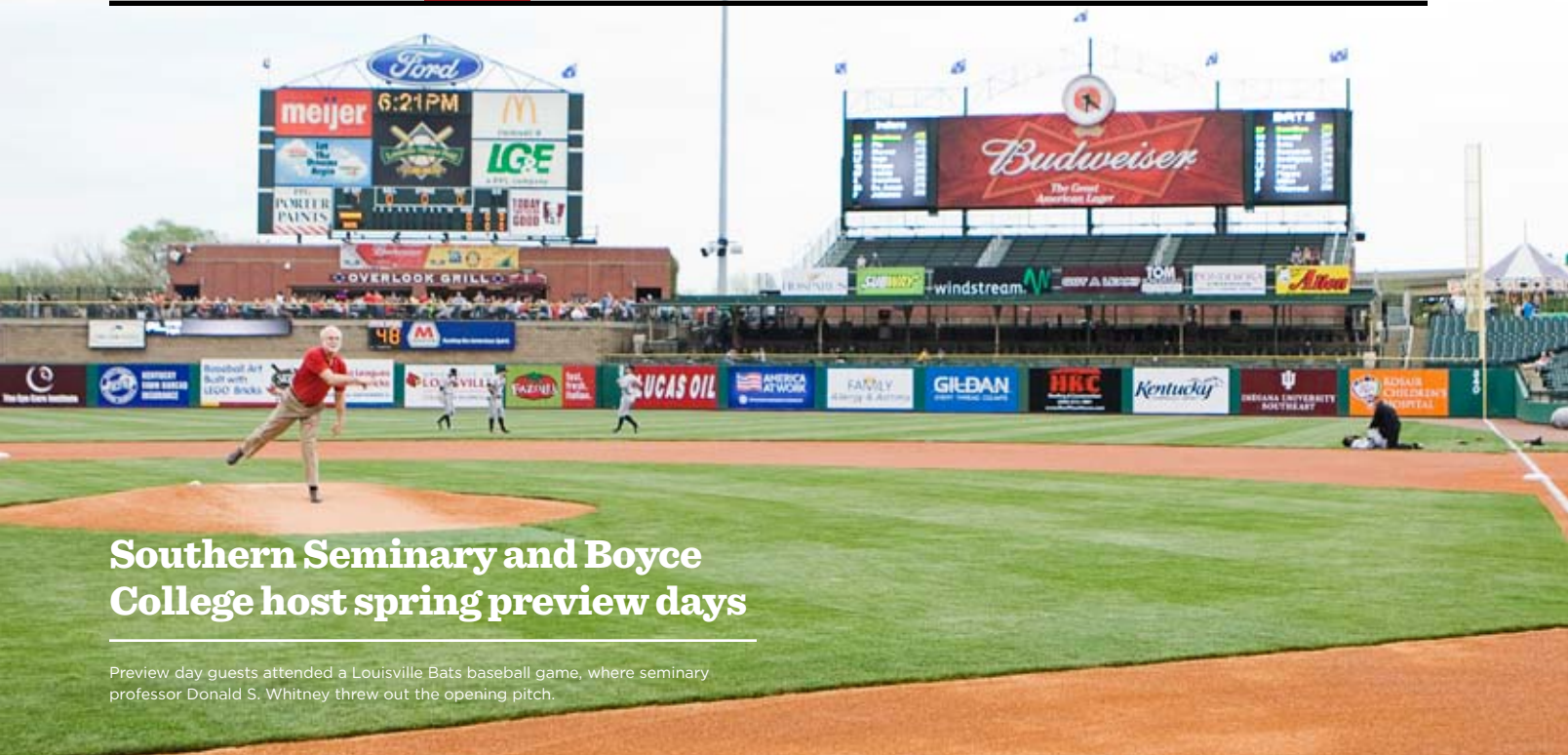
Tanya York, Seminary Wives Institute instructor and wife of Southern professor, Hershael York, spoke to the ladies from Hebrews 10:32. Using an illustration from the popular 1939 musical, *The Wizard of Oz*, in which three of the main characters journey to find a heart, brain and courage, York encouraged her audience to remain faithful, and gave three areas to continue in faithfulness: (1) engagement of the mind; (2) heart exposure; and (3) courageously enduring in difficult times. York exhorted the women to examine their priorities and determine what, in kingdom service, is important — things such as serving and giving time to ministering to others.

One of the auxiliary's main functions is to award scholarships to women students at the seminary. This year, 12 students received scholarships: Sarah Boehm, Michelle Corl, Alicia Corona, Emily Funderburg, Elizabeth Lumbrix, Courtney Moore, Anna Ovenell, Ana Marie Ort, Lauren Sierra, Ashley Thomas, Katie Thomas and Amber Wright.

Duke K. McCall, Southern's seventh president, and his wife began Woman's Auxiliary in 1961, with the help of Elizabeth Fuller, wife of Southern Seminary's sixth president, Ellis A. Fuller.

The next Woman's Auxiliary event will be Sept. 28, 2013. — RuthAnne Irvin

More information about women's programs at Southern Seminary is available at [www.sbts.edu/women](http://www.sbts.edu/women)



## Southern Seminary and Boyce College host spring preview days

Preview day guests attended a Louisville Bats baseball game, where seminary professor Donald S. Whitney threw out the opening pitch.



Southern Seminary hosted its spring Preview Day event, April 19, 2013. The seminary hosted 158 prospective students and 72 guests — parents, spouses and friends of prospective students — to learn about Southern Seminary and its mission. Groups of prospective students toured campus and learned about its history, the professors and the logistics about being a seminary student. Each attendee could attend a class lecture, and the Friday event concluded with prospective students visiting the home of seminary president, R. Albert Mohler Jr., for a meet-and-greet. The night before, some of the guests attended a Louisville Bats baseball game, where seminary professor Donald S. Whitney threw out the opening pitch.

Boyce College, Southern Seminary's undergraduate school, held spring preview, April 25-26. Preview Day attendees

received tickets to the Blackout Circuit tour concert featuring rappers Flame, Shai Linne, V Rose and others on the first night of preview. Event activities began the next day with 95 prospective students and 94 guests. Preview attendees toured campus, visited a class with professors and participated in a questions and answer session with Mohler. A meet-and-greet at the president's home, followed by a late night event at Boyce College completed the day. — RuthAnne Irvin

Southern will host its fall Preview Day Oct. 18, 2013. More information about preview days or Southern Seminary is available at [www.sbts.edu](http://www.sbts.edu); Boyce College will host its next Preview Day Oct. 25, 2013. Information about the college or future preview day events is [sbts.edu/events](http://sbts.edu/events)



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## Mullins Lectures discuss relationship between media and preaching

Both the message and the medium of the gospel are foolish to the world, but pastors must resist urges to market the message or modify the medium, said T. David Gordon at Southern Seminary's spring lectures on preaching.

Gordon, professor of religion and Greek at Grove City College, Penn., delivered the 2013 Mullins Lectures, March 26-28, 2013.

Gordon also studies and teaches on media ecology, a field that examines how certain media technologies affect culture. His expertise on that subject combined with his in-depth knowledge of biblical Greek and the background of the New Testament provided the framework for his series of lectures at the seminary.

The first two lectures, "A Foolish Message" and "A Foolish Medium," examined 1 Corinthians 1:14-25, where Paul describes the word of the cross as "folly to those who are perishing."

Discussing first the message, Gordon noted that the crucifixion of an innocent man and "the message of

humanity's impotence without Christ is folly" to the world.

"The wisdom of those who are perishing will always be contrary to God's wisdom," Gordon said, stressing that the gospel's exclusivity and dependence is incompatible with marketing trends to popularize the message.

In his second lecture, Gordon surveyed the historical context of first-century Christianity to dismiss the claim that "preaching or proclamation" was simply the most popular medium for spreading the faith. He listed poetry, dialogue, drama and rhetoric as more popular and respected forms of media that could have been

Jesus "pleasing" the Father in his baptism and transfiguration.

"The same God who was pleased with his Son was pleased with the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe," Gordon said.

In the final lecture, Gordon reflected on his book, *Why Johnny Can't Preach*, and offered suggestions to improve expositional preaching, which he emphasized is crucial "because it is the only way the audience knows the message is not the preacher's."

Gordon urged listeners in their spare time to resist image-based media, cultivate interests in literature and poetry and employ handwriting regularly in



The same God who was pleased with his Son was pleased with the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe.

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used for evangelization. Proclamation, on the other hand, did not carry the same cultural significance because it was ambassadorial and the preacher primarily functioned as a spokesman.

Furthermore, he argued that Paul's use of the verb "to please" in relation to God's choice of preaching is the same verb used in the Gospel accounts of

order to improve their preaching.

"What you do in your leisure is as consequential as what you do in your labor," he said. — CRAIG SANDERS

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Audio and video of the 2013 Mullins Lectures is available online at [sbts.edu/resources](http://sbts.edu/resources)



## TGC national meeting features SBTS leadership, faculty

The national meeting of the Gospel Coalition in early April in Orlando, Fla., featured Southern Seminary president R. Albert Mohler Jr., deans Russell D. Moore and Zane Pratt and professor Thomas R. Schreiner.

In a forum with Covenant Theological Seminary president, Bryan Chapell, Mohler discussed the importance of a historical Adam. Then, in his breakout session, “Is the World Really Flat? Convictional Leadership in a Global Age,” Mohler discussed leadership theory and practice, drawing from his new book, *The Conviction to Lead*. He explained the importance of leading with ideas, and then allowing practical issues to flow from those convictions.

“I want to define leadership as the transference of conviction that leads to communal right action,” he said.

Moore led a breakout about race, “Black and White and Red All Over: Racial Reconciliation and the Gospel in the Local Church,” explaining the importance of understanding race in terms of the kingdom of God — not in terms of Charles Darwin and bloodlines. He offered two ways in which the gospel overcomes racial divides: the calls of the gospel to the individual and to the community.

“The individual address of the gospel sees all people as whole persons, neither superior nor inferior to one another,” Moore said. And in the communal call of the gospel, “the church presents uncomfortably the kingdom of God to those who would rather see the ‘kingdom of me.’”

Pratt spoke twice at the TGC pre-conference about missions. First, he gave a talk and answered questions about trends in global missions. He noted that technology and the business-as-mission movement are areas that need particular attention in coming days.

In his second talk, “Contextualization and the Gospel Once-for-All Delivered to God’s People,” Pratt emphasized the ubiquity of contextualization. He said that, “everyone does contextualization; there is no New Testament church today, *per se*, since no one today lives in that world.”

Pratt suggested that, since ministers of the gospel necessarily contextualize, the issue is understanding contextualization and pursuing it in a careful, biblical way.

“The point of contextualization,” he said, “is not comfort; it’s clarity.”

Schreiner discussed the Lukan view

of atonement from the books of Luke and Acts. His breakout session ran in conjunction with a course he taught about the Gospel of Luke. Schreiner argued that, contrary to many opinions, Luke presents a robust theology of the atonement. And while Luke’s emphasis is certainly different from Paul’s, that does not mean that his theology is different. — AARON CLINE HANBURY

Audio and video of many of The Gospel Coalition national conference sessions are available at the TGC website, [www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org)







## Renown youth conference celebrates importance of resurrection

No event is more important to the Christian faith and life than the resurrection of Jesus Christ, said several pastors at Southern Seminary's Renown youth conference, March 15-16, 2013.

The annual youth conference seeks to communicate biblical truth to middle and high school-aged students. This year's conference featured speakers R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary and Dan DeWitt, dean of Boyce College, along with pastors Jimmy Scroggins and Greg Gilbert.

"You are God's creation. He made you, he loves you, he sent his Son for you, and God always wants you back," Scroggins said, preaching on the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15.

"And that's because of the power of the cross of Christ, motivated by the love of God, demonstrated by his resurrection from the dead — all for his glory and his renown."

Southern Seminary's Norton Hall Band led worship at the weekend event, and gospel rapper Shai Linne performed a concert after the first day of sessions. — CRAIG SANDERS

Audio and video of the Renown Conference is available online at [sbts.edu/resources](http://sbts.edu/resources)

## Alumni Academy: Gentry, Wellum present a covenantal reading of Scripture

Southern Seminary professors Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum proposed to more than 140 alumni of Southern Seminary that God reveals and establishes his kingdom through covenants as part of an Alumni Academy course, April 3-4, 2013.

In explaining kingdom through covenant, a concept developed in their recent book, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical and Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, Wellum opened the introductory session claiming that the covenants form the framework by which God's plans of redemption are established and revealed.

"If we fail to understand how the covenants unfold, if we don't pay sufficient attention to the intertextual development from Adam all the way to Christ, we will fail then to understand something of that overall plan," said Wellum.

The first section began with Wellum providing a foundation for the rest of the talks. He spoke about the desire to provide a middle way between the predominant views of reading the Bible: covenant theology and dispensationalism.

Gentry led the second section by putting Wellum's framework into

action. He walked through each of the major covenants, beginning with the literary structures and immediate context and moving into the surrounding context where he looked at what came before in the biblical narrative.

Gentry addressed the Noachic covenant first, since "whether or not a covenant, *per se*, is included in Genesis 1-3 is debated."

He then suggested that the covenant with Noah is an extension of the covenant originally made with Adam at creation. These are both followed by the covenant with Abraham, the covenant with Israel at Sinai and the covenant with David. This then led to a discussion of the New Covenant as viewed by the prophets, and, finally, he explained the fulfillment of the covenants in Jesus Christ.

For the third and final section, Wellum provided a summary of the biblical covenants through a Christ-focused lens and then discussed the implications of this reading. These included the person of Christ, the church, the nature of baptism and how the Christian should understand the atonement and eschatology.

In the end, Gentry and Wellum asked class attendees to examine the Bible for themselves to see whether God has indeed established his kingdom through covenant. — DANIEL STEMBER

Alumni Academy provides free ongoing instruction for alumni of Southern Seminary that will keep pastors and leaders growing in their grasp of the Bible.



## A Guide to Evangelism

(SBTS Press 2013, \$5.99), edited by Dan DeWitt

There was a time when Christians living in certain parts of America could assume that the people they evangelized shared basic presuppositions, such as the existence of God and of absolute truth. That time has passed. Today's cultural and religious landscape requires Christians to be ready to interact with a myriad of worldviews.

*A Guide to Evangelism*, the latest volume in the SBTS Press guide book series, prepares Christians for such interactions. In the book's introduction, editor Dan DeWitt writes that he hopes the book not only serves Christians as a resource for fruitful evangelism, but also to "cultivate [the] craving" for spreading the gospel.

In addition to DeWitt, who is the dean of Boyce College, contributors to the book include Boyce staff Chad Brand, Brian Payne, Denny Burk, Jim Stitzinger, Troy Temple, Owen Strachan, Travis Kerns and John Klaassen. The book divides into two sections: "For the Church," and "For the Christian."

The first section begins with Brand's chapter "Theological Incentives for Evangelism," where he addresses "the theological issues that compel Christians to 'go.'" He also covers the doctrines of God's love, election and conversion, among others.

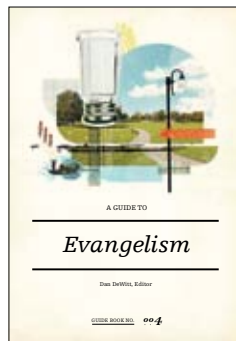
In his essay about the role of church discipline in a church's evangelism, Burk claims that a failure to discipline "compromises the witness of the church." Burk observes that many unbelievers accuse Christians of hypocrisy, and that "when churches refuse to discipline, those unbelievers are right."

The book's second section contains chapters that address the challenges involved with evangelizing nominal Christians, world religions, youth, Muslims and skeptics.

Kerns, in his chapter about evangelizing world religions, warns readers that their claims about the exclusivity of Christ will be met with accusations of "intolerance, unfairness and bigotry." He then provides some principles for interacting with members of other religions.

The final chapter of the book, by DeWitt, gives imperatives for sharing the gospel with skeptics. These imperatives, DeWitt writes, will "keep your gospel witness on track without falling into compromise."

The apostle Peter instructs Christians to be ready to give a defense for their hope (1 Pet 3:15), and *A Guide to Evangelism* will serve Christians in all contexts to be better prepared for such a defense. — REVIEW BY MATT DAMICO



### Excerpts from the book:

## 1

"God's love is not great because the world is so large, but because the people who dwell in it are so bad. God calls on his people to be co-lovers of the world with him, and in so doing to extend the love of God to those who have not yet recognized and experienced it in a saving manner. We share the gospel because God loves the world," writes Chad Brand in his chapter, "Theological Incentives for Evangelism."

## 2

"The laws of logic flow smoothly out of a worldview that places an eternal, intelligent and personal creator as the source of all things. ... Atheists from previous generations like H.G. Wells, and even contemporary atheistic philosophers like Thomas Nagel, recognize that in atheistic naturalism there is no objective reason to trust our cognitive faculties," writes Dan DeWitt in his chapter "Evangelism to Skeptics."

## 3

"God is working in Muslim lives. We pray that God will call and send thousands more into the harvest fields of Islamic lands and even places like the U.S. and Europe. ... If God has placed a Muslim in your life, you have a responsibility to share the gospel with him. You are an answer to the prayer for laborers," writes John Klaassen in his chapter, "Evangelism to Muslims."



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***Bill Cook, senior pastor of Ninth & O Baptist Church,  
27 years in pastoral ministry***

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## ***Flourishing Faith: A Baptist Primer on Work, Economics, and Civic Stewardship***

(Christian's Library Press 2013, \$10), Chad Brand

Many people commonly assume that the world of work, business and politics and the world of faith do not intersect. Politics, they might say, belongs in public life, public discussion and discourse. Faith, on the other hand, is a private matter, something left out of business and day-to-day life. Something for Sundays.

However, what a person believes dramatically shapes his or her view of both the weekend and the weekday. And a new book by Chad Brand lays out the Baptist perspective of work and of political economy, the relationship between politics and economics.

Brand is professor of Christian theology at Southern Seminary and associate dean of the seminary's Boyce College. In his book, *Flourishing Faith: A Baptist Primer on Work, Economics, and Civic Stewardship*, Brand examines what he considers the "five key issues related to political economy": work, wealth, government, government taxation and implications and how governmental philosophy relates to economic structure.

First, Brand contends that the Bible presents work positively.

Considering wealth, Brand says that in a fallen world, Christians must live "disciplined and circumspect lives to

ensure that they are using the wealth God has given to them in ways that honor him."

Then, on the issue of government, the Baptist doctrine of sin makes limited government the "biblical ideal," according to *Flourishing Faith*.

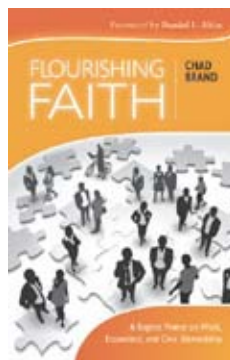
Brand also argues that heavy taxation by governments "solves nothing." Brand asserts this based on his survey of the history of governments' use of "other people's money."

He concludes: "Governments that confiscate from one class of society for their own purposes only create moral and fiscal problems."

Finally, then, Brand writes that political systems exert intrinsic influence on economic systems. He analyzes this influence by looking at the "three major competing" economic systems in

history: free-markets, socialism and government-managed economies.

*Flourishing Faith* presents a historically descriptive introduction to a Baptist perspective of work and wealth, and of politics and its relationship to economics. Baptists of all stripes would do well to read this book and to thus better understand the holistic nature of the Baptist faith. — AARON CLINE HANBURY



### Excerpts from the book:

## 1

"The Scriptures elevate human labor of all kinds to a laudable, fulfilling, and God-honoring calling. Although the church has not always seen work as occupying an important place in life, the Reformers and Puritans in keeping with Scripture made it clear that all people have a calling and that all believers are priests unto the Lord."

## 2

"The Scripture teaches that God is the one to whom we owe ultimate allegiance, but that selfsame God has also instituted governments to keep order in the world. All of those governments are fallen, since we live in a fallen world, and those states might well stand for injustice rather than justice."

## 3

"Most [Baptists] have been committed to limited government, to religious liberty, and to the relative autonomy of local congregations. We have generally stood for the rights of people to make their own way in life and to flourish in broad and various ways. ... Those principles have marked out the 'Baptist Way' for over four hundred years."



## Baptists do work: Brand talks about political economy

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In what follows, Southern Seminary Magazine editor Aaron Cline Hanbury talks with Chad Brand about his new book, *Flourishing Faith: A Baptist Primer on Work, Economics, and Civic Stewardship*. Brand is associate dean of biblical and theological studies and professor of Christian theology at Southern Seminary's Boyce College.

**ACH:** Why did you write *Flourishing Faith*?

**CB:** I was contacted by the Acton Institute [an organization that deals with politics, church-state issues]. The organization wanted to publish a series of primers about political economy and the church; it wanted four: one from a Baptist perspective, one from a Reformed, one from Wesleyan and one from a pentecostal. Initially, Acton contacted Danny Akin about it. Danny knew that I have been at work for some time on a rather large project that deals with the church and political economy, so he suggested it to me.

**ACH:** What is a Baptist political economy?

**CB:** What political economy describes is the interface between government and whatever economic system prevails in a given nation or culture. The political economy in the Soviet Union in the 1980s was a communist state with a socialist understanding of economics — a controlled-market economy. The United States was basically founded as a republic with a free market economy.

So when we introduce the idea of a Christian, and specifically Baptist, political economy, what we're asking is, "How does the church rub itself up against a free market republic?" "How does a Baptist understanding of theology and ecclesiology interface with that?"

Because Baptists have long held the idea of religious freedom, political



freedom, individual freedom and so on, the place where a Baptist political economy most manifests itself is in a kind of republican or libertarian form of economics. "Laissez faire" isn't in the *Baptist Faith and Message*, but if you read and believe its statements on government and anthropology, I think you would come to the same conclusion that the government that governs least, governs best.

The notion of political economy has been around for quite some time — the first professor of political economy was a guy by the name of Thomas Malthus at the University of Oxford in about

1815 — but it hasn't edged its way into evangelical circles until fairly recently.

**ACH:** How do you want your readers to think about work after reading your book?

**CB:** Luther's idea of vocation, that the Puritans and later Baptists picked up: everyone has a calling. You should find out what that calling is and pursue that calling. Realize that God doesn't just put his stamp of approval on the "sacred" callings, but on all callings. Because all of life is lived, Luther said, *coram deo*, in the face of God.

## ***Justification by Grace through Faith: Finding Freedom from Legalism, Lawlessness, Pride, and Despair***

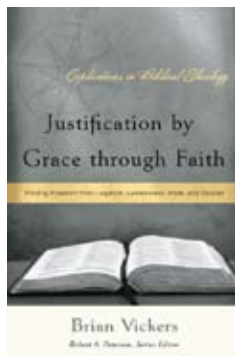
(P&R 2013, \$17.99), Brian Vickers

Southern Seminary professor Brian Vickers has done the evangelical church the favor of writing a book that not only builds a biblical-theological case for justification by faith but calls readers to appropriate the beloved teaching to their hearts and lives. The book, *Justification by Grace through Faith*, is the newest release in P&R's Explorations in Biblical Theology series.

In leading readers toward the Christ whose righteousness alone justifies, Vickers traces the concept of justification throughout the biblical narrative, moving fluidly between Old Testament and New Testament texts. Rather than delaying discussion of NT texts on justification until after treating the entirety of OT redemptive history, the author weds OT narrative with NT teaching. For instance, chapter one deals with the first Adam whose disobedience condemned the human race, and chapter two moves forward by examining Christ, the last Adam whose obedience results in justification for humanity. Vickers then takes a similar approach with his treatments of Abraham and the Mosaic law and each one's relationship to justification.

Not only does Vickers, who is associate professor of New Testament

interpretation at the seminary, explore the biblical teaching on justification related to key figures and institutions, such as Adam, Abraham and the Mosaic law, he looks at the relationship between faith and works as well as how to understand the apostles Paul and James, two biblical authors sometimes perceived to be at odds on the subject. Furthermore, the book includes a chapter in which Vickers spends some time with the letter to the Galatians,



showing how modern-day people have the tendency, like the Galatians, to fall into the trap of looking to “something beyond or in addition to Christ” for their justification.

Well balanced, exegetically careful, pedagogically illuminating and pastorally driven are several ways to describe Vickers' *Justification by Grace through Faith*. The author

has given pastors, seminary students and laymen alike an accessible, lucid and biblically sound resource on a important subject.

Vickers could not be more right in stating toward the outset of the book, “Justification by faith is not the whole of the gospel, but there is no gospel without justification by faith.” — JOSH HAYES

### Excerpts from the book:

## 1

“What we need is to see that everything, whether our ministries, traditions, associations, institutions, practices, or preferences, can be potential side-tracks from justification by faith; we can become slowly enslaved to good things that quietly lead us away from Christ.”

## 2

“The benefit of such an approach is that we may study how particular concepts flow together from both the Old Testament and the New Testament without leaving large gaps in the basic narrative of the book.”

## 3

“Self-justification is the disease, and the gospel — justification through faith in Christ alone — and the new life offered through the Spirit are the cure. As strange as it may sound, the life of the justified, a life in which God and neighbor take center stage and self-centeredness is killed, is a life of freedom.”



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## Vickers suggests the everyday “not about us” answer to legalism and lawlessness

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** Below, Brian Vickers, associate professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern Seminary, discusses his new book, *Justification by Grace through Faith: Finding Freedom from Legalism, Lawlessness, Pride, and Despair*, with Southern Seminary Magazine contributor Josh Hayes.

### **JH:** Can you define the doctrine of justification?

**BV:** Justification is God’s declaration that [Christians] stand before him without guilt and are fully acceptable to him as those who are pleasing to him in every way through Christ Jesus, who both lived and died on our behalf and whose righteousness becomes ours by faith. So, it’s really a declaration that’s first and foremost about what Christ has done for us, and secondly, that we have these benefits through him and in him.

It’s vitally important that we understand that justification is not first and foremost about us. It’s not even first and foremost about our standing before God. Of course, it is about those things, but what justification is about primarily is on the work of Christ on our behalf. Justification should ultimately point us to him, not to ourselves, not simply to debates and not even to books about justification, but to Christ himself.

### **JH:** Why begin a book about justification with a chapter about creation?

**BV:** We have to begin with creation so that we understand who we are. Justification turns us to look to God, not to ourselves, for our salvation. This sort of orientation doesn’t just happen after the Fall; we are built to be that way. In the garden, God creates us, he gives us life, he gives us work, and our direction and focus is on him and not ourselves. Adam was meant to live in harmony



with his wife and in harmony with the creation and to be a steward. Adam’s orientation was outside of himself toward his creator. What we easily forget and what we rebel against is that we are not independent beings; we are, by nature, dependent. That’s what I think is really at the heart of every temptation: that we can be something that we are not.

After the Fall, what justification does — being part of salvation, not the whole — is point us away from ourselves. Justification is part of what reorients us toward the way we were meant to be.

### **JH:** How would you advise pastors about keeping justification in the foreground of their preaching without reading it into and imposing it on every biblical text?

**BV:** The best way to keep our preaching ministry from becoming all about one thing — even if it’s a great thing — is to teach different parts of the Bible and to listen to what those texts have to say and not feel like it’s our responsibility every time we preach a text to talk about all the things that a text doesn’t say. Let the texts speak for themselves.

## Thoughts

## The work of Christ and an identity of relentless evangelism

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Jim Stitzinger is the director of the Bevin Center for Missions Mobilization at Southern Seminary. The Bevin Center trains and mobilizes the Southern Seminary community for evangelism, missions and church planting from the City of Louisville, Ky., to the ends of the earth.*

Evangelism is simple, but it's costly. Finding and telling unbelievers about Christ is not complicated, but it often comes at the cost of relational ease and tranquility. Jesus warned that a servant is not above his master, and Jesus' own calls for people to repent and believe resulted in his death.

The relational challenges to evangelism – not to mention the challenges presented by the domain of darkness and indwelling sin – often prevent Christians from living a life saturated with evangelism. Overcoming these challenges requires supernatural power.

To start, Christians must cultivate evangelistic instincts that compel them toward unbelievers, and they must develop a humble tenacity that is willing to engage in conversations that go beyond the point of least resistance and move toward the gospel. The Great Commission is not fulfilled in silence, but in conversations that confront ungodliness and unrighteousness with the kindness of God that leads to repentance (Rom 2:4). To do anything less would be to neglect Christ's commission.

Christians can begin developing these instincts by considering their identity. If you're a Christian, you need to throw off any tendency to live as an incognito Christian; stop living as a sheep in wolves clothing attempting to blend in with your sur-

roundings, and embrace your identity as an ambassador of Christ (2 Cor 5:20). The gospel is confrontational, and that can make situations uncomfortable, but it's too important to let discomfort keep us from obedience. Speak the gospel with clarity and authority, and rest in the Spirit's power to save.

The place to begin a life of evangelism is right where you are. God, in his sovereign grace, chose to place you where you are. The unbelievers around you – in your neighborhood, in your family and at work – are not there by accident. So what step will you take to engage them with the gospel, even if it means relational unease? It's not enough merely to talk about your unbelieving neighbors, you must talk with them and help them see that only Christ can forgive sin and reconcile sinners to God. Every unbeliever in your life should know you're a Christian and have an opportunity to respond to the gospel.

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians that he delivered to them "as of first importance what [he] also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3). For you to do faithful evangelism, the gospel must be of first importance to you. Only then will you

overcome the challenges that have prevented you from boldly sharing the gospel with unbelievers.

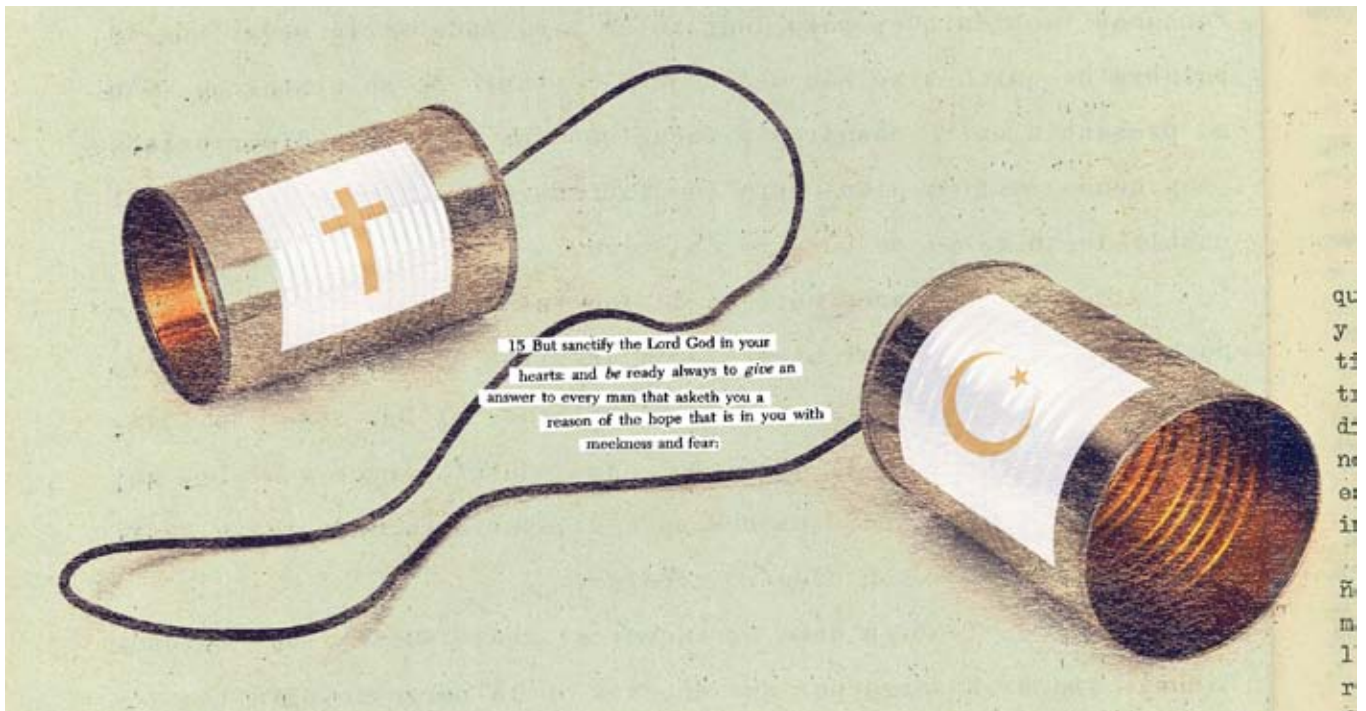
So embrace the gospel, embrace your identity as an ambassador of Christ, embrace the cost of an evangelistic lifestyle and look forward to seeing the

work Christ will do in and through you, to his glory. – JIM

STITZINGER







## How should Christians talk to members of world religions?

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Travis Kerns joined the Boyce College faculty in 2007 as assistant professor of Christian world-view and apologetics. Since 2009, Kerns has led a group of students to Utah to engage in evangelizing Mormons. And, starting in May 1, 2013, he became the SEND: North America city coordinator for the Salt Lake City, Utah region.*

Unfortunately, Christians occasionally treat members of other religions of the world as inferior to them, and may even take the opportunity to be a “jerk for Jesus.” This is not only unfortunate, but unbiblical. As we see in 1 Peter 3:15, the Holy Spirit, through Peter’s pen, commands followers of Jesus to be gentle and respectful when interacting with unbelievers about the gospel. Telling the non-Christian the gospel is confrontational in itself; the Christian need not make it more so.

Former dean of Harvard Divinity School, Krister Stendahl, when he spoke to a gathered media press conference

in 1985, gave three “rules of religious understanding” for understanding other religious groups, and they can be instructive for our purposes.

Stendahl’s first rule is that Christians should learn about the beliefs of another religion from members of that religion. We would expect this from others as well. This is not to say there is no place for books, articles or explanations about religions by non-members. This first rule is simply that the most accurate understanding of a particular religion and its belief system is likely to come from a member of that religion.

Stendahl’s second rule is that we should make fair comparisons. By this, Stendahl simply means that we should compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges. Don’t read a work about Jesus by a Christian with a Ph.D. and compare it to a work about Jesus by a Muslim layman. Likewise, don’t compare the Christianity of David Koresh or Jim Jones to the Hinduism of Mahatma Gandhi, and don’t compare the Islam of terrorists to the Christianity of Mother Teresa.

Stendahl’s third rule is that we should leave room for “holy envy.” Here, the Christian does not need to agree with the other religion or with the member of the other religion, but he can recog-

nize that the Buddhist may pray more intently, the Hindu may believe more strongly, the Mormon may give more liberally or the Jew may love more fully than the Christian. The devotion of members of other religions should drive Christians to be even more serious about their deeply held convictions.

So, how can we most effectively evangelize world religions? First, we pray. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 commands us to pray continually and that should include prayers for opportunity to speak with members of other religions, boldness when confronting false belief and compassion over the lost condition of those involved in other religions.

Second, we study. 1 Peter 3:15 commands us to be ready to give a defense for our hope in Christ whenever we are asked. The best way to defend the hope we have is to know what others believe and to be ready to ask them difficult questions as we present Christ to them.

Third, we go. Matthew 28:18-20 commands us to go into all the world, proclaiming the gospel and making disciples. May God grant us the courage, the boldness, the compassion, the ability and the burden to propagate the gospel to members of the world’s religions. – TRAVIS KERNS





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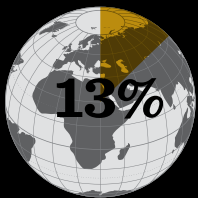
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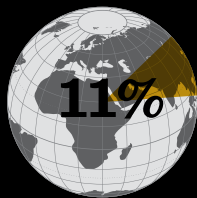
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# A Picture of Islam

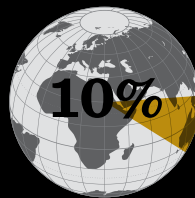
Nearly half of the world's Muslim population resides in six countries.



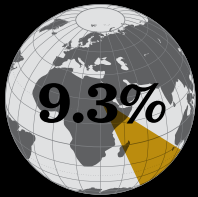
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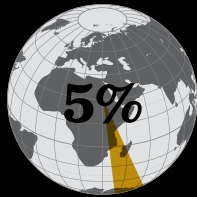
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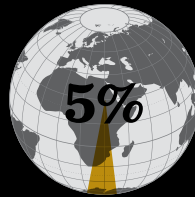
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Bangladesh

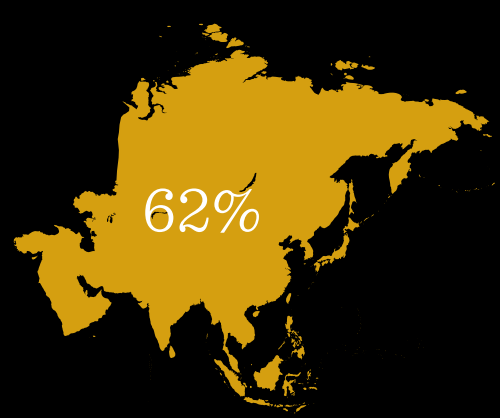


Egypt

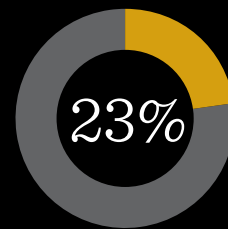


Nigeria

Ninety-six percent of Egyptians and Jordanians, 95% of Iraqis and 94% of Moroccan Muslims responded that "Islam alone" leads to heaven.

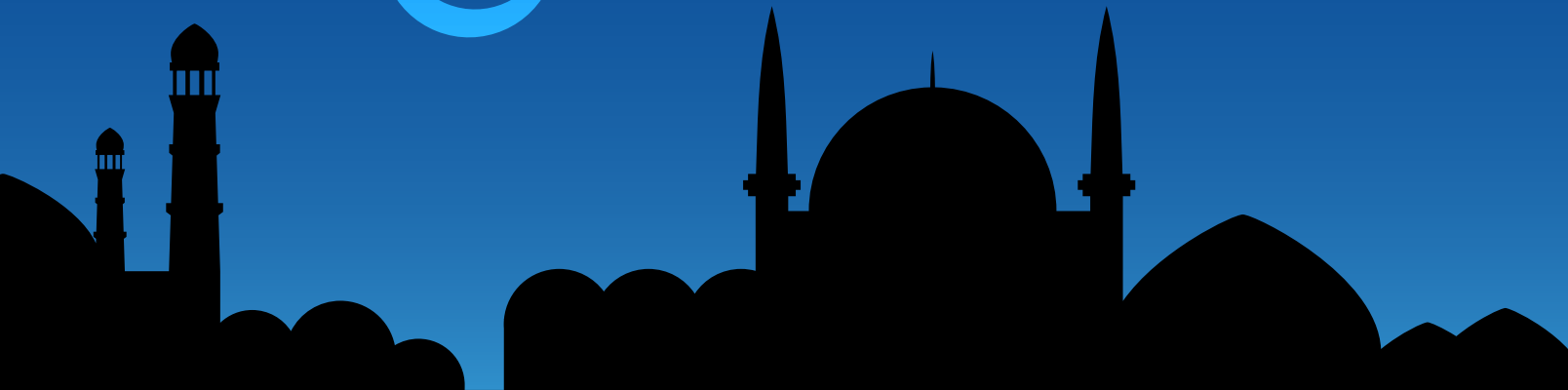


Asia is home to 62% of the world's Muslim population, from Turkey to China.



Muslims comprise 23% of the world's population (the second largest religion).

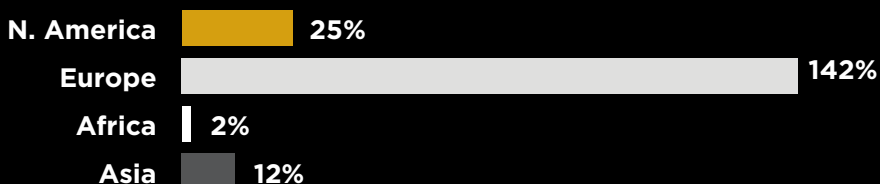




Russia, Germany and France have the fastest growing Muslim populations in Europe.

India, Ethiopia, China and Russia have the world's largest Muslim minorities.

### Growth of Islam since 1989



North America counts for less than 0.5% of the world's Muslim population.

Islam contains many different sects. Here are a few:

**Sunni** - 85% of Muslims adhere to this orthodox sect

**Shi`ite** - Shia Muslims (10-13%) broke from the Sunni in 661 over who is the rightful successor to Mohammed

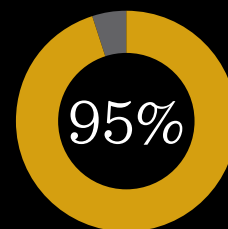
**Sufis** - Islamic mystics that often claim Sunni or Shi`ite identity

**Baha'is, Ahmadiyyas, Druze, Alevis and `Alawis** - Recent offshoots of Islam that are considered heretical, but share common heritage and practices with historical Islam.

Of the 6,000 unidentified people groups, 3,800 people groups have no church, no Bible and no witness in their communities.



More Muslims have committed to follow Christ in the last 10 years than in the last 15 centuries of Islam.



95% of American seminary students stay in the U.S. after graduation.

# تحديات الإسلام: من وجهة نظر مسيحي

(THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM:  
A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE)



# The challenge of Islam — A Christian perspective

By R. Albert Mohler Jr.

The issue of Islam is never far from our headlines. Early in his administration, President Barack Obama put the issue of Islam front and center on the international stage. His visits to Islamic-dominated lands and his public statements to the Muslim world have raised a host of questions at home and abroad.

In a speech to the Turkish parliament, President Obama declared: “The United States is not, and never will be, at war with Islam.” He went on to say that “our partnership with the Muslim world is critical not just in rolling back the violent ideologies that people of all faiths reject, but also to strengthen opportunity for all its people.”

But the President also spoke of his “deep appreciation for the Islamic faith.” Here is the statement in context:

I also want to be clear that America’s relationship with the Muslim community, the Muslim world, cannot, and will not, just be based upon opposition to terrorism. We seek broader engagement based on mutual interest and mutual respect. We will listen carefully, we will bridge misunderstandings, and we will seek common ground. We will be respectful, even when we do not agree. We will convey our deep appreciation for the Islamic faith, which has done so much over the centuries to shape the world — including in my own country. The United States has been enriched by Muslim Americans. Many other Americans have Muslims in their families or have lived in a Muslim-majority country — I know, because I am one of them.

At a press conference in Turkey, the President made yet another statement:

One of the great strengths of the United States is ... we have a very large Christian population — we do not consider ourselves a Christian nation or a Jewish nation or a Muslim nation. We consider ourselves a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values.”

Asked to respond to President Obama, I told CNN host Roland Martin:

I think President Obama rightly said that the United States is not at war with Islam. I think that’s a very

helpful clarification. But you can’t take Islam out of the whole civilizational struggle we are in, not only in the war on terror, but, frankly, going back for centuries, coming up with a definition of what a good civilization would look like and how a society ought to be arranged.

I do think that President Obama was correct in stating that the United States is not at war with Islam. This is not only important in terms of international diplomacy, but also in terms of constitutional authority. The government of United States has no right or authority to declare war on any religion.

We can understand the political context, especially as the President was in Turkey. Given the confusions rampant in the Muslim world, that is a crucial clarification. Of course, a quick review of the statements of President George W. Bush will reveal that he said much the same thing, over and over again.

The fact that President Obama made these comments in Turkey is very important. Throughout the Muslim world, most Muslims do see the United States as, in effect, at war with Islam. Classical Islam understands no real distinction between religion and the state, but instead establishes a unitary society. Thus, when a foreign power like the United States invades a Muslim nation like Iraq, most Muslims see this as a war against Islam.

While specific forms of government vary in the Islamic world, this general understanding holds true. Unlike New Testament Christianity, Islam is essentially a territorial religion that seeks to bring all lands under submission to the rule of the Qur’an. The president was in Turkey when he made these statements, and Turkey is usually defined in the media as having a secular government. Indeed, the Turkish constitution even requires a secular government. But, as anyone who has visited Turkey knows, this requires a very unusual definition of what it means to be secular.

Being Muslim is part of what the Turkish people and government call “Turkishness,” a unifying concept that goes all the way back to Mustafa Kemal Attaturk, the founder of modern Turkey. Offending “Turkishness” is a criminal act in Turkey. The Turkish government is the steward of every one of the seemingly countless mosques within the nation and it pays the imams. Thus, Turkey is a Muslim nation with a secular government, but its secular

character would not be seen as anything close to secular on an American model.

In this light, President Obama's statement that America is not a Christian country is also both accurate and helpful, though he is being criticized by many conservative Christians for making the claim. His clarification, offered in Muslim Turkey, establishes as a matter of public fact the reality that our American constitutional system is very different from what is found in the Muslim world — and even in Turkey itself.

Furthermore, if the United States is to be understood as a Christian nation in the same sense that most nations in the Islamic world consider themselves to be Muslim nations, then America *is* at war with Islam.

The controversy over the president's remarks in this context was misplaced. There is indeed a controversy over whether it is appropriate to call America a Christian nation in the sense that Americans would even make such a claim — but the context in Turkey and the Muslim world is very different. Do American Christians really believe that Christianity benefits by being associated with all that America represents in the Muslim world? To many Muslims, America appears as the great fountain of pornography, debased entertainments, abortion, and sexual revolution. Does it help our witness to Christ that all this would be associated in the Muslim mind with "Christian" America?

Beyond any historical doubt, the United States was established by founders whose worldview was shaped, in most cases quite self-consciously, by the Christian faith. The founding principles of this nation flow from a biblical logic and have been sustained by the fact that most Americans have considered themselves to be Christians and have operated out of a basically Christian frame of moral reference. America is a nation whose citizens are overwhelmingly identified as Christians and the American experiment is inconceivable without the foundation established by Christian moral assumptions.

But America is not, by definition, a Christian nation in any helpful sense. The secularists and enemies of the faith make this argument for any number of hostile and antagonistic reasons, and they offer many false arguments as well. But this should not prompt American Christians to make bad arguments of our own.

I criticize President Obama, not for stating that America is not at war with Islam, but for failing to be honest in clarifying that we do face a great civilizational challenge in Islam. Islam is, in effect, the single most vital competitor to

Western ideals of civilization on the world scene. The logic of Islam is to bring every square inch of this planet under submission to the rule of the Qur'an. Classical Islam divides the world into the "World of Islam" and the "World of War." In this latter world the struggle to bring the society under submission to the Qur'an is still ongoing.

At the time, President Obama also created his own confusion over these issues, subverting his own main point. If America is not at war with Islam, it would seem unhelpful for the Obama administration to refer, against previous American practice, to Iran as "The Islamic Republic of Iran." Similarly, some of his words and gestures during his trip seemed overly indulgent toward Islam — especially as these words and gestures would have been interpreted in the larger Islamic world.

This ambition drives the Muslim world — and each faithful Muslim — to hope, pray and work for the submission of the whole world to the Qur'an. Clearly, most Muslims are not willing to employ terrorism in order to achieve this goal.

Nevertheless, it remains the goal.

Islam and the West offer two very different and fundamentally irreconcilable visions of society. While we are certainly not a nation at war with Islam, we are a nation that faces a huge challenge from the Islamic world — a challenge that includes terrorism, but also a much larger civilizational ambition that remains central. Anyone standing in Istanbul, the historic seat of Ottoman power, should certainly recognize that fact.

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and a minister of the gospel, my primary concern about Islam is not civilizational or geopolitical, but theological. I believe that Jesus Christ is indeed, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and that no one comes to the Father but by him (John 14:6). Salvation is found only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the gospel of Christ is the only message that saves.

I can agree with President Obama that Islam has produced cultural wonders, but I have to see it more fundamentally as a belief system that is taking millions upon millions of persons spiritually captive — leaving them under the curse of sin and without hope of salvation.

For Christians, regardless of nationality, this is the great challenge that should be our urgent concern. Our concern is not mainly political, but theological and spiritual. And, all things considered, Islam almost surely represents the greatest challenge to Christian evangelism of our times. ►

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

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# Ten things every Christian should know about Islam

By Zane Pratt

## 1

### **“Muslim” and “Arab” are not the same thing.**

Muslim is a religious term. A Muslim is someone who adheres to the religion of Islam. Arab is an ethno-linguistic term. An Arab is a member of the people group who speak the Arabic language. It is true that Islam originated among the Arabs, and the Qur’an was written in Arabic. However, there are Arabs who are not part of the religion of Islam, but rather have historically been part of the ancient orthodox Christian churches. On the other hand, Islam spread far beyond the Arab world, and today most Muslims are not Arabs. This includes the Turks, the Kurds, the Iranians, the Pakistanis, other South Asian Muslims, the Malaysians and the Indonesians, almost all of whom are Muslim but none of whom are Arab.

## 2

### **The word “Islam” means submission.**

A Muslim is someone who submits to God. The Islamic conception of who God is, and how he is to be worshiped and served, is based on the teaching of Muhammad. Thus, the Islamic creed is: “There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his prophet.”

## 3

### **There are two major denominations of Muslims.**

Sunni and Shi’a. Sunnis are the majority, at 85% of all Muslims. The split occurred in the first generation after the death of Muhammad, and it was based on a dispute over who should succeed him as leader of the Islamic community.

## 4

### **Islamic theology could be summarized as belief in one God, his prophets, his books, his angels, his decrees and the final judgment.**

Islam teaches that humans are born spiritually neutral, perfectly capable of obeying the requirements of God completely, and that they remain this way even after they have personally sinned. The need of humanity, therefore, is not salvation but instruction, so Islam has prophets but no savior.



## 5

### **Islam teaches that Jesus was a great prophet.**

It affirms that he was born of a virgin, that he lived a sinless life, that he performed mighty miracles and that he will come again at the end of history. It even calls him a word from God. However, it explicitly denies the deity of Christ. It repudiates the title “Son of God” as blasphemous. It also (according to the majority view) denies that he died on the cross, claiming that the visage of Jesus was imposed on someone else, who was then crucified, and that Jesus was taken up into heaven without tasting death. Islam explicitly denies the possibility of substitutionary atonement.





Islam is a fast-growing religion, especially in the Western world. Increasingly, Christians need to be aware of Islam and, most importantly, how to engage adherents with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here are ten things I learned about Islam during my 20 years as a missionary in a Muslim-majority country that I think every Christian should know:

# 6

## **Islamic practice can be summarized by the Five Pillars of Islam.**

These comprised of the confession of faith (“There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his prophet”), prayer (the ritual prayers said in Arabic five times a day, while facing Mecca and going through the prescribed set of bowings, kneeling and prostrations), alms (taken as a tax in some officially Islamic countries), fasting (the lunar month of Ramadan, during which Muslim believers fast during daylight hours but can eat while it is dark) and pilgrimage (the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, which every Muslim believer should make once in his or her lifetime).

# 7

## **The vast majority of Muslims are not terrorists.**

In fact, normal Islamic religious law forbids the intentional killing of non-combatants in battle, and it also forbids suicide. It is a small minority view that allows these things, and it is a small minority who engage in terrorist activities.

# 8

## **Muslims can be some of the friendliest, most hospitable people on earth.**

They make great neighbors and great friends. No Christian should be afraid to build a relationship with a Muslim.

# 9

## **Muslims need salvation through Jesus Christ.**

They are lost exactly like any other non-Christian, neither more nor less than anyone else. Furthermore, Muslims do come to faith in Jesus Christ. It usually takes time, and extended exposure to the Word of God and the lives of Christians, but more Muslims are coming to faith today than at any point in history.



# 10

## **God loves Muslims, and so should we — even those few who are our enemies.**

We should love them enough to befriend them, love them enough to make them welcome in our homes and love them enough to share the gospel with them.



*Zane Pratt is associate professor of Christian missions at Southern Seminary.*

# A prayer for the nations

By Jeff Walters

## GLOSSARY

### Aimaq

Afghani people group 100 percent unreached and zero percent evangelical with no known Bible in its language

### Argentina

Eighty-four people groups with two unreached people groups; 9.5 percent evangelical

### Bedouin

Part of Mali; no Bible in native language

### Berber

In Morocco, Africa with zero percent evangelical and no Bible in its language

### Burundi

Country with 12 people groups; Christianity is the primary religion with 27.5 percent evangelical

### Egypt

Thirty-eight people groups with 22 unreached people groups and 3.5 percent evangelical

### French

France has 99 people groups, 32 unreached people groups and one percent is evangelical

### Fulakunda

Zero percent evangelical and unengaged with no complete Bible in its language.

### Han

Largest ethnic group in the world: 6.9 percent evangelical out of 803 million people

### Indonesia

Seven hundred eighty-three people groups with 227 unreached peoples; 2.8 percent evangelical

### Khmer

A Cambodian ethnicity.

Father, incline your ear to us, your people gathered cry out to you. Hear us from your holy hill.

We cry out on behalf of the [Fulakunda](#) and the [Quechua](#) and the [French](#) and the [Turkmen](#) and the [Uighur](#) and the [Berber](#). We come boldly to your throne, bringing the peoples of [Mali](#) and [Argentina](#) and [Indonesia](#) and [Egypt](#) and [Burundi](#).

You said, “Let light shine out of darkness.” Shine in the hearts of all tribes and tongues and peoples.

You remove the enemy’s veil, that light might shine in. Remove the darkness from the nations that they might know the resurrected Lord.

May they call on his name, the name above all names, and be saved.

But how shall they call on him of whom they’ve never heard? How shall they hear without one to tell them? And how will they tell unless they are sent?

We pray with one voice, in one accord, for workers. For believers among the [Aimaq](#) and [Pashtun](#) and [Bedouin](#) and [Han](#) to tell the good news. For biblical, healthy churches to sing and touch and tell.

And we would be wrong not to ask that we, ourselves, be an answer to this petition.

Send us from the pews of Alumni Chapel into the sands and savannahs of Africa.

Scatter us from the book stacks and carrels of Boyce Library into the slums and projects of the world’s great cities.

Fling us from Founder’s Café and Norton Hall among those who have never heard, and among those who have not turned from their idols to the Christ.

All for your glory forever and ever. All with a passion that longs for the day when we will worship alongside the [Maninke](#) and the [Mongol](#), the [Kurd](#) and the [Khmer](#), the [Soninke](#) and the [Sayyid](#). Forever and ever and ever.

Let the nations be glad. Let all the peoples praise you.

Hear our prayer, Oh God, prayed together in the strong, strong name of Jesus.

Amen.

*Jeff Walters is assistant professor of Christian missions and urban ministry at Southern Seminary*



#### **Kurd**

People group with 27 million spread across the world, persecuted minority and 100 percent unreached

#### **Mali**

West and central African country with 62 people groups and 39 unreached people groups; .06 percent evangelical

#### **Maninke**

Unreached people group in Africa with zero percent evangelical and no reported Bible in its language

#### **Mongol**

Mongolian (Northeast Asia) people with 30 people groups with 24 unreached; 1.1 percent evangelical

#### **Pashtun**

Northern and Southern parts of Afghanistan: Southern Pashtun is .02 percent Christian and evangelical, Northern is .01 percent Christian and evangelical; no Bible in the Pashtun's language.

#### **Quechua**

South American people group with 30 different alternate names

#### **Soninke**

Zero percent evangelical, highly unreached with no Bible in native language

#### **Sayyid**

People group in India with 14 million people completely unreached; less than two percent evangelical

#### **Turkmen**

Turkey has 57 people groups with 39 unreached people groups; zero percent evangelical

#### **Uyghur**

Eleven million spread throughout the world, mainly in China with one percent evangelical witness

## Bevin Center refocuses missions efforts

The Bevin Center for Missions Mobilization, a center Southern Seminary opened last fall, recently refocused efforts around four strategic locations for the seminary's international mission trips.

Teams from the seminary will minister in the same location each year, allowing for more effective partnerships and deeper ministry relationships with missionaries on the field. These regular trips will also allow students to plan and budget for trips more easily than a changing calendar with different prices every year. In addition, regular trips will allow future full-time missionaries to develop relationships with missionaries already overseas.

After a trip to one of the locations, students will be able to help lead on future trips to that same location. This, the center hopes, will help deepen student-involvement in the seminary's missions efforts.

Leadership of the Bevin Center chose these locations because of strong connections with long-term missionaries in each region. In addition to the international locations, the Bevin Center will also send teams to regular locations around the United States: Detroit, Mi., Chicago, Ill., New England and Utah.

### DOMESTIC TRIPS



**Detroit, Mich.**  
**Chicago, Ill.**  
**New England**  
**Utah**

### INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

#### **Brazil**

David Sills, A.P and Faye Stone Professor of Christian Missions and Cultural Anthropology and associate dean of Christian missions, will lead a team to Brazil that will focus on pastoral training, bible storying and evangelism among local churches, pastors and non-believers within the Quillombola community.

#### **Southeast Asia**

Robert L. Plummer, associate professor of New Testament interpretation, will lead a team in doing evangelism and leadership training among an unreached people group.

#### **South Asia**

Brian Vickers, associate professor of new testament interpretation and assistant editor of the Southern Baptist Journal of Theology, will lead in evangelism among unreached peoples, discipleship and teaching local church leaders and believers.

#### **Southern France**

Jeff Walters, associate professor of Christian missions and urban ministry and a former church planter in Paris, France, will take a team to help local church planting initiatives and evangelistic efforts along coast and piers of Southern France in areas of high international traffic and Muslim influence.



Southern France, pictured



entity of the Southern Baptist Convention, hired Scott Holste last year as vice president of global strategic mobilization to direct an initiative with Christian professionals across the world.

His goal is to mobilize businessmen and women whose global experience and connections allow them access to difficult-to-reach people groups across the world.

According to the IMB, more than two-thirds of Southern Baptist missionaries serving overseas encounter some geopolitical-access restrictions.

“A solution to these significant, growing challenges sits in our pews,” Holste said. Businessmen and women “intersect with other professionals in the workplace, where they naturally form relationships.”

According to Zane Pratt, a missions professor at Southern Seminary and vice president of theological advance at the IMB, pursuing business as missions offers at least four benefits, both to the missionary and the missions task.

**Security.** Governments in many restricted-access countries identify missionaries who work as non-government organizations (NGOs) — such as many relief and development efforts — and either silence their work or remove them from the country. Those with a legitimate business platform, on the other hand, who are integrated into the economy of the country make themselves a benefit to their host country, rather than a target.

“The important thing,” Pratt said, “is that these businesses be above board and that they be successful.”

**Access.** Christian businessmen and women overseas find greater access than traditional missionaries in two senses. The first, is political. Many countries will not allow Christian missionaries in their borders. Almost every country, however — including some of the most hostile toward Christians — is open to commerce. And, again, a business venture that brings a level of economic health or stimulation to a community will always find welcome. The other way in which business people find easier access into the

many overseas contexts is relational. Owning, operating or even just working allows an access point into the daily lives of nationals.

**Funding.** A healthy business platform can make church-planting efforts in closed countries self-sustaining. At a time when giving to missions, even among Southern Baptists, is low, missionaries who generate consistent or full funding are key.

**Model.** A businessman who is also the pastor of a church models bivocational ministry for indigenous believers and future pastors. Opportunities for full-time vocational ministry in most parts of the world are rare. Modeling the connection between church ministry and secular work for locals may prove more helpful than traditional scenarios.

Like anything, potential problems exist in the business as mission movement. Pratt named in particular failure rates, the amount of time business start ups require and the potential to allow the business aspect to distract from the primary goal of promoting the gospel.

Pratt says that one of the most significant advantages of business work in missions is that church members in the pews of North American churches can see how their giftings can contribute to the advance of the kingdom of God. In many church settings, members can form the impression that missions work is only for an elite class of Christians. Connecting the skills and work of all members of a church to Great Commission work around the world helps reorient these impressions.

A faithful gospel witness should define Christians in the worlds of both ministry and the marketplace. The influence of Christ-followers living and working in a community should be palpable. According to Pratt, business as mission is no different. It demonstrates that the international mission work of a local church is an extension of what a church does in its own community. ➤

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

### Southern Seminary offers joint business programs with UofL

Southern Seminary offers students an opportunity to study theology, missiology and business all in one degree program. Students in the program can pursue either a master of arts in missiology or a master of divinity from Southern Seminary and a master of business administration (MBA) from the University of Louisville. Both the joint M.A.-M.B.A. and joint M.Div.-M.B.A. award individual degrees from the respective schools.

Each school accepts nine elective credits from the other, which reduces overall required hours for both programs by 18 credit hours.

Louisville's program runs for 20 months, which includes two night classes a week for five weeks at a time. The seminary portion of the degree, other than the nine hours required for the M.B.A., does not stipulate a time frame.

Those interested should contact Southern Seminary's Office of Admissions at [admissions@sbits.edu](mailto:admissions@sbits.edu)

### Cross Conference to include business as mission course

Southern Seminary will offer a course in business as mission in conjunction with the 2013 Cross Conference in Louisville, Ky., Dec. 27-30, 2013.

The missions conference features speakers John Piper, D.A. Carson, Matt Chandler, Kevin DeYoung and David Platt, along with Southern Seminary professors David Sills and Zane Pratt.

Students enrolled in the course, taught by Pratt, will explore the theological, ethical and missiological issues involved in business as mission.

Details are available at [www.sbits.edu/event](http://www.sbits.edu/event) and at [www.crosscon.com](http://www.crosscon.com)



# Southern Seminary announces formation of new school and names new academic leadership

By Aaron Cline Hanbury

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary announced the formation of a new school and named new academic leadership at the spring meeting of its Board of Trustees, April 16, 2013.

## New academic leadership

Earlier this year, on March 26, 2013 trustees of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention elected Russell D. Moore as its next president. Beginning in 2004, Moore served the seminary as lead academic officer under the president as well as dean of the School of Theology. In light of Moore's election, seminary president R. Albert Mohler Jr. named Randy Stinson as senior vice president for academic administration and Gregory A. Wills as dean of the School of Theology. Mohler also announced Matthew J. Hall as vice president for academic services, which will include oversight of the Office of Enrollment Management and institutional research and assessment.

Mohler said that separating the roles of academic administration and dean is necessary due, in large part, to increased enrollment.

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## Randy Stinson

Stinson became the founding dean of the School of Church Ministries at its inception in 2009, after serving for three years as the dean of the School of Leadership and Christian Ministry. He holds a master of divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and master of theology and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southern Seminary. He is also the former executive director and

president and is currently senior fellow for the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.

"During his tenure as dean," Mohler said, "Randy Stinson has shown a unique ability to operate both from conviction and vision and very quickly earns the absolute trust and confidence of those with whom he works."

When he entered the University of South Florida, Stinson, a native of Tampa, Fla., planned to pursue a job in geriatrics. Not long after, however, his career goals changed. Primarily through the ministry of his home church pastor, he began to sense a desire and call to gospel ministry. People in his life affirmed giftings of leadership and preaching. Initially, Stinson understood this as a call to preach.

Shortly after graduating college in 1989, Stinson met his future wife, Danna. The two married in January of 1991. And not long after that, the new family moved to south Georgia for Stinson to take a job as youth pastor at a small church.

"It was while serving that church that I realized I needed theological education, and I had a burden for leadership in academia. At the time, when I was in south Georgia, there was a Southern Baptist college nearby that we couldn't send our students to because it had so much liberalism in it. And I determined that one day I'd like to help the Southern Baptist colleges turn around like the seminaries had started to turn around."

Stinson and his wife moved to Wake Forest, N.C., to attend Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1993. Stinson maintained his desire to lead in higher edu-



*“Randy Stinson understands local church ministry and the needs of the mission fields of the world, and he’s going to be able to give unique direction to Southern Seminary’s academic future.”*

*— R. Albert Mohler Jr.*

cation. He didn’t know what that might look like, but knew it meant a terminal degree.

So, after his master’s degree, Stinson moved with his family — which then included newly born twins — to Louisville, Ky., in the fall of 1996 to pursue a doctorate. There, he earned both a master of theology degree and a doctor of philosophy in systematic theology, which he earned under the supervision of Bruce A. Ware.

In the course of his study, which he focused on the doctrine of God in relation to gender and family issues, Stinson became involved with the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) as executive director (2000), then as president (2007) and now as senior fellow.

“CBMW was what helped me to see the importance of all the theological underpinnings of what is taught on this campus that ends up in the lives of pastors who go out and teach things to their congregations,” Stinson said.

This connection between academic theology and pew-

## New school of missions, evangelism and ministry

Beginning in August 2013, Southern Seminary will launch a new school: the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry. This school, which combines the current Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism, established in 1994, and the School of Church Ministries, 2009, will serve students of international and domestic missions, church planting, worship leadership and both local church and educational leadership.

“The new Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry

consolidates the great strengths of Southern Seminary’s tradition in Great Commission ministry, in global evangelism outreach and in ministry to the local church,” said R. Albert Mohler Jr., who is president of the seminary. “In a new global age, it is vitally important that students who graduate from Southern Seminary are exposed to a comprehensive curriculum that will prepare them for the challenges of real-life ministry in the local church and the mission fields of the world. This new school will

bring together a comprehensive ministry vision and Great Commission passion.”

In the time following the second world war, many rural churches expanded and developed programs of music and education. These churches needed ministers trained for these ministries. And in 1943, Southern Seminary’s sixth president, Ellis A. Fuller, set a vision for specialized schools within the curriculum of the seminary. Ellis established a model that paralleled common university structures, placing Southern Seminary among the first to develop separate schools in a seminary: first, a school of music in 1944,

*(Continued on page 38)*

level theology would prove significant for Stinson. When Stinson finished his Ph.D. in spring 2005, he joined the faculty that same calendar year. The next year, Mohler appointed Stinson to be dean of the seminary's School of Leadership and Church Ministry. In this role, he could emphasize the importance of biblically faithful discipleship ministries to families. The school, in 2009, combined with the School of Church Music and became the School of Church Ministries.

Stinson said that a key benefit of this new role was working up close with Mohler.

"Serving on the cabinet with Dr. Mohler not only gave me an appreciation for where this seminary has been, but seeing his commitment to steward its direction, particularly beyond his own tenure, took root in my thinking. This new role is a much bigger task than I've had before on this campus, but I truly believe that God has prepared me, through all these other roles, to take on this position and to carry the burden of academic stewardship of this institution."

Mohler said: "Randy is a remarkable man, deeply committed to the gospel, energetically committed to the Great Commission, deeply committed to the local church. He understands local church ministry and the needs of the mission fields of the world, and he's going to be able to give unique direction to Southern Seminary's academic future in terms of its two graduate schools and Boyce College. He is trained in the classical disciplines and has a deep understanding of theological education. And I am really looking forward to working with him in this new capacity."

and then a school of Christian education in 1953. Eventually, the seminary housed as many as five different graduate schools.

"During those years after World War II and up through the end of the 20th century, churches were adding specialized ministers: ministers of music, ministers of youth, ministers of education," Mohler said. "That trajectory changed: churches are now looking for pastoral staff who have great adaptability, someone who has a well-rounded background and is able to lead in many of these areas

— and to be able to adapt to the changing needs of a congregation over time.

"Southern Seminary was the first seminary in the United States to have an endowed chair of Christian missions," Mohler said. "It is now the first in the nation to combine the strengths of these disciplines into one school of missions, evangelism and ministry. Missions must be more than a department; it must permeate the entire curriculum. The creation of this new school allows us to penetrate the entire institution

## Gregory A. Wills

"The dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary has always been a scholar, and a master teacher among other teachers," Mohler said. "And I can't think of anyone who better represents that than Greg Wills."

Wills becomes the 10th dean of the seminary's oldest and central school since its formation in 1954.

A native of North Little Rock, Ark., Wills came to Southern Seminary to be the archives and special collections librarian in the fall of 1994 from Atlanta, Ga., where he studied at Emory University under E. Brooks Holifield. However, his reasons for accepting the position extended beyond the library.

"My ambition was not to be an archivist," said Wills, who was the school's first full-time archivist. "When I accepted this position, I accepted it in order to provide support to the resurgence of the commitment to Scriptural authority in the Southern Baptist Convention, to the renovation of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, whose heritage I identified with and wanted to see restored, and to support Al Mohler in his new role as president of the institution."

Four years earlier, both Wills and Mohler moved to Atlanta, Wills to study at Emory, Mohler to be the editor of the *Christian Index*. A mutual friend of theirs, Mark Dever — who is now a pastor in Washington, D.C. — thought the two would find encouragement in one another and should meet. And, according to Wills, he pestered the two about it.

Eventually, Wills decided, he needed to "get Dever off [his] back and meet the guy." So he made an appointment to meet the man he assumed would be a theological moderate.

"We discovered that, in fact, Dever was right," said Wills.

Mohler said of meeting Wills: "The first thing I came to know of him is his intelligence and scholarship. I also came to know of his deep theological commitments to the faith

with Great Commission urgency."

The new school's sole purpose will be to enhance the seminary's Great Commission reach and its faithfulness to the local church. Mohler noted that the seminary will retain all faculty in the current Graham School and School of Church Ministries, and will retain and even expand the entire curriculum.

The seminary plans to name the dean of the new Graham School in coming months.



once-for-all delivered to the saints and to biblical inerrancy. I could see how those commitments were combined with a great joy and commitment to the academic vocation and genuine Christian scholarship.”

The two men met regularly, usually for lunch, for the next two years. Then, in 1993, Mohler moved to Louisville, Ky.; trustees of Southern Seminary elected him as president of the institution.

Shortly after Mohler arrived in Louisville, Wills followed. At the time, Wills was a new Southern Baptist.

He didn’t become a Christian until 1981, his sophomore year at Duke University, even though he grew up attending a liberal Methodist church in Memphis, Tenn., where his family moved when he was in fourth grade. In college, a fellow student bought him C.S. Lewis’s book *Mere Christianity*. Wills read it during Christmas break after the first semester of his sophomore year.

“By the grace of God I read the book,” Wills said. “The Holy Spirit brought the gospel truths home to my heart in power, and I gave my life to Christ, seeking forgiveness of sins.”

Not long after, through a growing understanding of the Bible and wide reading in Christian literature — notably the biography of missionary Jim Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty* — Wills sensed a call to gospel ministry. At the time, he understood his call “primarily in terms of missionary service.”

While still in college, Wills went to the north country in

*“The dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary has always been a scholar, and a master teacher among other teachers. And I can’t think of anyone who better represents that than Greg Wills.”*

— R. Albert Mohler Jr.

Thailand and taught the Bible to church leaders there. On this trip, he recognized his need for substantial grounding in the Scriptures if he were to be an effective minister, whether on the mission field or stateside.

To gain this grounding, Wills enrolled at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Mass. His first year in seminary, he became increasingly aware of the duty of Christians to serve in the local church. Wills said that Baptists, and specifically Southern Baptists, best matched the scriptural pattern.

Wills became a convinced and committed Southern Baptist; and the theological heritage of the denomination compelled him. And so did the work of preserving that heritage that Mohler set out to do at the flagship seminary.

“Whatever I could do in support of his vision,” Wills said, “I wanted to do.”

During the next 20 years, Wills served the seminary as archivist and then as a member of the full-time faculty beginning in 1997. In that time, Wills also carried additional leadership responsibilities, serving as an associate dean in the School of Theology beginning in 2007, and as vice president of research and assessment in 2011.

He and his wife, Cathy — whom he met while studying toward a master of theology degree at Duke following his seminary degree — made a life in Louisville, raising their four children, Samuel, Abigail, James and Maggie.

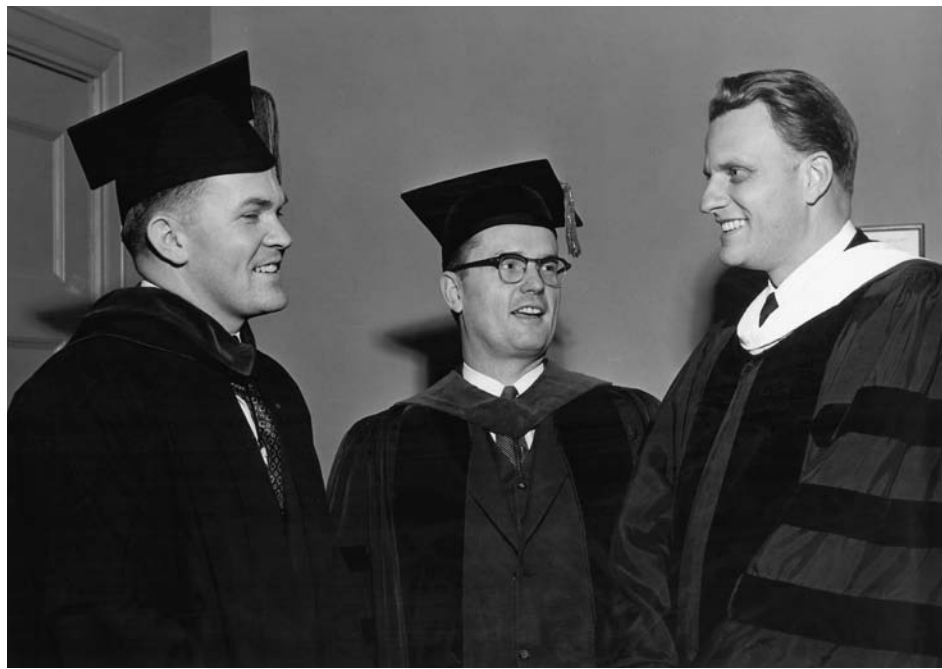
Wills’s scholarly expertise and leadership experience made him a clear choice to replace Moore as dean of the School of Theology.

“Throughout its history, Southern Seminary has had a succession of scholars who have served as dean of the School of Theology,” said Mohler, who appointed Wills to the new role. “Greg Wills belongs in that illustrious line and will make his own very distinctive contribution to the life and work of the School of Theology. He will lead the School of Theology in a way that is continuous with the glorious past and committed to the future.”

Wills said: “I feel humbled by the trust that the position entails. I feel challenged by the gravity of the responsibility. And I feel thrilled by the task of aiding the advance of faithful gospel ministry in the kingdom.” ➤

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





# Duke K. McCall

## Southern Baptist statesman and Southern Seminary president, dies at 98

By Gregory A. Wills and Aaron Cline Hanbury

Duke Kimbrough McCall, a Southern Baptist statesman and former president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, died April 2, near his home in Delray Beach, Fla., from congestive heart failure and respiratory distress. He was 98.

“A giant has fallen in Israel. The death of Dr. Duke K. McCall reminds us of the lengthened shadow one man can cast over a great denomination,” said R. Albert Mohler Jr., who is the current president of Southern Seminary. “Dr. McCall was a giant among Southern Baptists. He belongs to that great generation of Southern Baptist leaders who shaped the convention as the 20th century brought new opportunities and new challenges. He, along with Drs. W.A. Criswell and Hershel H. Hobbs, brought the Southern Baptist Convention into the modern age.”

McCall served as president of three different Southern Baptist entities: New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1943-1946), the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention (1946-1951) and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1951-1982). Second, he invested in denominational leadership as a very young man: he was only 28 when elected president of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Third, he exercised denominational leadership over an extraordinary period of time: 40 years across five decades of the 20th century, and then continued to be an active Baptist voice after his retirement.

“My relationship with Dr. McCall goes back to my childhood, when he came to my home church as a visiting

preacher,” Mohler said. “Later, he was the president of Southern Seminary when I arrived as a student. I saw his leadership up close, and my admiration only grew. Later, I was able to develop a deep and very personal friendship with Dr. McCall, and for that I am so very thankful. When I was elected president of Southern Seminary, in the midst of difficult days in our denomination, Dr. McCall was among the very first to call me. He offered prayer and friendship from the start, and, even when he would have disagreed with my decisions, he respected the office and offered true friendship.”

Son of judge John W. and Lizette McCall, Duke McCall was born in Meridian, Miss., in September of 1914, and he grew up with his four siblings in Memphis, Tenn. Following high school, McCall entered Furman University in Greenville, S.C. There, McCall met Marguerite Mullinnix. The couple married shortly after McCall graduated from the university as valedictorian in 1935. The McCalls raised four sons.

After McCall graduated from Furman University in 1935, he enrolled at Southern Seminary, earning a master of theology degree in 1938 and a doctor of philosophy degree in Old Testament studies in 1942 from Southern. Through most of his student years he pastored churches, including the prestigious Broadway Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.

In 1943, the trustees of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, at that time still called the Baptist Bible Institute of New Orleans, elected McCall, despite his youth, because he had earned a reputation for powerful preaching, evange-



listic zeal and bold leadership. He looked, however, like an incoming freshman. “Are you new here, too?” a freshman asked him in 1943. “Yes I am,” McCall replied, “they have just made me president.”

As president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and as president of the Executive Committee, McCall exercised visionary leadership and attracted the support of leaders throughout the denomination. He was able to move Southern Baptists to accomplish some of the challenging things that the gospel demanded of them. Though young, he demonstrated wisdom and power, and a heart to serve the churches. These things endeared him to Southern Baptist pastors and laypersons.

In 1951, the trustees of Southern Seminary brought McCall back to his *alma mater*. He had already proven himself capable of bold leadership in challenging circumstances at Broadway, New Orleans and the Executive Committee. And the seminary trustees ultimately concluded that McCall was their candidate; the search committee brought him to Louisville for the interview in early August 1951. McCall accepted and became the longest serving president in the institution’s history.

Duke K. McCall made deep and varied contributions to Baptist life throughout his remarkable career. Some of them came outside the Southern Baptist Convention, as in his long service and leadership in the Baptist World Alliance. But it was within the life of the Southern Baptist Convention that he made his most durable and impressive contributions. He launched a new era of progress for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He reconceived the work of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention in ways that resulted in advances in denominational giving, missionary expansion and institutional prosperity. And in less tangible ways, he left his imprint on Southern Baptists.

McCall leaves behind his wife, Winona McCandless, a widow whom he married after Marguerite died in 1983, and his four sons: Duke Jr., Douglas, John Richard and Michael.

“When a giant of this stature falls, we realize just how few men of his stature there are,” Mohler said. “What a remarkable life. Southern Seminary is praying for the entire McCall family. Our prayers are with Mrs. Winona McCall, his beloved wife, and his four sons and their families. I am so thankful to have known Dr. Duke K. McCall as president, statesman, churchman, preacher and friend.”

The family held a visitation service in the Duke K. McCall Sesquicentennial Pavilion at Southern Seminary, Sunday, April 7. The following day, the funeral took place at Broadway Baptist Church.

Those in attendance included Frank Page, the president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee; June Honeycutt, wife of Southern Seminary’s eighth president, Roy L. Honeycutt; and Jason K. Allen, the newly elected president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., and a former vice president at Southern Seminary.

The service began with readings of McCall’s favorite Scripture passages, including Psalm 23, followed by reflections from each of his sons. McCall’s sons also shared memories and stories from McCall’s life as their father.

After family reflections, William Self, a retired pastor from Johns Creek Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Ga., spoke about McCall’s life, speaking highly about McCall’s friendship and ministry.

Mohler spoke about McCall’s influence on the modern seminary as monumental, and he said that he is proud to be part of McCall’s line of influence.

“Duke invented the modern seminary presidency. I am proud to be his successor.”

*Reporting from RuthAnne Irvin contributed to this article. Gregory A. Wills is dean of the School of Theology and professor church history at Southern Seminary; Aaron Cline Hanbury is managing editor of Southern Seminary Magazine.*

Photos (from left to right): Duke K. McCall signs Abstract of Principles (March 11, 1952) at his inauguration; McCall (middle) with Billy Graham (right); R. Albert Mohler Jr. speaks at McCall’s funeral (April, 8 2013); McCall’s visitation (April 7, 2013) in the Duke K. McCall Sesquicentennial Pavilion.



## Southern Seminary alumni ministering around the world

**WAYNE RANDOLPH (1971)** retired in December 2012 from Second Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., after serving for 35 years as minister of music and worship. The church gave him the title of minister of music and worship emeritus, as well as commissioned a hymn arrangement by Mark Edwards entitled "People Look East" for the Celebrating Grace hymnal. He and his wife, Janet, will be moving to Heber Springs, Ark., to be with children and grandchildren, and he will continue doing part-time and interim work in church music. At Southern, he earned a master of church music degree.

**LARRY VERLANDER (1973)** retired after serving for 25 years with the International Mission Board in Africa.

**THOMAS NEWMAN (1982)**, from Leesburg, Ga., has been clinical chaplain at Albany Community Hospice in Albany, Ga. for 10 years. He has also pastored Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Camilla, Ga., for eight years.

**JOHNNIE R. BAILEY (1987)** is senior pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Springfield, Ky. Bailey was called to preach when he was 15 years old and is celebrating his 46th year of ministry.

**CLINTON AKINS (1990)**, doctor of ministry, has accepted the call from Bluewater Community Church in Niceville, Fla., to serve as interim pastor. Before accepting the interim pastor position, Akins, a native of Fort Walton Beach, a Vietnam War veteran, served three years as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Cardwell, Mo., and 24 years as

a missionary to Madagascar with World-venture Missionary Organization.

**RICK AXTELL (1990)**, Centre College chaplain and Paul L. Cantrell Associate Professor of Religion in Danville, Ky., has been promoted to full professor by the Centre College Board of Trustees. Axtell has studied hunger, sustainable development and/or liberation theology in Bangladesh, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Mexico and Nicaragua. He has also studied homelessness in major American cities. Axtell holds a bachelor's degree from Mississippi College. He earned a master of divinity degree and a doctorate from The Southern

Baptist Theological Seminary, and he has completed other advanced studies at the University of Notre Dame.

**RICHARD BROWN (1991)** works as director of pastoral care at Carilion Clinic, Roanoke, Va. He also teaches at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Jefferson College of Health Sciences.

**JAMES RAMSEY (2003)** earned a doctorate of ministry (D.Min.) from Erskine Theological Seminary on May 18, 2013. His dissertation title is "Increasing Christian Spirituality and Reducing Perceived Stress at Eisenhower Army Medical Center."

### Featured update

#### Homer D. Carter 1953-2013

Homer D. Carter, a Southern Baptist minister who served as pastor of First Baptist Church in Rockville, Wash., for 13 years, died April 29 at his home in Louisville, Ky., where he had lived since 2006.

Carter came to the Washington state area in 1980 when he was named pastor of First Baptist in Rockville. He was known for integrating the church and encouraging diversity.

Homer Dwight Carter was born in Louisville and received a bachelor's degree in history in 1950 from Georgetown College in Georgetown, Ky. He received a master of divinity degree in 1953 from Southern Seminary.

In 1973, he received a doctor of ministry degree from Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Mo.

Dr. Carter was the pastor of churches in Kentucky and Missouri before coming to the Washington area and taught part-time at several seminaries throughout his career. Weeks before his death, he was honored by Columbia Baptist Fellowship in Columbia, where he had served as interim pastor.

His wife of 57 years, Mary Martha Payton Carter, died in 2008.

Survivors include three children, Marilyn Carter of Montgomery Village, Philip Carter Abraham of Louisville and Christy Carter of Libertyville, Ill.; two sisters; a grandson; and a great-granddaughter.

*Adapted from Washington Post*

**JOSHUA "BUCKY" ROGERS (2005)** and his wife have adopted four children, and have served in the student ministry at Anderson Mill Road Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C., for the past six and a half years. Bucky has transitioned to a lead student pastor, supervising a middle grades pastor and a high school/college pastor. He also leads a modern worship service called IgniteSpartanburg. We remember our days at Southern fondly, and appreciate the investment its professors made into our lives and ministry.

**REBECCA (ALEXANDER) DREW, (2001)** Rebecca (Alexander) Drew is grateful to God for her recent marriage to Ken Drew on March 30, 2013 and is honored to serve as the prayer ministry associate at Tallowood Baptist Church, Houston, Texas.

**JASON DEES (2007)** is the new senior pastor of Valleydale Church in Birmingham, Ala. He is also pursuing a doctorate from Southern Seminary in biblical spirituality.

**RODNEY DUCKETT (2006)** has accepted the call to pastor Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in Mt. Juliet, Tenn. He has served on staff at West Hills Baptist Church in Lebanon, Tenn., as the Minister of Education since 2004.

**ADAM EMBRY (2008)** After graduating from Southern with the M. Div. in 2006, Adam completed a Th.M. in church history in 2008. His thesis about the English Puritan, John Flavel, was published with Reformation Heritage Books. Since 2007 he has served as one of the assistant pastors at Auburndale Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., and is currently enrolled in Southern's D.Min. program in biblical counseling.

**TIM FRANKS (2009)** is celebrating three years at First Southern Baptist

Church of Phoenix as the minister of students. Tim met his wife, Alicia, in Phoenix, Ariz., and they married in November, 2010. Tim's youth ministry is a melting pot of students from Vietnamese, Burundi, Hispanic, Burmese and Anglo backgrounds. His college ministry is primarily focused on reaching Grand Canyon University students, a private Christian school that shares a parking lot with his church.

**ALEX LEUNG (2011)** serves as youth minister at Tri-Valley Chinese Bible Church in Pleasanton, Calif., a suburb in the east bay of the San Francisco Bay area. Alex and his wife, Vivian, disciple the students through youth

fellowship and Sunday school. Alex also oversees the Sunday worship service, preaching twice a month on Sundays in 2013.

**CHAD KINCER (2012)** is the new college director at the Austin Stone church in Austin, Texas.

**JOHN LAKE (2013)** was approved as adjunct faculty and will be teaching Christian theology at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary's Arizona regional campus beginning in the fall of 2013.

**ERICH LAUTERBACH (2012)** began a new pastorate at Walnut Grove Baptist Church in Irvington, Ky.

#### Featured update

### Maxine White Polston 1928-2013

A resident of Chattanooga, Tenn., and Southern Seminary alumnus, Maxine White Polston died Thursday, April 18.

A native of Cookeville, Tenn., she was born May 21, 1928, the first of two daughters to the late H.D. White and Dora Elmore White.

Polston began the study of piano at the age of nine, which remained one of her passions in life. She played for many evangelistic crusades as a teenager, more than 200 weddings, receptions, memorial services and interim positions in churches.

After attending Tennessee Tech for three years, majoring in piano and music education, she entered The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary School of Church Music in Louisville, Ky., and graduated in 1953 with a bachelor of sacred music degree.

Polston returned to Chattanooga in 1957 with her husband, Russell Polston. For the next 56 years, she served at Red Bank Baptist Church, Signal Mountain Baptist Church and First Baptist Church of Chattanooga in the Golden Gateway.

She was selected to be the pianist for the Southern Baptist Convention in 1955, but she had to withdraw her name due to an automobile accident.

She is survived by her husband Russell Polston of 57 years; a beloved daughter Leanne; one niece, one nephew and two grand nieces.

She was preceded in death by her sister, Mary Helen Smith.

*Adapted from chattanooga.com*





**SANDY\***

(2013) MATSIL,  
Billy Graham School

Sandy first heard about Southern Seminary as an International Mission Board (IMB) journeyman working in Southeast Asia. The IMB’s journeyman program allows participants to earn course credit toward a master’s degree while on the field.

“I was called to missions in high school, but wasn’t sure what it would look like,” said Sandy, who enrolled in the program with the IMB after college. “I knew I wanted to go back to South East Asia eventually, and I knew seminary was a good next step.”

She said Southern Seminary’s commitment to sound theology and missions — and Zane Pratt’s deanship of the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism — ensured her that Southern was the right place for her.

**“I saw that Southern seemed on the top theologically, and that’s important when you’re on the field.”**

Because of the religions she encountered in Southeast Asia, courses about Islam particularly appealed to Sandy as she considered theological training.

Sandy plans after seminary to work with pastors and church planters back in Southeast Asia, teaching them what church planting looks like in the area.

**“Seminary has solidified my calling to go overseas and I know that’s where I am called to be,” she said.**

Until she completes the steps necessary for overseas deployment, Sandy hopes to work at her home church in Arkansas with the college ministry as a mobilizer.

Sandy is a member of Antioch Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky.

\*Full name undisclosed.



**CHARLES JUMA**

Southern Seminary (‘14)  
Ph.D. Billy Graham School

**Where are you from?**

I was born and raised in Kenya in a small Islamic community. At the age of 15, I traveled to Nairobi where I heard the gospel for the first time. A missionary from Denver, Colo., led me to the Lord and also discipled me. In the same year, I led my family to the Lord. During the next 10 years, I served as a pastor in the same church where I was saved.

**What is your current ministry context?**

I return to Africa every summer to continue my missionary work. I currently work in 13 African countries, focusing on leadership training and public school and open-air evangelism. When I am back in the U.S., I preach in churches to raise missions awareness and to recruit.

**Why did you choose to pursue a doctorate from Southern Seminary?**

My decision to pursue a doctorate from Southern Seminary was influenced by the leadership and faculty at the school. I was already aware of the seminary’s commitment to theology and missions. My studies at Southern have prepared me mentally and spiritually to preach the gospel of Jesus boldly to the lost world and to serve the church faithfully.

**What are your plans after graduation?**

After my graduation, I want to offer theological education to African leaders and churches. I will also continue with my evangelistic ministries in public schools and through open-air meetings.



**DANIEL THOMPSON\***

Southern Seminary (2014)  
Adv M.Div. Billy Graham School

**I worked for six years with a humanitarian aid / development non-government organization (NGO) in a war-torn country in Central Asia, helping with disaster response and long-term medical, education and community development projects.**

I also taught courses at the local university, giving life-on-life access to students who were more open-minded and future influencers of society. This “creative-access” strategy allowed us to bring good news to an impoverished, formerly unengaged, unreached people group.

I now live in Europe, managing international operations for this NGO and supervising church planting teams who reach out to Central Asian refugees and immigrants. **In my city, I help lead a Persian house church, which is made up of successful businessmen as well as asylum-seeking refugees.** Some are grounded in their Christian faith; others are new believers. Still others are not yet disciples: they are disillusioned with Islam, but still learning about Christ and considering the cost of following him.

For some time, I have wanted to pursue further theological education. I want to know God’s Word better so that I can better know God, and make him known to the lost. **I was looking for a seminary that has a commitment to God’s Word and strong scholarship. Southern Seminary has both.**

My background in management and humanitarian aid work provides access to the unreached; theological education helps me be a stronger disciple and disciple-maker.

\*Pseudonym



## SBTS graduate driven by theology and desire to be faithful

James Jones\* understands that missiology and theology are not mutually exclusive. After serving stints as a missionary in challenging contexts like Uganda, North Africa and Southern France, Jones says it's important to remember that "missiology is not methodology; it's applied theology."

This approach came from his studies at Southern Seminary; Jones graduated in 2002 with a master of divinity in evangelism and church planting. His wife, Rebekah, graduated in 2000 with a master of Christian education degree.

After Jones graduated in May of 2002, he and his wife were appointed by the International Mission Board in August to go to Uganda, where they spent the next five years ministering in a Muslim population.

"We are the workmanship of God, created for good works," he says. "And I want to be where God wants me, using the gifts that he's given."

The Jones' first year in Uganda was a disaster. They saw almost no fruit, their daughter became ill and they faced intense spiritual warfare. Eventually, the Jones' endurance earned them a hearing among the locals. The first breakthrough, Jones says, was the conversion of a local witch doctor. Jones and this new convert then had an opportunity to share the gospel and their testimonies with about 40 people, ten of whom gave their life to Christ that day. Shortly after, Jones planted his first church.

That was not the last church Jones planted in Uganda. He was there to see churches that he helped start plant more churches. These

churches continue to bear fruit in the Jones' absence, with indigenous leadership, which was their goal all along. "We want to produce healthy churches that are themselves reproducing," he says.

The Jones returned to the United States in 2007, and then, in 2009, went to North Africa. While in North Africa, Jones started a company that provided entrepreneurial and business training. He has a business background, having earned a degree in economics and finance from the University of Georgia in Athens, Ga.

This platform provided opportunities for Jones not only to train businesses, but to see the gospel bear fruit. In his two years in North Africa, Jones saw more than 150 Arabs believe and be baptized.

The Jones' most recent place of

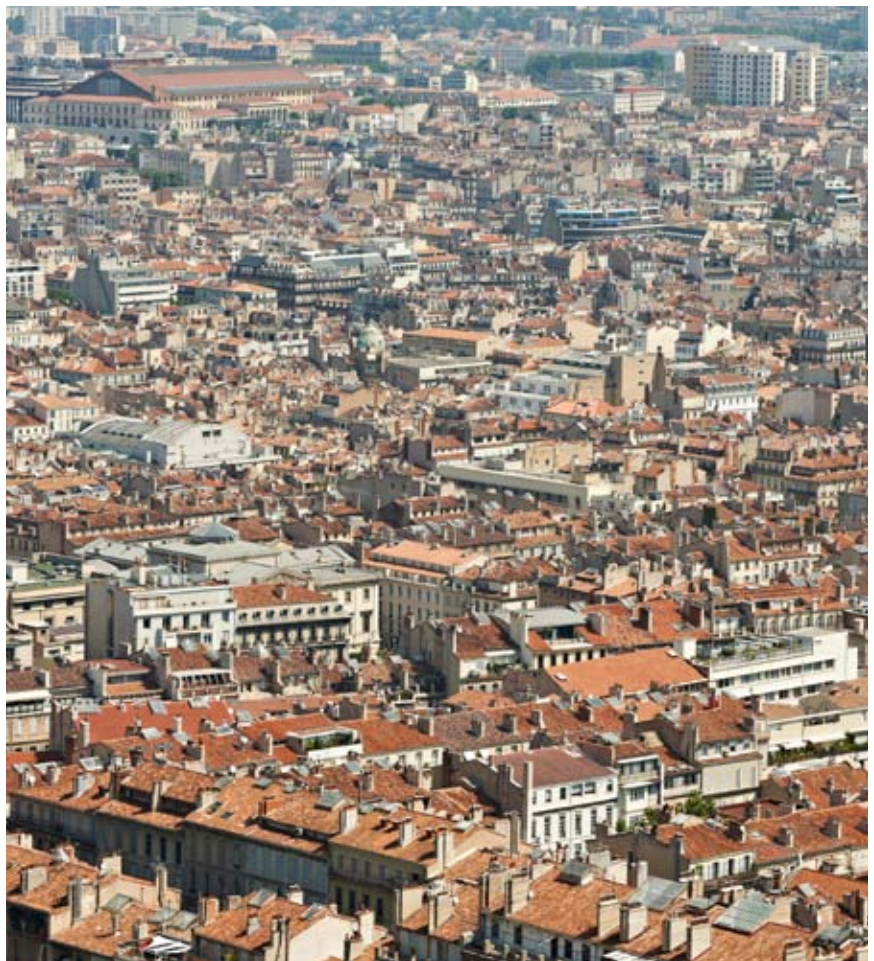
ministry has been Southern France, where they started another company, and where their first church plant just recently launched. The Joneses are currently in Louisville, Ky., where they remain until July, when they hope to return to Southern France and stay indefinitely.

Regardless of where he is, Jones' passion to plant churches and to train local people to lead those churches renders his presence unnecessary. And that seems to be the goal for Jones, whose motivation to take the gospel to the nations is the desire to be faithful to God.

"We are the workmanship of God, created for good works," he says. "And I want to be where God wants me, using the gifts that he's given."

— MATT DAMICO

*\*pseudonym*



## Darron and Rachel Byrd

### Gospel urgency in a time of need



**W**hen Darron and Rachel Byrd attended a Southern Seminary dinner in Jackson, Miss., led by President R. Albert Mohler Jr., they arrived without much prior knowledge of the seminary. They left that dinner informed and intrigued by the opportunity to partner with the school.

“We were impressed with Dr. Mohler and the mission of the seminary,” Darron Byrd said. “And we were excited about the opportunity to support it.”

That opportunity led them to attend the 2011 Foundation Board Retreat as guests, and to become members of the board that fall.

The Byrds are members of Morrison Heights Baptist Church in Clinton, Miss., and live in nearby Jackson, where they also own the franchise office of Home Instead Senior Care, a provider of in-home caregiving services for senior adults.

From their vantage point in Jackson, Miss., the Byrds recognize the declining morality and increasing hostility toward Bible-believing Christians in the broader culture. They also recognize that Mohler and Southern stand for the gospel in the midst of such hostility.

“The world in which we live is

aggressively warring against the truth of God’s Word,” said Darron Byrd.

“The opportunity to support and advance an institution and president who is actively engaging this culture with the salt and light of the gospel brings us great joy. We feel that we are playing a part in the vital role of the seminary as it strives to penetrate the darkness with the truth.”

The Byrds understand that their investment in Southern Seminary allows them to extend their own influence in the stand for truth because, by investing in today’s students at Southern Seminary, they invest in those students’ future ministry.

“Southern exhibits a commitment to the biblical gospel and an unashamed commitment to proclaim it through its instruction, development and deployment of future servants of the church,” said Darron Byrd.

The Byrds’s grasp of the need for the gospel to spread and for trained ministers and missionaries to proclaim it becomes clear simply by being around them, according to Craig Parker, vice president for institutional advancement and executive director of the Southern Seminary Foundation.

“It would be difficult to find a couple more devoted to Southern and our students than Darron and Rachel Byrd,” said Parker.

“You do not have to be with Darron and Rachel very long before you become aware of their great enthusiasm for the work being accomplished at Southern. There is nothing casual about their support of the seminary.”

Perhaps the Byrds’s support of Southern would be more casual if they didn’t recognize the need for the gospel around them. Fortunately the Byrds understand what’s at stake. — MATT DAMICO



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## From the Foundation



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

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# Southern Seminary seeks to increase impact in Midwest

**T**he Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the convention it represents, has natural affiliations with the geographical region in its name. But its influence increasingly reaches farther than the lower half of the United States. One area where we see a growing impact, and where we hope to increase that impact, is the Midwest.

For that reason, Southern Seminary recently welcomed Peter E. Coats as regional director of institutional advancement for the Midwest region.

Coats and his wife, Betsy, reside in Birmingham, Mich., where he works as a dose management specialist for Baxter Healthcare Corporation, and serves as an elder of Woodside Baptist Church, Troy, Mich. He is also the brother of U.S. Senator Dan Coats (R-Ind.), who came out of retirement in 2010 to reclaim his seat in the Senate.

Coats graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in political science and religious studies from Michigan State University in Lansing, Mich., and has since enjoyed a successful business career for 35 years.

Recently, Coats sensed a calling to vocational ministry, leading him to consider where and how he could serve. He soon began evaluating opportunities to serve a seminary, wanting to find a school with like-minded theological convictions, with a clear commitment to the local church and with strong institutional leadership. Southern Seminary became the clear favorite because it provides “extraordinary training in order to serve churches and strengthen mission efforts across the world.”

believe that once prospective donors are presented with this investment opportunity, they will quickly respond to the value that Southern brings to the advancement of the kingdom.”

Coats will seek donations to fund capital projects and “provide students with a low cost, high quality education.”

“With God’s guidance and empowerment, I hope to begin to open up a steady flow of donations in the Upper Midwest, which is an area served by Southern but needs considerable donor development,” Coats said. “Your prayers for this effort are needed and appreciated.”

With Southern graduates pastoring healthy churches all over the Midwest, and with students coming to Southern from the Midwest, this is a strategic time for Southern to strengthen rela-

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***We can trust that the seeds sown in the Midwest will bear fruit for the gospel across the world***

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Coats believes his business experience offers insight in promoting Southern Seminary’s commitment to the Great Commission.

“Our mission [in institutional advancement] is to build relationships with seminary friends to secure financial contributions,” Coats said. “I firmly

tionships with churches, pastors and friends in that region.

There is no doubt that Peter Coats will be a wonderful ambassador for Southern Seminary, and we can trust that the seeds sown in the Midwest will bear fruit for the gospel across the world.

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**CARL F.H. HENRY**

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