



**COVENANT RENEWAL
BETWEEN
TRUSTEES, FACULTY,
AND ADMINISTRATION**

**THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Adopted by the Seminary Faculty
March 28, 1991

Adopted by the Board of Trustees
April 8, 1991

This Covenant Renewal document is a spiritual and theological affirmation of our covenantal intentions as Trustees, Administrators, and Faculty of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Covenant renewal ceremonies in the Old Testament were dynamic spiritual experiences. Such covenants presupposed a common faith focused in the Lord and an affirmation of mutual responsibilities shared within the covenant community. By renewing our covenant we, Trustees, Administration, and Faculty, reaffirm our commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord as the focus of our relationship and our intention to function within God's purposes for The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Through this covenant renewal document we renew our vows to God and one another in a fresh spirit of mutual respect, cooperation, and effort to move toward common processes which will maintain the vitality, integrity, and mission of the Seminary.

GOVERNANCE

As Trustees, Administration and Faculty we commit ourselves to a system of Seminary governance which maintains in the operation of the institution the distinct and separate functions of Trustees, Administration and Faculty; specifically, the policy making role of Trustees, the administrative role of Seminary staff, and the implementing/teaching role of Seminary Faculty; coupled with the role of the President as the chief executive officer and the chief academic officer of the institution with the authority and responsibilities required for the operation of the institution. We further pledge ourselves to operate within the Seminary Charter and Bylaws, Faculty contracts, and the Faculty Staff Manual.

ARTICLE II

COOPERATION

We affirm our covenant obligation to cooperate with one another as Trustees, Faculty, and Administration in preserving the Christian heritage of Southern Seminary and in translating that heritage into an inclusive ministry to all Southern Baptists in a period of transition in denominational leadership and theological interpretation within the Southern Baptist Convention. Trustees, Administration and Faculty pledge respect for the convictions of all Southern Baptists and our intention to be sensitive to conservative viewpoints within the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE III

INTENTION

We, Trustees, Administration and Faculty promise to continue our covenantal commitment to the Abstract of Principles as the confessional guideline for all teaching within the Seminary. As Trustees, we affirm the proper exercise of academic freedom and scholarship balanced with appropriate Faculty accountability and responsibility. Administration and Faculty affirm our common responsibility to implement Trustee policy by making specific educational decisions through established processes regarding the curriculum and the conduct of teaching within the classrooms.

ARTICLE IV

FACULTY SELECTION

We, Trustees, Administration and Faculty commit ourselves to the continuing implementation of the 1987 Trustee Action Plan, as initiated in the Seminary Presidents 1986 Glorieta Statement and affirmed in the 1988 Faculty Resolution of Recommitment and Renewal, that pledges us

to fairness in selecting faculty across the theological spectrum of our Baptist constituency.

In our effort to achieve a balanced representation through intentional employment of conservative evangelical scholars for future openings within the Faculty, we will seek new Faculty members who:

Reflect a clear evangelical orientation in their view of the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scripture as clarified by the following statement on Scripture:¹

1. Through the Holy Spirit's work of inspiration, Scripture is entirely and completely the Word of God, as well as the words of human authors. It is inadequate to affirm that the Bible is only a human witness to divine revelation because the Bible is also God's witness to Himself. Through the superintending influence of the Holy Spirit on the writers of Holy Scripture, the accounts and interpretations of God's revelation have been recorded as God intended so that the Bible is actually the written Word of God.

2. Inspiration was the work in which God, by His Spirit through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine; and as such, the Holy Scriptures are the authoritative Word of God and are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery; but God in His work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of writers whom He had chosen and prepared. This work of the Spirit is plenary and totally trustworthy.

3. Inspiration, though not conferring omniscience on the author, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterances on all matters on which

¹Cf. James P. Boyce, *A Brief Catechism of Bible Doctrine*, 1878, and *Abstract of Systematic Theology*, 1887; Basil Manly, Jr., *The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, 1888; John A. Broadus, *A Catechism of Bible Teaching*, 1892; E. Y. Mullins, *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression*, 1917; *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 1963; *Second London Confession*, 1677

the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write. Having been given by inspiration, the Scripture is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses, whatever the subject matter. Scripture in its entirety is free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

4. The Holy Spirit's work of illumination enables believers to reach back and interpret the Biblical text in its original context in such a way as to understand the Biblical author's meaning, as well as its contemporary significance for our day. Ultimately, the Bible is to be interpreted in light of the centrality of Jesus Christ, who affirmed the complete veracity of the Bible and lived His life in fulfillment of Holy Scripture.

5. God has revealed Himself to all peoples at all times and all places through nature, history, and in human consciences and experiences. He has revealed Himself uniquely to specific people in special places through redemptive acts and prophetic and apostolic words. Ultimately, He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God. This special revelation of God is given to us through Holy Scripture, the inspired word from God.

6. These acts of special revelation have been interpreted by God's prophets and apostles and under the providential hand of God inspired persons have gathered them together to form the canon of Sacred Scripture. This special revelation is progressive, which means in the witness of Biblical history there is a developing disclosure of God, His will, and His truth in the Old and New Testaments. The development is not contradictory, but is complementary and supplementary to what has been previously revealed. God's special revelation is personal in that God reveals Himself personally and redemptively, but His revelation is also propositional in that it reveals truths about God and His creation.

7. The Bible is the ultimate standard of authority for God's people, transcending temporal and cultural contexts. The Bible is the only and all sufficient rule of faith and practice. The Holy Spirit, who

inspired Holy Scripture, leads believers today to recognize the authority of Scripture and to respond to and obey its message.

Further, in filling Faculty vacancies we will also seek persons who:

- Will teach in accordance with and not contrary to the Abstract of Principles;
- Affirm their experience of the spiritual rebirth through faith in Jesus Christ and demonstrate their active discipleship in a local congregation;
- Understand and are committed to the distinctive doctrines of our Baptist heritage;
- Embody the highest qualities of Christian character and life;
- Are committed to prepare God-called people for Christian ministry in the churches and church-related ministries;
- Are committed to winning the lost and are advocates of the missionary imperative of the Christian gospel for the whole world; and
- Affirm the covenantal relationship between Southern Seminary and the Southern Baptist Convention and its cooperating churches.

Until the Trustees, in consultation with Administration and Faculty, determine that the Seminary has achieved Faculty balance the Seminary will employ only Faculty or Instructors (whether temporary or permanent) or grant tenure to those who sign the Abstract of Principles and positively affirm this covenant, including its statement on Scripture.

Specific exceptions to ARTICLE IV may be made by the President, with the concurrence of the appropriate trustees, e.g., the Officers, the Executive Committee or the Full Board, as determined by the nature of the appointment.

ARTICLE V

ACCOUNTABILITY

We, Trustees, Administration and Faculty, covenant to function with mutual accountability both institutionally and personally. Trustees are accountable to the Southern Baptist Convention, the President is accountable to the Trustees, and the Seminary Faculty and Staff are accountable to the President. Together, we acknowledge our accountability to the Seminary Charter and ByLaws, the Faculty Staff Manual, and individual contracts between the Seminary and its employees.

Trustees properly function with the right to direct both the present and the future course of the institution by the policies which they establish. In so doing we Trustees covenant to function in accordance with and not contrary to seminary policies and procedures.

Likewise, Faculty covenants to function with acknowledged accountability for our actions. As professors teaching in a denominational seminary we renew our commitment to freedom with responsibility. We recognize that while freedom must ultimately be realized through the spirit and loyalties of persons, it must take form and be protected through regulations governing institutional practice. Yet, we recognize the effectiveness of stated principles depends finally upon the dedication and personal integrity of individuals within the Seminary Faculty and Administration.

Administration and Faculty acknowledge our covenantal responsibilities to one another within the Seminary community. Consequently, we shall accept and affirm as colleagues all who join this faculty.

Through this covenant renewal of our accountability we Trustees, Administration, and Faculty renew our covenantal relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention and its cooperating churches and reaffirm our intention to maintain a proper balance between freedom and responsibility by each party of this covenant.

ARTICLE VI

AMENDMENT

We, Trustees, Administration, and Faculty, covenant to follow the principle of mutuality prior to amending this Covenant of Renewal. In the Bible, covenants are unilateral. The Lord God is sovereign of the Old Testament Covenant; He makes the covenant. Christ is Lord of the New Testament Covenant and we function in the community of believers under his Lordship. For Christians who enter into covenant with one another, however, covenants are bilateral, not unilateral. We acknowledge the right of Trustees to adopt formal policies and to amend seminary documents such as the Charter and By-Laws and the Faculty Staff Manual; yet, any amendment of matters specifically addressed in this Covenant Renewal without concurrence of the Administration and Faculty nullifies its covenantal nature.

SUMMATION

We, Trustees, Administration, and Faculty thank God for Southern Seminary and commit ourselves to sustain and enhance the excellence of the Seminary's academic programs and to assure the continued vital impact of this institution within the work of the Kingdom of God.