

Towers



A NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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JUST DO SOMETHING

Author and pastor
Kevin DeYoung on
discerning God's will



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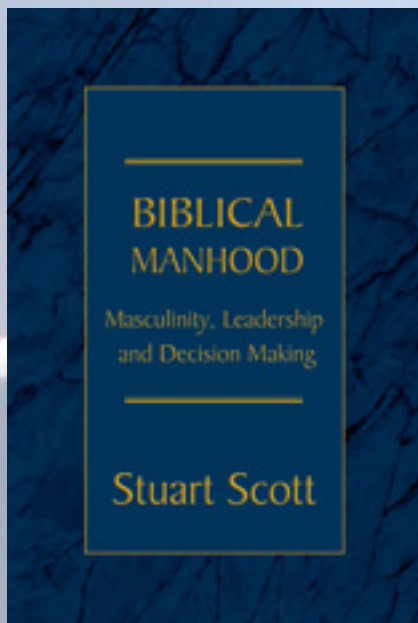
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IN THIS ISSUE

4

Waiting by the bush: how does God call people?

by Jim Orrick.

7

To Ph.D. or not to Ph.D.?

SBTS profs give their advice.

9

Professor profile: Bruce Ware

11

History Highlight

President John R. Sampey: competent fisherman

13

Great Commission Center 5k: A Photo Collage

16

3 questions with Micah Fries

So you want to do God's will? Just do something

AUTHOR AND PASTOR KEVIN DEYOUNG ON DISCERNING GOD'S WILL

By GARRETT E. WISHALL

We have all heard it before: “Man, I don’t know. I think she might be ‘THE ONE,’ but I’m not sure. Pray for me.” Such a conversation often occurs in a college dorm room — sometimes multiple nights per week — in a work break room or via a long distance phone call.

Such a question for a Christian is usually framed as: “What is God’s will?” Should I marry this girl or that girl? Should I major in applied economics or animal science? Is God calling me to go overseas or go back to my hometown to minister? What about buying a house?

While such questions are important, Kevin DeYoung argues that placing them under the banner of discerning God’s will is fundamentally misguided.

“I think living in God’s will is the daily decision to live for Christ, die to self and obey the Scriptures,” said DeYoung, senior pastor of University Reformed Church in East Lansing, Mich. “It is sort of like what Augustine said, ‘Love God and do whatever you want.’ Now, obviously you need to fill up love God with a lot of good, biblical truth. Otherwise, people will excuse a lot of sinful behavior.

“But I think living in the will of God and pursuing God’s will is not asking Him about every single possible choice you have to face and expecting Him to give you an answer. Instead, it is so being transformed by the renewing of your mind that you are learning to think God’s thoughts after Him.”

DeYoung is the author of “Just Do Something: a Liberating Approach to Finding God’s Will” (Moody 2009). Instead of God’s will being about decision making, DeYoung notes that Scripture centers it in growth in Christlikeness.

“1 Thessalonians 4:3 says, ‘This is the will of God: your sanctification,’” he said. “The will of God is for us to be like Christ. The will of God is for us to be holy. So, we need to put away passivity, which we excuse as being very spiritual when often it is just laziness or cowardice.

“We need to be willing to take risks for God and trust that He doesn’t have to show us the future because we trust that He holds the future. And we need to go out and do something and trust that if we are seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness ... then we will live a life that is pleasing to God.”

Making decisions: seek wisdom from God, not divine guidance

When it comes to decision making, DeYoung said there is usually not one single right answer. Clearly, if a decision would violate the moral standards of God’s Word then it is out of bounds. But beyond that, DeYoung suggests there are multiple paths each Christian can take.

“I don’t see people in the New Testament approaching decision making questions in that way (pursuing one right answer),” he said. “Most of those decisions are amoral: they are judging between two things that could both be right.

“For example, for marriage — providing you are thinking about marrying in the Lord and you are marrying somebody who is equally yoked — there is not just one person who could be the right answer. That is just living in fear and trepidation in a way that the Lord does not intend. People are well-intentioned, but are often hyper-spiritual with something that I think could be much simpler and more freeing.”

DeYoung said one reason Christians in America are so enamored of a pursuit of God’s will that centers on decision making is because of the abundance of choice in today’s society.

“Fifty to one hundred years ago our grandparents didn’t have 10,000 choices,” he said. “You lived in the same place, married one of the few people in town and worked on the farm or taught in school. It is only with the explosion of choice that this has become such a pressing issue, which makes me think that it is not mainly spiritual. ... We make it more complicated by making it this grand spiritual pursuit.”

Of course, there are still decisions to be made. So how should Christians make decisions?

“First, ask ‘Is it biblical?’” DeYoung said. “Second, you want to seek counsel from other



people. Third, you pray. You aren’t praying so much, ‘God tell me what to do,’ but ‘Help me see who I am. Help me be honest in this job interview. Help me have a clear sense of where my heart is at.’ Then you go and do something.

“I think one of the main motivations or impulses people should have is they need to think in terms of wisdom, instead of guidance. Guidance suggests that there is a right answer and a wrong answer here, and I might screw it up. Wisdom suggests I am learning, I am seeing my sin, I am figuring out who I am, God is with me, He is helping me in the process and there is not necessarily one right or wrong answer.”

Growing in wisdom

To grow in wisdom, which will lead to sound decisions, people should immerse themselves in Scripture, DeYoung said. James 1 also encourages those who lack wisdom to ask God

See DeYoung, page 6.

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ISSUE INSIGHT

Waiting by the bush: how does God call people?

When I was 17, I was trying to figure out what God wanted me to do with my life. I wanted to be a preacher, but I feared that I had not been called. I had heard many preachers talk about their call, and it seemed to me that they were describing an experience pretty close to what Moses had at the burning bush. I knew that nothing like that had happened to me.

Based on what I had heard from some of them, it was unlikely that I would ever be called to preach because I actually *wanted* to be a preacher. More than a few of those same preachers made a big deal out of the fact that when God called them to preach, preaching was something that they absolutely did not want to do. They explained that, for various reasons, they had fought the call for years and had generally regarded the call to preach to have roughly the same allure as the call to be a leper. In spite of their valiant resistance, God had won out in the end, and here they were now: preachers. What was wrong with a boy who was waiting by the bush hoping that it would catch fire and God would call him to preach?

Another thing that apparently would hinder my being called was that my parents were delighted with the prospect that I might be a preacher. The burning bush boys implied that a man's calling was suspicious if his family approved. They thundered, "You had better be for (expletive) sure that God has called you and not your momma." (Okay, they did not use the expletive). Why did I have to have such a supportive mother? It seemed that I stood virtually no chance of getting called to preach.

The situation began to get complicated when pastors began asking me to preach for them. The first time it happened, I explained, "I would like to, but I am not sure that God has called me to preach." The pastor wisely responded, "That's all right; just give a little talk." I accepted his invitation.

When I received this first invitation, I had already been an earnest Christian for three years. During that time I had witnessed to everyone I

could get to sit still long enough to listen to me. I had taught Sunday School classes, youth Bible studies at church and Bible studies at the church camp where I had been a counselor for three previous summers.



Jim Orrick
Professor of
Literature and
Culture
Boyce College

I also had done a lot of speaking at my public high school's events and athletic banquets. Those were the days when a student who was willing to pray in public would get asked to offer invocations before school assemblies. I was comfortable in front of crowds, and the crowds seemed to laugh at the places where they were supposed to laugh. I even won the Speech Award in my high school speech class.

I knew, however, that preaching was different from all that I had done. My "little talk" was going to be at a Sunday evening service before the congregation of Faith Baptist Church in Lee County Kentucky. The masses would be crowding the doors. There would be at least 15 people there. I invited all my friends and they swelled the crowd to 17. I gave an expository little talk (rather than preaching an expository sermon) from Romans 5 called "The Fruits of Justification." Someone recorded it, and I sent the tape to my mother. She loved it. More water on my bush. Why couldn't she cooperate by being a little uncooperative?

A few days after my first little talk, another pastor asked me to preach for him on the next Sunday night. The situation was getting serious. What if I was complicit in a satanic plot to corrupt churches by tempting a boy to preach who had never experienced a genuine call?

It was about that time that I was in the Fayette Mall in Lexington, Ky., and I encountered Edward H. Overbey sitting by a fountain squinting at the tiny print of a compact Bible. Brother

Overbey was a longtime family friend and an unusually fine pastor and Bible scholar. He taught for many years at Lexington Baptist College, which was absorbed into Boyce College several years ago.

I greeted him, and we exchanged niceties. It was a few weeks before I was heading off to college, and brother Overbey soon got around to asking me what I wanted to do in life. I answered, "Well, I want to be a preacher, but I'm not sure that God has called me." He responded, "I believe that the desire to preach is a strong indication that God has called you to preach." As I remember this statement, it was followed by an oriental gong and a gentle aroma of incense, but that is just because of the effect that it has had on the rest of my life.

The immediate effect was that I joyfully accepted the idea that, in spite of the lack of fire in any bushes, God was calling me to preach. The long term effect was that the idea contained in Overbey's statement became one of the three criteria by which I have endeavored to discern God's will ever since. When I, or anyone seeking my counsel, have asked, "Is it God's will for me to do this?" I ask three questions. The first is: "Do you want to do it?"

When Jeremiah the prophet resolved that he would not speak the Word of the Lord he found that his silence made him miserable. He wanted to preach. The Word of the Lord became "a fire shut up in his bones," and he could not hold it in. If a man asks me whether or not God is calling him to be a missionary or a preacher, I am not so concerned to find out if he has seen a bush on fire; I want to know, "Are your bones on fire?"

My second question is, "Do you have the ability to do this thing that you are considering?" I will further explore the answer by asking, "Is this only your own opinion, or is it also the opinion of unbiased observers? What does your local church think of your ability to do this?"

C. H. Spurgeon would not admit anyone to the Pastor's College who did not have the voice and the speaking abilities requisite to being a preacher.

In the absence of natural ability, I ask, "Are you willing to work hard to correct your deficiency?" One need not be a scholar when he commences preaching, but he must have the desire and discipline to study the Bible hard. He may not be a naturally gifted speaker — John Piper was not — but is he willing to work as hard as Piper has, writing and wrestling with language until speech becomes his flaming servant?

The third question in my formula is, "Do you have the opportunity?" I read something years ago that has steadied me through many a perplexing lull: "The stone that is fit for the wall will not be left to lie in the ditch."

God does not need me, but if he wants to use me to do something, He knows where I am, and He will open doors of opportunity. If He does not open the door, and He has me standing and waiting in the hall — well, "They also serve who only stand and wait" (Milton).

Some men are blessed with burning bush experiences. God can still work that way when he pleases. But when the bush does not catch fire, a man's calling is just as surely from God if his bones are on fire with desire, his heart is on fire with resolve to use his God-given abilities, and his way is on fire with opportunities.

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MOORE TO THE POINT

Michael Moore, mammon and me

While in Detroit recently, I saw an advertisement for the new Michael Moore movie denouncing capitalism and the free market system. It irritated me, and then, the more I thought about it, it irritated me more, in ways I didn't expect.

Moore is, first of all, no relation, and, second, not new to iconoclastic filmmaking. His previous cinematic offerings have taken on everything from corporate greed in the car industry to gun control and school shootings to 9/11 conspiracy theories.

What amazes me is not that Moore doesn't like capitalism. It's that he's trying to make money off of his denunciation of capitalism. It's almost as though the filmmaker is winking at us, kind of like the *Borat* character, bilking us for our cash and laughing at our gullibility for

giving it to him.

But the more I think about it, Moore isn't all that different from me, and most of the Christians I know.



Russell D. Moore
Senior Vice President for
Academic Administration
and Dean of the School
of Theology
Southern Seminary

Moore believes (I'll take him and face value) that the market system is destructive and evil, and should be replaced with something else. He just doesn't want to live in the "something else."

I believe the market system is often destructive and evil, and everything it could be replaced with is even more dehumanizing, until it's replaced with the kingdom of Christ. I don't mind a limited, bounded market system (one that is people-centered; treats workers right, respects the creation, maintains local traditions and the social order).

But I also know what I've received from the prophets and apostles of Jesus. The issue, ultimately, isn't the economic system itself (although that's important). It's the rebellion of money-worship and greed.

I know as a follower of Christ Jesus that one of the most dangerous forces in this age is the passion for money or, more often, the passion for things. I know what Jesus has taught us that Mammon is a god, and a jealous one at that.

And yet, I'm able to know this, believe this, think this, while having too many of my decisions made by "care for tomorrow," even though I'm able to repeat back from memory what Jesus said about this.

Yes, Moore is a hypocrite. But aren't we all. And shouldn't his hypocrisy remind us to take up the plank in our own eye, and start giving away some money, some stuff, from our homes and, more importantly, from our affections.

I hope I'm able to see a love of Mammon more and more clearly in my own life, and not just in the other Moore's situation. The issue isn't capitalism vs. socialism, and it certainly isn't Moore's hypocritical antics.

After all, a "serve two masters" hypocrisy is much worse when one of those masters is supposed to be Jesus.

ISSUE INSIGHT

The perils of comparison

Although all sin is an act of rebellion against our Holy God, some sins are more obvious to us than others. Some sin does not register with us because of its subtle nature and the disguises we intentionally and unintentionally shroud it in.

An example of such a sin is the dangerous and wicked activity of comparison. The adversary uses this more often than we are aware to destroy relationships, derail people in the pursuit of their calling and defeat people before they ever begin to pursue God with all their heart, soul and mind. The root of this sin is covetousness, which God calls us to avoid:

"And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's" (Deut 5:21).

The forbidden act of coveting has at its core the treacherous act of comparison. Whatever we covet of our neighbors begins with an evaluation of what we have or do not have ourselves. Thus, the sin of covetousness begins the minute we are not satisfied with what we have —with what God has provided us.

Here are some specific examples of comparison and how they lead to covetousness:

Pastors in training

Seminary students are bombarded with the temptation to compare themselves to their classmates, professors and pastors. The enemy lurks behind the scenes in the private mind of a man being trained to fulfill his calling and

tenaciously seeks to derail him before he ever gets close to pastoring a church.

Many (if not all) students are enticed to compare their Bible knowledge, intellect, speaking ability, life experiences and leadership skills to those they revere. While there are some



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who in arrogance deem themselves superior to those they are comparing themselves to, there are a multitude who begin to waver and doubt their calling because they cannot "measure-up" to their target.

Such doubt is an affront to God who has called him to ministry and a season of preparation in seminary. This dishonors God who has brought him along at this season of life (earlier or later) and is preparing him for a unique ministry that is specifically ordained for him. Such doubt often leads to covetousness, which proclaims that: God's provisions, gifting and timing are inadequate for what He has in store for me. The actual statement that such a man is making is that: God's provisions, gifting and timing are inadequate for what I have in store for myself. Therein lies the sin of covetousness!

And this sin is borne out of the treacherous act of comparison.

This example easily translates into the context of the workplace and our position in relation to our peers and superiors. It can also be applied to our service roles within the local church and our personal relationships in everyday life.

Husbands and wives

The perilous act of comparison can wreck a marriage quicker than we think. We must understand that Satan desires to destroy marriages with a burning passion. Evidence supporting this is found in the divorce rates of the world, our country and, tragically, within the church. This is due to the fact that God established marriage to be a picture of Jesus Christ (the husband) and the church (His bride). Satan wants more than anything to destroy everything that God created and established, especially anything that proclaims the Gospel (such as marriage).

Satan attacks marriages in many ways, however, it seems that one of the most common attacks is to entice a husband or wife to start down the road of comparison. Perhaps a husband will compare his wife to another man's wife as it relates to perceived superiority in the areas of career, housekeeping, cooking, child-rearing or even sexual intimacy (let us soberly acknowledge that Satan is most active with sexual temptation). Likewise, perhaps a wife will compare her husband to another woman's

husband as it relates to perceived superiority in the areas of career, empathy, leadership, gentleness and respect.

In both cases, I say "perceived" because a spouse trapped in the act of comparison can only know the reality of such things by being married to the other person and living with him or her on a daily basis. But Satan is the great liar and deceiver and entices men and women to believe what they cannot in any way rightly perceive.

Fighting sin at its root

We must all acknowledge that we are tempted by the wicked act of comparison. Such acts, if not forsaken, find their maturity in covetousness. Furthermore, covetousness, while sin in and of itself, will also lead to a host of other sins. Thus, we must begin our defense by addressing the temptation to compare. Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount:

"If your right eye causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you loose one of your members than your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away, for it is better than you loose one of your members than your whole body go into hell" (Matt 5:29-30).

Thus, if comparison causes us to sin, we must cut it off and throw it away. Furthermore, we must do this every waking moment of our lives. Such aggression toward sin is an act of worship of the one true God.

DeYoung

Continued from Page 3.

for it, he noted. In his experience, DeYoung said God has helped him grow in wisdom by walking him through difficult situations where he did not know what to do.

“I think one of the reasons that God does not give us all sorts of special messages to tell us what to do is because that short circuits the process of wisdom and the process of sanctification,” DeYoung said. “Usually, we get in a situation where we totally don’t know what to do and we say, ‘Give me wisdom’ and we fail to realize, ‘He is giving you wisdom by putting you here.’”

“So, we need to realize that part of cultivating godly wisdom is trusting God that we are going to have to live through some experiences to get that kind of wisdom and we are going to make some mistakes. God is interested in our whole lives being transformed.”

DeYoung also said God works through the guidance of other people, whether through books or personal conversations, in people’s lives to help them grow in wisdom.

“I think Tim Keller has a line — I am not going to get it exactly right — if you read one author, you will be a follower; if you read two

different authors, you will learn and if you read widely from a whole bunch of different authors, you will be wise,” DeYoung said.

“Don’t just read books that are going to tell you everything you already know, everything you already agree on. Don’t just surround yourself with people who will constantly affirm you. Iron sharpens iron.”

The “call to ministry,” feeling a “peace” and mental impressions

DeYoung said he encourages people to get away from the idea of receiving a “call to ministry,” particularly the notion of an internal call.

“I think the traditional notion of a call to ministry is overblown,” he said. “As in the rest of life, most people won’t consider vocational ministry unless they feel like they might like it or be good at it. Is this a call? I would say ‘call’ language is not the most helpful because it makes it sound like this one job is the only possible thing I could do and be obedient to God.”

“If we do use the language of ‘call,’ I think an external sense of call is more important than an internal sense. I am more impressed when a church urges a young man to consider pastoral

ministry than I am when a young man feels like he should be a pastor.”

DeYoung said that in particularly weighty matters, some people will never feel absolutely certain that what they are planning to do is the right thing. In contrast, easy-going people sometimes feel good about a choice they have no business making. Thus, whether or not someone “feels a peace” about something is not a good barometer, unless biblical convictions and one’s conscience are involved.

“I could imagine a guy going to propose to a girl and she is not a believer,” he said. “People have been telling him not to do it and he wants to do it, but he is not feeling right about it: that could be his conscience. If there is something revealed to us in Scripture, then we need to pay attention to our conscience in telling us that something might not be right.”

While some decisions don’t require extensive thought, DeYoung suggested people should not rely on feelings or impressions in their decision making.

“Sometimes we do go with our gut, where we think, ‘You know wait, I just don’t feel good about it,’ and you don’t do it. That’s fine,” he

said. “I don’t want us to be robots who make all of our decisions based on Excel spreadsheets. I would just caution people to not put too much stock into those sorts of things (gut feelings). Not to over spiritualize the sort of messages that you are getting from a peaceful feeling.”

DeYoung said he wants to give people the freedom he believes the Bible extends in the area of decision making.

“The important thing is realizing — as long as we are not dealing with blatant, sinful vocations — that there are many different things that can please God,” he said. “It is going to be in the context of friendship, community and church leaders that people are going to sort through their desires. There are no simple answers, but often I don’t think there is a right or wrong answer.”

“We just need to help people be willing to really think about decisions and pray, ‘Lord help me see if I am motivated by the right things.’ At the end of the day, we have to believe in some Christian freedom, that if people have a clean conscience toward a decision to move to Manhattan and work in finance, then they can do that to the glory of God.”

MISSIONS EMPHASIS WEEK

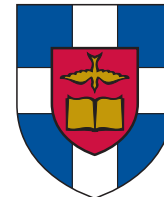


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Broadus Chapel

To Ph.D. or not to Ph.D.: that is the question

By PATRICK SCHREINER

When Brian Vickers first stepped onto the campus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary he had a mission.

He needed to find room 267.

When he got to the door he knocked and stood there, waiting, all the while examining the plaque on the door, which read: “Tom Schreiner, Professor of New Testament.”

The two men had never met.

The door swung open and Vickers spoke first: “Hi, I am Brian Vickers. I came here to do a Ph.D. with you. I hope it works out.”

You could say it worked out: today, Vickers serves as assistant professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern alongside Schreiner, who became his mentor and supervisor in the Ph.D. program.

Getting a Ph.D. worked out well for Vickers because he knew what he wanted to study, and who he wanted to study under. But for many students who dream of completing a Ph.D., things are not so clear and many students are troubled about this specialized degree.

Who should pursue a Ph.D.?

Jonathan Pennington, assistant professor of New Testament interpretation, said the Ph.D. is for students who are serious about teaching and research because it is fundamentally a research degree.

“Spurgeon once said about preaching, ‘If you can do anything else do it.’ That is how I feel about the Ph.D.,” Pennington said. “For me I knew that it was what I was supposed to do. I could not be satisfied doing anything else but teaching.”

Should someone who is a pastor or missionary think about getting one? Wisdom among Southern Seminary’s faculty members varies on this question.

“A pastor typically has to deal with applying the Bible to everything across the board,” Vickers said. “If you are going to do a specialized Ph.D., then you have to ask yourself is this really preparing me to be a pastor.”

Tom Schreiner, associate dean of Scripture and interpretation and James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation, advised pastors and missionaries to think hard before committing to the academy-oriented program.

“Usually they (pastor/missionary) shouldn’t,” Schreiner said. “But there may be some cases where they feel called to do scholarly work to help them in their pastorate or mission work.”

Chuck Lawless, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism, said some

missionaries and pastors should consider studying for the terminal degree. There are more opportunities for ministry for pastors or missionaries who have a doctorate, he said.

“For missionaries there are increasingly open doors for someone to teach overseas,” Lawless said. “For a pastor, we are increasingly living in an educated society, so in a lot of cases we end up shepherding someone with a doctoral degree.”

Although many students think that the Ph.D. provides them with additional time to study, professors encourage students not to think that this degree is for everyone.

“I would encourage the default being a student ending his academic career with the M.Div. But if you are thinking about getting a doctorate then my advice actually goes in two opposite directions: Try to get the most out of the breadth of the M.Div, but also try to narrow and take a lot of classes in your field of interest. Take the tough ones too.”

— Bruce Ware

“A reason not to pursue a Ph.D. is because you love seminary and want to learn more,” Pennington said. “It is a great thing to want to learn more, but many students feel that way.”

David Puckett, who heads the Ph.D. studies department at Southern, said that it is not a good idea to pursue a Ph.D. if you are assuming that it would secure a job at the completion of the program.

“The job market in higher education is already challenging, and will almost certainly become much more difficult as a result of the economic stress we are experiencing,” Puckett said.

Vickers said that the desire for the Ph.D. should not be a desire for a mere title.

“I think that students should prefer the title ‘pastor’ over the title ‘doctor,’” Vickers said.

Shawn Wright, assistant professor of church history, cautioned students against thinking that the possession of a Ph.D. equates with greater wisdom and godliness.

“A student should not assume that a Ph.D. will automatically make him as wise and godly as that professor that he so admires,” Wright said.

Timothy Paul Jones, professor of church

leadership and church ministry, said that the Ph.D. should not be viewed as a badge of prestige.

“If what you want is the prestige that comes with having the letters ‘Ph.D.’ after your surname, please don’t apply to any Ph.D. program — and please avoid our Ph.D. program in particular,” Jones said.

What factors go into the decision?

Grade-point average might serve as one indicator, Pennington said.

“If you have less than stellar grades there is not even a question: don’t pursue a Ph.D. In addition you need to ask your teachers if you should pursue one, unless a teacher pulls you aside and encourages you to pursue further study,” Pennington said.

Bruce Ware, professor of theology, said that there must be a very strong desire that would warrant the time and effort that goes into earning a Ph.D.

All agree that life circumstances are one of the primary considerations for those contemplating studies beyond the M.Div.

“There are lots of people who are gifted and qualified and able to do one, but because of personal circumstances they should not do it. It is really hard on families; your wife needs to be in 100% support,” Vickers said.

Lawless added that one’s local church should be in support of the student who is pursuing a doctorate.

When Pennington first told his wife that he was thinking about doing a Ph.D., he said she lovingly laughed at such a prospect.

“She asked where we were going to get all the money,” he said. “Over time, God began to provide and she realized this was going to be a good thing.”

How should you prepare for the Ph.D. program?

Ware said Southern’s M.Div. is broad and prepares many students well to pursue advanced studies.

“I would encourage the default being a student ending his academic career with the M.Div.,” Ware said. “But if you are thinking about getting a doctorate then my advice actually goes in two opposite directions: Try to get the most out of the breadth of the M.Div, but also try to narrow and take a lot of classes in your field of interest. Take the tough ones too. Build a solid foundation.”

Jones encouraged would-be Ph.D. students to push themselves academically and to hone their writing skills.

“Read beyond the minimum, especially in the areas in which you want to specialize —

and then, write, write well and learn to write better,” Jones said. “Begin seeking an area of study about which you may want to write a dissertation, and — even before you apply for a Ph.D. program — do everything in your power to become the expert in that area.”

Many professors also praised the Th.M. program as a means of preparing students to enter the Ph.D. program.

“The Th.M. is really helpful because it lets a person find out if this is really what they want to do,” Pennington said. “Most M.Div. students should not begin by thinking about the Ph.D., but the Th.M., and Southern has recently revamped its Th.M. program.”

How do you pick a school for Ph.D. studies?

“I based my decision upon who I wanted to study under,” Vickers said.

Pennington, who studied at St. Andrews in Scotland, said a student might consider the differences between a Ph.D. in Europe vs. one at an American school; the former is strictly research oriented, while the latter includes further classwork.

“There are pros and cons of both systems of course,” Pennington said. “In the American system you are entering a program. In the British system you are applying to a person. In the American system you take more courses and are prepared to teach out of the shoot. In the British system you do more research and are prepared to write.”

Each situation is different

In the end whether or not to do a Ph.D. is a case-by-case decision. All Southern professors interviewed agreed that each student must weigh the strengths and abilities that the Lord has given him. Puckett said the Ph.D. program is one that should be entered only after a time of careful, prayerful thought.

“This is clearly an issue of God’s guidance and all of the wisdom that would be a part of coming to understand His direction in any other area of life applies here,” he said. “Certainly one may have a God-given conviction that this is the course of action one must pursue.”

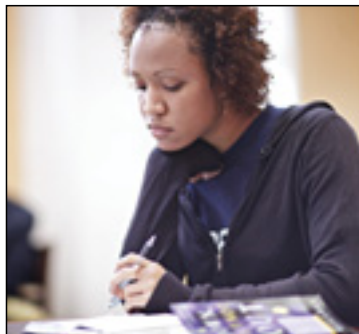
Southern professors also advised students to examine their motives.

“Every student should ask themselves, ‘Am I looking to further my name or the kingdom?’” Schreiner said.

Said Jones: “It’s my hope that our Ph.D. students long to be not merely scholars but ‘servant-scholars’ — persons of humility who seek to contribute to a field of study for God’s glory, not their own.”



with Mercedes Speller



A cross section of the student body of Southern Seminary

Hometown:

Norfolk, Va.

Before Southern:

Speller came straight out of college, from Hampton University in Hampton, Va.

Degree track:

Master of divinity in the School of Theology; Christian ministry track. Speller started in Fall 2006.

Why Southern?

"I did not have any experience with seminaries, but my pastor Mark A. Croston, Sr., of East End Baptist Church in Suffolk, Va. was a graduate of Southern and encouraged me to come here."

Local church:

First Gethsemane Baptist Church, where Southern Seminary professor T. Vaughn Walker serves as pastor.

Favorite local restaurant:

Pita Delights (1616 Grinstead Drive). "It is small and not usually busy. They have great food and friendly employees." Pita Delights features Greek, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Persian food.

Job:

Front desk associate at the Marriott, downtown location.

Impactful element of Southern:

"I enjoyed my Applied Ministry. I worked with Janice Seifrid in the Women's Ministry office. I had previously had a class with her, but this was a great opportunity to get to know her. That was one of the benefits: I got to spend a lot of time with her and learn from her. I recommend spending time with Seifrid to any woman on campus. I was there this summer in part to assist

Seifrid, but I think she has helped me more than I have helped her."

Campus life:

"I like living in the dorm (Mullins Hall). I like the women I have community with there. I live with really great women on the floor. It is a nice environment that is helpful, encouraging and loving. I don't think my seminary experience would be as rich as it is if I didn't live on campus with those women."

South Africa:

Speller came to Southern to prepare for missions work, possibly in Africa. From January-May 2008, Mercedes served with the International Mission Board in South Africa as part of their Hands-on program. Speller said her group did youth ministry, working with babies who had been orphaned by HIV and serving in the inner city of Johannesburg. Speller said her group of 23 — she was one of three from Southern — was the first Hands-on group sent out by the IMB.

Hobby:

"I like to write. Right now, I am writing devotionals. I don't write out the devotionals for a particular purpose. It has been an overflow from what God has taught me, things I want to put down on paper. Primarily, I write them to minister to myself. I don't know if I will do anything with them ... maybe share them with a few of my friends."

Advice for other students:

While it seems like forever when you are here in the midst of it, when you look back you will realize that it went really fast. Don't take more classes than you can handle, make great friends while you are here, and give yourself time to enjoy the friends you make."



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

@drmoore: RAM said our students have been "swimming against secular stream since they were tadpoles." Unlike Darwin, he doesn't mean that literally.

<http://twitter.com/drmoore>

@davidprince: You either approach the Bible as though it is all about Jesus or all about you. Only one approach is correct.

<http://twitter.com/davideprince>

@thomrainer: Watching some members of the SBC Executive Committee watching me tweet.

<http://twitter.com/ThomRainer>

Bird illustration Copyright © 2009 Luc Latulippe



Dr. Bruce Ware

Professor of Christian Theology

Information:

Spouse's name/length of marriage:

Married to Jodi for 31 years

Children's names and ages:

Bethany Strachan, 26; Rachel Ware, 22

Grandchildren:

Ella Rose, 14 months

Hometown:

Spokane, Wash.

List one of your favorite:

Preachers:

John Piper, Brian Borgman, Wayne Pickens

Courses that you teach:

Anything concerning God — Trinity, providence, attributes.

Music groups:

Chicago

Movies:

Fiddler on the Roof

TV shows:

24

Restaurants:

Ivar's Salmon House in Seattle

Vacation spots:

Oregon coast

Current church/local church ministry:

Clifton Baptist Church; elder chairman; Sunday School teacher

Influential books in your life (besides the Bible):

A.W. Tozer, "Knowledge of the Holy;" Roland Bainton, "Here I Stand;" Augustine, "Confessions;" Jonathan Edwards, "Religious Affections;" Arthur Pierson, "George Muller of Bristol."

Ministry passion (why do you teach?):

To borrow from Eric Liddel, when I teach, I feel God's pleasure. It is my joy and privilege to share glorious truths the Lord has taught me with others who I hope benefit from them.

Most pressing theological issue facing the church today:

The cultural captivity of theological beliefs across the spectrum of evangelical convictions. That is, doctrines like the Trinity, substitutionary atonement, justification by faith, the nature and roles of men and women, the nature of divine wrath and hell, and more, are being reformulated (aka: distorted and deformed) to fit current cultural intuitions and values.

How can a pastor maintain and strengthen his theology on a day-to-day, year-to-year basis?

Meditate deeply on the theology of passages in the Bible; read selectively of the most faithful and insightful works available.

How have you grown your marriage amid a busy ministerial life?

Having virtually no hobbies helps; life is full enough without them. My hobby/avocation is and has been my wife and family.

What do you do to relax?

Go on walks with my wife; talk with friends.

Things students might not know about you:

I grew up slalom waterskiing. I play the trumpet; my most memorable trumpet experience was playing hymns for badly-wounded South Vietnamese soldiers in Dalat during the Vietnam War.

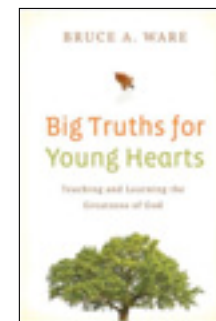
What do you appreciate about your wife and your two daughters?

My wife, Jodi, is God's most precious gift to me following the infinitely glorious gift of eternal life through Christ. Jodi excels at many things, and I benefit from them all. One of her strengths is her God-given gift of encouragement. I have never met another person so instinctively gifted at encouraging others than Jodi. She is deeply supportive of me, encouraging to me and challenges me to grow in areas where I am prone to sin and weakness. She remains, after 31 years of marriage, my favorite person to be with.

Bethany, our older daughter, is now the mother of our only grandchild, Ella Rose Strachan, now 14 months old. Bethany is an excellent wife and mother, and is learning to support her busy ministry/student husband, Owen, very much as Jodi learned to support me in ministry in our early years of marriage. Bethany is one of the most thoughtful people I know, and plans carefully in order to make things the best she can for her family and others. Her joy in the Lord grows constantly, for which we are deeply grateful.

Rachel, our younger daughter, now works on staff at Union University, Jackson, Tenn., where she graduated this past May. Rachel is deeply reflective, wanting with all her heart to make her life count for Christ. She loves discipling younger women, playing piano and singing in her church's worship team, and taking drives or walks where she can pray and meditate on Scripture. We are deeply grateful for her heart for God and pray this will only grow more over the years.

Books:



Big Truths for Young Hearts: Teaching and Learning the Greatness of God (Crossway: 2009).



God's Greater Glory: The Exalted God of Scripture and the Christian Faith (Crossway: 2004).



God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism (Crossway: 2001).

Agent of Change: Boyce student using blog to challenge teens

By JEFF ROBINSON

Tim Sweetman was thinking and writing like a blogger before blogging was cool.

A sophomore at Boyce College majoring in Christian leadership, Sweetman was writing about politics, theology and even sports at the age of 13, an age when most of his peers were playing Xbox or spending increasing amounts of time in thought about the opposite gender.

A deep concern to challenge teens to think out of a Christian worldview drove Sweetman and some friends to publish an online magazine and allowed him to put to use his deep love for written communication.

Today, at 19 his thoughts have matured and his blog, Agent Tim Online, has exploded in popularity, with more than 750,000 hits in three years of existence. A native of Maryland, Sweetman grew up near Washington, D.C., a hub of political thinking and activism, a reality that fueled his love for ideas and writing at an early age.

The goal of his blog and his other writings is to push his own generation to think deeply about the world around them through the lens of Scripture. Sweetman said his training

at Boyce is further equipping him to do just that.

"I have really enjoyed the classes here," Sweetman said. "This is really the place to be



right now, I think. I am gaining a firm theological foundation that will help me in my writing ministry and hopefully help me to minister to my generation and encourage teens that all of life is to be lived to the glory of God."

The son of a police officer in D.C., Sweetman is the oldest of five siblings and was

homeschooled from kindergarten through high school. He first heard about Boyce College through Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr.'s writing and radio show. Sweetman serves as a student worship leader at Highview Baptist Church's east campus.

Sweetman is precocious as a writer. At 13 he began writing on the Bible and writing stories about his soccer games. After writing for a couple of years, he fell in love with politics and began to interact on the Internet with political and cultural pundits, none of whom knew he was a teenager.

"I used to feel kind of funny, dialoguing with all these guys about politics and culture, knowing they had no idea I was a teenager," Sweetman said. "I didn't know what I was doing at first, but I really wanted to engage all these important ideas and I learned a ton by doing that."

As an older teen, Sweetman grew interested in theology and began to read writers such as John Piper and C.J. Mahaney. His writing began to take on a new shape. In his writing today, Sweetman seeks to apply theology to everyday circumstances in hopes of influencing teens to develop a robust Christian worldview.

Sweetman is a regular contributor to Boundless, a publication of Focus on the Family, has appeared as a guest on The Albert Mohler Program and has worked closely with several well-known ministries such as The Rebelution, led by Alex and Brett Harris.

"My writing now is kind of like a sermon to myself," he said. "I hit myself as hard as possible so others can see themselves in my situation. It's a sneaky way to help people see that they have the same issues as well. I used to really like to write about politics and I loved it. I still love the genre, but growing up in the D.C. area doesn't really make you like politics.

"In general, I just love to write about the heart and personal things I am going through. I really like to write about life issues, people's lives and personal commentaries on myself or other people. I also like to address big cultural issues from a theological perspective much like Dr. Mohler does."

Agent Tim Online may be accessed at www.agenttimonline.com.

The name of Sweetman's blog comes from a love he possessed when he was younger for movies and books about spies and secret agents.

'The Call,' the focus of 11th annual vision conference at Boyce

By GARRETT E. WISHALL

The International Center for Youth and Family Ministry (CYM) at Boyce College hosted its 11th annual Vision Conference for youth and family ministers, students and parents Sept. 25 in partnership with Leadership Rocks, a ministry of Student Leadership University (SLU).

David Adams, executive director of CYM and department coordinator for youth ministry at Boyce, said the goal of the Vision Conference is to serve local churches.

"The primary purpose is still the same for the Vision Conference: We want to provide a service for our youth and family ministers and the laymen. We want to help equip and train them in the service of youth and family in their local churches," said Adams, who also serves as associate dean for applied studies and professor for youth ministry at Boyce.

The faculty of SLU challenged students to consider and respond to "The Call," focusing on God's call of the apostle Paul to receive the Gospel, to live for the Gospel amid suffering and persecution and to faithfully uphold the Gospel until death.

The Vision Conference at Boyce was the

second of 13 stops for Leadership Rocks' "The Call" tour.

Adams said Boyce first partnered with SLU, which Jay Strack leads, at the Vision Conference three years ago, when they began encouraging students to join youth leaders and parents at the event. The shared ministry passion of CYM and SLU led Adams to seek the partnership.

"Their vision is similar to ours. Their standard of excellence honors and glorifies the Lord and attracts people," he said. "My friendship with Jay Strack spans three decades. We also know that many of our partnering churches that we are working with (CYM) will also have their students involved with Strack's Orlando ministry."

Brent Crowe, vice-president of SLU, and SLU faculty member Dave Edwards spoke at the Vision Conference. The Matt Papa Band led worship.

Crowe speaks regularly at national and international conferences and is the co-author of the "The Call: Insights From Those Who Have Answered ... Practical Advice For Those Who Are About To." Edwards is a regular conference speaker and is the author of 17 books.

In addition to the main sessions, the CYM offered four breakout tracks on discipleship for

youth leaders and parents: equipping parents to disciple their teenager, discipling girls, discipling your leadership team and leading students to disciple their peers.



Dave Edwards, SLU faculty member and the author of 17 books, was one of the featured speakers at the 11th annual Vision Conference. Photo by John Gill

Boyce preview weekend

For the first time, Boyce preview weekend was held in conjunction with the Vision Conference. Prospective students heard from R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern, Jason Allen, vice president for institutional advance-

ment at Southern, and Denny Burk, dean of Boyce, at the conference and also got to visit the president's library.

Burk said the goal of Boyce College is to produce students who are passionate about the Christian Word, a Christian worldview and a Christian witness. In what they teach, Burk said Boyce faculty trains students to center their future ministries on the Word of God.

"When Jesus says to Satan, 'man shall not live on bread alone, but on every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God' Jesus is quoting the Bible. He is quoting from Deuteronomy," Burk said. "Satan distorts the Scriptures to try and bring down Jesus and Jesus quotes from Scripture back to Him. And Jesus says, 'we don't live on the physical sustenance of food, clothing and shelter. That is not what motivates us. Our strength and our power in this life is the Word of God."

"We are unashamed about this. We are trying to produce school-teachers, pastors, missionaries, ministers, people who may go into a secular profession someday and be ministers bi-vocationally — people who are serving in all manners of ways in their churches — we are trying to produce people who are going to be saturated with the Christian Word."

SBTS to launch theological training program for laymen

By EMILY GRIFFIN

In January 2010, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary will launch the Institute for Christian Leadership (ICL) whose primary aim is to provide quality theological instruction for lay adults and ministers, regardless of previous training, in an efficient, technology-driven format.

Designed with accessibility in mind, the ICL program will be ideal for those who have the desire to learn and strengthen their understanding of the Bible but are not currently able to participate in a traditional theological degree program.

The ICL program, developed by Hayward Armstrong, associate professor of Christian missions and associate vice president for online learning and intercultural programs at Southern Seminary, will offer three certificates: theological studies, great commission studies and church ministry.

"The Institute will provide basic training at an affordable price and in an accommodating format for those who might not otherwise have

easy access to theological education," Armstrong said.

The ICL's curriculum offers courses in Spanish, making the program available to a broad audience.

ICL tuition is \$150 per course, totaling \$1,385 for the entire program, including the \$35 non-refundable admission fee, plus book expenses.

Course credits from ICL are non-transferable to Southern traditional degree programs and credits from other institutions may not be transferred to the ICL program.

If you are interested in the ICL program, you can apply at the Southern and Boyce College admissions office, located in the Duke K. McCall Sesquicentennial Pavilion, or online at www.sbts.edu. Course registration will be through the office of online learning and intercultural programs.

For more information, call admissions at 1-800-626-5525, ext. 4617. You may also contact the office of online learning and intercultural programs at 1-800-626-5525, ext. 4315, or by e-mail at boyceonline@sbts.edu.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHT:

President John R. Sampey: competent fisherman

Southern Seminary President John R. Sampey took a doctor-recommended vacation during the first weeks of October 1931. Sampey chose to spend 10 days fishing on the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Gulfport, Miss. Sampey recorded the following recollections of the trip.

"I was declared a 'Competent Fisherman' by the Gulf Coast Fishing and Outing Club. After an oral examination, which took place in the basement of the First Baptist Church in the presence of a hundred and fifty people, I received the diploma of the award conferred upon me. A photostatic copy of a day's successful fishing experience was proof of skill as a fisherman. I caught in one morning 178 game fish, while my partner caught 104 game fish."

Southern Seminary News reported further that the degree of Competent Fisherman, "carries with it the permission 'to exaggerate modestly to the extent of twice the size of any fish caught without fear of being reprimanded by members of this Club, or by Southern Baptists generally.' He was voted one hundred extra merit tokens for failure and refusal to use unbecoming language after losing numerous fish."

To learn more about John R. Sampey, the history of the seminary and archival resources available to you visit archives.sbts.edu.



John R. Sampey (second from right) stands next to a portion of his catch, October 1931. Image from SBTS archives.

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Morris Chapman announces retirement

By ART TOALSTON

Morris H. Chapman has announced his plans to retire as president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee (EC) effective Sept. 30, 2010.

Chapman, 68, announced his retirement in a letter to EC members on the opening day of their Sept. 20-21 meeting in Nashville, Tenn., writing that after giving "serious and prayerful thought to my retirement date" in recent years, "the time has come."

Chapman, upon retirement, will have led the EC 18 years.

His tenure has spanned junctures of:

- theological conviction, such as the adoption of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.
- heightened denominational effectiveness, such as the streamlining of the SBC's entities during the mid-1990s and an invigorated emphasis on the Cooperative Program and stewardship.

- cultural relevance, such as the SBC's racial reconciliation resolution in 1995 and a multi-year emphasis on family ministry that began in the latter 1990s.

Chapman's announcement comes on "my 50th anniversary in the ministry," Chapman wrote, connecting back to his work on church staffs as a teenager followed by his first pastorate in Rogers, Texas, at age 26.

"To be called of God ... in serving all Southern Baptists was one of the greatest honors of my life and yet one of the most humbling challenges I had ever faced," Chapman wrote of assuming the EC presidency on Oct. 1, 1992. "I



Morris Chapman. BP photo

knew that except for depending completely upon God's Spirit to guide me, I could fail miserably. Listening to and remembering the word of the Lord heard by Zerubbabel in Zechariah 4:6 was paramount if I were to fulfill the duties of my new office in a way that truly honored the Lord Jesus Christ. In His Word, God said, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.'"

Chapman noted in his letter, "I reserve my greatest thanks to God. His grace has been sufficient and He has supplied all my 'need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus' (Phil. 4:19). Every direction I have led and decision I have made, the uppermost question in my mind has been, 'What is in the best interest of the entire Southern Baptist Convention

and its Executive Committee.' My prayer is that God will bless and lead the Executive Committee in its every deliberation and decision in the coming months and years. I pledge my prayers and encouragement to you and to the one who shall succeed me."

Of his tenure at the EC, Chapman wrote, "I have sought to administer the operations of the Executive Committee in a way that would be pleasing to Christ while advancing His Kingdom by facilitating the varied assignments for each and every entity of the SBC. I sought also to educate the churches on the importance of the [Executive] Committee's ministry assignments.

"The SBC Bylaws and other legal documents were instituted for the purpose of guiding the work of the Southern Baptist Convention and its various entities. If I have faulted in my interpretation of these official policies, it has been on the side of caution. My question always has been, 'Why have policies if they are to be ignored?'"

Chapman was elected as EC president while concluding two years of service as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (1990-92). Chapman was pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, from 1979-92.

He holds doctor of ministry and master of divinity degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. (BP)

Newsbriefs

Executive Committee trustee business and referrals

During the final business session of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee's Sept. 21-22 meeting in Nashville, Tenn., members completed the following action:

- Approved a requested \$250,000 budget for the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force, which was created by a vote of messengers to the 2009 SBC annual meeting in Louisville, Ky. The next task force meeting is slated for Oct. 27 in Dallas.

Regarding motions referred from the 2009 SBC annual meeting in Louisville, Ky., the Executive Committee:

- Postponed action on a proposed reallocation of the World Hunger Fund to 70 percent to the International Mission Board and 30 percent to the North American Mission Board (from the current 80-20 allocation).

- Declined to recommend adjustment of the seminary funding formula, "agreeing with previous positions taken by the Council of Seminary Presidents that while the current formula is not perfect, it is the best of all other options."

- Declined to recommend the appointment of a task force to examine Cooperative Program giving, specifically regarding the possibility of allowing portions of CP dollars from each church to be designated to particular SBC causes.

The Executive Committee stated that "such an action would undermine the continued viability of the Cooperative Program." The EC also noted that "the Task Force on Cooperation (2000-2002) and the Cooperative Program Ad Hoc Committee (2002-2006) provided sufficient opportunities to examine this issue resulting in the definition of the Cooperative Program, which was approved during the 2007 SBC annual meeting."

The definition states: "The Cooperative Program (CP) is the unified plan of giving approved by the Southern Baptist Convention through which cooperating Southern Baptist churches give a percentage of their undesignated receipts in support of cooperative state, national, and international missions, ministries, and theological education."

- Declined to recommend revision of trustee term provisions in the SBC constitution, such as term lengths and trustee service by members of the same church, describing the current provisions as "beneficial to the Convention." (BP)

Executive Committee authorizes search for Chapman's successor

By ART TOALSTON & MICHAEL FOUST

Members of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee voted Sept. 20 to authorize their chairman to name a search committee for a successor to Morris H. Chapman, who announced his plans to retire effective Sept. 30, 2010.

EC chairman Randall James, assistant pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla., named himself and six others to the search committee at the close of the EC's Sept. 21-22 meeting in Nashville. James asked Chapman to remain in office after next September if the search process extends longer than expected.

James, commenting on leadership transitions within the SBC, said, "I know all of you are familiar with what's happened the last few months with the North American Mission Board, the International Mission Board and now at the Executive Committee."

NAMB President Geoff Hammond resigned under trustee pressure during an Aug. 11 meeting at the board's headquarters in Alpharetta, Ga.

IMB President Jerry Rankin announced his retirement Sept. 16 during a trustee meeting in Jacksonville, Fla.

"I think it's the most important time right now in Southern Baptist life," James told Executive Committee members. "I'm asking each of you to pray that God will direct our steps, that He will guide and guard our tongues, and that everything we do and say will bring honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Joining James, EC chairman since 2008 and an EC member since 2003, on the presidential search committee are EC members Martha Lawley, EC secretary and a member of First Southern Baptist Church in Worland, Wyo.; Clarence J. Cooper, pastor of Brandon (Miss.) Baptist Church; David O. Dykes, pastor of

Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas; Doug Melton, pastor of Southern Hills Baptist Church in Oklahoma City; Jay F. Shell, member of West Baptist Church in Batesville, Ark.; and Danny S. Sinquefield, pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Bartlett, Tenn., and president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

James said he hopes the committee will be able to present a nominee by next June's SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. Names submitted to the committee will be held in "the strictest of confidence," James said, requesting that potential candidates' names be submitted by Dec. 1.

James said the names of nominees for president of the Executive Committee can be addressed to Presidential Search Committee c/o SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce St., Nashville, TN 37203, or to him at First Baptist Church, 3000 S. John Young Pkwy., Orlando, FL 32805. (BP)

Great Commission Center 5k run/walk 2009

By EMILY GRIFFIN

Saturday, Sept. 12, under a beautiful blue sky, 75 members of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Boyce College community participated in the Great Commission Center 5k run/walk.

Each participant's race entry fee of \$20

culminated into \$1,200, which went into a scholarship fund for Southern Seminary and Boyce College students planning to participate in school sponsored mission trips.

Through the Great Commission Center and the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism, students will be eligible to receive a \$100 scholarship to apply towards mission

expenses. To date, the following locations for future mission trips include: Ecuador, Central Asia, West Africa, Portugal, Brazil, Utah and South Asia.

The race course took participants around the seminary campus three times, totaling 3.1 miles.

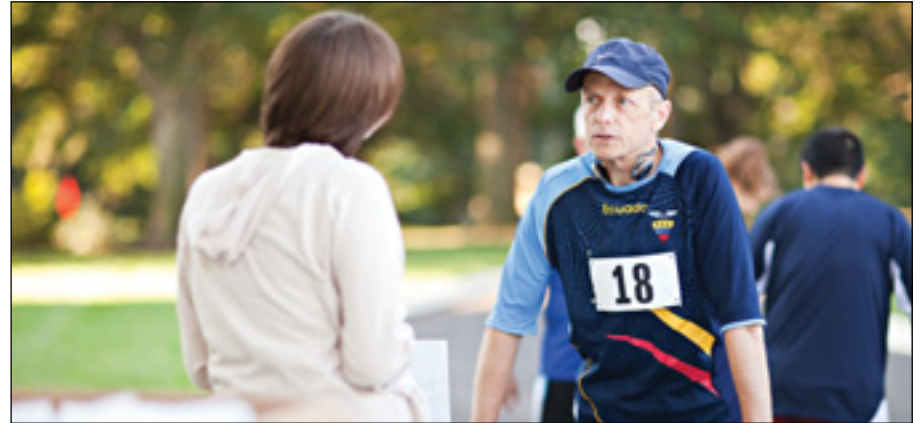
The men's overall winner was Sky Johnston, who ran the course in 17 minutes, 1 second.

The female overall winner was Stephanie Moore, at 22:50. Southern Seminary professors M. David Sills and Gregory A. Wills participated. Sills finished third in the over-40 category.

The Lawless Group, O'Neil Chiropractic, Christian Book Nook and the Billy Graham School sponsored the event.



Participants in the Great Commission Center 5k run/walk completed three loops around the Southern Seminary campus. *Photo by John Gill*



Southern Seminary professor David Sills finished third in the over-40 category. *Photo by John Gill*



The 5k resulted in \$1,200 for student mission trips scholarships. *Photo by John Gill*

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THIS IS AN ADVERTISEMENT

Mrs. Mohler welcomes Pendergraph Women's Ministry

By EMILY GRIFFIN

As part of its 25th year of fellowship, the Pendergraph Women's Ministry invited Mary K. Mohler, wife of Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr., to speak in Heritage Hall on Sept. 22. Afterward, Mrs. Mohler opened her home for a cake and coffee reception.

Mrs. Mohler spoke on the topic of waiting on the Lord. She commented on how all believers are frustrated at times by the process of

waiting on the Lord, but that waiting graciously and with a Christ-honoring spirit results in patience, contentment and discernment. She encouraged the audience to wait upon the Lord in three ways: humbly with the right attitude, actively and expectantly.

Twenty-five years ago, the Pendergraph Women's Ministry at Southern Seminary was founded to provide fellowship and the sharing of common experiences among the wives of seminary students.

The organization, launched in 1985, has

been built upon the founding gift of Jackie Pendergraph, the widow of former Southern student G.R. Pendergraph. In 1984, Pendergraph gifted an endowment to develop an organization to meet the needs of, and lift up, seminary wives, something she remembers being a pressing need during her years as a seminary wife.

As a result of Pendergraph's initiative, in April 1985 a combination Bible study and support group was organized for all the wives of Southern seminarians. The meetings were met with great success and provided organizers a model for encouraging further fellowship between seminary wives.

The Mohler's were a student couple, living in Fuller Hall, when the Pendergraph organization started. Since returning to Southern in 1993, upon her husband's appointment to president, Mrs. Mohler has had the

opportunity to watch the Pendergraph organization grow and open itself to include not only seminary wives but Southern and Boyce College female students as well. Pendergraph recently expanded again to include all women in the seminary community.

Each month the Pendergraph board, comprised of 11 women, organizes and hosts topical events, often featuring faculty speakers, for all females in the seminary community. With the support of a troop of volunteers, Pendergraph offers childcare to all families for \$1 per child, per event.

In November, the Pendergraph board will host past presidents and board members for an anniversary recognition and holiday gift exchange. In addition to singing worship songs and enjoying light refreshments, the past presidents and board members will be sharing memories of their Pendergraph days. For more information on upcoming events and childcare, visit pendergraph.wordpress.com or email pendergraph@sbts.edu.



(Left) Mary Mohler and Maria Moore interact with women at a Pendergraph dessert reception at the president's house.

(Right) A cake celebrates Pendergraph's 25th anniversary. Photos by Abigail McBroom



CHAPEL SCHEDULE

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

10 a.m., Tue., Oct. 13 Heritage Week

R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.
President
Southern Seminary

10 a.m., Wed., Oct. 14 Heritage Week

JAMES MERRITT
Senior Pastor
Cross Pointe Church
Duluth, Ga.

10 a.m., Thu., Oct. 15 Heritage Week

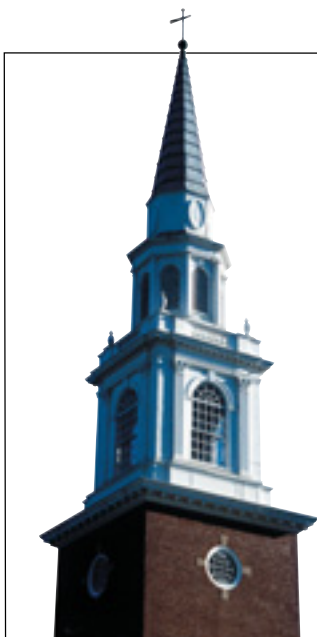
RUSSELL D. MOORE
Senior V.P. for Acad. Admin.
Southern Seminary

10 a.m., Tue., Oct. 20

AL GILBERT
Senior Pastor
Calvary Baptist Church
Winston-Salem, N.C.

10 a.m., Thu., Oct. 22

PANEL DISCUSSION:
SOUTHERN BAPTISTS
AND THE GCR
Moderator: R. Albert Mohler Jr.
Panelists: Russell D. Moore, Nick Moore, Jonathan Akin



Announcements

Music lessons available at Southern Seminary School of the Arts

Registration is open for fall music lessons at Southern Seminary. The Seminary School of the Arts (formerly the Seminary Academy of Music) offers private instruction at all levels in voice, guitar, violin, bass, piano, organ, banjo, trumpet, clarinet, saxophone and more. New this fall is the Suzuki violin program and the seminary youth orchestra and youth choir programs. For registration forms and information, contact Aarica Myers at ext. 4115 or amyers@sbts.edu or Esther Crookshank at ext. 4507 or ecrookshank@sbts.edu.

Community Newsbriefs

'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@albertmohler.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.

Ministry Resources

English Language Institute/China: teaching opportunities

Clarke and Rita Holtsberry, and David Raisor, director of partnerships with English Language Institute China, will be on campus Oct. 13-14 to speak with students interested in teaching English in China. They will host a table in the Honeycutt Campus Center lobby near 5th and Broadway. For more information, visit www.elic.org.

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 regular hours during the fall semester:

- M-F — 6:30 a.m.-10 p.m.
- Sat. — 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Aerobics schedule

- Fitness Boot Camp M, W & F 7-8 a.m.
- Mommy and Me Power Walking M, W & F 9-10 a.m.
- Practical Pilates M, T, & R 4:45-5:45 p.m.
- Aqua Alive T & R 5-5:45 p.m.
- Step It Up Cardio Blast T & R 8-9 p.m.

Intramural flag football

Registration: Now until Wednesday, Oct. 14.
Games: 10 a.m., Sat., Oct. 17, 24, 31, Nov. 7.

Swim lessons

3:30, 4 and 4:30 p.m., Wednesdays and Fridays, Oct. 14-30. Cost is \$20 per child.
Register at the HRC front desk.

Ping Pong tournament

10 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 17.
Register at the HRC front desk.

Family Fun Day/faculty vs. students softball game

11 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 17. Softball game at 1 p.m. Register at the HRC front desk or by emailing schambers@sbts.edu.

Parents Night Out

6:30-9:30 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 24.
Registration begins Saturday, Oct. 17.

Indoor soccer game

10 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 31.
Register at the HRC front desk.

Racquetball tournament

10 a.m., Saturday, Nov. 7.
Register at the HRC front desk.



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3 Questions WITH

Micah Fries
senior pastor of Frederick
Boulevard Baptist Church in
St. Joseph, Mo.

1 *What are a few things you would like to see happen in the Southern Baptist Convention over the next 5-10 years?*

WHILE I AM both indebted and grateful to the SBC, I recognize a few areas that I think could be strengthened, or which might be in need of realignment. Greatest among those areas would be a renewed commitment to the primacy of the local church.

I am incredibly grateful for the work of many organizations within SBC life. At the same time, if we are not careful I think we can become satisfied to hand off ministry to others because we convince ourselves that we are too small, too poor or simply unable to engage in it ourselves. The unfortunate result of that behavior is that we can hand off authority to the organization and although we may still call ourselves a bottom-up organization, instead we become a de facto top-down organization. We move from being a convention of churches to becoming a denomination, in the traditional sense. As we think about realignment in our convention, recapturing the authority and primacy of the local church must be paramount.

2 *What is God teaching you about pastoral ministry right now?*

I AM CONCERNED with how invested the local church has become in merely facilitating her own existence. It seems to me that the longer our churches exist in ministry, the easier it is to fill our time by simply perpetuating internal ministry almost exclusively and rarely engaging those who have not yet believed the Gospel.

We often preach a strong commitment to

Romans 10:14-17 but our behavior proves us to be little more than eloquent mouthpieces. It should be noted that a significant part of pastoral skill must include a great commitment to serving those within the body, but we should also remember that it can be seductive to do little more than that. If I am going to have a great commitment to the Gospel, I must love my own people but I must equally be committed to those who are not yet a part of the Kingdom.

3 *What role do you see social media playing in local church ministry over the next 10 years?*

A FEW YEARS ago I heard someone say that blogging was the 21st century's equivalent to the Guettenberg press. While that statement may have been a bit premature, I think it is that social media as an entire medium is creating a significant cultural shift in terms of impact on speed and ease of communication, among other things. For instance it can help create an increasingly educated laity as they have more consistent access to information that previously was difficult for them to obtain or even find, for that matter.

Additionally, social media can facilitate the advance of prayer needs. It can also help create a sense of intimacy with personal contacts on a worldwide scale, which in turn can tighten relationships for the sake of global mission. In my own personal context, I have found it extremely valuable in connecting on a personal level with a number of our church members, many of whom I might rarely have had much interpersonal contact with otherwise.

Towers

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