

Towers

A News Publication of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary



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2010

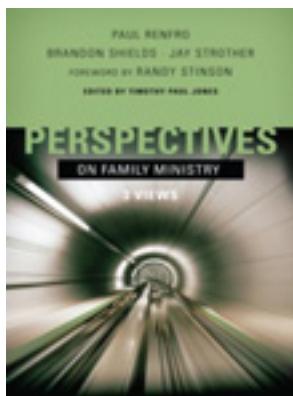


WHAT HATH
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Russell D. Moore on country music's relationship to the SBC

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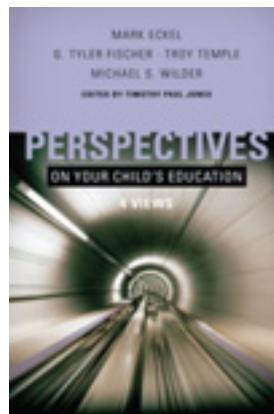
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Timothy Paul Jones is editor of *The Journal of Family Ministry* and associate professor of Leadership and Church Ministry at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. He is also the author of *Misquoting Truth* and received the Baker Book House Award for excellence in theological scholarship.

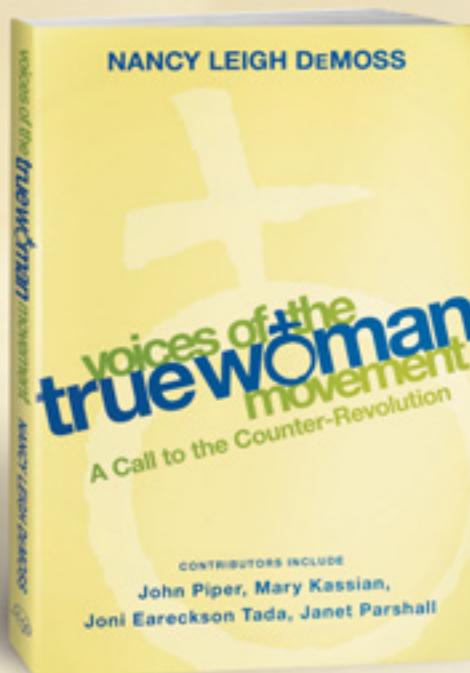
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What hath Nashville to do with Jerusalem?

Russell D. Moore on country music's relationship to the Southern Baptist Convention

By JEFF ROBINSON

Russell D. Moore is well known for his powerful and convicting sermons, impassioned teaching and clear, powerful writing. But he is also known for something else: his love of country music.

How long have you been a country music fan?

Russell D. Moore: I have always listened to country music. Probably my earliest memories are of being in the living room with my parents and grandparents listening to an eight track with a compilation of the best of the Grand Ole Opry. I listened to that eight track all through elementary school, high school and college. When the eight track wore out it was a major loss. One of the best gifts anyone has ever given me was when my wife, Maria, just a few years ago, found the LP of that album and had it transferred onto a CD. Now I have that on my ipod. It has everybody from Chet Atkins to Kitty Wells to the Carter family.

Besides that, country music was all over our house and our community in south Mississippi. I have always liked country music, but I kind of kept quiet about it (when I left Mississippi) because I was going off into the big wide world. I was in Washington, D.C., listening to George Jones, but nobody ever knew what was playing in my earbuds, so eventually, I just said, "I am who I am."

Who are your favorite country artists and why?

Moore: I love Merle Haggard. He has an honesty about him that led Johnny Cash to say once, "You have lived the life that I have pretended to live." Haggard really has lived a life of pain and there is a great deal of honesty and character that comes through in what he has to say.

I like George Jones. I think Jones is a unique songwriter and as a vocalist is inimitable. I like Loretta Lynn. Some musicians of any genre tend to write songs when they are younger and then play and perform throughout their career the songs they wrote when they were young, but Lynn, by contrast, continues all through her career to come up with good new songs. On this relatively new album, Van Lear Rose, she has this song, "I Miss Being Mrs. Tonight," about losing her husband. It is a powerful, haunting song. Lynn is a complicated musician

in a lot of ways and has a life story that is rooted in music.

I like the Carter Family, Ralph Stanley, of course Johnny Cash for the whole span of his career. I like Kris Kristofferson's songwriting, but don't like him as a singer. One of my favorite albums is Willie Nelson sings Kris Kristofferson. I like Nelson and Waylon Jennings. Charlie Pride is one of my favorites. He is a fellow Mississippian. I like Hank Williams; it's hard to get better lyrical poetry than "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry." Of the newer artists, I like a lot of Alan Jackson's stuff and I also like Brad Paisley.

What is it that draws you to country music?

Moore: Number one, country music is rooted. I'm not talking about the new stuff, but the old country music. There is a Nashville sound and a Bakersfield sound that has really been lost in American culture. Everything is just kind of homogenized. Don Williams sings, "Good Old Boys Like Me" and he sings, "I learned to talk like the man on the six o'clock news." All of American art is moving in that direction of having a sameness and people who aren't from anywhere.

Country music is not like that. There are unique regional sounds and there also is an autobiographical lyrical experience in country music, so that Lynn is singing as a coal miner's daughter and Cash is singing as a man in black. In some other forms of music, there's more of a branding. In country music, at least in the genuine article, it's really not; it is really a recognition that a life is a narrative and I like that.

Theologically, what might Christians find attractive about country music?

Moore: Country music recognizes sin and redemption even from people who are lost. Many of these artists are lost, but they are lost in a different kind of way. Country music tends to bypass, at least a little bit, self-justification. Whereas in some other genres of music you can have sin consistently glorified with no consequences, country music rarely does that. There is a lot of singing about sin but it is always sin that has some hope of redemption or some recognition of judgment — the sowing and reaping and consequences.



Russell D. Moore said country music recognizes the realities of sin and redemption "even from people who are lost." Photo by John Gill

Somebody asked me one day, "How can you listen to people singing who you know use drugs and participate in drunkenness?" Because people use drugs and people get drunk and country music, with some exceptions, is recognizing the full complicatedness of sin. Think of "Ring of Fire" (by Johnny Cash) for instance. June Carter Cash is writing this, talking about adultery kind of on the front end of adultery. This isn't a glorification of adultery; it is a real representation of what adultery feels like — "bound by wild desire, love is a burning thing" — I think that is authentic.

I think a Christian ought to be able to resonate with that because it is formed out of at least a memory of something that came from Scripture. I think the way love is presented in country music is very different from pop music, which is adolescent hormonal (love) only. People joke about country music being a bunch of songs about how my woman left me and there is a lot of that in there. But there is also a lot about middle-aged and elderly people in love. You will never find a top 40 song about elderly people in love or about elderly people falling out of love, but in country music you do have that and I think that's the way it ought to be. In pop music, what you typically have is, "I want to love you all night long," or "I'm going to love you forever," but it's kind of abstractly forever. Country music is more, "We can't make the house payment, but we're going to stay together until we are dead."

See *Country music*, page 6.

TOWERS

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ISSUE INSIGHT

Three chords and the truth — challenges and opportunities in country music

First, I need to settle an offensive question regarding Christians and country music: Should Christians listen to country music? O, please. The prophets and apostles were country music fans. The apostle John was always talking about hard times, as were Peter and Matthew. Who's to say there wasn't sawdust on the floor when Paul broke the news that through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God? Put a steel guitar on that, and try not to mist up. Or what about King David, who said, "The drunkards make songs about me" (Ps 69:12). Really, people. I might be biased.

Choosing church planting over a country music career

I had hit "the big time." Well, kind of. Heading into the summer before my senior year at Middle Tennessee State University, I had been offered my first staff songwriting deal. That, along with the companion artist development contract, was exactly what I had moved from Southern California to Tennessee to attain. My salary? I still have a copy of the check for \$800 for the month of July 1997 — made out to me. Coincidentally, that was also right around the start of my professional career as a restaurant waiter. The big time, I say. (For more on Dorsey's story, go to page 7.)

That was more than 13 years ago. God has since called me into pastoral ministry and led my wife and son and I to Southern Seminary, where I earned an M.Div. in theology in 2007. Now I am a full-time North American Mission Board Nehemiah church planting missionary and pastor of two new churches in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. And as we say in Newfoundland, my perspective on the big time has changed, "b'ye."

Challenges and opportunities for the Gospel in the country music world

When considering faith and country music, we might say with the apostle Paul that the Christian and country music may be permissible,

but not always profitable. For the follower of Christ pursuing a career in country music, I see a few challenges and opportunities.



Adam Dorsey, Master of Divinity Graduate from Southern Seminary and a Nehemiah Church Planter with the North American Mission Board in Canada

One challenge is the influence of cultural Christianity on the content of music produced. Perhaps due in large part to its proximity and persistent popularity in the Bible belt, country music has always enjoyed close fellowship with Christianity. Contemporary bluegrass queen Alison Krauss is quoted as saying, "I'm trying to think of a bluegrass band that doesn't play Gospel. I just can't think of any." This may seem at first to be an asset to country music, and, as I will argue below, it can be. As many have observed, however, Bible Belt cultural Christianity has also weakened the church's doctrinal resolve and Great Commission witness. This dilution of biblical Christianity within the culture has also influenced the lyrical content of country music. A kind of "Oprah New Age spirituality," where everyone is "workin' hard to get to heaven," and, ultimately, everyone goes to heaven, pervades the music that is written and recorded.

For example, I recall several writing sessions where a decision had to be made as to just how explicit we were going to make the Christian message in the song. If we were too "Christian," we might lose a cut. But if, for instance, we just said, "God" instead of "Jesus," we might have a shot at radio. This is the political reality behind the business of country music with which any follower of Christ wanting to work within must wrestle.

Another challenge is the divorcing of faith from work. The rationale usually goes one of two ways. First, "I'm not a preacher; I'm just a

singer." I don't think Francis Schaeffer would buy this; nor the apostles, for that matter. Everyone who speaks, preaches something. As Paul David Tripp says, everyone who speaks, counsels something.

A second rationale is, "We'll reach more people this way." True, maybe; but reach them with what? If the Gospel is the power of God to save, what is the power of a watered-down gospel? Remember, every Christian is commanded to make disciples, not

"Another challenge (to faithfully representing Christ in country music) is the divorcing of faith from work. The rationale usually goes one of two ways. First, 'I'm not a preacher; I'm just a singer.' I don't think Francis Schaeffer would buy this; nor the apostles, for that matter. Everyone who speaks, preaches something."

— Adam Dorsey

fans. A Christian must not entertain the thought that a compromised Gospel message is honoring to Christ. To avoid the subtle slip into this mentality, the Christian country music artist must put on the full armor of God, cultivating first and foremost a personal spiritual fellowship with Christ, His Word and His Gospel, along with submitting himself to the accountability structure of a Gospel-centered local church. Out of the wellspring of that heart will overflow the abundant full-

ness of the Gospel of grace (Ps 119:11).

Just as there are challenges, though, there are opportunities for Great Commission witness in country music. Above I mentioned that country music's connection with Christianity has led to a compromise of orthodox content. On the other hand, unlike other popular genres, such as rock and pop, because of country music's historic connection with, and love of, Christianity (even if increasingly more so to "cultural Christianity"), a Christian songwriter or performer has measurable access to the mainstream. Therefore, any Christian desiring to work in the big leagues of country music should work to the glory of God to seize the opportunity to contribute to the creation of music that is both genuinely "country" and solidly biblical.

Standing firm for the Gospel

In the end, being a Christian in the country music industry will be hard. It will limit your options. Being salt and light means flavoring the world with an offensive message, and exposing the evil of persistent creation worship. E.J. Young says of Daniel, "An honest man of conviction in the midst of government or ecclesiastical politicians stands out like a fair flower in the barren wilderness."

In the end, no Number One Party or Song of the Year award will travel with us at the trumpet's sound. Or, in neon lingo, "You ain't never seen a U-Haul behind a hearse." Moses was commended for "choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin"... considering "the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt" (Heb 11:25, 26).

Put a steel guitar on that; that'll preach.

RESOURCE:

Joshua Harris in chapel

Link to the video of Joshua Harris, senior pastor of Covenant Life Church in Gaithersburg, Md., speaking in chapel at Southern Seminary March 18.

<http://www.sbts.edu/resources/chapel/chapel-spring-2010/total-trust/>

ISSUE INSIGHT

GCRTF progress report: A significant step in the right direction

The Great Commission Resurgence Task Force released a progress report in February in Nashville. It is my privilege to serve with these godly men and women on the Task Force. I watched the members struggle with the complexities of bettering our convention's Great Commission ministries while moving forward together. Unity of vision and heart was accomplished on the Task Force. I pray Southern Baptists will catch the vision and be of one heart as well.

If I were the author of the documents, I might have chosen different words at times. If I had my way on every issue, the report would look different (and no doubt not as good). Some may feel certain areas of Southern Baptist work did not get enough attention. Our major focus was reaching the nations and our nation. I am convinced the Task Force progress report is a significant step in the right direction. All of us are being challenged. It will be difficult, but anything worthwhile always calls for sacrifice.

The Cooperative Program (CP) definition remains unchanged and uncompromised. It is still the preferred channel of giving. Some state conventions introduced a "designated" Cooperative Program in the early 1990s. It is a

failed concept. The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC) was founded with a strong commitment to keep CP an undesignated giving channel for missions and ministry. The



Jim Richards,
Executive Director of
Southern Baptists of Texas
Convention

SBTC has recognized designated gifts from churches from the beginning. In the future Southern Baptists may call those types of gifts "Designated Great Commission Giving." The CP will remain the preferred way of Great Commission Giving.

I will not comment on all the components of GCR progress report in this article, but there is one of the components that is very close to my heart: reaching North America with the Gospel.

I am a traditional Southern Baptist. My comfort zone is with traditional ministries found in many of our churches located in the

deep South or similar rural settings. But much of the world I grew up in is gone. Some of that culture was good, some of it was bad. We can't pine for the "good ole' days" or the way it used to be. Decisions can't be based on my preferences; it has to be about Jesus' passion. His passion was to seek and to save those who are lost.

Our nation is becoming less evangelized every year. Southern Baptists work hard. We will not get the job done by working harder. We have to work smarter. By viewing our nation as the world, we can have a better handle on the getting the Gospel to the burgeoning people groups and diverse culture of the United States. We must find a way to move personnel and finances outside of our strongest areas and redirect them to the places of greatest lossness.

Is the GCR plan perfect? No. Is there time to improve it? Yes. I encourage you to offer positive suggestions. Help us find a way to move in the most aggressive way possible with the Gospel toward lossness in America. It is my desire for God to use Southern Baptists as a tool of national spiritual awakening. It can be a spiritual morning in America. It will take a Joel chapter two experience. It also requires us to get outside the box to see what God would have

us do differently.

We all want men, women, boys and girls to experience life in Christ. Business as usual will not get it done. An undeniable decline in the number of baptisms to population growth has

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— Jim Richards

taken place for decades. After much prayer and study the Task Force has cast a vision. I believe God is giving us one more opportunity to put our money and personnel where we say our hearts are. Let's go for it, together.

ISSUE INSIGHT

A new name for Southern Baptist Convention giving

I thank God every day that I have godly parents. Being reared in the deep South I was taught the southern graces such as responding with "Yes ma'am, no ma'am," and "Yes sir, no sir." I sometimes get funny looks when I use these deeply-rooted, culturally-gracious terms.

"While some suggest that using the term 'Great Commission Giving' to apply to both the Cooperative Program and designated gifts, elevates designations and devalues the CP, the term was not conceived to do either, but rather to acknowledge, with gratitude, all that our churches are giving to Kingdom causes through our convention."

— Robert White

Honestly, I can't help it.

I was also taught to say, "Thank you," and "No, thank you." When using these words I have received the surprised response of some



Robert White,
Executive Director of the
Georgia Baptist Convention

folks who say, "Well, thank you for saying 'Thank you.'"

I have learned through the years that saying "Thank you" often produces gratitude. People just naturally appreciate being thanked, and are generally encouraged to do more.

In the GCR Task Force report to the SBC Executive Committee, it was revealed that the task force is recommending the term "Great Commission Giving" in making reference to the mission gifts from our Southern Baptist

Churches for the Cooperative Program (CP) and designations to the causes of the SBC, state conventions and associations.

The term "Great Commission Giving" is intended to more clearly define the purpose and destination of our mission gifts. The report makes it abundantly clear that the CP is Southern Baptist's primary and preferred means of supporting missions for it supports the whole program of Southern Baptist missions and ministries.

Designated gifts to SBC, state and association causes are included as Great Commission gifts because they are. While some suggest that using the term "Great Commission Giving" to apply to both the CP and designated gifts, elevates designations and devalues the CP, the term was not conceived to do either, but rather to acknowledge, with gratitude, all that our churches are giving to Kingdom causes through our convention.

Designations include the familiar convention causes of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North Ameri-

can Missions, World Hunger, State Missions Offerings, Children's Homes Offerings and others. These are convention-approved offerings. Also included are gifts given to your local association.

While some have expressed fear that this will encourage SBC entities to solicit funds from our churches, the Business and Finance Plan of the SBC Executive Committee prohibits such activity from SBC entities that receive support through the CP. It is absolutely essential that the boards of trustees of our entities exercise strict control over their entities to see that direct solicitation among our churches does not happen. Such solicitation is a direct threat to the very existence of the CP.

The hour is urgent and the need critical as a clarion call is given to Southern Baptists to recognize the need for Great Commission giving. The time for unity is here. Let's unite under the theme of "Great Commission Giving." Let's do it for our missionaries. Let's do it for our ministries. Let's do it for our Jesus, Who commanded that we take the Gospel to the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Country music

Continued from Page 3.

On one hand, George Jones sings “Wrong’s What I Do Best” and then on the other hand, Hank Williams Sr. sings, “I Saw the Light.” Both sin and grace seem to abound in country music. Do you think country music has both of them mostly right?

Moore: I don’t have any evidence that Hank ever knew the Lord, but he seemed to halfway want to know the Lord. In “I Saw the Light” and in his Luke the Drifter stuff, you have a longing for redemption. It’s almost Augustine (saying), “give me chastity, but not yet.” You see what redemption is, but you know that you’re not ready for it. I think that’s present in country music.

If somebody could just understand what is going on in, “I Saw the Light,” or if they could just understand how Willie Nelson can sing Amazing Grace and then move right into “Whiskey River,” I think they would be much more missiologically-equipped than they are by listening to happy-clappy Christian music.

Americans are said to live within a contradiction in which a deep

religiosity exists alongside a fairly pronounced ethical Antinomianism and many see country music as reflecting that paradox. Do you agree with that?

Moore: Yes, but I don’t think it’s American, I think it’s Southern Baptist. Most of the country music that we hear is coming from a person who has either been redeemed through a Southern Baptist version of Christianity or damned by a Southern Baptist version of Christianity. So, all of the best aspects of Southern Baptist “Just As I Am” revivalism are present in country music — the idea that no one is too far for redemption, the idea of new beginnings, being born again — all those are present in country music.

But you also have the carnal, “Jesus is my Savior but not my Lord,” unregenerate person, keeping the hypocrisy hidden under the church attendance — all that is present too. Even from artists who are not Baptists, but are growing up in a Bible Belt South, where, as one sociologist put it, “Baptists are the center of gravity,” we (Southern Baptist culture) created country music for both good and for ill.

How has country music affected the SBC and vice versa?

Moore: When you look at the trajectory of country music as coming out of the South, it became more and more commercial and more and more “showy” and consumerist. So did the SBC. Whether there is a direct link or whether the common cultural factors were impacting both the Grand Ole Opry and the SBC remains to be seen, but both follow a similar trajectory.

Country music started as a group of people who were largely despised as ignorant hillbillies and rednecks, but who are playing the music that arises out of their experience and speaking to that experience.

Country music was not even welcomed in Nashville at the beginning; the cultural elites of Nashville hated the idea of being identified with country music because they saw it as backward. But country music spoke so well to the experience of common people, that it became commercially viable and then commercially profitable. The more commercially profitable it became, the more mainstream it became in the culture and the more mainstream it became in the culture, the more like the rest of the culture it became and the more that it was then shaped by that commercial success.

The SBC has exactly the same trajectory. It starts with a group of people who are cut off from the established churches, seen as backward, but able to speak to common people with the simplicity of the Gospel, and able to speak so well

that the SBC becomes successful. The more successful the churches become, the more consumerist and elite they become and the less powerful.

“If somebody could just understand what is going on in, “I Saw the Light,” or if they could just understand how Willie Nelson can sing Amazing Grace and then move right into “Whiskey River,” I think they would be much more missiologically-equipped than they are by listening to happy-clappy Christian music.”

— Russell D. Moore

Why do people like to listen to Cash on American VI or American V when he is singing, “Hurt?” It’s because it is a dying man. You don’t see a strong, sober picture of a man facing death. Instead you have the authenticity of somebody whose voice is raspy and who is dying. The difference between Cash and Rascal Flatts is the difference between a prophetic, marginalized Baptist witness and the slick packaged product of Southern Baptist success.

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SBTS expands summer schedule

By GARRETT E. WISHALL

Students will have twice as many classes from which to choose this summer with an expanded schedule that is also five weeks longer than a year ago.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is making the move in an effort to best meet the changing schedule demands of students.

“We’re hopeful that by doubling the number of courses students want and need, and by lengthening the time of the summer term that students will seize the opportunity to take more hours this summer than they might have otherwise,” said Don Whitney, senior associate

dean of the School of Theology and associate professor of biblical spirituality at Southern.

The summer class period will begin May 18 this year and extend until Aug. 11, beginning two weeks earlier than a year ago and extending an extra three weeks. Online registration will begin March 29 for the summer term as well as the fall semester.

Summer classes cover the same amount of material as a semester-long course, but in a concentrated amount of time (one week for most classes).

The registration schedule is available on Southern’s website at: www.sbts.edu/current-students/files/registration-schedule.pdf.

RESOURCE:

Panel Discussion on Brian McLaren’s new book

Members of the SBTS faculty discuss Brian McLaren’s “A New Kind of Christianity.”
<http://www.sbts.edu/resources/chapel/chapel-spring-2010>

My father's son: Brand making a name in country music

By JEFF ROBINSON

In his song "Walking in My Father's Shoes," Craig Morgan sings lovingly of a father who taught his son how to be a man by example: "He taught me so many things, even when he wasn't trying to," one line recalls.

Country music has a cherished tradition of emphasizing the often complex relationship between fathers and sons.

On the positive side of the ledger, it has celebrated the fathers who were worthy of emulation.

In one of his most beloved hits, "A Father's Love," George Strait croons about the love between a father and son, typifying it as "a love without end, amen." The song ends by comparing an earthly father's love to that which the Heavenly Father possesses for His people. President George H.W. Bush, a lifelong country music aficionado, called Strait's song his favorite because it reminds him of a treasured relationship with his own sons.

On the negative side, country has also mourned deeply those fathers who were MIA.

Hank Williams, Jr., has often written songs that reflect wistfully on the tragic legacy of his father, Hank Williams, Sr., a legend who died at age 29 after little more than a half-decade of hit-making and hard-living. The elder Williams left a legacy of womanizing, drunkenness and drug abuse that no son would benefit from emulating.

Owen Brand, son of Chad Brand, professor of theology at Boyce College and Southern Seminary, is in position to write a song of the decidedly more joyful variety about his father's legacy and personal impact. At 27, the younger Brand is a rising country music talent who, alongside musical heroes such as Merle Haggard, Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings, places Chad Brand as the most influential man in his life.

"My dad has taught me about great theology and early on, he sat me down and taught me about good music," Brand said. "Dad and I are very close and he has been a great influence on my life and my music."

Owen Brand

Owen Brand's musical pilgrimage began some 13 years ago at age 14 after his father introduced him to classic rock and country artists such as the Beatles, Johnny Cash and Merle Haggard and challenged him to assess the worldviews communicated in each. Owen soon took up playing guitar, another of his father's longtime pleasures, and at 14 played his first paid gig.

"When I was 13 I got my first guitar for Christmas and I started playing in bands a couple of years after that, all local stuff," Owen Brand said. "My first gig was at an opening of a Burger King in South Carolina at age 14. We got \$40 apiece for it and each of us got a cardboard Burger King crown."



Owen Brand (left) said he has "a really solid relationship with God and my family, and of course, with my dad." SBTS prof. Chad Brand (right) is Owen's father. Photo by Devin Maddox

These days, Brand is not playing openings for hamburger joints, but is fronting, as lead singer and guitarist, his own group known as "Firebrand," a band that includes his wife, Whitney. Brand also regularly plays shows as a freelance guitarist for other groups. His travels are often rigorous and have taken him in recent years from the southernmost tip of the U.S., Key West, Fla., to the upper northwest, including the Dakotas and the Rocky Mountains.

Firebrand performs cover tunes of classic country and Southern Rock artists, but also sings original songs that Brand has written. Brand writes in the classical storytelling vein of old country music. In the fall, he plans to record his first full-length original album with famed producer Elliott Mazer, who has worked with such folk rock legends as Bob Dylan and Janis Joplin.

The elder Brand, who also plays guitar and loves classic country, says he was awakened to his son's significant musical gifts long ago and has watched them gain momentum like a Southern Railway engine in a Boxcar Willie song.

"I think Owen has been gifted by God," Chad Brand said. "When he first learned to play, we would play together and I would play 'Proud Mary' or something like that. I would play the cords and sing a little bit and he said, 'I'll never be able to do that.' Within six months, he had far outstripped me. He is incredibly gifted both as a guitarist and a vocalist."

In recent months, when Owen was home from the road, the two Brands have played and sung Gospel songs in church together at Northside Baptist Church in Elizabethtown where Chad Brand serves as pastor. Most recently, they dueted on Josh Turner's hit "Long Black Train."

Representing Christ

Owen Brand says he is drawn to country music because of the genre's ability to communicate stories that relate to both the hard times and good times that form the metanarrative of everyday life. Country music, with its close historic ties to Gospel and blues music, is an excellent means for communicating the fallenness of the world and every man's need for divine grace, he said.

"The book of Job is the perfect wrap up of country music," he said. "Look at the book of Job and tell me that's not every country music song you ever heard? Job didn't have a pickup truck, but if had, it would have been stolen. That's the kind of thing I'm talking about."

"The world we live in is fallen. If I'm out there singing my songs in these clubs and restaurants on Saturday nights and I can cause people to ask the right questions and seek wisdom from someone in their lives like their pastors, then that would make me happy."

"If you were to take a theological example of what I am talking about, think about Jonathan Edwards' first delivery of 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.' People were crawling over the pews to be saved and he told them, 'No, go home and come back next week.' That's how I feel about writing and singing. If, when I play and sing, somebody gets to a point to where they want some answers they are going to go ask the people who can point them to the answer."

Working in an industry in which the artists often live out the honky-tonk songs they perform, how does Owen Brand hope to make an impact as a follower of Christ? First and foremost, he wants both his fans and fellow

artists to witness something different in his daily life.

"You have to be around sinners if you are going to speak to sinners," he said. "But you have to be in the world, but not of it. I get a chance every time I play to lead by example. Often, people will want to buy me a shot (of an alcoholic beverage), and I say, 'Give me a Diet Coke and I'll be fine.' By the end of the night, I'll have 12-15 Diet Cokes lined up on the stage. You'd be surprised how people notice that."

"When you are up playing in front of people, they are watching everything you do. So, they notice when you aren't drinking and you are able after the set and to interact with and be gracious to the fans."

Further plumbing the father-son line, how will Chad Brand, who often attends his son's performances when they are within close proximity, help his son avoid the dark underbelly of the entertainment world?

"I encourage him to avoid the dark side of the music industry," Chad Brand said. "I probably had to do that more in the earlier days than now, because he has really found his own footing. I don't really feel like I have to tell him what to do at this point, because he isn't caught up in the dark side of the music industry at all."

"The book of Job is the perfect wrap up of country music. Look at the book of Job and tell me that's not every country music song you ever heard? Job didn't have a pickup truck, but if had, it would have been stolen. That's the kind of thing I'm talking about."

— Owen Brand

Having his wife and infant son — named Buck Owen Brand after Buck Owens, who pioneered the Bakersfield country sound — on the road with him much of the time provides natural, and much-welcomed, accountability.

Dad, Owen Brand said, will always be there as well.

"It is a hostile environment," he said. "I have really good structural foundation build into my life. I have a great family. I have a really solid relationship with God and my family, and of course, with my dad. I am very thankful for these relationships."



with **Jeff Gayhart**



A cross section of the student body of Southern Seminary

Hometown:

Crossville, Tenn.

What are you earliest memories of music?

"I am a country music boy. I'm from Crossville, Tenn., up in those mountains. I grew up with my Papaw singing old country songs from Roy Acuff and Willie Nelson."

What sparked your interest in playing the guitar?

"My grandpa got a guitar for his retirement in 1982 from my grandma and he gave me that guitar before he passed away. He would teach me a song or two during the summers, and they ended up buying me a guitar when I was in eighth grade. I fooled around with it a little, but by the time I was in college country music was really getting big. Garth Brooks had just come out and every guy in the world wanted to sit down with a guitar at a party and be able to sing a few songs. There were standard songs you just had to know, like Brown Eyed Girl. This was also the time of the hair-bands like Poison and Cinderella. Those bands had these major power-ballads, but every group would have at least one acoustic love song that you could play with just the guitar. So when my friends started playing guitar, I picked mine up again and really started getting serious about music."

When did you decide to make music your career?

"I decided at one point to move to Texas and become a songwriter, so I moved to Austin in 1997 and lived there for three years just playing music. Then, I ended up in Nashville chasing that neon-rainbow. So I went through the progression of playing, then trying to write my own songs and then trying to get famous."

How did you see the Lord's hand in your life during those years?

"The Lord was gracious enough for me not to get famous. It is fool's-gold. I knew some guys that did well, but as we all know money, power, attention, fame and all those kinds of things can corrupt. So, after seeing that close up, it was pretty awesome for God to say 'I know you can't handle this, so I'm not going to give it to you. So instead I'm going to have you make no money, and not become famous, and have you use music for a higher purpose than glorifying yourself.'

"In Nashville, I would have doors open and I'd think 'this it, this is my opportunity,' then that door would close, and then another one would open. I can look back and say how gracious and awesome God is that I didn't get sucked into that life."

When did you leave Nashville and head for Southern Seminary?

Gayhart started at Southern in spring 2007.

What are your future plans?

"I am graduating in May with a master of divinity from the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism. Right now I'm applying for the Ph.D. program. With the International Mission Board being in a difficult situation financially it is going to take 18 months or so to actually get on the field, so I wanted to use my time wisely and I think the Ph.D. program will end up being very useful down the road."



Tweetable features "tweets" from Southern Seminary faculty and other leaders in Southern Baptist life.

@drmoore

Timothy is joining me on a speaking trip. You've never seen anyone so excited to go to Pine Bluff, Arkansas. He's packed and ready.

<http://twitter.com/drmoore>

@ BushTroy

New Orleans still facing challenges & great opportunities 4 urban min. Kingdom-minded leaders R needed more than ever.

<http://twitter.com/BushTroy>

@davidsills

Trusting in God's promises and flying into the teeth of all threatening circumstances to the contrary is a pleasing sacrifice.

<http://twitter.com/davidsills>

Bird illustration Copyright © 2009 Luc Latulippe



That's what I love about ministry: Former Nashville songwriter sees God's providence in call to plant churches

By JEFF ROBINSON

(Editor's note: The following is an updated version of a story that first ran in the Spring 2007 edition of the *Southern Seminary Magazine*)

Adam Dorsey has packed so much living into the past few years it might make for a good country/western song on par with "Walkin' the Floor Over You."

As any country music fan knows, an authentic country verse contains at least three elements: a major heartache book-ended by loving and leaving. Dorsey, a graduate of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has experienced all three over the past 15 years.

But Dorsey, himself an accomplished writer of country tunes, is quick to point out that his storyline differs from the typical country lyric in that God has been the chief actor who has orchestrated the verses of his life's song both for Dorsey's good and God's glory.

Loving

In talking to Dorsey, three main loves emerge: Christ, family and music. A native of Riverside, Calif., Dorsey was converted as a young boy. His love for country music also took root at a young age and accelerated at 16, when Dorsey's father gave him his first guitar. A songwriter was soon born.

"I've probably written 200 or 300 songs since I was 16," Dorsey said. "I started writing songs immediately to help me learn to play the guitar."

At 18, Dorsey moved from California to Nashville to pursue a career as a songwriter. In 1997, his senior year as a music business major at Middle Tennessee State University, Dorsey met the woman who a year later would become his wife — Christi Leigh Doyle. That year, Dorsey also signed his first publishing deal, one that paid \$800 per month.

Dorsey seemed to be on the fast track as one of Nashville's bright young songwriters. But little did he know that God was going to teach him the discipline of patience as he toiled for seven years without scoring a major recording label, waiting tables to help support his family.

"I loved what I was doing, so I kept at it," he said. "These companies would say, 'you're doing a good job, these are good songs, but we don't



Adam Dorsey and his wife Christi rejoice in their adopted son, Jacob. The Dorseys live in Canada, where Adam serves as a church planter. Photo by John Gill

want to cut any of them. Just keep writing."

"Both Christi and I worked during the day and I waited tables at night. ... It was pretty frustrating, but God was definitely working in our lives and looking back, we know that now."

Heartache

In 2001, the couple learned that Christi was going to need a liver transplant. So advanced was her liver disease that Vanderbilt University immediately put Christi on its transplant list. Worse, the couple's doctor told them that the liver condition would prohibit child bearing. In December 2003, the Dorseys joined a waiting list to adopt a baby.

"We really learned to trust God," he said. "We strongly desired to have our own child, but as soon as we got the news we started thinking about adoption. As hard as it was to accept, we still knew God's plan was better than ours."

Not longer after this, Dorsey learned that Craig Morgan, a relative newcomer to Music Row, had chosen one of his songs, "That's What I Love About Sunday," for his upcoming album. But the news was tempered a few days later when Dorsey's publishing company informed him that his contract would not be renewed.

To make matters even more confusing, Dorsey said something strange was going on inside his mind. As he and Christi were growing under sound biblical teaching at First

Baptist Church of Spring Hill, Tenn., Dorsey began to sense that God was calling him out of the music business and into the ministry.

"I couldn't get the sense of God's calling to ministry off my mind," he said. "I told Christi, not knowing what in the world she would think, but she said, 'I've thought for a while that He was.'"

Leaving

Dorsey's call to the ministry proved to be, in the words of George Strait, "a fire he couldn't put out." Yet, the commercial success as a songwriter that had eluded him was approaching at the speed of the Orange Blossom Special. In November 2004, Broken Bow Records — a small independent label — released the first single from Morgan's new album: "That's What I Love About Sunday."

By March, the song — co-written by Mark Narmore — chronicling Lord's Day activities with a Mayberry ethos, had climbed to No. 2 on the Billboard Hot Country Singles chart. On March 26, 2005, it reached No. 1, where it remained five weeks, setting a record for chart success by a song from an independent label.

"We started watching the charts and it just kept climbing higher and higher," he said. "It didn't make any sense for a song from a small independent label to climb that high. God definitely blessed us. I watched this knowing the whole time that I was going to leave songwriting for the ministry. Never did I doubt God's calling."

In November 2004, the Dorseys had adopted their son, Jacob. The couple was in the delivery room at the birth mother's request when Jacob was born. The young woman

chose the Dorseys to adopt her son in spite of Christi's liver disorder.

"We saw God work in an incredible way with us adopting Jacob," he said. "The birth mother chose our profile because her grandfather had a liver disorder and was completely cured. What we thought might prohibit us from adopting God used as a catalyst for adopting Jacob."

In May 2005, the Dorseys bade farewell to Nashville and moved to New Orleans where Adam enrolled at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. But their leaving days weren't over. In August, Hurricane Katrina demolished the Crescent City and put New Orleans Seminary, and most of the Dorseys' worldly possessions, under water. Soon, the family found itself on the road again, this time bound for Louisville, Christi's hometown, and Southern Seminary.

"All along, I was planning on ministering as a Navy chaplain but while in seminary, I was pulled out of my first church planting class by a phone call from the Navy recruiter who told me that I was medically disqualified from service because of childhood asthma," Dorsey said.

"I have learned very clearly that we can make our plans, but God is in control."

Dorsey graduated from Southern in December 2007. Presently, the Dorseys have helped plant two churches in St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada. The Dorseys are working alongside the family of another Southern Seminary alumnus, Steve Grissom. Christi received a liver transplant early last year and it is functioning well.

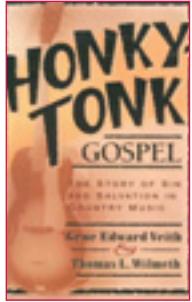
While his full-time focus differs presently from that of his days on Music Row, Dorsey has by no means divorced his musical gifts.

"God is teaching me more and more how to surrender every aspect of my life to the ministry of the Gospel," he said. "This is my renewed vision for my gift of music. As a result, I have been writing songs consistently since I moved here. In fact, just before Christmas, I finished a new CD, 'My Story' with 10 new songs that I've written since moving to the mission field.

"I also lead our groups in a time of musical worship at the beginning of our study time. This has helped cultivate a sense of community, as well as preparing our groups to become Christ-exalting churches, God willing."

Books old and new

By RUSSELL D. MOORE



“Honky-Tonk Gospel: The Story of Sin and Salvation in Country Music” by Gene Edward Veith and Thomas L. Wilmeth (Baker Book House 2001, \$12.50)

This article first appeared in the April 2005 issue of Touchstone under the title “Graced Lightning.”

How can artists like Willie Nelson end a concert by moving, without comment, from crooning “Whiskey River, Take My Mind” to softly singing “Amazing Grace?” The authors of “Honky-Tonk Gospel” — published four years ago but still the only book of its sort — contend that this is not as contradictory as it seems, since the popular music and the popular religion of the American South feed off a common understanding of theological questions, such as the relationship between sin and grace.

Gene Edward Veith and Thomas L. Wilmeth suggest that country music helps explain southern pop theology largely because this art form, unlike many others, “has a way of acknowledging the sinfulness of sin.” They root southern folk music in the revivalist worship of frontier Baptists and Methodists, for whom “the line between the camp meeting and the church service began to blur” in the nineteenth century.

The authors are both noted Evangelical worldview analysts. Wilmeth teaches English at Concordia University, and Veith is culture editor of World magazine.

“Evangelicals indeed must pay attention to the writings of John Calvin and John Wesley. But we must also pay attention to Johnny Cash.”

— Russell D. Moore

Music’s testimony

Since country music has represented a kind of “secularized testimony,” it can focus attention, simultaneously, on drunkenness and infidelity on the one hand and marital love and Christian conversion on the other. Using country music as a test case for the cultural context of southern religion, the authors explore the theological assumptions behind the lyrics of country musicians, assumptions

that resonate in the region’s pulpits as well as its radio airwaves.

They have identified some surprising — but deeply pervasive — theological underpinnings present in both southern music and southern religion. One such underpinning is a complex view of gender and sexuality. While southern folk culture, and especially southern religion, have been caricatured as reflexively misogynist and patriarchal, the lyrics of country music songs reflect a much more complicated tension.

Female singers like Kitty Wells and Loretta Lynn sing about the need for respect for women, but they do so from the vantage point not of secular feminism, but of a Christian tradition of husbands honoring their wives and families by refusing to abandon them for the neighborhood bar or the woman on the next barstool.

Similarly, while a country music song might be as sexually explicit as its “Top 40” counterpart on the radio dial, the romantic overtures in country music are more often directed to one’s spouse than to an illicit lover. Veith and Wilmeth attribute this to a residual cultural nod toward the Christian belief in the goodness of marriage.

At the same time, they diagnose a trend in country music toward a postmodern rejection of universal truth claims or any overarching meta-narrative capable of explaining history and morality. The fact that postmodern lingo can find its way into the most conservative and tradition-laden of American popular art forms is, for the writers, a warning signal to the churches of an epistemological nihilism growing in the culture at large — and in their own churches as well.

But this nihilism was preceded by an even more longstanding antinomianism in southern popular culture, fed by the preaching of southern churches on the doctrine of salvation. Country music often illustrates, in full color, the kinds of “carnal Christian” soteriological concepts that are almost cultural givens in the American South. Thus, pastors who are familiar with what is being sung from Nashville should not be completely surprised to see the funeral of the town drunk feature the singing of “I Saw the Light.” After all, the writer of the song, Hank Williams Sr., was himself an unrepentant alcoholic and adulterer — and a very public professing Evangelical Christian.

Country’s churches

Veith and Wilmeth also very helpfully use country music lyrics to expose the culture’s love-hate relationship with the local congregation. They argue compellingly that southern culture has adopted an unbiblical, individualistic view of human spirituality that is the direct

result of a truncated Evangelical ecclesiology.

Country music lyrics, therefore, speak incessantly of the church, but always of the abandoned little country church in which the repentant sinner bows and prays — alone. As the writers conclude, “In contemporary country music, the church as the place of salvation has all but disappeared.”

It can be argued that these lyrics simply reflect what southern Evangelicalism itself has embraced for too long: a gospel in which “Jesus saves” the individual soul, rather than the biblical message in which Jesus purchases individuals and calls them together as a church (Eph 5:25-30). The cultural pervasiveness of this notion should spur Southern Baptists and other Evangelicals toward the project of emphasizing the need for a biblical and theological understanding of the church as the Body of Christ and the focal point of personal salvation.

“Honky-Tonk Gospel” offers a helpful method of cultural analysis. Unlike some contemporary

Evangelicals, this book’s authors do not treat popular culture as in any way revelatory. The Spirit is not seen to be speaking through the lyrics of George Jones or the Dixie Chicks. Cultural analysis thus serves as a missiological exercise rather than an epistemological one.

This book, therefore, is a helpful tool for Christians seeking to navigate a region that Flannery O’Connor famously called “Christ-haunted.” While country music enthusiasts across the nation have hailed this book for its thoughtful treatment of the art form, the volume may prove even more valuable for pastors and theologians as they seek to diagnose the sometimes hidden theologies in the pews of southern churches.

As such, “Honky-Tonk Gospel” helps to remind us that the world is made up of theologians, some of whom acknowledge the Creator and some of whom do not (Rom 1). Evangelicals indeed must pay attention to the writings of John Calvin and John Wesley. But we must also pay attention to Johnny Cash.

Moore speaks at first-ever Desiring God Parenting Seminar

By ROBERT E. SAGERS

What does parenting have to do with the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Absolutely everything, contends Russell D. Moore.

Moore, dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary, spoke at the first-ever Desiring God Parenting Seminar hosted by Bethlehem Baptist Church, March 5-6 in Minneapolis, Minn. Desiring God is affiliated with the ministry of John Piper, Bethlehem Baptist Church’s pastor for preaching and vision.

Preaching three sessions on “Crucified Parenting” to more than 500 seminar registrants, Moore rooted the biblical call to parenting in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Preaching on what Joseph of Nazareth can teach families about raising God-imaging boys, Moore said that fathers provide for their sons identity, provision, protection and fidelity.

Calling on fathers to raise their sons to be masculine, Moore noted the difference between satanic masculinity and Christ-honoring masculinity. Satanic masculinity, he said, seeks to sever fathers from sons. At Calvary, however, even when it seemed that God had abandoned his Son, Jesus cried out in prayer to His Father. Just as sons will identify with their earthly fathers, so Christians are to identify with the Son of God in relating to their heavenly Father.

Likewise, Mary of Nazareth has much to teach families about how to raise God-exalting girls, Moore said. Mary’s life exemplified honor, submission, power and a lack of fear.

Lastly, Moore preached on how Jesus’ childhood has much to teach families about how to raise God-anointed boys and girls. The Bible demonstrates how Jesus’ rootedness, submission and obedience, wisdom, humility, maturity and discipline are evident even in His earliest years of life.

Speaking to the issue of the so-called “silent years” of Jesus — that is, the lack of explicit biblical reference to Jesus’ life between the ages of 12 and 30 — Moore argued that the Bible does display Jesus in every stage of life: as an embryo, infant, child and adult. Churches, then, ought to be training children to be adults, not focusing on the adolescent teenage years as a separate life stage category.

Moore also preached at Bethlehem Baptist’s Saturday evening and Sunday morning worship services. Moore filled in for Piper, who is on writing leave. Moore’s title and text for the sermon was “Jacob and Esau in the Church Nursery: Protecting Your Boys and Girls from Satanic Masculinity and Femininity” (Gen 25:19-34).

Moore likened filling the pulpit for Piper to “Little Jimmy Dickens singing for Amadeus Mozart.”

By JEFF ROBINSON



“Johnny Cash: The Biography” by Michael Streissguth (Da Capo Press 2006, \$15.95)

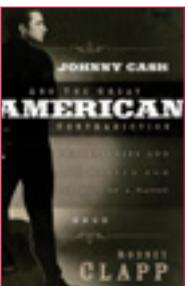
Like many of the hit makers in classic country music, the life and musical career of Johnny Cash was marked by deep paradoxes. On the one hand, Cash was the product of Great Depression-era Arkansas, the descendant of a poor but proud agrarian family, one that prized church involvement, Bible reading and singing old Gospel hymns. On the other hand, he was the world famous man in black, a fast-lane musician who battled the demons of drug addiction, guilt and self-doubt, who, by God’s arresting grace, overcame them at last and blossomed into an exalted face on the Mount Rushmore of Music Row. Cash was also a devout follower of Christ, whose testimony to the transforming power of divine grace grew more prominent in his music and personal witness as he hurtled toward the



“Getting the Blues: What Blues Music Teaches Us About Suffering & Salvation” by Stephen J. Nichols (Brazos Press 2008, \$19.99)

What does the Mississippi Delta have to do with Jerusalem? Stephen Nichols knows the connection well and traces it out artfully in his delightful book on blues music and the Christian Gospel.

Nichols argues that blues music, particularly in its early-mid 20th century deep South form,



“Johnny Cash and the Great American Contradiction: Christianity and the Battle for the Soul of a Nation” by Rodney Clapp (Westminster John Knox 2008, \$16.95)

Clapp sets forth his thesis early and clearly in this intriguing analysis of Christianity in America: “In this brief book, I will focus on America’s great contradictions, its simultaneous embrace of holiness and hedonism, its pining love of tradition as it carries on a headlong romantic affair with progress, its extreme individualism coursing beside a gigantic, gaping yearning for

end of his life. Michael Streissguth has captured these seemingly disparate hues of Cash.

Streissguth divides Cash’s life into five distinct periods from birth in 1932 to death in 2003. He begins by setting Cash firmly within his poverty-stricken early life as the son of a farming family in rural Arkansas. Here, we meet a stern and mostly detached father and a saintly mother, the sole parental encourager of the family’s Christian faith. The book also chronicles the tragic death of the older brother whom Johnny idolized, Jack Cash, a budding Baptist preacher, who died in a sawmilling accident as a young teen. Jack’s death haunted Johnny deep into his adult years.

Streissguth explores Cash’s stress-inducing time in the military and moves easily into the early years of his music career. Here, the author chronicles in powerfully vivid detail Cash’s growing propensity toward self-destructive behavior, a factor that gained strength in direct correlation to the flowering of the artist’s fame. During this period, Cash began to use drugs, a reality which brought about a precipitous estrangement from his first wife, Vivian, and their three daughters. Like the 2005 movie,

is much like a Flannery O’Connor work: it is haunted by suffering, but is also inhibited by the events of Good Friday and Easter morning. Nichols rightly calls it “theology in a minor key.” The music and lyrics of blues greats, such as Muddy Waters and Robert Johnson, exegete well the biblical narrative of a suffering people who must be rescued by One outside themselves. But, Nichols asserts, the moaning slide guitars and talk-back lyrics also contain an omnipresent Savior who has come to rescue them from their burden of sin. Throughout the book, Nichols seeks to harmonize the narrative of Scripture with those of the songs of the Mississippi Delta.

community, and its insistence on innocence at the same time it revels in violence. ... To bring an even sharper focus to America’s great democracy and its great contradictions, I will concentrate on a single country music artist, Johnny Cash.”

For Clapp, Cash in particular, and country music in general, embodies America’s dual competing affections for religiosity and unbri-dled pleasure: “In country music, holiness is the pork to hedonism’s beans.” Country music artists and southern folk in general possess this great contradiction, Clapp insists, “because they both grew up in church.” His book will provoke much thought for those interested in the relationship between Christianity in America and its democratic and pleasure-

“Walk the Line,” Streissguth does nothing to hide the sinfulness of Cash’s adulterous relationship with June Carter, who would later become the singer’s second wife. The book spends much time chronicling their relationship, but, unlike the movie, it shows the flaws in both Cash and Carter, ultimately blaming both for breaking their own marriage vows. The movie also compressed the post-addiction years of Cash’s life as if he were redeemed and entirely clean after his marriage to June Carter, but Streissguth corrects that misconception and shows how Cash continued to wrestle with many of his old demons well into the 1980s.

While the biography paints the darker side of the man in black, it also sheds seldom seen light on his Christian faith. In the context of filming “The Gospel Road,” Cash’s 1973 movie about the life of Jesus, Streissguth provides an account of Cash’s conversion on May 9, 1971, at a tiny Assembly of God church in Hendersonville, Tenn. The author credits the birth of Johnny and June’s son, John Carter Cash, as the means that spawned a pronounced spiritual awakening in Cash.

One of the most interesting facets of the book from an evangelical perspective is its account of the relationship Cash formed with evangelist



“Sing a Sad Song: The Life of Hank Williams” by Roger M. Williams (University of Illinois 1981, \$22.95)

The history and themes of country music are virtually incomprehensible without a basic comprehension of the life of Hank Williams, country music’s tragic hero. What Delilah was to Samson, the honky-tonk lifestyle — in Williams’ case, pills mixed with alcohol — was to Williams, perhaps the most talented, but troubled country music singer who ever lived.

In early 1953, Williams died at 29, an artist in the flower of his career. And he left this world pathetically, in the back seat of his car having died from an overdose of pain killers. Chillingly, the final single released shortly before Hank’s death was, “I’ll Never Get Out of This World Alive.” Like many vintage country-western artists, Williams was a bundle of contradictions, all of them reflected in his music. He recorded one of the best known songs of all-time, “Your Cheatin’ Heart,” released posthumously, weeks after his death. The hit told of the heart-wrenching effects of breaking the Seventh Commandment (“thou shalt not commit adultery”). But Williams also wrote music

Billy Graham in the early 1970s. Johnny and June Carter Cash often performed in Graham crusades and were regular visitors to the Graham home in Black Mountain, N.C. Interestingly, the book also touts at some length Cash’s zeal for personal evangelism and illustrates his concern for lost souls by providing a brief account of Cash’s efforts at converting workers on his road crew. “He was so glad that he was doing something that would affect peoples’ lives with the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” Streissguth writes. Cash’s desire to see souls won to Christ led to his making of “The Gospel Road.”

Though it is not an explicitly Christian biography, Streissguth’s work renders a resounding witness to Cash’s evangelical faith. There is much sin and grace in this book and Streissguth’s attention to details, some of which have not been heretofore reported, make both clear. The Cash that emerges is a deeply troubled man, hounded by sin and weakness, but a man who was keenly aware of his fallenness and depravity, a man in black who encountered the God/man Jesus Christ, who subdued Cash’s rebellion and clothed him in the white robes of His perfect righteousness. It is a book that provides a clear illustration of why the Good News is so good.

as his God-fearing alter-ego “Luke the Drifter,” recording his seminal Gospel classic “I Saw the Light,” which depicts the conversion of one imprisoned in sin’s dark night.

“Sing a Sad Song” by Roger M. Williams’ (no relation to the author, presumably) is a well-written and thoroughly researched account of Williams’ brief, difficult life, his meteoric rise to fame and his self-inflicted demise. Along the way, the reader learns the details — many of them are not for the faint of heart — of Hank’s brilliant, though brief, music career, his two incendiary marriages and his tumultuous relationships with virtually every person who entered his relational sphere. This book is sympathetic to Williams, but by no means drifts into hagiography. Roger Williams neither mask his subjects myriad flaws, nor does he sensationalize them, and he refuses to perpetuate the gaggle of myths that grew up around Williams and his Drifting Cowboy Band. There are several well-done books on Williams’ life, including a more recent work by Colin Escott simply titled “Hank Williams: The Biography.” For the Christian reader, “Sing a Sad Song” shows the tragedy of a life aimed at Solomon’s pursuit of pleasure in Ecclesiastes, but with the wisdom of chapter 12, which centers genuine pleasure squarely in the fear of God, sadly ignored.

SBTS assists NAMB with 'Buckets of Hope'

By EMILY GRIFFIN

As residents of Haiti seek to put their lives back together, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is working in partnership with Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief to help alleviate the hunger needs in the earthquake-ravaged nation.

The week of March 15, Southern Seminary served as the final collection point for the North American Mission Board's "Buckets of Hope" program in the state of Kentucky. Bob Perkins, director of campus security at Southern, explained that the initiative is the official response to the situation in Haiti from the North American Mission Board. NAMB asked churches and individuals to buy specific food items to put in a five-gallon bucket, Perkins said. Those buckets were then taken to regional

collection points and delivered to the central collection location, Southern Seminary.

Student, faculty and staff volunteers worked throughout the week to load the buckets onto pallets and shrink-wrap the pallets. NAMB will transport the buckets to Hialeah, Fla., where the Florida Baptist Convention will make sure they arrive safely in Haiti.

Each "Bucket of Hope" consists of a plastic five-gallon bucket packed with a standardized set of food items. The food contained in



Southern Seminary students prepare "Buckets of Hope" for shipment to Haiti. Photo by Devin Maddox

a single bucket will feed a Haitian family for a week. Each bucket also includes a \$10 cash contribution to cover the cost of transporting the relief buckets to Haiti.

Coy Webb, disaster relief associate for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, spent a week in Haiti with an assessment team in mid-January and met with two Haitian Baptist Conventions and representatives with the International Mission Board. These conversations led to the idea for the Buckets of Hope.

Wright to be nominated for SBC president

By BP STAFF

Georgia pastor Bryant Wright will be nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Convention, a Florida pastor announced March 12.



Bryant Wright

The nomination of Bryant Wright, senior pastor of the Atlanta-area Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, will be made by David Uth, pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando, according to a March 12 report by the Florida Baptist Witness.

Uth told the Florida Baptist Witness that Wright is "uniquely positioned to continue the much-needed focus on the Great Commission as set forth by Johnny Hunt and the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force."

"Bryant has been a consistent leader among Southern Baptists who acknowledges and appreciates our traditional heritage while embracing some of the creative and innovative methods of reaching today's generation for Christ," the Florida paper quoted Uth as saying.

Uth described Wright as an "example of a missional mindset in leading his church to not only aggressively support the Cooperative Program, but to give generously to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and to other mission causes beyond his own church."

Wright is the founding pastor of Johnson Ferry, which began in 1981 and now reports average weekly worship attendance of 4,383 and a resident membership of 6,121. The

church reported 459 baptisms in 2009. Wright was president of the SBC Pastors' Conference in 2006 in Greensboro, N.C.

Uth said Johnson Ferry "has had a strong missional emphasis from the beginning." Uth said the Georgia church gave 17 percent of budgeted receipts to mission causes in 2009 and "last year alone more than 1,500 members went on 70 mission trips to 27 nations around the world."

Uth said the church has started seven mission churches in Cobb County and north Atlanta and co-sponsored five other church plants.

The church gave \$638,992, or 3.9 percent, of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program in 2009, according to the Georgia Baptist Convention's Annual Church Profile. Wright, in comments to Index editor Gerald Harris March 12, said he wants to see "a greater percentage of our dollars [going] to the IMB, NAMB [North American Mission Board] and our seminaries."

Joe Shadden, Johnson Ferry's finance manager, told the Florida Baptist Witness that the church reduced CP and IMB gifts from 5 percent to 3.5 percent each in its 2009 budget as part of an overall budget reduction in response to the economic recession.

Wright, in a Nov. 5, 2009 column in The Index, called for "a radical reprioritizing of Cooperative Program (CP) funds through our state conventions," affirming SBC President Johnny Hunt's call "for a resurgent focus on fulfilling Christ's Great Commission."

Wright proposed that each state convention keep no more than 25-30 percent of CP funds

in-state so that 50 percent can go to international missions.

"[A]s our lay volunteers began to go in great numbers on mission trips and to partner with ministries around the world, they were absolutely appalled to find how high a percentage of our CP dollars stayed in the state and how little actually wound up on the international mission field," Wright wrote. "So several years ago, we began to dramatically shift the funding to Southern Baptist mission causes by giving 5 percent of the church budget to the CP and 5 percent directly to the IMB in what is considered a monthly gift to the Lottie Moon offering.

"We'd prefer that the full amount we give to Southern Baptist mission causes go through the CP," Wright continued, "but until the formulas change dramatically and most of the dollars go to international missions, we'll keep giving directly to international mission causes, and that percentage may even increase in the days ahead. Our lay leaders in missions are 'chomping at the bit' to do so today."

Wright holds a master of divinity degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. After earning his M.Div., he was minister to single adults at Second Baptist Church in Houston before accepting the pastorate of the Johnson Ferry in December 1981.

No other nominees for SBC offices have been announced to date; the SBC annual meeting will be June 15-16 in Orlando. (BP) Compiled by Baptist Press editor Art Toalston from reports by James A. Smith Sr., executive editor of the Florida Baptist Witness, and Scott Barkley, production editor of The Christian Index of Georgia.

Newsbriefs

Southern Baptist Chile relief focuses on food, shelter

Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers are on the ground in Chile, partnering with Chilean Baptists to address critical needs in two areas hit hard by the 8.8-magnitude earthquake that struck the country Feb. 27. A six-member team from the South Carolina Baptist Convention landed in Santiago March 9 and a second team was scheduled to arrive March 15. Two teams from the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention were scheduled to arrive March 12. The teams, which specialize in mass feeding operations, will set up kitchens capable of producing as many as 1,000 meals daily.

The South Carolina team began by purchasing equipment for two kitchens, using money provided by Southern Baptist hunger and relief funds, said Charles Clark, an International Mission Board missionary who serves as strategy leader for the part of South America that includes Chile. The South Carolina and Texas feeding teams will train Chilean Baptist partners to run the kitchens and distribute meals themselves. For more information about the Chile relief effort, visit www.imb.org. (BP)

Church remembers slain pastor Fred Winters

One day short of the first anniversary of the shooting death of pastor Fred Winters, his church family at First Baptist in Maryville, Ill., gathered to remember him and hear testimony of God's sufficiency from his widow Cindy. The Illinois Baptist pastor was shot and killed March 8, 2009, while preaching, making headline news across the country.

During the March 7, 2010, service, Maryville's interim pastor, Tom Huffty, expressed appreciation to community emergency responders and then introduced Cindy Winters to a standing ovation. Winters shared her testimony of the events of that morning, saying, "Many people ask where God was on March 8. I don't have any great words of wisdom, but I know where God was. He was with me." Winters encouraged the congregation to focus on how real heaven is. "It doesn't take away our pain, but it does help keep things in perspective. God was in my bedroom that night, reminding me that Fred was in a perfect place. I went to the pit, and God was in the pit. ... There is hope in chaos, and there is joy in the darkest circumstances. I always believed that, but now I know it." (BP)

Blind Anabaptist Blues weds sound doctrine to Windy City music

By GARRETT E. WISHALL

What might you get if you cross-pollinated the theology of John Dagg with the music of Johnny Cash?

You might wind up with the Blind Anabaptist Blues, which is not an acute case of spiritual melancholy, but is the name of a band fronted by Southern Seminary student Joe Dittman.

Through the impact of Augustine, Thomas A. Dorsey, Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan and Southern Seminary Professor Mark Coppenger, God has led Dittman to pursue the advance of His glory through music and largely through his work as a singer and pianist for his band, Blind Anabaptist Blues.

Dittman, who writes songs for the band, seeks to wed the theology of Calvary and the Damascus Road with music from that crossroads the meet in the Mississippi Delta.

“My songwriting attempts to express what Paul expresses to the Corinthians when he declares, ‘You were bought at a price,’” Dittman said. “Because we are fallen, we all have firsthand encounters with our own human depravity. Though I mourn my sinfulness, I continually seek forgiveness and renewal through Christ, I trust God and I use my knowledge and distaste of my own sin to communicate the awesome power of God’s redemption.”

Dittman, a master of arts student at Southern’s Chicago extension center, leads Blind Anabaptist Blues, a country/blues musical group that writes songs “to confront the lies of our culture with the truth of Christ through the expression of live performance, singing and recording.”

Why the name “Blind Anabaptist Blues?”

“Blind’ resonates with the names of great past rural blues players and Gospel groups: Blind Blake, Blind Willie Johnson, Blind Willie McTell, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Boys of Alabama,” Dittman said.

“Anabaptist’ prepares an audience for the spiritual content of our music without allowing would-be listeners to prematurely stereotype or pigeonhole us. Among the unchurched our moniker sounds churchy, but while we meet many who carry a load of caricatures and complaints against Baptists, we meet few who know anything about Anabaptists. And there the theological conversations begin.”

“Blues’ remains an ubiquitous Chicago style. We aim to challenge the preconceived notions and improve what has come before us.”

Dittman grew up in a small independent Baptist church in Port Washington, Wis., and professed faith in Christ on April 20, 1986. He

attended several Baptist churches throughout his childhood before meeting Coppenger in 2000 as a student at Northwestern University.

Coppenger, professor of Christian apologetics at Southern, planted Evanston Baptist Church in Evanston, Ill., near the Northwestern campus just north of Chicago in September 2000. Coppenger continues to live in Chicago and pastor Evanston Baptist.

“Dr. Mark and Sharon Coppenger guided me through my most challenging days as a believer and frequently encouraged me to use my musical talents and experiences to serve the Kingdom,” Dittman said. “I became an official member (at Evanston Baptist) in May 2006 and have been serving as a worship musician and occasional worship leader since that time.”

Blind Anabaptist Blues began in 2006, Dittman said, when the group submitted a collection of recordings for Garrison Keillor’s “A Prairie Home Companion,” in response to a request for such submissions from “talented 20-somethings.”

The submission did not bear fruit, but the group began performing in various venues in the evenings and in church services. In February 2009, the band released its first EP “Crying For The Promises.” Dittman said the group has a single nearing release called “More Than Watchmen Wait” based on Psalm 130, and it hopes to release subsequent singles every two to three months.

Dittman believes any form of music has the potential to bring glory to God, but Dylan, Cash, Hank Williams and Townes Van Zandt steered him toward country and blues music. Dorsey’s Depression-era, Gospel blues music also impacted him.

“Any performer or writer who would serve God should strive to master the forms of his or her particular art, and strive for excellence to the glory of God,” Dittman said. “Any performer or writer who would serve God should never offer a meaningless sacrifice nor a lukewarm offering. The Lord says, ‘I will spit you out of my mouth.’ ... ‘Call the whole assembly of Israel together and say to them: “Be holy, for the LORD your God is Holy.”’

“Since the beginning of country and blues, artists have crossed freely between revelry and repentance, profanity and piety, darkness and light. Though our northern culture in America has drifted far from the public performance of hymnody the window remains open (for such performances), so we seek to boldly pronounce the glories of Christ and declare His redemption, the only satisfying replacement for our formerly dissipated lives.”

HISTORY HIGHLIGHT:

The dedication of Alumni Chapel

By STEVE JONES

Alumni Memorial Chapel has served as the home for Southern Seminary’s worship services, recitals and events for 60 years. The chapel was dedicated with a week of special services held in conjunction with Southern Seminary’s annual Pastor’s Conference from March 20-26, 1950.

sermon was focused upon the meaning and practice of true worship and served as a call for Alumni Memorial Chapel to become a place where God’s people worshiped him in spirit and truth and refused to settle for false worship.

Fuller stated, “Does this beautiful sanctuary represent the profligacy of prideful ambition or the profitable investment at the direction of divine wisdom and council?”



Ellis A. Fuller leading prayer as Theron D. Price stands to his left before the sealing of the Alumni Memorial Chapel cornerstone, March 21, 1950.

The chapel was a welcomed addition to the campus in 1950. Prior to that point, seminary worship services were held in Norton Hall. As the seminary began to experience an increase in enrollment following World War II, it became evident that there was a need for expanded facilities.

Fuller appealed to the seminary alumni to raise \$250,000, which would be supplemented by funds raised from other individuals and churches, to build the new chapel. The alumni responded and a groundbreaking ceremony for Alumni Memorial Chapel was held Nov. 6, 1947. The design for the Georgian colonial structure provided seating for 1,400 and was modeled after First Baptist Church of Atlanta, Ga., where Fuller had served as pastor.

The weeklong dedication included multiple worship services, lectures, dramas and the laying of the chapel cornerstone.

Fuller delivered his dedicatory sermon from Psalm 95:6 on the evening of March 23. His

What the decades shall say to this question, will be determined by what we of this day, and those who are to come after us, believe and do about worship. For this building was erected primarily to be a place of worship on this campus. Therefore it is imperative that we know what true worship is and that we ourselves become true worshippers. Or else, this building will mock us before our needy world and will condemn us at the throne of God’s judgment.”¹

To hear an audio recording of portions of Fuller’s dedicatory sermon, visit the seminary’s institutional repository at <http://digital.library.sbts.edu:8080/> and search for “Alumni Chapel.”

ENDNOTES

¹Ellis A. Fuller, Alumni Chapel Dedication, recorded at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, March 23, 1950.

The bluegrass Gospel: Long Run Players minister to the nations through back-home music

By EMILY GRIFFIN

Much to the delight of Russell D. Moore, senior vice president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary and life-long country music aficionado (see pages 3 and 6), bluegrass music rumbled through the hallowed halls of Alumni Memorial Chapel at Southern.

Southern Seminary welcomed the Long Run Players in a March chapel service. The band, comprised of five Southern students, treated the congregation to a selection of old-fashioned, foot-tapping bluegrass hymns.

The Long Run Players are fiddle player Cameron Beckerdite, a School of Church Ministries student; bass player Jeff Gayhart, a Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism student; banjo player Paul Martin, a Billy Graham School student and son of BGS professor George H. Martin; guitar player Sarah Morrison, a School of Theology student; and mandolin player Matt Shirley, a School of Church Ministries student.

The group is named after the Long Run Baptist Association, which is the metro-Louisville local association of Baptist churches. The Players can thank George H. Martin and his wife Donna for the idea.

The Players formed in 2008, under the encouragement of J.D. Payne, associate professor of church planting and evangelism at Southern. Martin led the group on a 10-day trip to Newfoundland, Canada. The Players found that

performing bluegrass music was an effective way to draw an audience and share the Gospel.

After the success of the Canada trip, the idea was born to connect with the International



The Long Run Players led worship in a recent chapel service at Southern Seminary. The group formed after a mission trip to Canada in 2008. *Photo by Devin Maddox*

Mission Board and travel abroad with bluegrass and the Gospel. In 2009, the IMB connected the Players with missionaries in Taiwan and developed a way for them to play music and evangelize to their audiences.

With instruments in tow, the Players left in July 2009 for a five-month mission trip to Taiwan. The group first arrived in Hong Kong where they spent a week in orientation and training. From there, they headed to establish a connection with two IMB career missionaries in Banciao, a suburb of Taipei, Taiwan.

“We were curious as to how they were going to use music to reach the people and what we would be doing at other times,” Gayhart said.

“We knew we were not going to be touring. We were there to do evangelism and discipleship, but we didn’t know how exactly how that would look in Taiwan.”

Their first six-weeks were heavily planned and the Players did everything from perform in local McDonald’s restaurants, department stores, parks and subway stations to helping with English camps in junior high schools and assisting with worship in churches.

“Our first six-weeks were also really busy because we were learning the culture and taking Chinese classes,” Gayhart said. “But after six-weeks the missionaries cut us loose, they said ‘you’ve got your wings, now fly.’”

From there the group spent time working with college students, particularly at a local technical college.

“We really worked to meet with students and share the Gospel with them, and if they came to faith we wanted to disciple them and teach them how to share the Gospel with other people,” Gayhart said.

They also rehearsed and prepared for shows they had scheduled around the region. The Players performed more than 60 times in the five months they were abroad. They also had the opportunity to record a show for a local

Christian television network, Good TV.

“There were times when we’d play five-days in a row and then some weeks when we wouldn’t play at all, each week was new,” Gayhart said.

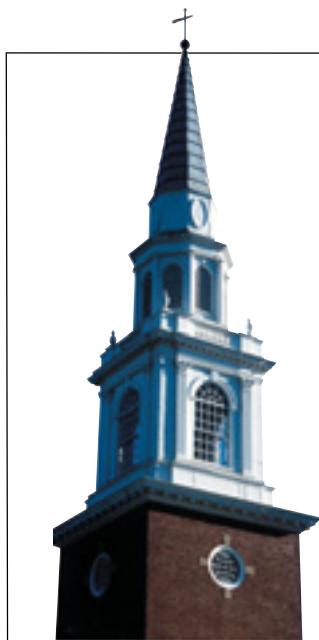
The Players did experience a language barrier: none of them spoke a significant amount of Mandarin Chinese prior to the trip. Gayhart said they were surprised to learn that the people of Taiwan speak a lot of English.

“Although most people’s English was better than our Chinese — since they study it for years — they were very patient with our speaking,” Gayhart said.

Most of the Players audiences didn’t understand the lyrics to their bluegrass songs. Gayhart explained that it wasn’t because their audience’s English was insufficient, but that a lot of traditional Bluegrass songs have fast tempos and the lyrics contain words like “yonder” and “holler” — words that aren’t presented in typical English classes. The group was able to learn a few songs in Mandarin, such as “Peace Like a River” and “God is Good.”

“They definitely sensed our joy from the music,” Gayhart said. “We had translators at our concerts that would explain the songs and then we would share the Gospel, both corporately and individually.”

Just like the Players audience in Alumni Memorial Chapel, the audiences in Taiwan immediately started clapping and tapping their feet as the group hit the first few notes of each song.



CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Tuesday & Thursday
at 10 a.m.

Previous chapel messages available
at www.sbts.edu/resources/.

Tue., March 23

DAVID UTH
Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church
Orlando, Fla.

Thu., March 25

CHUCK LAWLESS
Dean of the Billy Graham School
Southern Seminary

Tue., March 30

BRYAN CHAPPELL
President
Covenant Theological Seminary
St. Louis, Mo.

Thu., April 1

BRYAN CHAPPELL
President
Covenant Theological Seminary
St. Louis, Mo.

Dan DeWitt: ministering in the homes of the country legends

BY EMILY GRIFFIN

Country music and ministry came to an intersection in a very tangible way early in the ministry of Dan DeWitt: his Sunday school class met in Tammy Wynette's bathtub. At least, the massive tub that once belonged to the legendary female vocalist.

Nashville's Judson Baptist Church was in need of space to host youth activities. The church purchased two neighboring properties to house their missions and youth programming and each of these properties happened to be Nashville landmarks.

The missions house once served as Country music legend Hank Williams Sr. mother's home and the youth group moved into the home once owned by the late Tammy Wynette, who was known as the "first lady of country music." Williams is known for writing some of the greatest country songs of all times. Before his death at age 29, Williams recorded 11 number one hits.

Wynette dominated the country charts in the 1960s and 70s and is best known for her 1968 hit, "Stand By Your Man."

Wynette's home is a sprawling 12,000 square-foot mansion that was originally built by Hank Williams Sr. so he could be near his mother. Over the years the home was owned by many, including singer/songwriter Hank Williams Jr., and was remodeled and expanded numerous times. The church purchased and used the home for youth activities.

DeWitt, Judson Baptist Church's youth pastor at the time and current vice president

for communications at Southern Seminary, and his wife April joined with the church leadership to adapt Wynette's estate to serve the needs of the youth group — giving the kitchen an old-fashioned diner feel, turning the front room into a coffee shop and building a stage in the sprawling living room. Wynette's former home included seven bedrooms; some were converted into Sunday school meeting rooms and the master bedroom suite provided the DeWitt's with a living space.

The master bedroom was large enough to serve as the DeWitt's bedroom and living room. Wynette's onetime dressing room and salon served as a dining room — the DeWitt's had to look past the make-up mirrors and 200 light bulbs. The abovementioned bathtub, a 10 feet by 10 feet marble tub garnished with columns and draperies, became a favorite, unique meeting spot for a youth boys Sunday school class.

Devin Maddox, a former youth student at Judson and present Southern Seminary student, remembers when Judson first purchased the Wynette home.

"When we first started meeting in there as a youth group the house still looked like Tammy Wynette's house — just without the furniture. There was lots of gold and marble everywhere, it looked just how you might imagine it," Maddox said. "We were probably the only youth group in town that had Gray Line sightseeing tours coming to our Wednesday night meetings."

The William's home is no longer standing and Judson Baptist Church has renovated the Wynette home to meet the needs of the growing church.

Announcements

'The Albert Mohler Program'

"The Albert Mohler Program," a daily radio show hosted by R. Albert Mohler Jr., can be heard from 5-6 p.m. on WFIA-FM 94.7 or as a live webcast at www.AlbertMohler.com. Previous broadcasts of the nationwide program may be accessed at the web site and are also available as a podcast. Anyone is invited to call the show toll free, 877-893-8255, or to e-mail mail@albert-mohler.com with questions and comments.

Free sewing class

The free sewing class led by Mrs. Barbara Gentry meets from 6-7:30 p.m. on Mondays in Fuller Room 16. Sewing machines are provided at no cost. No experience is required, but women with experience may also participate. Knitting and crocheting lessons will also be offered. Mrs. Barbara Gentry leads the class, assisted by Mrs. Kathy Vogel. For questions, you can call Mrs. Gentry at 380-6448 or Mrs. Vogel at 742-1497.

Edge Faculty Award nominations

Nominations are being accepted for the "Findley B. and Louvenia Edge Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence." The Edge Award honors Findley Edge, who served as a member of the Southern Seminary faculty from 1947 to 1982, and recognizes teaching excellence by a Southern faculty member. The award also honors Louvenia Edge, who served with distinction in shared ministry with her husband, and who was equally involved in the personal care of students and in their spiritual development.

Nominations are to be submitted in writing to Russell D. Moore's office, no later than April 15. Nominations should be based on how effectively the faculty member teaches the basic knowledge for which he/she is responsible; how personal care and interest are demonstrated for students and how genuine concern is demonstrated, inside and outside of the classroom, for the spiritual development of students. For more information, contact the office of academic administration, ext. 4112.

Women's Auxiliary scholarship

Women committed to a Christian vocation are eligible for the Women's Auxiliary scholarship and must apply by the standard financial aid deadline of April 15. Applicants will be interviewed and evaluated based on financial need. Applicants must carry at least a "B" grade average, be a member of a local Southern Baptist church and be a full-time student with at least nine credit hours. In addition, applicants must become a member of Woman's Auxiliary, and attend at least three required Woman's Auxiliary meetings. Applications are

available online at <https://finaid.sbts.edu>. For more information, call the Financial Aid office, at ext. 4206.

Ministry Resources

Ministry position postings

Full-time and part-time ministry positions may be found on e-campus through the help desk's link to Ministry Resources.

Résumé service

Start or update your résumé file with Ministry Resources by submitting our on-line candidate form. Visit the Church Resources quick link on www.sbts.edu for the simple instructions. The office is also eager to counsel you over your resume and ministry preferences. Visit Norton Room 150 or call ext. 4208.

Health and Rec

The Health and Recreation Center (HRC) will be open new hours during the spring semester: M-F — 6 a.m.-10 p.m. Sat. — 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Aerobics schedule

- Fitness Boot Camp M, W & F 8-8:45 a.m.
- Mommy and Me Power Walking M & F 10-11 a.m., W 9-9:45 a.m.
- Practical Pilates M, T, & R 4:45-5:45 p.m.
- Aqua Alive T & R 5-5:45 p.m.
- Fast Blast Aerobics T & R 6-6:45 p.m.

Intramural volleyball

Co-ed volleyball takes place at 6:30 p.m. every Monday in the Main Gym of the HRC.

Swim lessons

Registration is open now through April 14. You can register at the HRC front desk. Lessons will take place Wednesdays and Fridays, April 14-30 in the HRC natatorium.

Resurrection celebration

3:30-5:30 p.m., Thursday, April 1. Seminary Lawn (weather permitting)

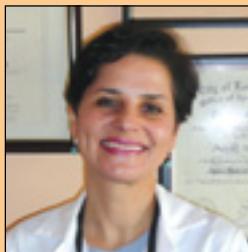
Holiday hours

9 a.m.-9 p.m., Friday, April 2
Good Friday

Blood drive

11 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday, April 12
The Red Cross Bus will be located in the parking lot behind the Honeycutt Campus Center.

- Call the HRC at 897-4720 with questions about scheduling and events.



Azam Hakim, D.D.S.

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3 Questions WITH

Jedd Medefind
President of the
Christian Alliance
for Orphans

1 What is the goal of the Christian Alliance for Orphans?

OUR DESIRE IS to ignite and equip the church to care for orphans in their distress. We are trying to stir people's hearts to God's call to defend the cause of the fatherless and help them do that effectively, particularly through orphan ministry rooted in local churches.

We realize that to care for orphans well, you can't go around the church: you need to go through it. You can provide food and shelter and critical needs like that on a mass scale in an assembly line fashion and that is very important, but to meet the deeper needs for love and nurture it requires the personal engagement of individual Christians.

2 What questions should people thinking about adoption be asking?

THE NUMBER ONE thing is to have a deep sense of why they would be doing it. Is it simply to fill a need within their heart, or to grow their family? Or is this really a response to God's call? That is a very important discernment question. From there, you move into a lot of practical questions: finances, support community, the dynamics within one's own home.

Another sphere is for a couple to think together about what this will mean for their marriage. The challenges that sometimes come through adoption can reveal things about ourselves and our relationship that we may not have seen before. So, it is important to put a lot of thought into the question of – as with any time you are going into parenthood – are we prepared as a couple for the strains that could come with new children?

3 If you were a pastor in a church wanting to promote an orphan care culture, what things would you do and say?

YOU CAN ALWAYS BEGIN with Scripture because God's heart for orphans is so clear. That should be the wellspring of orphan ministry, and all ministry, as we expose people in the church to the fact that caring for orphans in their distress is a central part of following Christ.

Second, an orphan care culture becomes particularly powerful when pastors are modeling it. When a church sees a pastor that has adopted kids or is somehow involved with the foster system or in other ways is caring for orphans, then it is just natural for people to begin modeling that.

A third thing I would emphasize is the importance of focusing not just on process, but on the journey. The process is the paperwork, the finances and the preparation to adopt. That is very, very important. However, the journey of a life with a child — everything prior to the adoption, in the adoption and for decades afterwards — is part of what adoption means and the church has a role in all of that. The church especially has a role in ministering to adoptive families after they adopt, supporting them through difficult times: everything with help with childcare to counseling if there are very difficult issues. So, I would argue that a full adoption culture includes support not just of process, but of community wrapping around the adoptive family to love them through all the ups, downs, joys and challenges of adoption.



E.Y. Mullins Lectures on Preaching

MARCH 30 – APRIL 1, 2010

DR. BRYAN CHAPELL

TUESDAY, MARCH 30

10:00–11:00 a.m. Alumni Chapel

“Use for Useless Heroes” – Judges 7

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31

10:00–11:00 a.m. Heritage Hall

“Holiness in Heaven's Plan” – Daniel 2

THURSDAY, APRIL 1

10:00–11:00 a.m. Alumni Chapel

“Hope's Journey” – Romans 15:4