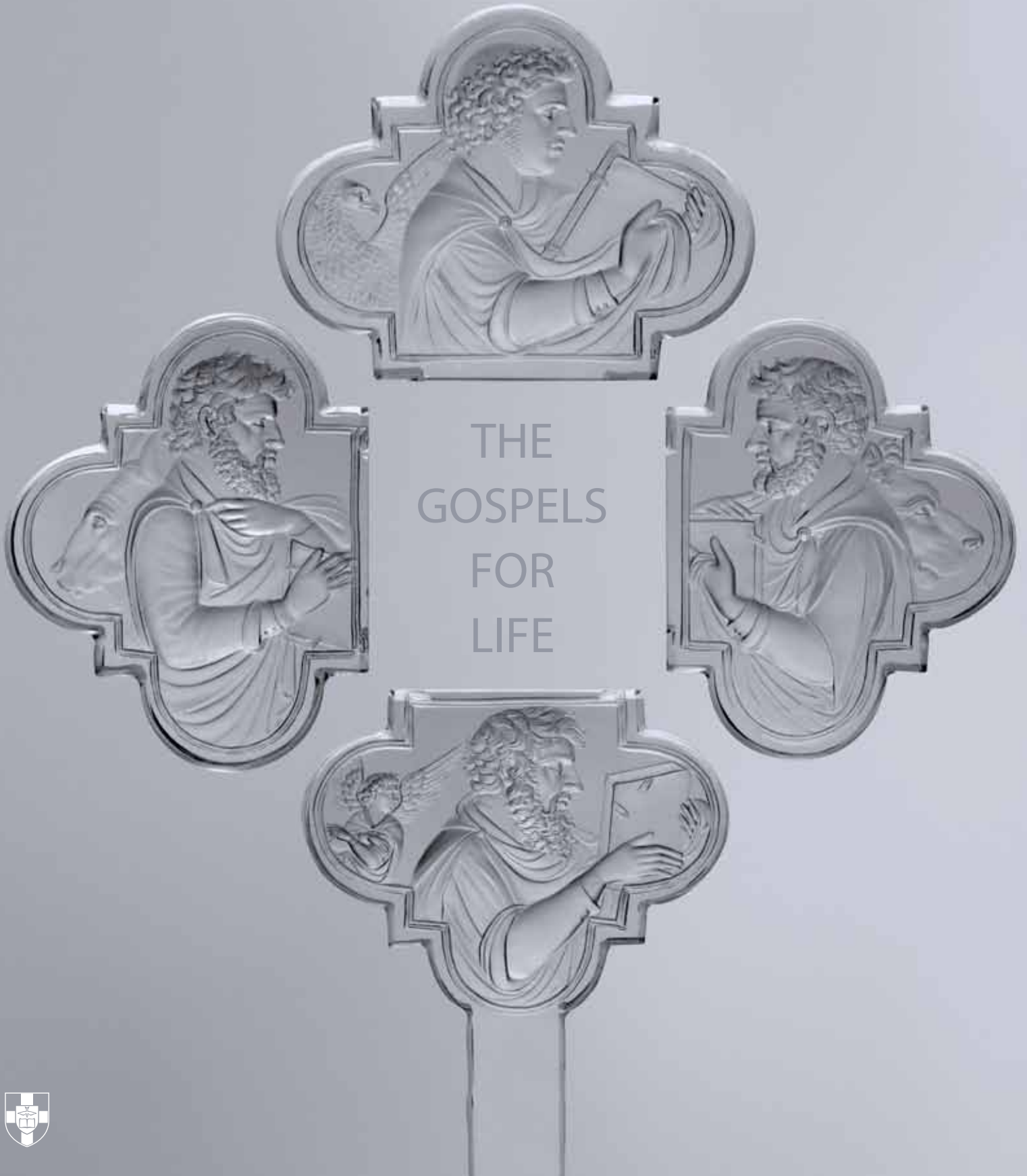
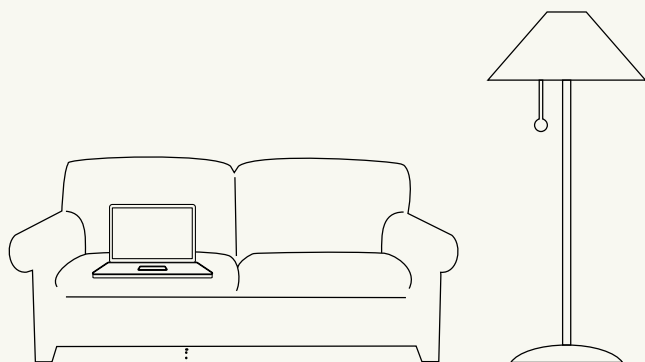


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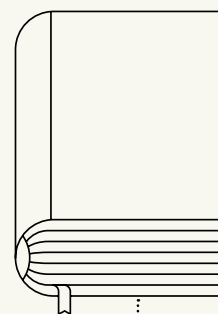
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Love for a Bible not read: a call for biblical literacy

While America’s evangelical Christians are rightly concerned about the secular worldview’s rejection of biblical Christianity, we ought to give some urgent attention to a problem much closer to home: biblical illiteracy in the church. This scandalous problem is our own, and it’s up to us to fix it.

Researchers George Gallup and Jim Castelli put the problem squarely: “Americans revere the Bible — but, by and large, they don’t read it. And because they don’t read it, they have become a nation of biblical illiterates.” Researchers tell us that it is worse than most could imagine.

Fewer than half of all adults can name the four Gospels. Many Christians cannot identify more than two or three of the disciples. According to data from one research group, 60 percent of Americans can’t name even five of the Ten Commandments. Americans may demand that the Ten Commandments be posted in the courthouse, but they seem unable to remember what exactly they are.

According to 82 percent of Americans, “God helps those who help themselves,” is a Bible verse. Those identified as born-again Christians did better — by one percent. A majority of

adults think the Bible teaches that the most important purpose in life is taking care of one’s family.

One poll indicates that at least 12 percent of adults believe that Joan of Arc was Noah’s wife. Another survey of graduating high school seniors reveals that more than 50 percent thought Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife. A considerable number of respondents to one poll indicated that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Billy Graham. We are in big trouble.

How can a generation be biblically shaped in its understanding of human

teaching now often accounts for only a diminishing fraction of the local congregation’s time and attention. The move to small group ministry has certainly increased opportunities for fellowship, but many of these groups never get beyond superficial Bible study.

This really is our problem, and recovery starts at home. Parents are to be the first and most important educators of their own children, teaching them the Word of God. Parents cannot franchise out their responsibility to the congregation, no matter how faithful it may be.

Churches must recover the centrality and urgency of biblical teaching and preaching.

We will not believe more than we know, and we will not live higher than our beliefs. The many fronts of Christian compromise in this generation can

This generation must get deadly serious about the problem of biblical illiteracy.

sexuality when it believes Sodom and Gomorrah to be a married couple? Many who identify themselves as Christians are similarly confused about the gospel itself. An individual who believes that “God helps those who help themselves” will find salvation by grace and justification by faith to be alien concepts.

Christians who lack biblical knowledge are the products of churches that marginalize biblical knowledge. Bible

be directly traced to biblical illiteracy in the pews and the absence of biblical preaching and teaching in our homes and churches.

This generation must get deadly serious about the problem of biblical illiteracy, or a frighteningly large number of Americans — many church members included — will go on thinking that Sodom and Gomorrah lived happily ever after.

Features

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Southern Seminary Magazine is published quarterly by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40280. Periodicals Postage Paid at Louisville, Ky and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions: Free. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Southern Seminary Magazine*, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40280 • USPS 025-619

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The parable of the Good Samaritan offers a look into the mission of Jesus. *By Russell D. Moore*



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Tom and Diane Schreiner anticipated a different fall season, but their faith in God prepared them for the fall that came. *By RuthAnne Irvin*

30 The Gospels as the archway to the canon

In the history of the church, many Christians viewed the four Gospels as the foundational books of the New Testament canon, and many in the church today should rediscover their central place. *By Jonathan T. Pennington*



On the cover
 This cover image depicts rock crystal plaques of the four Gospel witnesses, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, attributed to Valerio Belli (Il Vicentino) (1468–1546).

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38 Preach Christ from the Gospel accounts

Preaching Christ from the accounts of his life may seem obvious, but sometimes missing Jesus is just as easy. *By David E. Prince*



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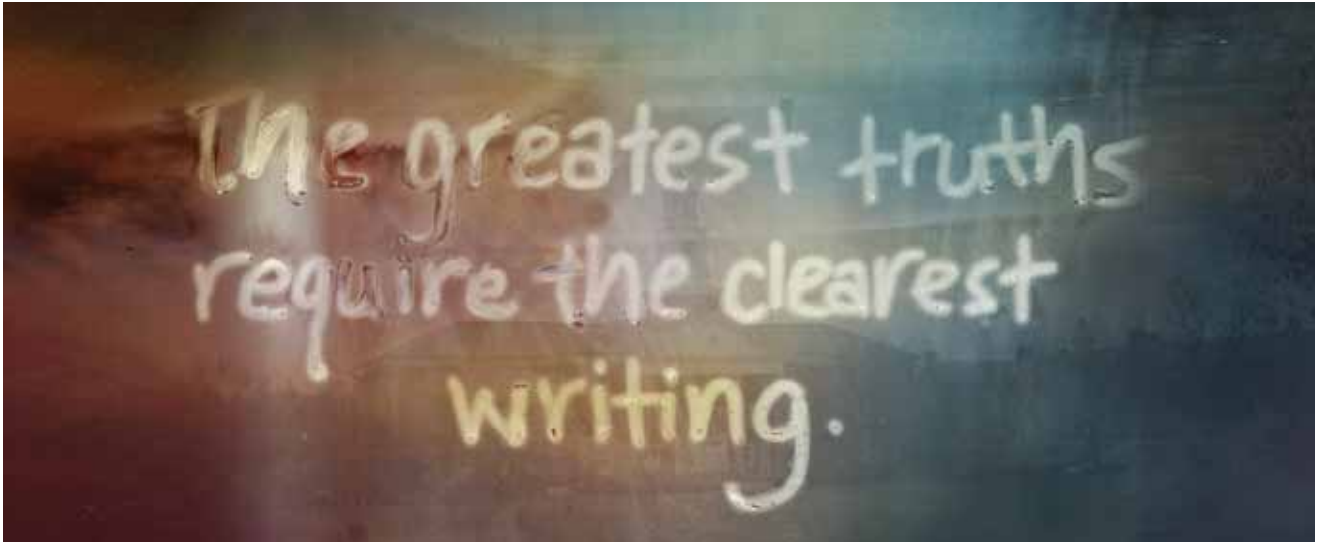
Recently, *Newsweek* magazine took aim at the integrity and reliability of New Testament; but of the two publications, only one will last. *By R. Albert Mohler Jr.*

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News



New plan aims to improve writing, communication

In Barbara Kingsolver's novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*, missionary pastor Nathan Price preaches to villagers in the Belgian Congo for three decades with no fruit from his labors. Price's fruitless ministry, which culminates in the death of a daughter and the abandonment of his family, centers on his poor communication. For 30 years, he preaches "Jesus is Bangala," which translates as "Jesus is a poisonwood tree." Price's ministry isn't fruitless because of a lack of zeal, but because he lacks clear communication.

"Pastors need the ability to communicate the greatest truths clearly, in such a way that the least educated person in their congregation can clearly understand them and see the beauty of these life-changing truths," said Joe Harrod, director of assessment at Southern Seminary.

Toward that end, the seminary will implement a plan to improve theological writing among master's degree-level students.

As a part of the seminary's regular 10-year accreditation reaffirmation process, the school formed an enhance-

ment plan to strengthen an area of student learning. In the process, the faculty at Southern Seminary decided to focus on student writing ability. So, starting fall 2013, the seminary will initiate a quality enhancement plan (QEP) to improve theological writing among master's students.

Harrod says that while theological writing may seem only an academic pursuit, the fruits of better papers will be "vitaly important for the church."

"We recognized that writing is a key feature of academic life, and also a key feature of pastoral ministry," Harrod said. "Pastors, missionaries and those serving in other ministries — whether they go on to do a higher academic degree or not — will always be writing. We want to help them write better papers while they're here, and, ultimately, we want them to be better communicators of the gospel."

The seminary will improve theological writing among master's level students primarily through a new rubric for evaluating academic papers in systematic theology courses. This rubric, which represents the consensus and expertise of the Southern Seminary faculty, emphasizes eight areas of theological writing: (1) thesis statements, (2) methodology statements, (3) argument and orga-

nization, (4) biblical interaction, (5) source and information literacy, (6) grammar and mechanics, (7) style and (8) Southern Seminary format.

This new rubric will allow professors and graders to give students both objective and constructive feedback on written assignments; students will understand clearly those areas in which they need to improve. They can then pursue improvement through the seminary's newly bolstered Writing Center.

The QEP team also launched a campus-wide campaign to raise awareness of the initiative, which is an important aspect of the QEP. The seminary's midterm review of the plan takes place in 2018, at which point the seminary must report to accreditors on the impact of its QEP. But that won't be the end of the seminary's emphasis on writing.

"This project will extend far beyond 2018; we want it to become part of Southern's culture," said Harrod. "This isn't just something we do because we have to, we want to improve student writing for the long-run." — Aaron Cline Hanbury

More information about the QEP and the Southern Seminary Writing Center is available at www.sbts.edu/writing



ETS features SBTS faculty and alumni

The 64th annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) convened in Milwaukee, Wis., Nov. 17-19, to discuss “Caring for Creation.”

Russell D. Moore, senior vice president

for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary, delivered a plenary address titled “Heaven and Nature Sing: How Evangelical Theology Can Inform the Task of Environmental Protection, and Vice-Versa.”

Moore said Christians are called to the “shepherding of creation around us,” which should prompt evangelicals to join forces with secular environmentalists for the good of creation.

He said that because the Incarnation joined the divine with the material word, “the earth is now the permanent dwelling place of God in Jesus Christ, so it matters what we do with it now.”

Moore encouraged his listeners to pursue environmental protection with concern for other humans, which reflects Jesus’ display of “God’s free power and man’s servant rulership.”

The annual meeting also featured a panel discussion about biblical theology,

“Recent Whole Bible Biblical Theologies,” which featured the recent works of three Southern Seminary faculty members and responses from some the evangelical community.

James M. Hamilton, associate professor of biblical theology, presented a lecture concerning his work *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*. Peter J. Gentry, professor of Old Testament interpretation, and Stephen J. Wellum, professor of Christian theology, each presented lectures on their recent book *Kingdom through Covenant*.

After the presentations, biblical scholars Mark Boda and Elmer A. Martens offered responses to Hamilton and Gentry-Wellum respectively. A panel also heard responses from two systematists.

Including Moore, Hamilton, Gentry and Wellum, Southern Seminary faculty, students and alumni presented 40 papers at the ETS 2012 meeting. — CRAIG SANDERS

Strachan named executive director of CBMW

The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) named Boyce College professor Owen Strachan as its new executive director, Jan. 7, 2013.

“Owen is an exceptionally gifted theologian and scholar who brings a gospel-gravity to his cultural commentary,” said Dan DeWitt, dean of Boyce College. “His appointment at the CBMW will greatly serve the church in continuing to understand what’s at stake in protecting and nurturing biblical gender roles.”

The council, which consists of men and women within the evangelical community from a spectrum of professional and ministerial backgrounds, considers the Bible’s teaching about “the complementary differences” between the genders as “essential for obedience to Scripture and for the health of the family and the church,” and thus seeks to promote a



“I’m excited to promote this design at CBMW through an ambitious slate of events and initiatives in coming days.”

“complementarian” vision for gender roles as normative for the evangelical church.

Strachan, who is assistant professor of theology and church history at Southern Seminary’s undergraduate school, succeeds Randy Stinson, dean of the School of Church Ministries

at the seminary, as CBMW’s day-to-day leader. Strachan will continue his teaching ministry at the college.

“I am thrilled to work for CBMW as executive director,” he said. “Under the instruction and mentorship of complementarian leaders like Bruce Ware, Albert Mohler and Mark Dever, God enabled me to see the beauty and wisdom of biblical gender roles. I’m excited to promote this design at CBMW through an ambitious slate of events and initiatives in coming days.” — SBTS COMMUNICATIONS

More information about the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood is available at www.cbmw.org

Moore calls for Christians to reshape views on adoption

Understanding what the gospel is about is at the heart of recovering a Christian commitment to adoption and orphan care, said Russell D. Moore in a lecture at the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., Dec. 4, 2012.

“Christians ought to be listening to and attuning to the cries of the vulnerable because we understand our adoption in Christ.”

Moore, dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary, presented the lecture “Adopted for Life: Orphan Care and the Christian Mission.” Moore adopted two of his five children.

November marked National Adoption Month, a significant celebration for Christians precisely because adoption is important to Jesus, who calls the orphaned children of this world his “brothers and sisters.”

Reflecting on the Christmas season, Moore bemoaned the negligence many Christians show toward Joseph, who adopted Jesus as his son. Moore illustrated this by sharing how, as a young boy, his role as the cow in a Christmas play received more attention than Joseph.

Moore emphasized that Joseph acted in Jesus’ life as a true father by naming him and giving him an inheritance in the line of David, saying that “Joseph was putting his life on the line by caring for this child.”

“[Adoption] creates a real family and a real relationship with a new identity and a new inheritance and a new future,” Moore said, opposing the view that adoption is not quite as authentic of a relationship as biological parenting. —CRAIG SANDERS

Moore’s full lecture is available online in both video and audio formats at the Family Research Council’s website, www.frc.org/events



Louisville is named the top travel destination for 2013

Lonely Planet (LP) — the world’s largest travel guide, and one of the world’s most successful publishers — named Louisville, Ky., the number one destination for travelers in 2013. Every year, LP’s U.S. editors and “expert authors” compile a list of recommended destinations in the states. And, according to a CNN interview with LP’s U.S. travel editor Robert Reid, the group “tends to debate” entries for the list, but they all agreed on Louisville.

“Louisville has asserted itself as a lively, offbeat cultural mecca on the Ohio River,” Reid writes. “New Louisville, also known as the East Market District or NuLu, features converted warehouses used as ... antiques shops and the city’s coolest restaurants.”

Other cities on the list include Twin Cities, Minn., Fairbanks, Alaska and San Juan Islands, Wash.

— SBTS COMMUNICATIONS

More information about the top destinations, including details about Louisville’s selection, is available at www.lonelyplanet.com



DeWitt writes about Lewis, Henry in *Christianity Today* article

Christianity Today recently published an article by Dan DeWitt, “Why C.S. Lewis Didn’t Write for *Christianity Today*,” in its December 2012 issue. In the article, DeWitt, dean of Boyce College, explains that Lewis’ writing approach was tailor-made for “smuggling theology behind enemy lines.”

DeWitt writes,

“Before introducing the world to *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis published *Miracles* in 1947. It was his last straightforward defense of the gospel. Lewis told his friend and biographer George Sayer that he would never again write another ‘book of that sort.’ And he didn’t. From that point forward, he published primarily fictional, devotional, and biographical material. His passion for explaining and defending the Christian faith could now best be found in a magical world of talking animals.”

DeWitt details a conversation Lewis had with Carl F. Henry, founding editor of *Christianity Today*, in which Lewis declined to write articles about Christian doctrine because, as he told Henry, “(his) thought and talent (such as they are) now flow in different, though I trust not less Christian, channels.”

Dewitt explains that Lewis decided to funnel his thought and talent into channels that seem less opaque to Christians.

Lewis continued to battle for truth and the gospel until his death in 1963. And “like the deep magic of Narnia, this battle was not with flesh and blood but with powers and principalities.” — CHAD MAHANEY

The full article is available at Christianitytoday.com

Didn’t waste his life: former Boyce student showed love for God and love for others

Shelby Tyler Smith posted the text “Don’t waste your life” across his Facebook page. And, according to his family and friends, he didn’t.

Smith, a mid-year junior at Southern Seminary’s Boyce College, died, Dec. 28, from injuries sustained when the 20-year-old’s car collided with a tractor-trailer on Interstate 71 near Dayton, Ohio.

During the service, Holsteen read 14 resolutions that Smith made and recorded the previous year. The reading from Smith’s journal reiterated what Smith’s friends said about him: he didn’t want to waste his life. Smith’s 14th resolution reads,

“I resolve that with God’s glory as my goal, and his word as my means, that I will never live a wasted life. Jesus, my life is yours. May all lesser aspirations cease.”

Boyce College dean, Dan DeWitt, said about Smith: “I have never met a student with a harder work ethic or a more upbeat personality than Shelby. He will be greatly missed by our student body.”



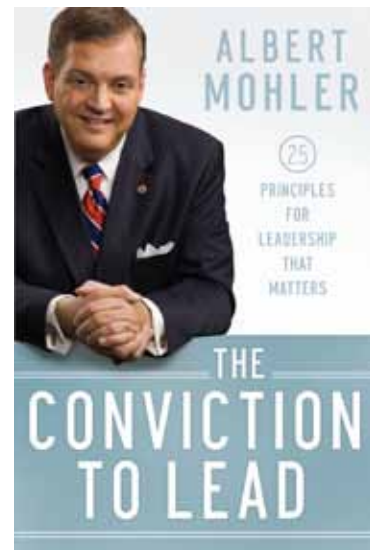
At the beginning of the Boyce spring semester, the college held a memorial service to honor and celebrate Smith’s life, Jan. 23. At the service, Smith’s girlfriend, Michaela Ray, along with Smith’s roommate, Ethan Holsteen and friend, Brian Van Doren, shared memories about the way Smith lived joyfully even amid long hours of work and study.

Smith leaves behind his mother and step-father, Annette and Keith King; and his father and step-mother, Kristen and Brad Smith, along with four siblings and step-siblings. — AARON CLINE HANBURY AND RUTHANNE IRVIN

Reporting from *The Spencer Magnet* contributed to this article.



John Fuller, R. Albert Mohler Jr. and Jim Daly



Mohler presents convictional leadership to a variety of leaders

Most definitions of leadership are in error, according to R. Albert Mohler Jr. He suggests that leadership is not merely pragmatic. And in his book, *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership that Matters*, Mohler, who is the president of Southern Seminary, proposes a model of leadership in which conviction drives action, inspiring and equipping others to do the same.

Since *The Conviction to Lead* debuted in November 2012, more than 30 writers around the United States have reviewed the book for publications and websites. Leaders — from areas like business, missions and church ministries — use the book to train their leaders. And *The Conviction to Lead*, now five months after publication, is still in the top 20 books sold on Amazon.com in its category.

Not long after the book's publication, Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), gave a copy of the book to more than 1,300 church planters in NAMB's Send North America Support Network. A spokesperson from NAMB said that church planters must be, as Mohler states in his book, 'deeply convinced'

about the truths that the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches.

He said: "These men must lead, and lead well."

Recently, too, Mohler addressed the executive leadership team for Focus on the Family, a non-profit organization dedicated to "helping families thrive." Leon Wirth, executive director of parenting and youth for Focus who attended the late-February event, said Mohler redirected common assumptions about leadership.

"We often talk about generating a 'movement' based on a particularly charismatic person, dynamic resource or unique event," he said. "But Dr. Mohler correctly pointed us to a deeper expectation for what creates a movement, by declaring that a real movement comes from big ideas and convictions that do not depend on a single person.

"Dr. Mohler's work on leadership is a great reminder to me in my ministry leadership role to stay rooted in principled convictions. No matter how great or small the level of influence I may have, or hope to have, I need to stay grounded in convictions. And that's instructive to us all in family, in church and wherever we may lead."

While at Focus, Mohler also recorded an episode of the "Focus on the Family Daily Broadcast" radio show, a broadcast co-hosted by Focus vice president John Fuller and Jim Daly, who is the

nonprofit's president and chief executive officer. On the episode, "Taking the Lead, Changing the World," Mohler shared principles of leadership and encouraged parents to use their influence on their children's lives as a starting point in developing future Christian leaders. The broadcast aired March 12.

On January 31, Mohler delivered leadership talks to 450 corporate executives at The Summit Business Persons' Luncheon in Northwest Arkansas, hosted by Ronnie Floyd, who is senior pastor of Cross Church Northwest Arkansas. Floyd started the meeting of businessmen and businesswomen 12 years ago for executives from the major corporations in Arkansas, and for the more than 1,400 national companies that service Walmart's corporate offices in that same area.

Mohler writes in the opening line of *The Conviction to Lead* that he wants to change the way people view leadership. And in the first months since he published the book, leaders around the country appear to resonate with his model of conviction-centered leadership. — AARON CLINE HANBURY

The Conviction to Lead is available online at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and at most major book sellers; audio for the "Focus on the Family Daily Broadcast" featuring Mohler is available at [FocusontheFamily.com/radio](https://www.FocusontheFamily.com/radio)



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and Michael Card

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Events



Resolute, Piper challenge students to think globally

Southern Seminary welcomed college students from across the country for the Resolute collegiate conference, Feb. 15-16. R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of the seminary, hoped the conference would be the “genesis of a great deployment” for world missions.

Resolute culminated the seminary’s Global Evangelism Week. Representatives of the North American Mission Board and International Mission Board visited Southern’s campus throughout the week to provide resources to seminary students interested in pursuing missions or mobilizing their churches for evangelism. Students also had the opportunity to attend lectures, panel discussions, information sessions and prayer vigils, all emphasizing the need to advance the gospel around the world.

The conference featured author and speaker John Piper, Mohler and Russell D. Moore, vice president of

academic administration and dean of the School of Theology. Charlie Hall, a songwriter and worship leader with Passion Conferences, led worship for the weekend event.

Piper preached messages for two of the four general sessions of the conference, intending to place students on “a trajectory for world missions” and provide lasting support for their journey.

“The removal of God’s wrath is a universally relevant message.”

That support came from a reminder that God does everything for “magnifying his glory” and displays his glory by saving sinners through the cross of Christ.

Piper also urged students to serve world missions either by going themselves or sending others. He distinguished the roles of missionaries, those who plant churches in unreached areas, and pastors, those who mobilize churches for missions efforts. The most important factor in one’s call to missions is holy ambition.

“How do you gain a holy ambition? Immerse yourself in the Bible and ask

God to make something burn in your heart,” Piper said.

Mohler proclaimed the universal purpose of God’s salvation in his message, “Finding Your Place in God’s Story.” He reminded attendees, though, that their personal stories do not matter much beyond its role in illustrating God’s regenerative power.

“Our purpose is to find our story and then lose it in God’s story,” Mohler said.

Moore closed the conference preaching from John 12:16-43, when Jesus foretells his death. Moore pointed to verse 31 as an illustration to show the relationship between the cross and the Great Commission, that “Jesus drew all people to himself.”

“The desire to take the gospel to the nations means you must crucify the desire for your own glory.” — CRAIG SANDERS

More information about future conferences at Southern Seminary is available at www.sbts.edu/eventswww.sbts.edu/preaching

First annual 9Marks conference promotes expositional preaching

The task of expositional preaching is fundamental to pastoral ministry and integral to the health of the church, said a group of pastors at the first annual 9Marks Conference at Southern Seminary, March 1-2, 2013.

Mark Dever, president of 9Marks and senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., led the weekend conference that also featured R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary; K. Edward Copeland, pastor of New Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Rockford, Ill.; Mike Bullmore, senior pastor of CrossWay Community Church in Bristol, Wis.; David Helm, lead pastor for the Hyde Park congregation of Holy Trinity Church in Chicago, Ill.; and Ryan Fullerton, lead pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky.

Dever preached from John 12:37-50, telling conference attendees that fulfilling the duty of expositional preaching may not always yield positive results — in fact, he suggested, it may harden the hearts of listeners.

“Acceptance or rejection of Jesus’ words is equal to acceptance or rejection of Jesus’ person,” Dever said. “You cannot know the real God apart from the Word of God.”

As the first day of sessions came to a close, Mohler gave a provocatively titled lecture, “The Foolishness of Preaching: Why Expository Preaching Is Such a Bad Idea.”

Mohler offered a glimpse at the erosion and seeming irrelevance of expository preaching in modern culture. Nevertheless, Mohler said, God has given us “exposition as the proper Christian mode of preaching.”

Mohler said: “Expository preaching is such a bad idea, only a sovereign God could come up with it.” — CRAIG SANDERS

Audio and video of the conference is available at sbts.edu/resources



Evangelism week emphasizes ‘global lostness’

“If you’re not committed to missions, you’re not serious about the gospel,” said Zane Pratt, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism, at a chapel service held during Southern Seminary’s Global Evangelism Week, Feb. 11-15, 2013.

Pratt’s sermon, “The Missionary Logic of the Gospel,” used Romans 10:5-17 to remind students that missions is the central focus of the gospel message. Pratt served as a missionary in Central Asia for 20 years prior to coming to Southern Seminary.

Representatives of the North American Mission Board and International Mission Board visited Southern’s campus throughout the week to provide resources to seminary students interested in pursuing missions or mobilizing their churches for world evangelism.

Students had the opportunity each day to attend lectures, panel discussions, information sessions and prayer vigils to emphasize the need to advance the gospel around the globe.

The seminary community also gathered for the week’s biggest event, a chapel service with author and speaker John Piper.

Piper’s sermon, “The Sadness and Beauty of Paul’s Final Words,” examined 2 Tim 4:9-22 and offered observations regarding the difficulties of ministry.

To open Global Evangelism Week, Southern Seminary hosted the Embrace IMB Conference with Gordon Fort, the IMB vice president for global strategy. Fort spoke at chapel, Feb. 7, and headlined the weekend conference, Feb. 8-9. — CRAIG SANDERS



Alumni Academy winter term emphasizes sexual ethics, historical theology

Southern Seminary's Alumni Academy wrapped up its inaugural year of course offerings with a focus on sexual ethics, and kicked off the new year with historical theology.

Sexual ethics

The first course in the winter term, "Christian Ethics: Marriage and Sexuality," featured a series of lectures from Russell D. Moore, senior vice president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology, Dec. 11-12, 2012.

Moore opened the course with a sense of foreboding, explaining the rapid pace of developing technology and its intimate relation to sexual ethics in the context of marriage. Moore warned that, while Christians could not predict the effects of present technology on sexual relationships 15 years ago, they must be prepared for a swifter current

and an already-changing landscape.

Moore talked through a number of ethical issues that new technologies introduce. He asked students to reflect on the ways in which they will need to counsel couples thinking through these issues.

He also emphasized gender roles in marriage, dealing with difficult real-life situations in which married

anything else," Moore concluded.

Historical theology

Gregg R. Allison, professor of Christian theology, taught "Historical Theology In and For the Church," Jan. 3-4, 2013.

In the opening session, Allison defined historical theology as "wisdom from the past in terms of sound biblical interpretation and sound theological formulation."

In 2011, Allison published *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, a work which spanned 13 years of research. He published his latest work, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church*, in November 2012.

Allison surveyed exegetical theology, biblical theology and systematic theology as three major disciplines informing the church throughout history. He described practical theology as "the fruit of labors in these disciplines" and what the church preaches.

"Wisdom [from past tradition] helps us as we do theology, engage in ministry, evangelize and engage in missional endeavors today."

A panel discussion wrapped up the two-day course, in which Allison moderated a group featuring fellow professors Tom Nettles, Owen Strachan and Chad Owen Brand. The discussion centered on the role of his-

Wisdom [from past tradition] helps us as we do theology, engage in ministry, evangelize and engage in missional endeavors today.

couples struggle with income and child-rearing responsibilities.

In the final session, Moore focused on redeeming those struggling with same-sex attraction and pornography, which he described as a primary issue in sexual ethics and a pervasive danger in marital unions. He stressed the importance of both justice in ethics and Christian doctrine of justification.

"If you don't have these, you do not have a Christian ethic of sexuality or

torical theology in the local church.

Alumni Academy's next course will feature Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum teaching through their recent work, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*. — CRAIG SANDERS

Alumni Academy courses are free for alumni, and they may bring spouses and church members for a minimal registration fee. Details about future course offers are available at www.sbsts.edu/events

Guthrie describes boldness of new covenant ministry in Gheens Lectures

Paul provides a theological defense of his pastoral ministry in 2 Corinthians that is applicable for ministers today, according to George H. Guthrie, who delivered Southern Seminary's 2013 Gheens Lectures, Feb. 19-20.

Guthrie, Benjamin W. Perry Professor of Bible at Union University, Jackson, Tenn., delivered a series of lectures titled "With Christ in the

2 Cor 2:14-16, in his lecture "The Fragrance of a Gospel-Centered Ministry." Contrary to popular opinion, Guthrie asserted that Paul does not describe himself as a prisoner of Christ in that passage, but rather an incense bearer in a victorious procession.

Guthrie reached his conclusion by surveying the use of *thriambeuo* ("to lead in triumph") in Greco-Roman literature and determining whether or not Paul's use of "aroma" and "fragrance" followed Old Testament patterns. He stated that Paul describes his ministry as a liberated captive in a triumphal procession who divides humanity with the fragrance of the gospel.

covenant ministers are to be completely God-centered and constantly aware that their ministry belongs to Christ.

"Our competency in ministry relies on the competency of God," Guthrie said. "We only have confidence as we live in sincerity before Christ."

Guthrie addressed the "celebrity pastor" phenomenon in his third and final lecture, "The Glory of a Spirit-Empowered Ministry," which examined 2 Cor 3:7-18. Guthrie focused specifically on "the greater glory of new covenant ministry" in contrast with the repeated veilings of Moses' face in Exodus 34.

Similar to his first lecture in the series, Guthrie devoted attention primarily to Greek exegesis and Paul's reliance on the Septuagint in order to distinguish between ministry in the old and new covenants.

"To be a new covenant minister means we have an open-faced relationship with God and proclaim that others can have it, too."

The first 100 students in attendance received a free copy of Guthrie's book, *Read the Bible for Life: Your Guide to Understanding and Living God's Word*.

— CRAIG SANDERS

Audio and video of the Gheens Lectures are available at Southern Seminary's website, www.sbts.edu/resources

“
To be a new covenant minister means we have an open-faced relationship with God and proclaim that others can have it, too.”

Crucible: Authentic Ministry According to 2 Corinthians.”

A New Testament scholar who has published extensively about the epistle to the Hebrews, Guthrie examined common assumptions regarding Paul's employment of cultural and Old Testament references and their meaning for new covenant ministry.

Guthrie addressed arguably the most debated passage in Paul's letter,

In his second lecture, "The Confidence of a Truly Competent Ministry," Guthrie extracted six practical observations from 2 Cor 2:17-3:6 about new covenant ministry. In this passage, Paul commends himself to the Corinthians and dismisses any need for them to re-evaluate the validity of his ministry.

The practical nature of the second lecture encouraged listeners that new



This was my sixth trip to Israel and/or Jordan, the first was in 1966, when the Mount of Olives and Bethlehem were still controlled by Jordan. I have to say this was the most strenuous one yet, the most packed with good stuff to see and hear and do. I'd never visited the east bank Jordanian towns of Ajloun and Jerash, traversed the Negev to and from Aqaba, and climbed the Herodium south of Jerusalem. I'd not gone down into the Hula Valley above Galilee and seen the way the Israelis had transformed what was a malaria swamp under the Ottomans into an agricultural and ecological treasure. And I'd never had to "sing for my supper," teaching daily alongside history professor Greg Wills and Union University Bible professor Ray Van Neste. It was a workout.

Southern Seminary Expeditions takes students to the Holy Land

Let me give you an example of one of our 12, 24-hour periods:

At midday, Saturday, January 5, we took a cable car packed with about 80 people on a 300-yard trip to the top of Masada, where about a thousand Jews fled after the Romans destroyed the Temple in AD 70. Up there, Dr. Greg Wills brought a mini-lecture about monasticism, and I spoke on the immorality of the Jews' (albeit stirring) decision to commit mass suicide and murder (of their families) to avoid abuse and slavery at the hands of the Romans.

From there, we moved up the west bank of the Dead Sea to the park at En Gedi, where Dr. Ray Van Neste spoke of its role in Scripture, and also of nature

Psalms. As twilight approached, we made our way to Jericho, passing through security, from Israel proper to land controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

For supper, we took the bus to a restaurant owned by Tass Saada, an Arab convert whose Tyndale book, *Once an Arafat Man: The True Story of How a PLO Sniper Found New Life*, told his amazing story. Feasting at his table and hearing his testimony, we had an evening that gave us a glimpse of God's power to bring miraculous reconciliation among enemies.

Early the next morning, we rode across town to the foot of the Mount of Temptation, where, in a Sunday devotional, we reflected on the way in which our salvation depended upon

Jesus' saying no to the devil — for if he had given in, he would not have been the spotless lamb, providing perfect sacrifice on our behalf.

Next, we viewed a film at the visitors' center beside the ruins of the ancient city. We heard the judgment of archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon (1906-1978) that research there did not support the biblical account of the fall of Jericho. Of course, it wasn't surprising that the Palestinians featured this quote in their program, for they are disinclined to recognize and celebrate the Jews' miraculous entry into the Promised Land as God's chosen people.

Once outside the film room, we joined in a tag-team analysis of the

presentation, where I talked about the way in which scientific paradigms color one's gathering and reading of evidence. Dr. Van Neste and doctoral student Josh Clutterham spoke in some detail about the blinders Kenyon was wearing as she did her (literally) ground-breaking work.

Then it was down to the Jordan River, not far above where it flows into the Dead Sea, at a spot near where Jesus was baptized by his cousin John. As Dr. Wills spoke about the scriptural (and, indeed, Baptist) understanding of baptism, and departures therefrom in church history, a group of Russian Orthodox devotees on the opposite bank, about 20 yards away, were descending stairs in white robes, and immersing themselves in the chilly water.

As we made our way back from the river through "no man's land," we saw a ghost town of Jordanian barracks, abandoned during the 1967, Six-Day War, when Israel gained/regained land on the West Bank, the Golan, Sinai and Gaza. Not far from there, we stopped at Qumran, where the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls were dis-

covered by a Bedouin shepherd boy in 1946. (A few days later, we visited the Shrine of Book in Jerusalem, built to house these ancient scriptures, which attested to the skill and faithfulness of copyists in forwarding the Word of God over the centuries.) Clutterham again provided useful background notes.

And thus ended the 24-hour period.

It was like this for two weeks. Plenty of sites. Plenty of teaching. Plenty of inspiration.

The tour members were fascinating. Among our students was a farmer in central Kentucky who tends to 73,000 piglets a year, a FedEx pilot who flew fighters for the Air Force, and the chief financial officer of a trucking firm in middle Tennessee. We had alums from Southern Seminary and their spouses, natives of the eastern and western hemispheres, Yankees and children of the South, doctors and homemakers, plus a great support team from the seminary's event and communications offices — 31 in all.

Along with the basic Holy Land images is a host of memories peculiar to our group — of a pesky bagpiper

wanting to play for money as he stood on a wall above Dr. Wills, who was lecturing at Jerash; of Dr. Van Neste's ingenious and painful plays on words as we made our way around the sites (such as when, in Jaffa, he spoke about a special tariff we needed to pay as we came across a group of feral cats at a spot in the road; he called this the "fee line"); of one of our Nashville extension students, Zachery Van Gieson, climbing up in a sycamore tree near Tiberias, in honor of Zachaeus; of perhaps our oldest traveler (name withheld) being the only one to have the fortitude to swim/float in the Dead Sea on a blustery, cold day; of Dr. Wills taking a wild ride on some sort of carnival-lighted bungee/slingshot contraption after hours on the seashore in Eliat; of our making slush balls on the Temple Mount on a sleety day; of mistakenly walking one evening with women in our group to the left side of the Wailing Wall, only to be chased away by the Orthodox Jewish guardians of that zone.

In sum, it was a great expedition. (And I hear there's another one in the works for 2014.) — MARK COPPENGER





Capital expedition focuses on intersection of kingdoms

The Weather Channel app read 24 degrees, followed by the note “feels like 19 degrees” as students from Southern Seminary’s Washington, D.C. Expedition stood on the National Mall alongside an estimated 400,000 people for a rally leading up to the March for Life. Snow began to swirl as they made the trek to the Capitol and then on to the Supreme Court.

The march, held Jan. 25, commemorated the 40th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion. It also provided a focal point for a Jan. 23-26 expedition, in which 41 travelers considered how the kingdom of God intersects with the kingdoms of men.

“When Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God, he spoke of a cosmic restoration,” explained Russell D. Moore, dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration at the seminary, who led the D.C. Expedition. “This kingdom includes personal salvation for those united to Christ, of course, but also concerns righteousness (ethics), freedom (religious liberty), communion (society), authority (politics) and the ‘glory and honor of the nations’ (culture.) Christians therefore should connect the agenda of the kingdom of Christ to the cultures of our own lives and local congregations for the sake of the mission of the gospel in the world.”

Moore sees few places as more central to American culture and politics than Washington, D.C. To that end, he and the Expedition team structured the trip to include a whirlwind tour of key places, leaders, journalists, organizations and pastors alongside participation in activities for the 40th annual March for Life.

Starting the expedition on a personal note, Moore explained at a welcome



lunch that it was in the nation's capital he was called to ministry while working for United States Congressman Gene Taylor (D-Miss.). He also told about his discovery of a distant relative named Jeremiah Moore who planted two Baptist churches in the area and even spent time in jail for preaching without a license. He encouraged participants to make the most of their time in D.C. as preparation to engage the culture for the cause of Christ.

A key benefit of the trip was the opportunity to meet with both U.S. senators from Kentucky: Senator Rand Paul and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. Katie Mohler, daughter of R. Albert Mohler, Jr., serves as director of arrangements for the Office of the Republican Leader in McConnell's office and helped to arrange an opportunity for photos and Q&A. During the visit, McConnell told the group about his great uncle who was a graduate of Southern Seminary.



While often supporting positions held by senators such as McConnell and Paul, Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, explained to the group in another setting that Christians often expect politicians to deal with issues pastors are afraid to address. He added that while he encourages Christian engagement in the public square, no legislation can provide our ultimate answers. He stressed that America's spiritual leaders should confront the spiritual issues of our day with courage and conviction.

Washington, D.C.-based journalists Jon Ward (Huffington Post) and Mike Allen (Politico) challenged the group to read "beyond the echo chamber" during a lively presentation and Q&A session they led in the basement of Tortilla Coast, a popular Mexican restaurant near the Capitol. They encouraged the group to read what they may see as the opposition and also stressed the need to curb consumption of sensationalist cable news programming.

The expedition group spent two mornings at Capitol Hill Baptist Church where Mark Dever has served as pastor since 1994. Dever warned the group about the harm of wedding the gospel to a particular party. He stressed that his mission has been to defeat utopianism on both the left and the right, echoing Perkins' earlier comment that there are no political solutions to our primary problems. Both Dever and Josh Harris, pastor of Covenant Life Church in Gaithersburg, Md., explained to the group that ministering the gospel in the D.C. area has required them to be bold and consistent in speaking to moral issues while not get-

ting caught up in partisan agendas.

Many of the stops on the trip involved packing the 41 participants into spaces designed for fewer occupants — including an intimate visit to the office of Joshua DuBois, executive director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. DuBois, who has connected with Moore on the issue of adoption, sex trafficking, international human rights and more, graciously welcomed the large group into his office in an historic Brownstone adjacent to the White House, to explain the role his office serves as a link between the President and faith-based groups.

While in D.C., participants took in a tour of national monuments, historic landmarks throughout the city, and a half-day tour of the Smithsonian Museums. Additionally, the group enjoyed a private evening tour of Mount Vernon including dinner at Mount Vernon Inn, where they experienced a taste

of the hospitality that President George Washington and his wife, Martha, showed the thousands of visitors they hosted in their historic home.

The final lecture of the trip grew out of an impromptu Q&A Moore led in the Cabinet Room of Old Ebbitt Grill, a D.C. restaurant established in the late 1800s. Even the waiter who had been serving the group earlier stood at the edge engrossed in the message Moore gave students about engaging the world with the truth, grace and love of Christ.

The trip provided a unique connecting point for the majority of participants who are currently taking classes with Southern through distance learning options.

"As an online student, the opportunity to have fellowship with other students as well as seminary leaders and professors was invaluable," said Chad Linden, a West Liberty, Ky., native living in Georgetown, Ky. "Engaging with a range of elected officials, pastors and journalists also provided great context for the messages we heard about the interaction between the gospel and the public square."

Those on the trip called to gospel ministry left with new wisdom and conviction for where their ministry intersects with culture and policy. "Having access to peoples and places I normally wouldn't, prepares me to get my head around political issues in order to help people in my congregation think about political issues in a biblically wise way," said Chris Parrish, a master of divinity student from Lexington, Ky.

"I now feel better equipped to deal with issues at play now as well as those that may come up in the future." — STEVE WATERS

Four Views on the Apostle Paul

(Zondervan 2012, \$17.99), Michael F. Bird, general editor

Nearly everyone agrees that the apostle Paul stands as one of the most important figures in Christianity. But consensus about Paul's importance doesn't mean consensus about his message.

A new book, *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*, highlights this lack of agreement. A Southern Seminary New Testament professor, Thomas R. Schreiner, writes one of the "views."

The book, as the title less-than-subtly states, presents four contrasting views of the apostle's theology: (1) Schreiner writes for a Reformed reading; (2) Luke Timothy Johnson explains the Roman Catholic perspective; (3) Douglas A. Campbell, inventing a new category, represents a "Post-New Perspective" view of Paul; and (4) Mark D. Nanos lays out a Jewish perspective.

"In the attempt to get beyond the mass debate that is Pauline studies, in both its historical and current forms, the modest aim of this volume is to contrast four competing perspectives on the apostle," writes general editor Michael F. Bird. "In particular these contributors look at what Paul 'meant'

and what he continues to 'mean' for contemporary audiences."

Each author explains what he thinks is the best reading of Paul in four areas: salvation, significance of Christ, Paul's theological framework and the church.

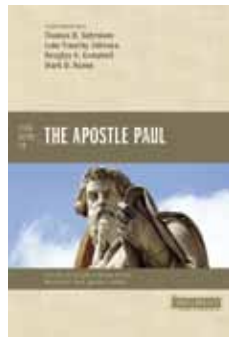
Schreiner, who is the author of several other books about Paul, claims that Christ-centeredness defines Paul's theology, which in turn feeds his answers to the other three questions.

After surveying his reading, Schreiner concludes: "What is most striking about Paul's theology is its Christ-centeredness. Whether we speak of the framework of his thought, his soteriology, or his ecclesiology, the saving work of Jesus Christ is the focus.

Hence, what it means to be a believer is to embrace Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, to give up all things for the sake of knowing Christ (Phil. 3:7-9), and to do everything in his name (Col. 3:17)."

For those looking to better understand what Bird calls, "the different ways of reading Paul," this "views" book provides a good starting point.—

REVIEW BY AARON CLINE HANBURY



Excerpts from the book:

1

"If we reflect on some of the central promises in the Old Testament, Paul clearly sees them as fulfilled in his gospel. For instance, the Old Testament prophesied that all nations would be blessed in Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 18:18, etc.). Paul maintains that this promise has been fulfilled in his gospel inasmuch as the Gentiles are justified by faith (Gal. 3:6-8)." Thomas R. Schreiner

2

"Clearly Jesus Christ fulfills Old Testament prophecy. But the mystery of God's will also centers on Christ, for it was God's purpose to unite all things in history in Christ (Eph. 1:9-10). The Christ was prophesied in the Old Testament, but the full significance of his work was hidden and is apparent only now that the fulfillment has come." Schreiner

3

"Paul is distinctive in identifying the church as Christ's body. The centrality of Christ is evident in this metaphor, even if it is understood in diverse ways." Schreiner



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The Man Christ Jesus: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ

(Crossway 2013, \$15.99), Bruce A. Ware

Did the baby Jesus know the quadratic formula? Many among conservative evangelical churches might respond to the question with a quick, emphatic “yes.” After all, Jesus is God, and God knows everything, math included. However, the answer to the question is more complex than this. To give the “yes” answer with only Jesus’ divinity in view does not take into consideration his humanity. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus grew in wisdom (Luke 2:40, 52), that he learned obedience (Heb 5:8), so Christians must come to terms with everything the Bible teaches about Jesus, about both his deity and his humanity.

Thankfully, works like Southern Seminary theology professor Bruce A. Ware’s *The Man Christ Jesus* confronts us with the reality and implications of Christ’s humanity. Until believers reflect on this truth, they will not appreciate the extent to which the eternal Son humbled himself in becoming a man.

In this 160-page treatise, Ware discusses the significance of God the Son taking on a human nature in

addition to his eternal pre-existent divine nature as the second member of the Trinity. He dedicates chapter-length treatments to matters related to the exercise and expression of Jesus’ divine attributes in light of the incarnation, what it means for him to conduct his ministry and miracles

by the power of the Holy Spirit, the significance of his resisting temptation as a man and the necessity of his coming as the God-man in order to die in humanity’s place, among other discussions.

Christ’s humanity is not some complex abstract notion meant only for theologians to contemplate. Ware demonstrates

this by including points of application to end each chapter along with a list of discussion questions aimed not only to stimulate careful thinking, but to help readers see how Jesus’ life as a man bears upon their lives.

Ware’s *The Man Christ Jesus* is an ideal primer for anyone willing to learn more about this sadly neglected but essential biblical truth. — REVIEW BY JOSH HAYES



Excerpts from the book:

1

“The most pressing application from this understanding of Jesus is that the life of obedience and faithfulness that Jesus lived can genuinely and rightly be set forward as an example for how we, too, should live, precisely because the very resources Jesus used to live his obedient life are resources given also to all of us who trust and follow him.”

2

“Without comprehending the profundity of the purpose of the incarnation ... we will inevitably trivialize what it means to ‘do what Jesus would do’ or to ‘live like Jesus.’ How trite, until we see the heights from which he came and the depths to which he descended in coming as the suffering Servant who would bear our sin.”

3

“We will belittle the magnitude of what Jesus has done if we fail to see the kind of obedience he rendered and the extent to which he was willing to go in ensuring he fulfilled the will of the Father.”

Follow in his steps: Ware talks about The Man Christ Jesus

EDITOR'S NOTE: In what follows, Bruce A. Ware, professor of Christian theology at Southern Seminary, discusses his new book, *The Man Jesus Christ: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ* (Crossway 2013), with contributor Josh Hayes.

JH: How does a biblical understanding of Christ's humanity shape our understanding of the Christian life and what it means to be human?

Bruce Ware: I grew up in a committed Christian home, and I recall as a young boy (perhaps 12 years old), reading 1 Peter 2:21, where we are commanded to "follow in his steps" and thinking, "How can this be fair?" After all, I had learned that Jesus was God, and it seemed to me that since I certainly was not God, I could not rightly be called to live like Jesus lived. This changes when we see that Jesus lived his life as one of us — as a full and complete human — and carried out his obedience with the same resources now given to us. Jesus knew and relied on the Word of God, prayer and, very importantly, the Holy Spirit who indwelt him. If Jesus lived his life as a man, in the power of the Spirit, believing the Word and praying to the Father — these are all things that we, too, have as Christian men and women. Therefore, it is right to call us to "follow in his steps," and we can rightly look at Jesus as an example for how we should live (cf. Phil 2:5).

JH: If, as you argue in the book, Christ normatively performed miracles and healings through the power of the Holy Spirit, then how do his actions demonstrate his deity?

BW: Some miracles of Jesus may indeed give direct support to his deity;



I would never want to rule this out. But it looks like the evidence points to the norm being this: Jesus performed his miracles, and cast out demons, as a man in the power of the Spirit. But even here this can support his deity, and here's how: Jesus made clear claims of being God (e.g., John 8:58; 10:30), and then Jesus said that if you don't believe the words he says, believe on account of the works that he does, that he is from the Father (e.g., John 10:25, 38). So, the miracles that Jesus does in the power of the Spirit confirm that he is the Messiah of God, so when he claims to be God, we should believe those claims of deity.

JH: How does Christ's humanity relate to his resurrection and reign as the — to use the terminology in your book — "exalted Son"?

BW: As the eternal Son of the Father, the second person of the Trinity, he

created the heavens and earth and so has full rights of authority over all that he made by virtue of being Creator of all that is. But when this eternal Son came to earth, he was conceived and born as the God-man, the Messiah from God, the greater Son of David. As the Messiah, he did not have intrinsic authority over all, but he had to win the right to rule by obeying the Father and going to the cross whereby he would then be given this authority over all. Many passages of Scripture indicate this. One that illustrates it is this: after his resurrection, in giving his Great Commission directives to his disciples, Jesus begins by saying, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me" (Matt 28:18). By his obedient life, substitutionary death and victorious resurrection, he now was given authority from the Father to reign over all (cf. 1 Cor 15:20-28; Eph 1:20-23; Heb 1:1-2).

Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church

(Crossway 2012, \$40) Gregg R. Allison

Gifted theologians offer much guidance in areas like biblical theology, Christology and ethics, but resources that set forth ecclesiology are rarer, particularly from a robust Baptist perspective.

Gregg R. Allison, professor of Christian theology at Southern Seminary, fills that void with his latest book, *Sojourners and Strangers*.

“The church is the people of God who have been saved through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and have been incorporated into his body through baptism with the Holy Spirit,” he writes.

Observing that church experience often influences the development of ecclesiology, he examines the sufficiency of Scripture in forming this doctrine and offers helpful tips for distinguishing between normative and relative passages of instruction in the New Testament.

“The church of Jesus Christ itself is a necessary reality,” Allison writes. Emphasizing the role of the church in Christian life, he describes seven characteristics of the church’s origin and vision: doxological, logocentric, pneumadynamic, covenantal, confessional, missional and eschatological.

Allison identifies a lack of church discipline as the greatest problem in American evangelical churches and a

hindrance to achieving purity. Allison urges churches to practice discipline as a future warning, and reminds them of the presence of Christ through this difficult process.

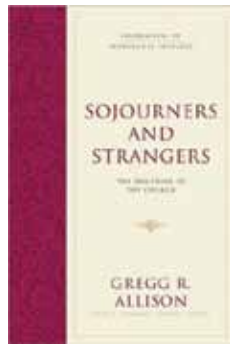
Since church polity is a defining mark of Baptist ecclesiology, Allison surveys the various offices of the church and summarizes the main forms of church government. Allison advocates plural-elder-led congregationalism, which he argues has historical precedence in Baptist life.

Readers may be surprised to find an academic endorsement of multi-site churches, and should examine the biblical basis for Allison’s arguments; Allison is an elder at Sojourn Community Church, Louisville, Ky.

Countering what he sees as apathy in administering ordinances in

many churches, Allison offers a theological basis for a careful and deliberate approach to baptism and the Lord’s Supper with local churches.

The final section of the book handles the ministries of the church, which encompasses not only spiritual gifts but also worship, preaching, evangelism, discipleship and member care. Ultimately, according to Allison, “the church is a paradox,” loving her neighbors through culture-building while opposing the fallen world. — REVIEW BY CRAIG SANDERS



Excerpts from
the book:

1

“To the church Christ has given two signs of this new covenant relationship: baptism, the sign of entrance into the new covenant relationship with God and into the covenant community, the church; and the Lord’s Supper, the sign of ongoing new covenant relationship with God and the covenant community, the church.”

2

“The church is the missional body commissioned by its head, Jesus Christ, with the same commission with which he was commissioned by the Father. The missional church is identified by and engages in the *missio Dei*.”

3

“Failure on the part of Christ-followers to [pursue holiness] should lead to their being disciplined by the church as proleptic and declarative sign of the divine eschatological judgment. ... The church benefits not only from divine sanction as it engages in church discipline but also from answered prayer and from the presence of Jesus Christ himself.”

Church necessarily: Allison discusses his new book

EDITOR'S NOTE: In what follows, Southern Seminary Magazine writer Craig Sanders talks with Gregg Allison, professor of Christian theology at Southern Seminary, about his new book, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Crossway 2012).

CS: Of all the topics in systematic theology, what made you want to write about ecclesiology?

Gregg Allison (GA): One of the distinctives of Baptist theology is its ecclesiology, so being part of Southern Seminary and area churches has re-emphasized for me the importance of this doctrine. I know there are a lot of good writers in other areas like the doctrine of God, but it seems like there's been a lack of attention among evangelicals to ecclesiology other than in pragmatically oriented books. I thought this would be a really good project to present a biblical and theological ecclesiology.

CS: We have a *Baptist Faith and Message* as a denomination, but are you suggesting that local and individual churches seem to be lacking strength in confession?

GA: Yes. The *Baptist Faith and Message* (2000) is a wonderful statement of our confession. In our Southern Baptist churches, if we would read and even summarize it on a regular basis among our members, people would know what we believe and our members know what is expected of them. It provides a way to prepare for church discipline, if people deny Jesus Christ, for example. It brings unity as it helps our people read the Bible with the proper theological framework. So it has a lot of benefits to this confessional element and I think the *BF&M* is a wonderful framework for what we believe.

CS: What kind of legacy do you hope to leave with this work?

GA: A church that has all the seven characteristics that I list. (1) It's doxological, oriented to the glory of God; (2) the church



is logocentric, centered on the incarnate word, Jesus Christ, and the inspired word of God, Scripture; (3) it is pneumodynamic, empowered, gifted, guided and directed by the Holy Spirit; (4) the church is covenantal, existing in this new covenant relationship with God and displaying strong covenantal relationships between its members; (5) it's confessional — each person is a regenerate member or has a personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ. And on a regular basis the church confesses the faith — what we believe in

the *BF&M*, for example; (6) it's missional: we're called by God and sent out by God to be on mission and that's not just an activity, it's an identity of the church; and (7) then the church is spatial temporal eschatological, it is a reality that exists now. It has a building most likely and it's in a space in time reality and flourishing but it sees itself as a penultimate reality. It's always looking for that which is to come.

Thoughts

Overwhelming evidence for the trustworthiness of the New Testament



Documentaries, magazines and TV shows call into question the reliability of the New Testament all the time. Yet evidence shows a mountain of support for it. Beyond that, the time frame from the original manuscripts to the first copies is less than 100 years for the NT, but as long as 500 years for Homer's *Iliad* – even longer for other ancient books – making the NT the most well attested book of all ancient literature.

— AARON CLINE HANBURY

Number of existing manuscripts

■	5,686 New Testament
■	49 Aristotle
■	193 Sophocles
■	643 Homer's Iliad

Four pieces of Gospels art

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mark Coppenger, professor of Christian philosophy, writes about four of his favorite pieces of art inspired by the parables of Jesus in the Gospel accounts.

Jesus was, indeed, a master of metaphor in its various forms, including simile and parable. Whether calling himself “bread,” his critics “whitewashed tombs” or his disciples “salt,” his comparisons hit the mark.

Here are four strong visual images to match the verbal images the Lord used to preach and teach his kingdom:



(1) “The Return of the Prodigal Son” (Luke 15:11-32), 1668-1669, Rembrandt van Rijn. What Christian doesn't know the healing shame of coming broken to the Father, to the irritated bafflement of those who are strangers to grace.



(2) “The Blind Leading the Blind” (Mat 15:13-14), 1568, Pieter Bruegel the Elder. This painting reminds me of the 120,000 Ninevites in Jonah 4:11, who couldn't “distinguish between their right and their left.” Of course, Ninevites are everywhere, and woe to those who are leading them into ditches. (God help us to never be the ones at the head of the line, like the addled religious leaders of Jesus' day.)



(3) “The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins” (Mat 25:1-13), 1803-1805, William Blake. Mystic poet William Blake captured the gloom and consternation of those who have put themselves shamefully on the wrong side of salvation history, as well as the confidence of those ready to meet the Lord at a moment's notice.

(4) “The Good Samaritan” (Luke 10:29-37), 1889, Vincent Van Gogh. The original event was probably a drab and dusty affair, but Van Gogh's energetic pallet and brushwork pick up on the splendor this act of spiritual heroism.

Newsweek vs. the New Testament: a case study in clashing worldviews

By R. Albert Mohler Jr.

All readings of the Bible are based in some faith, and deeply grounded in some set of presuppositions. For the many people engaged in academia today, that faith is some form of ideological secularism. A Christian reading should always be absolutely transparent and clear about confessional commitments. And, we should never allow that those who hold alternative worldviews are any less ideologically or intellectually committed.

When Christians are perplexed by resistance to the Bible and to the gospel, we underestimate the distance of the divide between biblical Christianity and secular worldviews.

All this should remind us of our constant evangelistic and apologetic task — and of the fact that salvation is all by grace. After all, it's not that we were smart enough to wade through all this and emerge as believers. Instead, our eyes were opened so that we would see. As we engage in the controversies and debates of this age, we had better keep the Christian worldview in the forefront of our thinking.

This Christian worldview stands or falls on the historical trustworthiness of the New Testament. The four Gospels, in particular, are the church's definitive authority for our knowledge of both the word and works of Jesus during his earthly ministry. An attack on the historical truthfulness of the four Gospels, therefore, is an attack on nothing other than the central truth on which our faith rests.

Timed for this past Christmas, *Newsweek* released a cover essay by Bart D. Ehrman, who is well-known for his belief that the New Testament is largely historical fiction. "Who is Jesus?"



is the question on the cover. "The Myths of Jesus" is the headline on the essay itself.

Newsweek's agenda is clear, and it has chosen to feature a cover article denying the historical basis of the Christian faith as one of its last print editions.

Ehrman begins, predictably, by reviewing the controversy concerning the so-called "Gospel of Jesus' Wife" that emerged late last year when Professor Karen King of Harvard University claimed a tiny papyrus fragment to be a monumental discovery. Even as she insisted that the fragment did not prove in any sense that Jesus had a wife, she fueled the confusion in carefully-staged media appearances in which she referred to the fragment as "The Gospel of Jesus' Wife."

A professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Ehrman's academic specialization is in the history of the New Testament and its times. As such, he dismissed the papyrus fragment as either irrelevant or a hoax. He writes, "As it turns out, most experts on early Christianity have come to think the fragment is a hoax, a forgery produced in recent years by



An attack on the historical truthfulness of the four Gospels, therefore, is an attack on nothing other than the central truth on which our faith rests.

an amateur who, unlike King and scholars of her stature, was not well-versed in the niceties of Coptic grammar and so was unable to cover up the traces of his own deceit.”

Ehrman cites that controversy, however, in order to make the

point that there were hundreds of “proto-gospels” about Jesus floating about in the first few centuries of the Christian church, and that much of what modern people think they know about Christmas is actually not to be found in the New Testament.

He rightly states:

“As Christians around the world now prepare to celebrate Jesus’ birth, it is worth considering that much of the ‘common knowledge’ about the babe in Bethlehem cannot be found in any scriptural authority, but is either a modern myth or based on Gospel accounts from outside the sacred bounds of Christian Scripture.”

Of course, that is profoundly true. The New Testament tells us that Jesus was born in unusual circumstances and placed in a manger because “there was no room in the inn.” There is no innkeeper in the New Testament, however. There is no record of the number of the magi, no reference to December 25 as the date of Christ’s birth, and no mention of barnyard animals, much less a little drummer boy.

Beyond these rather familiar issues, Ehrman also points to a

host of claims about Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the larger Christmas story that amount to “legends and fabrications” that are rightly recognized as implausible and untrue.

Ehrman then turns to press his case on the New Testament itself. After reviewing a number of traditions and non-biblical accounts he asks, “Are the stories about Jesus’ birth that are in the New Testament any less unbelievable?”

He then says that the answer to that question “depends on whom you ask.” To leave no doubt, Ehrman answers the question directly in his essay. The New Testament writings “are not historically reliable descriptions of what really happened when Jesus was born,” he asserts.

Ehrman juxtaposes those who are “interested in affirming the narratives of Scripture” and those who are more interested in “knowing what actually happened in the past.”

He then explains:

“And there is indeed a very wide swath of scholars—Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, agnostic and others—who have a very different view of the accounts of Jesus’ birth in the New Testament and who realize that there are problems with the traditional stories as they are recounted for us in Matthew and Luke, the only two Gospels that contain infancy narratives. However valuable these writings may be for theological reflection on the meaning and importance of Jesus — and why should anyone deny that they are tremendously valuable for that? — they are not the sorts of historical sources that we might hope for if we are seriously engaged in trying to reconstruct the events of history.”

In other words, Ehrman argues that Matthew and Luke simply can’t be trusted to convey historical truth. He points to what he insists are inconsistencies and erroneous historical claims, arguing that though some attempt to explain these questions in an attempt to affirm the veracity of the Gospels, it is better just to abandon them altogether if you are “seriously engaged in trying to reconstruct the events of history.”

Just as a practical matter, a reading of

Bart Ehrman’s many books, along with similar efforts, reveals that those who claim to abandon the New Testament in order to “reconstruct the events of history” find themselves coming back to the New Testament again and again. The reason for this is simple — there are no comparable sources.

Ehrman reveals his real agenda in the sentence that follows his denial of the historical truthfulness of the New Testament. He asserts, “For some Christian believers that is a problem; for others, it is a liberation, as it frees the believer from having to base faith on the uncertainties provided by the imperfect historical record and the fallible historians who study it.”

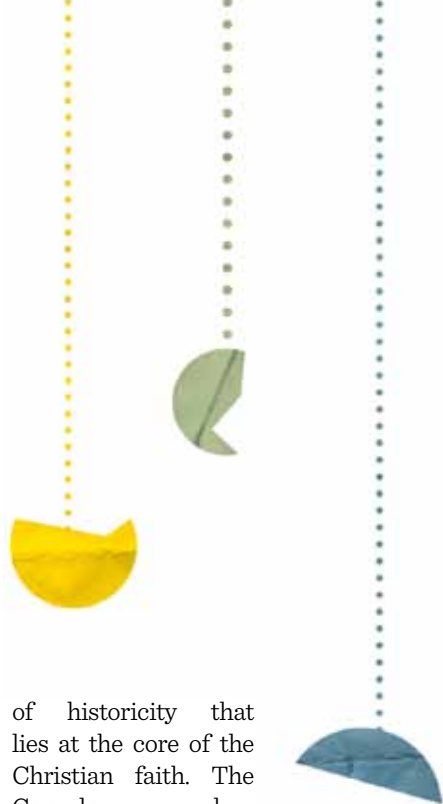
In Ehrman’s view, liberation comes in freeing the believer from a faith based in the claims of the New Testament, or in any historical record, for that matter.

The interesting point about Ehrman’s proposed path of liberation for Christian believers is the fact that Ehrman is himself no longer a believer. He was once a conservative evangelical, but now describes himself as an agnostic who has left the church.

Like many others, Ehrman tries to argue that the New Testament is still useful for “theological reflection on the meaning and importance of Jesus.” He asks, “And why should anyone deny that they are tremendously valuable for that?”

But the New Testament does not present itself merely for the purpose of theological reflection. It makes unvarnished historical claims and direct statements of fact. Ehrman attempts to sideswipe this truth, stating that the New Testament contains writings identified as “gospels” rather than “histories.” But the word “history” in that sense is a fairly modern invention. The Gospels do contain interpretation and theological elaboration, but all four Gospels, including Matthew and Luke, contain explicit and pervasive historical material — the bedrock historical claims of Christianity itself.

At the bottom of all of this lies antipathy toward the Christian gospel, the four New Testament Gospels, and the claim



of historicity that lies at the core of the Christian faith. The Gospels are very clear in presenting the birth, life, death, burial and resurrection of Christ as the ultimate accomplishments of God’s saving purpose.

Christianity stands or falls on the truth concerning Jesus, and thus it also stands or falls on the authority and truthfulness of the Bible. What you believe about historical truth defines what you believe about Jesus Christ. Without the revealed truths of the New Testament, there is no Christianity, just superstitions and fantasies about Jesus.

Interestingly, Bart Ehrman does believe that Jesus existed. In a recent book he debunks those who dismiss all claims about Christ as mere myth. He believes Jesus to have been a Jewish apocalyptic prophet, but not God incarnate in human flesh.

The cover article in the magazine, timed for maximum publicity at Christmas, was a premeditated act. Securing Bart Ehrman to write the essay set the course, and the cover art is intended to sell the magazine.

So, in the waning days of *Newsweek* as a print magazine, the editors decided to take on the New Testament. Readers should note carefully that it is *Newsweek*, and not the New Testament, that is out of print. ►

R. Albert Mohler Jr. is president of Southern Seminary

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Gospels as the archway into the canon

By Jonathan T. Pennington

There was a time in the not so distant past when many conservative Christians were suspicious of any preacher or professor who emphasized the Gospels too much. On the surface this seems like an odd thing to say and an odd position to take. After all, are not the Gospels Holy Scripture and indeed the place where we see Jesus himself? Could they really be emphasized too much? Nevertheless, there was anecdotal evidence that gave this assumption some grounding.

Specifically, leading up to the tumultuous days of the Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention, a divide had often occurred between those who emphasized the Gospels versus those who emphasized the Epistles (especially Paul). The opposing groups often chose one part of the New Testament over the other. The “moderates” or “liberals” tended to define the gospel in terms of love, mercy, acceptance of others, political progressiveness and social upheaval and reconstruction — all stemming from the model and teachings of Jesus himself as found in the Gospels.

On the other hand, the “conservatives” perceived correctly that the Bible not only speaks of these things but also teaches non-negotiable doctrines about the person of Christ, the nature of God and salvation and the need for correct confessional understanding and repentance. This understanding of the gospel finds its clearest expression in the Epistles. As a result, a split in practice (if not completely in principle) occurred in those deeply divisive days. I have been told that a regular litmus test was just this: preachers and professors who emphasized the Gospels generally could be reckoned on the liberal side of

the ledger, while those who emphasized Paul and the Epistles on the conservative side. Neither side trusted the other and the intensity of the disagreement tended to increase the divide and entrench both sides in their positions, as such debates always do.

A biblical “both-and” not an “either-or”

There is no doubt that the conservative position was right to emphasize that using Jesus in the Gospels merely as a model of ethics and social justice was problematic and ultimately spiritually bankrupt. This is not only because of the clear doctrinal teachings of the Epistles, which are also part of the inspired and inerrant canon of Holy Scripture; this position is also untenable by an examination of the Gospels themselves. The Gospels are no less doctrinal than the Epistles, and neither do they have a different message — all of the Gospels focus on the divine nature of Christ and the need for forgiveness of sins, even as the Epistles do; the Pauline Epistles don’t have a corner on the market of doctrinal teaching and the call for personal repentance.

Yet, I’m afraid, an error can occur on the other end of the spectrum. While rightly emphasizing the Epistles and their teaching, we can consciously or unconsciously de-emphasize the Gospels. In our correct stress on the necessity of doctrinal beliefs such as the deity of Christ, we can forget that Jesus was a man and a model and that he taught many things by his own example.[1]

The way of wisdom and truth is to avoid such false dichotomies and to

hold together what God has given us in the New Testament canon — both the Gospels and the Epistles. Both of these parts of the New Testament canon are inspired and given by God to his church. And his church suffers if we neglect either the Gospels or the Epistles in our practice, preaching and theological formulations.[2]

Emphasis on the Gospels versus the Epistles should not be seen as a litmus test of faithfulness. Rather, a better biblical gauge is faithfulness to the witness of both aspects of the New Testament canon. The way of wisdom is a “both-and,” not an “either-or” when it comes to the Gospels and the Epistles. The good news is that while the split between the moderates and the conservatives has not ended, thankfully, the fearful neglect of the Gospels by many evangelical believers is diminishing.[3]

Using the zoom slider on the “both-and”: the Gospels as the archway into the canon

So far we have been looking at the macro-level map of the New Testament canon. I have suggested that we dare not neglect the Gospels or the Epistles in understanding the lay of the biblical land.

At the same time, I would suggest that when we use the zoom slider on the metaphorical Google map of the Bible we will see that the two land masses of the Gospels and the Epistles — while both absolutely essential — are neither precisely the same, nor do they offer the same kind of topography or natural resources.

What I mean is this: when we step back from the New Testament and

examine its two main parts, Gospels and Epistles,[4] there are several striking differences that highlight particularly the importance of the Gospels. For example, quite simply, these narrative Gospels make up the majority of the New Testament's witness.[5] There is more of the Gospels than the rest of the New Testament, by far. In this way, the New Testament is remarkably like the Old Testament, which likewise contains mostly narrative material. Apparently, God is comfortable with and even prefers, we might say, to reveal himself to us in Scripture through historical narrative accounts.

It is also worth noting that the four-fold Gospel book[6] intentionally stands at the head of the New Testament. In the providentially superintended development of the canon, the four-fold Gospel book is the entry way and the leading foot. We can rightly draw an analogy with the relationship between the Pentateuch to the Prophets in the Old Testament, and the relationship of the Gospels to the Epistles.

The Pentateuch provides the foundational narrative and the historical accounts of God's work in creating and forming his people. The prophetic literature harkens back to these narratives and applies their truths to contemporary situations. One would have trouble understanding and

The keystone of an archway fits in such a way that it holds both sides of the structure in place, thereby enabling an entryway. On the one side of the keystone are the Old Testament Scriptures; on the other side are the rest of the New Testament writings. It is the Gospels that uniquely are shaped, formed and placed to hold together these two major sections of the canon. On one side, the Gospels present themselves as the completion and consummation of the whole story of God's work from creation through the exile of Israel; on the other side, the Gospels, as we have seen above, serve as the foundational source documents for the Epistles which take up the true accounts and teachings of Jesus and apply to pastoral situations.

How shall we then live (and theologize and preach)?

Of course, much more could be said in terms of arguing for this keystone position of the Gospels, but space constraints require that we conclude with a few suggestions concerning the implications of these ideas. Even if you are unsure about what this would mean to emphasize the central role for the Gospels, I trust we can all agree that the Gospels should in no way be neglected in our reading, studying and teaching of the Bible.

It is the Gospels that uniquely are shaped, formed and placed to hold together the two major sections of the canon.

reading well the Old Testament if the canon began with the Prophets (or the Writings) and only later gave us Genesis through Deuteronomy.

So too is the relationship of the Gospels to the Epistles. The Gospel biographies of Jesus, who is the undeniable center-point of Christianity, are the foundational documents for the new covenant/New Testament. They orient us to a proper understanding of what Christianity is and who Jesus himself is.

These biblical clues about the central role of the Gospels find support in history of the church, from its earliest days on.[7] Many church Fathers spoke about the Gospels as the "four pillars of the church," as the "first-fruits" of the Bible and as the true spiritual "food" of believers. Additionally, we see that from the earliest days of church practice, gatherings of the saints in worship often focused on readings from the Gospels. All of this applies not only to early days of the church, but all throughout its history.[8]

These insights about the central role of the Gospels in our understanding of the Bible have led me to analogize the four-fold Gospel as the keystone in the archway into the canon of Holy Scripture (see my graphic in *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, p 231).

If indeed we were to think anew about the importance of the Gospels in our lives and ministries, what would be some of the implications? I will suggest three.

First, rather than simply using certain Gospel texts for Christmas and Easter sermons and plucking a few Gospel flowers to plant in the soil of some topic such as divorce, we should rise to the challenge (and it can be daunting!) of preaching and teaching through a whole Gospel account.

Second, a renewed attention to the Gospels will help us understand and appropriate many theological themes that we might otherwise neglect. For example, while the theme of the kingdom of God is not absent from the Pauline Epistles (indeed, I would say it appears quite regularly), it is completely unavoidable in the Gospels. One cannot read the Gospels without getting a very clear sense that Jesus' ministry — and therefore ours as well — is focused on, framed by and looking forward to the coming kingdom of God. Renewed focus on the Gospels will challenge us to make sure an explicitly kingdom-focus marks our church life, mission and evangelism.

Third and finally, paying closer attention to the Gospels can reinvigorate our understanding of the importance of

discipleship. While believing correct doctrines and defending them is part of the Christian life, there is a larger and more comprehensive category that the Bible uses: being a follower or disciple of Jesus. No servant is greater than his master. To be a Christian means to be a follower after Jesus in believing his teachings and seeking to live according to them. We rightly understand that our living and following in no way earns favor with God or makes us God’s children — this happens through God’s gracious re-birthing of us through the work of the Holy Spirit — but the Gospels paint an unmistakable picture of what it means to be a Christian. It means to seek to follow — imperfectly and failing to be sure — Jesus’ own model of loving God and loving neighbor

and taking up one’s cross of suffering and hardship. While the richness of our salvation through spiritual union with Christ is more than discipleship, Christianity is certainly not less than being a follower-disciple. The Gospels help us see this clearly.

To conclude, I will simply invite you to consider anew the beauty, power and wonder that the four Gospels give to us. They are a marvelous gift given to every generation of followers Jesus. ➤

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END NOTES:

- [1] For a recent thoughtful exploration of the implications of Jesus’ full humanity see Dr. Bruce Ware’s book, *The Man Jesus Christ: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ* (Crossway, 2013).
- [2] Likewise from a canonical perspective, neglect of the Old Testament by Christians is a self-imposed impoverishment, and even more, a great potential danger in understanding the whole of the Bible’s message.
- [3] In chapter three of my *Reading the Gospels*

Wisely (Baker, 2012) I share my own journey in coming to appreciate the Gospels after many years of focus almost exclusively on the Epistles. I have found that many students and readers resonate with my experience. Yet at the same time I have seen a change afoot in both preaching the Gospels and evangelical students’ increasing love and appreciation for them.

[4] This construction is, of course, intentionally simplified for clarity sake. The “Epistles” are not all strictly epistles (such as the Book of Revelation) and we have another large book not

included in this schema, the Book of Acts. However, for my purposes here, Acts falls much more in line with the Gospels as narrative accounts, as compared to the teaching, pastoral and polemical style of the epistolary literature.

[5] This is true even without taking Acts into account. When the narrative of Acts is reckoned here the percentage of narrative to didactic spikes even more.

[6] It is important to understand that from the earliest days of the church our four Gospels were actually referred to in the singular, as the Gos-

pel book (the Tetraevangelium), given to us through the witness of four men: according to Matthew, according to Mark, according to Luke and according to John.

[7] For a fuller argument along these lines see my *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, chapter 12.

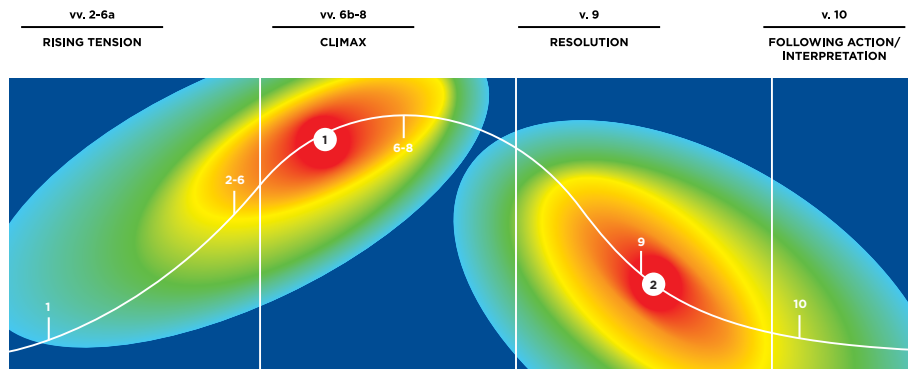
[8] For example, Martin Bucer, a contemporary and major influence on John Calvin argued that to read the Bible well it is necessary to begin with the Gospels. See *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, p244.

A thermographic reading of Gospel narratives

Jonathan T. Pennington suggests reading and analyzing Gospel narratives through a “thermographic lens.” A thermographic map indicates relative heat emission from objects or areas under their purview. In a thermographic reading of a narrative, the most important ideas/elements of the story are the hottest, and thus reddest in color; these hot spots usually appear either at the moment of highest tension (climax and resolution) or the closing comments of the story (following action/interpretation) — and sometimes both.

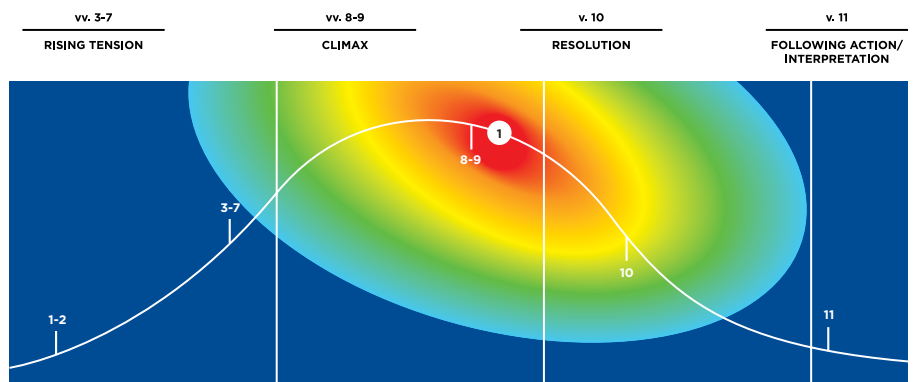
To the right, are representations of two Gospel stories when read through a thermographic lens: on the top is a representation of Luke 7:1-10 on a thermographic map; on the bottom is Matthew 4:1-11.

Luke 7:1-10 — Jesus heals a centurion’s servant



1. Jesus’s authority 2. The faith of the non-Israelite centurion

Matthew 4:1-11 — Temptation of Jesus



1. Jesus successfully resists temptation

A conversation with the dean: Russell D. Moore talks about the School of Theology, the Gos- pels in church life



EDITOR'S NOTE: *In what follows, Russell D. Moore, dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary talks with Southern Seminary Magazine editors Steve Watters and Aaron Cline Hanbury about the School of Theology, public policy and the Gospels.*

Editors: Can you talk about the place of academic theology and theoretical study in the training of pastors?

RDM: The School of Theology is the oldest and most central school at Southern Seminary, devoted primarily to training pastors and preachers of the gospel. The School of Theology has a long and rich history of combining the best of scholarship with practical, local church application, which is why the curriculum flows naturally from biblical languages to the Old and New Testament to systematic theology to apologetics and ethics to preaching and counseling and pastoral ministry and leadership and so forth. In order to be a well-rounded minister of the gospel, the pastor must have the tools necessary to minister. If any one tool is missing, someone is not going to be adequately prepared to serve in ministry.

There are some people who God has gifted to give their lives to in-depth scholarship in order to hand things upward to the people in the churches. But pastors themselves are doing the same things as the scholars, just at a different level. The pastor is not a professional philosopher, but he has to answer questions about the meaning of life; he might not be a professional apologist, but he has to defend the faith when a 17-year-old young woman comes into his office and says she no longer believe there's a God; he may not be a full-time ethicist, but he has to answer the couple who ask if it's alright to clone their deceased daughter in order to have another baby. And he has to be someone who knows how to communicate



the message of the Scriptures, and be able to deal with conflict and lead people toward a vision. That's why we have a broad, comprehensive set of tools given to the minister here at Southern Seminary.

Editors: How do you see Southern Seminary Expeditions in the place of seminary education?

RDM: The expeditions have been important for a couple of reasons: One, they enable students to study in the context of the material. So when you're learning philosophy in Athens, where Socrates and Aristotle and Plato were, or learning New Testament in Israel or on the missionary paths of Paul, it helps clarify matters.

Second, expeditions are important because they build close relationships among the students who go. So, often you'll have students from extension centers and on-campus students who otherwise wouldn't know one another who form close, lifelong friendships when they're studying and traveling together. I think they're very beneficial.

Editors: You recently led an expedition to Washington, D.C. where you addressed the role of Christians in the public square. How do you counsel Christians regarding the public square?

RDM: Evangelicals tend to ping back and forth between extremes. You have some evangelicals who have a political agenda in search of a gospel useful enough to accommodate it. You can always find those evangelicals who are the court chaplains of the Republican or Democratic parties, and they just put a Christian spin on whatever those parties do. That's not what faithful Christians are to be.

You have other evangelicals who are so apathetic to their political context and to their neighbors that they pretend as though they can remain isolated from it. But people tend to become hyper-political even as they pretend to be a-political: if you're preaching the gospel in 1859 and you don't say anything about slavery, you're actually saying a great deal about slavery. You have slaveholders who will give an account before the judgment seat for the sin of man stealing and owning another human being created in the image of God. Similarly, if you are in the United States in 2013 and you don't talk about abortion, you actually are talking about abortion.

So people who try to isolate themselves and exude a sense of apathy are just as political as the people who use Jesus as a mascot — sometimes more so.

I think the place where we have to be as Christians is at a distance from the political powers, but we need also to be the people who speak about issues out of care for our neighbors.

So when you're talking about the issue of marriage, a church that says they believe marriage rests upon sexual complementarity isn't a political church, it's a church affirming what Christianity and every human culture has always affirmed. We're not trying to prevent our gay and lesbian neighbors from having access to what we have; we're saying, it's impossible to expand the definition of marriage to include all of these other things, just like it's impossible to expand the definition of Islam out to include Christians.

The very reason why the state has an interest in marriage — as opposed to friendship or any other sort of relationship — is because marriage protects women and children from being harmed. When we speak to that, we're not speaking against anyone; we're speaking in favor of those who are vulnerable. And you can do that without being angry or hating your gay and lesbian friends and neighbors.

Editors: How can pastors work the Gospels into the DNA of a local congregation?

RDM: The first thing a pastor should ask is, "Do I normally gravitate toward one particular form of biblical material?" For example, I tend to preach the Gospels and the narratives more than anything else. And so I have to remind myself to preach the Pauline Epistles. Someone who has the reverse situation needs to say, "Am I skirting the whole counsel of God by only preaching where I'm most comfortable?" And then say how do we introduce into the service ways for people to come in contact with Scripture that will train those people how to be immersed in Scripture all throughout their lives.

Churches need to ask, "What's our context and how do we increase the profile of the Gospels in our church?" And then look also not only to how the large gathering in a worship service is conducted but also how Sunday school or community groups or whatever avenues that church has for teaching beyond the service can be thoughtfully planned. ➤

Letters from a Jericho ditch: God, neighbor and the questions we ask

By Russell D. Moore

Most celebrities are known to carry with them very specific requests in their contract riders used for public appearances. These requests are there to protect them from things they want to avoid. But contract riders are not limited to celebrities only. We all have our own contract riders, don't we? We all have those kinds of questions that we ask where the purpose is not really to gain

information. Instead, they are the kinds of questions that protect.

This is the very thing that is going on in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Jesus is being cross-examined by a lawyer, a lawyer with his own implicit contract rider. Most of us are familiar with this story. Though we call it the story of "The Good Samaritan," the story really isn't about a Samaritan at all. The story is really about the law-

yer. It's about the one who stood up to ask the questions. And beyond that it's about God, it's about neighbor and it's about the kinds of questions we ask to protect ourselves from God.

While this account most certainly begins with the lawyer coming to Jesus with questions, the teaching ends with Jesus turning back to the lawyer asking, "Which one of these do you suppose proved to be a neighbor?" With a lump



of conviction in his throat, the lawyer couldn't bring himself to confess the Samaritan in the parable to have been the true and loving neighbor. Instead he simply replied, "The one who showed mercy." And there's a good reason why. The Samaritans were absolute off-scourings in the minds of the Jews. The disciples, after all, wanted to vaporize them (Luke 9:54). And yet, Jesus at this point not only casts the Samaritan as a good figure, he says, "You go and act like a Samaritan (Luke 10:37)." That would have sounded to this lawyer like it would sound to you if Jesus were saying, "You go and act like a post-op transvestite," "You go and act like a crack-addicted drug dealer," or "You go and act like a porn star." These things are difficult enough to imagine, let alone hear and receive.

Through this parable, Jesus is ultimately speaking about his mission. The mission of Jesus does not start in the pastoral epistles, and mission does not start in Matthew 28, with the giving of the Great Commission. In this commission, Jesus takes a mission that he had already been carrying out, and he then gives that very mission to his disciples by saying, "All of this authority that is given to me, I now give to you. You go to the nations. You make disciples. You baptize. You teach. You move forward with the mission that belongs to me." And it is a mission that speaks to people in every aspect of human life: spiritual, physical, emotional, relational.

Now, there are always going to be those people who want to turn the mission simply into the physical maintenance of peoples and cultures. On the other hand, there are also going to be those people who want to turn to the hyper-spiritual and to say, "Let's not be concerned with what people eat. Let's not be concerned with the shelter that people have. Let's not be concerned with their cultures and with their communities. Let's simply be concerned with individual transport from earth to heaven." Jesus allows us no such thing. You are to love God and you are to love neighbor as self. That means every aspect of human existence is being addressed here by the gospel.

Carl F.H. Henry, once spoke of the evangelical tendency to speak only of the spiritual aspect of mission — only speaking directly to evangelism and not speaking to the mercy that people need. This mercy asks the simple question, "If I am to love my neighbor as myself, do you minister to yourself in only that way?"

Do you refuse to feed yourself because you have the gospel? Do you refuse to clothe yourself because you have the gospel? Do you refuse to learn how to disciple your children because you have the gospel? No. You love God and you love neighbor.

The gospel demands that we give explicit verbal witness to the call to

Jesus is ultimately speaking about his mission.

faith and repentance. And the gospel also changes our lives such that we purify water systems in famine-wrecked communities, mentor that homeless prostitute, sift through the rubble with tsunami victims and visit the prisoner long forgotten behind bars. We love and we show mercy because the gospel is true and because life is better than death.

This mission of Jesus is personal. It isn't about humanity in the abstract sense. It is instead about individual persons. It's easy to love causes. It's easy to become identified with causes. All you have to do is get the wrist-band for Sudan, wear the t-shirt or write down a prayer request. But Jesus shows us that there is something deeper happening in his mission. There is a providential bringing together of the neighbor with the one who needs the neighbor, and it exposes the reality of the Christ-life or the lack thereof.

There are people in your life, providentially placed there, who you will either encounter or you will pass by. There are all kinds of labels that people will want to affix to them in order to say, "This is not really your neighbor." They

might say, "This is just an embryo, this is an orphan, this is a victim of sex trafficking or this is an AIDS patient."

Whatever the language is, whatever the label is, there will be all sorts of neighbors in your life — that unwed mother without health insurance pouring your coffee this morning; that man who is shaking because he is coming off of drugs and out of prison who shoots you that obscene gesture on the road; that atheist, nihilist college professor in your community who ridicules you to your own church members, but who is deeply scared of death.

Jesus says those people are going to be in your life, and the question is whether you will carry out the mission

of Jesus, whether you will be moved with compassion. Will you be moved with mercy? Who cares if all you have is an ossified orthodoxy, if all that means is that you know how to say, "Be warmed and filled," in perfect koine Greek. That is not the way the Christ-life lives. Jesus turns the question around, "Are you the neighbor?"

The Christian church has often said that we need to see Jesus as the Samaritan, and indeed he is. But even more than that, Jesus is the beaten man. He will go to Jerusalem. He will go outside the camp. He will fall among thieves and be stripped and beaten, and the priests and the Levites and the businessmen and even the Samaritans will walk along the road. Many of them will point to their children as they see this man drowning in his own blood and will say simply, "You don't want to end up like that. Let's go over this way." The crucified one shows up mysteriously, he tells us, "In the least of these, my brothers," and the question is, when you encounter them, do you see his face? ➤

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



Preach Christ from the Gospels

By David Prince

I am frequently asked, “What was the topic of your dissertation?” When I reply, “Developing a Christocentric, Kingdom-Focused Model of Expository Preaching” the response is often, “Oh, it is about preaching Christ in the Old Testament.” The almost universal assumption is that no one has difficulty preaching Christ from the New Testament, especially from the Gospels (or more accurately, the four accounts of the one Gospel).

Most recognize elements of discontinuity between the Old Testament narrative and us, but wrongly assume no discontinuity exists between the Gospels and us. We are not first-century Jews living at the time of the Incarnation, but the Gospels feel like familiar territory — and we maintain a false sense of security because we are more familiar with their contents. But many of the problems with contemporary preaching of the Old Testament are just as readily apparent in sermons from the Gospels. Sermons that fail to exposit the biblical text in light of Christ from the storyline of redemptive history are not preaching Christ — no matter how frequently they mention him.

Simply mentioning Jesus or preaching about an encounter

in the life of Christ does not constitute preaching Christ. Whenever we jump from the biblical text straight to us we are guilty of treating the Bible as if it is all about us instead of all about Jesus. Moralistic, atomistic sermons that abstract moral principles apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ are anti-Christ, even when the principles are drawn from a particular episode in the life of Christ. When the sermon's preeminent aim is to ask and answer the question, "Where am I in the story? What do I need to do?" the result is a sermon in which the Pharisees opposing Christ in the Gospels could have said, "Amen!" (John 5:39).

Preaching Christ from the Gospels means that we do not take the gospel for granted. The Gospels reside in a biblical-theological context that constitutes an eschatological blast of the trumpet. In Jesus, the biblical storyline moves from the Old Testament promise of a messianic kingdom to the presence of the messianic King. Jesus' preaching of the kingdom was in continuity with the kingdom emphasis in the Old Testament; but what made his preaching unique was his contention that the kingdom was being presently fulfilled in him. Jesus' life, ministry and preaching revealed the inaugurated eschatological tension of the kingdom, an overlap of the ages, in which the kingdom of God was already present but still awaits consummation in the age to come.

The Gospel accounts reveal Jesus as the gospel preacher par excellence. At the commencement of his Galilean ministry, the Markan account states, "Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mark 1:14b-15). The decisive time had arrived. His message was the Good News that every promise made to Israel finds its "Yes" and "Amen" in him (2 Cor 1:20). Jesus was ushering in and proclaiming the promised Messianic age of salvation. He is both the object and the subject of the good news.

Luke's Gospel records the Galilean crowds' pleading with Jesus to stay and continue his miraculous ministry of healing and exorcism, to which he responds, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose" (Luke 4:43). It is striking that, according to Jesus, preaching the gospel of his kingdom held the place of primacy in his mission. The four Gospels mention the kingdom more than 120 times. When the resurrected Christ appeared to his disciples he urged them to rethink and retell the entire Old Testament story in light of his inauguration of kingdom. The Gospel accounts establish the fact that all of the promised blessings to Israel are fulfilled in one Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, who perfectly obeyed the law of God, is crucified for his people and raised from the dead for their justification.

Thus, preaching Christ from the Gospels, means recognizing the Old Testament roots of the teaching and themes found in the Gospels and understanding each Gospel text through the already-but-not-yet eschatological lens of the

kingdom of Christ. Jesus stood in the Nazareth synagogue, unrolled the scroll, read Is 61:1-2, which referenced the Year of Jubilee in a way that went beyond its institution in Lev 25:8-22, and he declared, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). Jesus did not call for reform to reclaim the Year of Jubilee; he claimed that in his presence, the promised Sabbath rest of the Year of Jubilee was fulfilled.

Simply put, Christ preached Christ and we must as well. In the Gospel accounts, it is clear that all of the promises of God are fulfilled in Jesus Christ and that apart from him, there are no promises. The Gospel accounts are certainly replete with moral and ethical imperatives but they are not bare, abstract imperatives. The preacher who myopically focuses on biblical moral instructions, abstracted from the story of Jesus in the storyline of Scripture, will cultivate self-righteousness in the prideful, despair in the humble and damn the lost.

For instance, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) is full of imperatives. The preacher who treats these as abstract ethical commands — avoid anger, lust, divorce, oaths, retaliation, love your enemies, give to the needy — can be guilty of using the words of Jesus to drive hearers away from the kingdom of Christ. It is easy to teach the ethical truths of the Sermon on the Mount apart from the story of the Christ who is preaching those truths. If our sermon from Jesus' sermon abstracts the imperatives from "the Gospel of the Kingdom" (Matt 4:23) then we turn the good news into bad news.

The ethical commands of the Sermon on the Mount are not a plan for self-improvement. Rather, they are the consequential imperatives that can only be rightly understood and lived out in light of the foundational gospel indicative. The larger framework of the Gospels makes clear that this relationship cannot be reversed.

The Gospel accounts clarify that, in principle, Satan is not opposed to morality, self-improvement or religion. In fact, Satan quotes Scripture and urges others to claim the promises of Scripture. But his temptation of Christ clarifies that he is opposed to the gospel of the kingdom of Christ. He wanted Jesus to claim the promises apart from the cross and the kingdom — and he wants you to preach the Bible in the same way.

Let me suggest one question to ask yourself when you have finished preparing your sermon. It is one I would recommend that you ask yourself any time you prepare to preach, and I think it is every bit as needed when preaching from one of the Gospel accounts as it is when preaching from the Minor Prophets: "Did Jesus have to be crucified and resurrected for this sermon to work?"

If not, start over. ➤

David E. Prince is pastor of preaching and vision, Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington, Ky., and assistant professor of Christian preaching at Southern Seminary

Theology for life:

Schreiners display model of faithfulness through trial

By RuthAnne Irvin with Aaron Cline Hanbury

Back in August 2012, Tom and Diane Schreiner anticipated a different fall season for their family, but their faith in God, rooted in sound theology, prepared them for the fall that came.

Late in the month, Diane crashed her bicycle in a severe accident while riding home from a neighborhood yard sale, Aug. 17.

At the time of the accident, Schreiner, a New Testament professor at Southern Seminary, was at his home in Louisville, Ky., preparing a sermon. Initially, he did not worry about his wife's abnormally long bike ride — "She's often late," he said. Eventually,

though, Schreiner went to look for her. After seeing that a police officer driving around his neighborhood was headed toward his house, Schreiner realized that Diane was hurt. He assumed, however, that Diane's accident was like others before: a few bruises and scrapes, but nothing too serious.

But then, after arriving at the hospital, he saw her.

When neighbors found Diane, she was unconscious with several broken bones and fractures — and, of most urgent concern, bruising to her brain. She needed immediate medical attention. The cause of her accident was

— and still is — a mystery.

Initial response from the doctors gave Schreiner and his family little clarity, and her critical condition made them unsure about whether she would live or not.

During the following days, Schreiner kept an online journal through Caring-Bridge, in order to update friends and family about his wife's condition following the accident. This journal also became a window into the spiritual and emotional state of Schreiner and his family.

"We don't know for sure, and in one sense it doesn't matter," he wrote in his





first entry. “God reigns over all things, and now we deal with the situation he has placed us in.”

Five days later, on Aug. 22, Schreiner wrote: “Diane woke up and was conscious. She responded to questions, squeezed my hand, gave us the peace sign when we asked, etc. We cried with joy. We know that we have a long journey, but what an astounding answer to the prayers of so many.”

Later, he wrote that Diane had the text of Isaiah 41:10 posted to a window sill. The verse reads, ‘Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with my righteous right hand.’

Schreiner’s response to this crisis

that we would become more like Christ and trust our Father even more.”

On Oct. 25, Tom Schreiner was scheduled to preach in Southern Seminary’s chapel. Diane progressed enough in her recovery that she was able to attend the chapel, where she received a warm greeting from seminary president R. Albert Mohler Jr. and an extended standing ovation from those in attendance. Once he stood to preach, Schreiner thanked the seminary community for prayers and support.

“I want to say thank you for the love and prayers you’ve shown Diane and me. Your love for us has been overwhelming; it has been deeply encouraging to us. I’m so grateful to Drs. Mohler and Moore; they gave me

“We are full of praise, for Diane finished her outpatient therapy today! ... That doesn’t mean that Diane is fully recovered; but she has made amazing progress since her accident.

“The best thing to prepare for suffering is good theology,” Schreiner wrote at CaringBridge. “Whether it is life or death, healing or disease, God is good and he rules.”

Six months after the accident, Diane spoke openly about the accident and God’s faithfulness throughout the unknowns and difficult healing process. She says that she tells people that she has more faith in God than ever.

Thankful to be far along in recovery, Diane also said that she knew why God spared her, and it was to glorify him with her life in the coming days and years.

Schreiner said that he enjoyed caring for Diane through the recovery process. He also said that they are looking forward to riding bikes together again.

When asked about how the accident altered Schreiner’s view about life and suffering, he again spoke about the sovereignty of God. For Schreiner, God’s sovereignty is not an abstract concept reserved only for seminary classrooms; rather, God’s rule over all things provides comfort, assurance and strength for believers.

“God’s grace isn’t for imaginary situations, but for real life.” ➤

RuthAnne Irvin is an editorial intern at Southern Seminary; Aaron Cline Hanbury is managing editor of Southern Seminary Magazine.

The best thing to prepare for suffering is good theology.

demonstrates that he and his family believe this promise in Isaiah to be true.

The process of Diane’s healing brought many unknowns, but Schreiner consistently pointed to the gospel through all the questions. In a post at the online journal, Sept. 2, Schreiner wrote:

“If sparrows don’t fall to the ground apart from the Father, neither do bicycle riders. Not even the tiniest thing can happen to us apart from the Father’s will. He didn’t cease being her Father when she fell. ... Why did it happen? The scriptures are clear: to bring glory to God. ... He planned it for our good, so

freedom to care for and minister to Diane, for which I am so grateful. We have seen the love of Christ in countless ways — especially in prayers. Almost every day the Lord has encouraged me and my family by answering prayer. From the very beginning, it’s his will, but we’d ask, ‘Lord, encourage us with an answer to prayer’ and virtually every day, he did.”

The week after Diane’s accident, the Schreiner family prepared for a recovery time lasting as long as two years. On Nov. 19, roughly three months after the accident, however, Schreiner updated friends and family:

Southern Seminary alumni ministering around the world

KOOK WON BAE, a graduate of Southern Seminary, became the new president of Korea Baptist Theological Seminary, Daejeon, South Korea. Other alumni teaching at the seminary include: **NAM SOO KIM**, dean of student affairs and professor of church music; **HYUNG WON LEE**, dean of the graduate School of Theology and professor of Old Testament; **KWANG SOO KIM**, professor of New Testament; **YONG KOOK KIM**, professor of church history; **SEUNG TAE CHUNG**, professor of philosophy of religion; **WON JIN CHOI**, professor of missiology; and **BYUNG KWON KIM**, professor of Christian ethics.

EUGENE MARTIN (1954) is training ten piano students and still returns to the seminary each summer to coach alongside Maurice Hinson. Since his retirement in 2000, Eugene and his wife Sarah have served in several extended interim positions.

JAMES THOMASON (1978) is the president and chief executive officer of The Communities of Maple Lawn, a retirement community located in Eureka, Ill., that was founded in 1922 and serves 355 seniors in various care settings.

AARON STRIEGEL (1987) was selected to his high school hall of fame, April 15, 2012. Striegel, a 1979 graduate of Floyd Central High in Floyds Knobs, Ind., was one of four individuals chosen for Floyd Central's third hall of fame class. Striegel has been a bi-vocational pastor during his 25 years of ministry as pastor of Grace Community Church in Sellersburg, Ind., while working as a school

counselor for Trinity High School in Louisville, Ky.

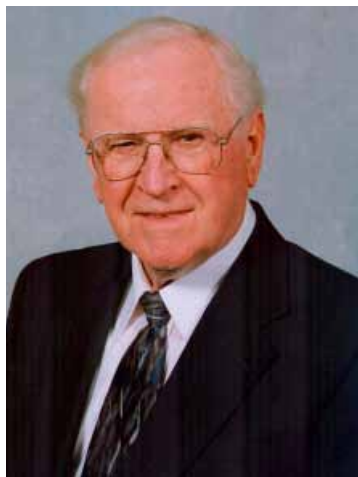
LT. COL. TIMOTHY MALLARD (1990) currently serves as the deputy chaplain and Protestant pastor at United States Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. Mallard is expected to graduate in July with his D.Phil. in Christian ethics from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, having written his dissertation on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology as a basis

for contemporary public theology.

JACOB O. GURLEY III (1994) recently published *Is Mormonism Christian?: A Comparison Between Christian and Mormon Doctrines* with co-author Ernest E. Dean. The book debuted from WestBow Press in January 2013.

CHRIS SHORT (1995) serves as associate pastor of students at Calvary Baptist Church, Glasgow, Ky. Chris and his wife Michele have four children;

Featured update



Archie Kliewer, 1922-2013

Archie Kliewer, former assistant professor of voice at Southern Seminary, died, Jan. 4, at the age of 90. Kliewer is survived by four children, eight grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Kliewer was born into a Mennonite family and devoted his life to Christian ministry as a teenager. He met his wife Agnes when they were both students at Tabor College in the Mennonite community of Hillsboro, Kan. Archie sang in the Tabor College Men's Quartet and Agnes sang in the Tabor College Lady's

Quartet. He received a bachelor of music in vocal performance from the University of Kansas, master of music in vocal performance from the University of Wichita and completed all the course requirements for his DMA in vocal performance at the University of Illinois. He was assistant professor at Tabor College and produced the *Tabor College Chapel Hour*, heard in most Mennonite Brethren homes during the 1950s. Kliewer served as assistant professor and chair of the voice department at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1961 to 1966. While at Southern, he was a tenor soloist with the Louisville Orchestra and performed with the Kentucky Opera Association.

A digital library of Kliewer's music can be found on his website, architenor.org

Madison (17), Kendall (14), Camden (10) and Brennen (9).

DARYL CORNETT (1995) has served as pastor of First Baptist Hazard, Ky. since Aug 2008. Cornett recently published a book with B&H Academic in 2011, *Christian America?: Perspectives on Our Religious Heritage*, which he edited and to which contributed.

REBECCA ALEXANDER (2001) is the prayer ministry associate at Tallwood Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, and will be get married on March 30, 2013.

JOHN WHITTAKER (2003) became pastor of Clarkson Baptist Church in Grayson County, Ky., in November 2012.

AARON ROBB (2003) recently moved to Laffayette, N.J., where he accepted the call to serve as the senior pastor at the Lafayette Federated Church. His wife, Dana, has taken on a new challenge in homeschooling the couple's nine-year old triplets, Katie, Kelsie and Caleb.

W. STEPHEN WILLIAMS (2004) became dean of the James W. Cecil Baptist College of the Bible at Mid-Continent University, Mayfield, Ky. in May 2012. Williams lives in Hickory, Ky., with his wife Janine.

TRAVIS FLEMING (2006) is serving at Union Avenue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., where he has been senior pastor since 2009. Travis began serving as senior pastor in 2009. He and his wife Jenna have two daughters, Kara and Analise.

KEITH THIELKE (2008) is moving to Cincinnati, Ohio, as a bivocational pastor to work with the North American Mission Board's Send Cincinnati church plant initiative.

GARON GRIFFITHS (2011) works for Auburn University in areas of biblical counseling and mechanical engineering. He helps with with the Formula Team, the Baja Team, the Concrete Canoe, the Steel Bridge and the Solar Car.

TYLER GORDON (2012) is serving as a pastoral assistant and youth minister at Second Baptist Church in

West Frankfort, Ill. The church just installed two new elders in March.

ANDY HUBER (2012) accepted the position of associate pastor at Church of the Open Door in Leavenworth, Kan.

PHILLIP VAN STEENBURGH (2012) is the associate pastor of Redeemer Church of Dubai.

Featured updates

Carl James Gerbrandt, 1940-2013

Carl James Gerbrandt, 72, died peacefully in his Platteville, Colo., home surrounded by family on January 23, after a six-month battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife Marilyn, two children, Lynée and Gregory, and four grandchildren.

In 1979, Gerbrandt moved to Louisville, Ky., and founded the sacred music drama program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Gerbrandt published *Sacred Music Drama: The Producer's Guide* in 1993, inspired in part by his time at Southern Seminary. Prior to arriving at Southern, Gerbrandt earned his Doctor of Musical Arts in Voice Performance at Peabody Conservatory of Music of Johns Hopkins University.

He made his professional opera directing debut at the Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C. Gerbrandt received nationwide exposure during a PBS broadcast of his staged production of Mendelssohn's "Elijah" and one of his performances as bass soloist in Handel's "Messiah" with the Annapolis Naval Academy.

In 1983, the family moved to Greeley, Colo., where Carl accepted the position as director of opera theater, voice professor and graduate student advisor at the University of Northern Colorado. He retired in 2005 and received the title of Professor Emeritus. He also served as music director and conductor of the Greeley Chorale for 20 years, during which he directed the 100-voice community choir on six international concert tours and presented ten world premieres. In 2005, the chorale sang a High Mass in the Vatican before the Pope.

Gerbrandt sang over 70 opera and oratorio roles and directed over 40 operas in his lifetime. Cambridge University awarded Gerbrandt both visiting fellow and scholar research positions, the latter of which is the highest position given to a non-UK citizen. In 2010, he received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Opera Association.





NICK MOORE

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

I am the pastor at Redemption Hill Baptist Church in Spencer County, Ky. Redemption Hill (RH) was planted as a joint-venture between Highview Baptist Church (Louisville) and Parkland Baptist Church (Louisville) in June of 2012. I have served as lead pastor of RH since its inception.

The M.Div. from Southern was the boot camp I needed for vocational ministry. I can't list the number of scenarios I have already faced in ministry that were completely new to me. But in each one (much like a soldier) I have been able to adapt by looking back to the instincts, principles and resources instilled in me by my basic training.

I cannot recall a day in ministry in which I have not faced issues that were discussed in either Dr. [Russell D.] Moore's Christian ethics or Dr. [Randy] Stinson's leadership and family ministry courses. **These types of professors and courses demonstrate where the rubber of sound theology and exegesis meets the road of practical application to the lives of people.**

I want to be remembered as a local church guy. My greatest desire for the people of RH is that they would gain an understanding about the magnitude of what is actually happening when God's people gather in these local outposts of the Kingdom of Christ. Numbers, platforms, programs and buildings all become secondary matters when this reality is rightly understood.



ROB LISTER

Southern Seminary ('07)
Ph.D. School of Theology

With whom did you study during your Ph.D.?

My supervisor was Bruce Ware. Not only did he suggest the topic (divine impassibility) of my research, but he has had an enormous influence on how I think about God and life lived in light of his glory.

What is your thesis in *God is Impassible and Impassioned*?

The primary thesis of *GII* is that when properly interpreted, the Scriptures demonstrate that God is both impassible and impassioned. This means that God's affective engagement with his creation is always voluntary and that his affection about the things that matter most is more (not less) profound than human affective experience.

What is the primary implication of your book?

One of the primary implications of the book is that relationship with God has some glorious dissimilarities to our relationships with other humans. We should rejoice on account of these dissimilarities as they continually remind us of the amazing blessing that is ours as we enjoy relationship with the God of the universe.

How do you see your role as a professor serving the (local) church?

I have a conscientious focus on building up my students as members of their local bodies during the time I have together with them in the classroom, so that they take their learning and the gifts into the context of a lifelong love of and commitment to the local church.



LAURA C. SHIVER

Southern Seminary ('14)
M.Div. School of Theology

Laura "Chris" Shiver first heard about Southern Seminary from her father. About the time, he, a long-time pastor, decided to return to seminary to pursue an advanced degree, Shiver also began to sense a calling to theological education.

"After about a year, **I knew with absolute confidence that this is a place where I would receive a world-class theological education and where I could rest in the foundation of truth and commitment to the Bible that characterizes Southern.**"

Now a master of divinity student at the seminary, Shiver is a member of Bethany Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., which is one of her favorite parts of living in the city.

"I am blessed to sing in the choir, watch babies and toddlers in the nursery, and serve my church family by cooking, cleaning and planning fellowship events."

When Shiver isn't serving her church or studying, she enjoys fellowshiping with the fellow students with whom she lives.

"I just love sharing life with my roommates," she said. "So when I am not in class, at work or studying I revel in the fact that even the mundane things of life are a sincere joy with those ladies."

After she graduates in 2014, Shiver plans to influence people around her for the gospel, wherever that may be. She said: **"I sincerely hope that what I learn here at Southern I will be able to communicate clearly through my life and conversations with others."**

Pastor, SBTS student preaches gospel hope in Newtown, Conn.

Joey Newton is not just pursuing a Ph.D. in biblical spirituality — he is also pursuing the hearts of broken and hurting people in Newtown, Conn.

In 2008, Newton accepted the pastorate at Newtown Bible Church. At the time, his wife and three daughters added a significant boost to the 15 regular attendees. Since his move to Newtown, church attendance has reached nearly one hundred.

The growth at Newtown Bible Church is remarkable, considering Newton's initial observation that the quaint town exhibited a secular atmosphere and showed no interest in responding to the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

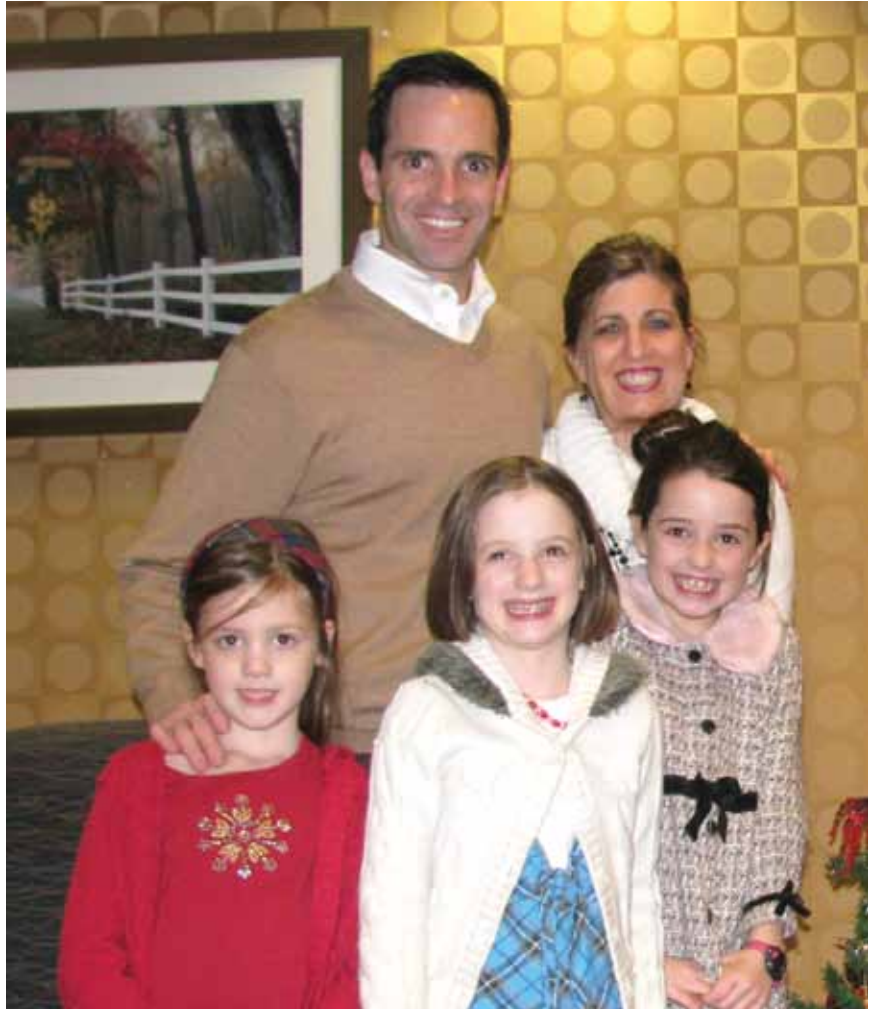
Newton himself is familiar with this attitude of indifference. A Florida native, Newton lived his early life apart from and skeptical toward the gospel. But he experienced God's

“We see this as our opportunity to shine brightly the light of the gospel of Christ”

grace while living in Southern California, and he later became a member of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, Calif., the church pastored by influential speaker and author, John MacArthur. After sensing a calling to ministry, Newton finished his bachelor's degree at the Master's College and completed a master of divinity at the Master's Seminary.

The dismissive attitude of Newtown's residents disappeared when, on Dec. 14, 2012, the peaceful town became the center of one the nation's greatest tragedies.

That morning, Newton received a phone call informing him of the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.



On his way to the scene, Newton learned from a police officer that more than a dozen children had been shot, and that the families were gathered at a nearby fire station.

“That’s when the gravity of the situation hit me,” Newton said, who initially understood the victims to be two adults.

Newtown Bible Church had no members of its church family involved in the shooting, but the congregation quickly stepped in to serve at community events and prayer vigils.

Newton decided to wait until the media attention dissipated from the town before approaching the victims' families. When that time came, the church sent letters and resources to each family. And Newton set himself to

engage the darkness surrounding his community with the light of the gospel.

“We call people to a God who is sovereign over the evil acts of men, and who is gracious and willing to forgive sinners,” he said. “The fruit of this outreach is not going to be immediate,” Newton said, noting that the community has been more open to asking questions and seeking truth.

“But we’re not going anywhere, and we know the fruit will come in time. That’s our long-term perspective.”

In light of the Newtown tragedy, Newton sees an illustration of sin and death, which “the gospel answers in Jesus Christ.”

“We see this as our opportunity to shine brightly the light of the gospel of Christ.” — CRAIG SANDERS

Marshall and Laurie Albritton Hearts for law and ministry



Ask a seminary student to pick out a donor from a crowd at Southern Seminary, and his natural tendency will be to search for someone who emanates wisdom and boasts a crown of white hair.

Yet when Marshall Albritton of Nashville, Tenn., began serving on the Southern Seminary Foundation Board in 1996, the attorney at Parker, Lawrence, Cantrell & Smith was only 35 years old.

“My youth has never been an impediment or an obstacle in any way,” Albritton said. “I’ve met so many wonderful saints a little further down the road who have a heart for the Lord and

understand the importance of theological education for training the next generation of pastors.”

Albritton grew up in Nashville attending a mainline Protestant church, but accepted Christ as a teenager when he visited a service at a local Southern Baptist congregation, Park Avenue Baptist Church. On his 16th birthday, Albritton’s first trip behind the wheel sent him to Park Avenue so he could be baptized and become a member of the church.

Intending to pursue a seminary education and a career in ministry, Albritton graduated from Tennessee Temple University with a double major

in ancient history and biblical studies.

But as the time to head to seminary drew near, Albritton sensed that his gifts would be better used as an active lay person in his church.

The lay ministry of retired judge Paul Pressler, who organized the conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention during the 1980s, inspired Albritton to pursue a career as a lawyer.

Albritton chose to study law at Samford University, SBTS President R. Albert Mohler Jr.’s alma mater, where he met his wife Laurie Geiger.

In 1992, Albritton and several others founded a Southern Baptist church plant in Nashville, Grace Community Church. Today, Grace Community Church averages nearly 1,000 people in worship services, a great testament to Albritton’s commitment to lay ministry.

“Marshall has proven an unshakable commitment over the years to his Lord, his church, his family and of course, to Southern Seminary,” said R. Craig Parker, vice president for institutional advancement and executive director of the Southern Seminary Foundation. “Marshall is approaching seventeen years as a member of the Foundation Board, and very few of the other members of the Board can match his years of service.”

Albritton’s experience in lay ministry compels him to caution seminarians today: “Be honest about the evaluation of your gifts.”

He worries that many seminary students and graduates are holding on to a dream of pastoring a church when they do not actually possess those gifts.

“The gifts you have will actually benefit the church more than trying to use the gifts you don’t have.” —CRAIG SANDERS

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“Gospel ministry is exhausting and draining. As a result, it is often difficult for a busy pastor to keep his spiritual tank full. Alumni Academy provides the gospel minister with an opportunity for spiritual renewal, Christian fellowship and further theological instruction in areas related to kingdom ministry.”

Bill Cook, senior pastor of Ninth & O Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., and a professor at Southern Seminary

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



Multiplying talents: making a worthy investment in students

There are many things that I love about Southern Seminary. For example, I love that our professors are not only world-class scholars, but they are also warm individuals who take tremendous personal interest in their students. I love the beauty of our campus and the fact that it is such a wonderful environment for study. But what excites me most about Southern are the students. One of the great joys of my work is meeting a student and hearing how God brought him or her to this place at this time.

One such student is Dal Lam Mang — “Lampy” — from Myanmar (formerly Burma). Lampy, now 30 years old, became a Christian when he was 15. He is a fourth-generation Christian, whose great-grandfather was the first person in his region to believe the gospel. Lampy is from a northern region of Myanmar, and so he doesn’t consider himself Burmese, but he is fluent in the Burmese language. This means that the Bible that Lampy uses, as well as other Christians in Myanmar, is the one translated by Adoniram Judson, the

famous Baptist missionary to Burma.

Lampy was a teacher and church planter in Myanmar before arriving at Southern in late January, and is now pursuing a master of theology degree because he wants to study the Bible with hopes that he will return to Myanmar better equipped to teach God’s Word.

Stories like Lampy’s serve as a reminder that an investment in Southern Seminary is an investment in the Great Commission. When Jesus told his disciples the parable

of our talents than in the students of Southern Seminary. An investment in our students — whether from Myanmar or Missouri — is an investment in all of the people to whom those students will minister.

There are a number of factors that prevent prospective ministers and missionaries from fulfilling God’s call on their lives, and most of those factors are out of our control. But all members of the Southern Baptist Convention have a say in the cost of tuition for our theological students. And far be it from us to bury our talents in the ground, which, for all we know, could prevent students like Lampy from pursuing education in order to serve his people more faithfully.

It may be that God uses our talents

An investment in Southern Seminary is an investment in the Great Commission.

of the talents in Matthew 25, he told them that the servants in the story who multiplied their talents were commended by their master, while the servant who buried his talent was condemned. As with the servants in Jesus’ parable, the talents entrusted to us are meant to be multiplied. I can’t think of a better place to multi-

ply our talents than in the students of Southern Seminary. An investment in our students — whether from Myanmar or Missouri — is an investment in all of the people to whom those students will minister.

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to raise up another Adoniram Judson, or to equip someone like Lampy to teach in his native country, or he may use our talents to bring faithful preaching to a church in rural Alabama. I don’t know what God will do with our talents, but I do know that Southern Seminary is a good place to see them multiplied.

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