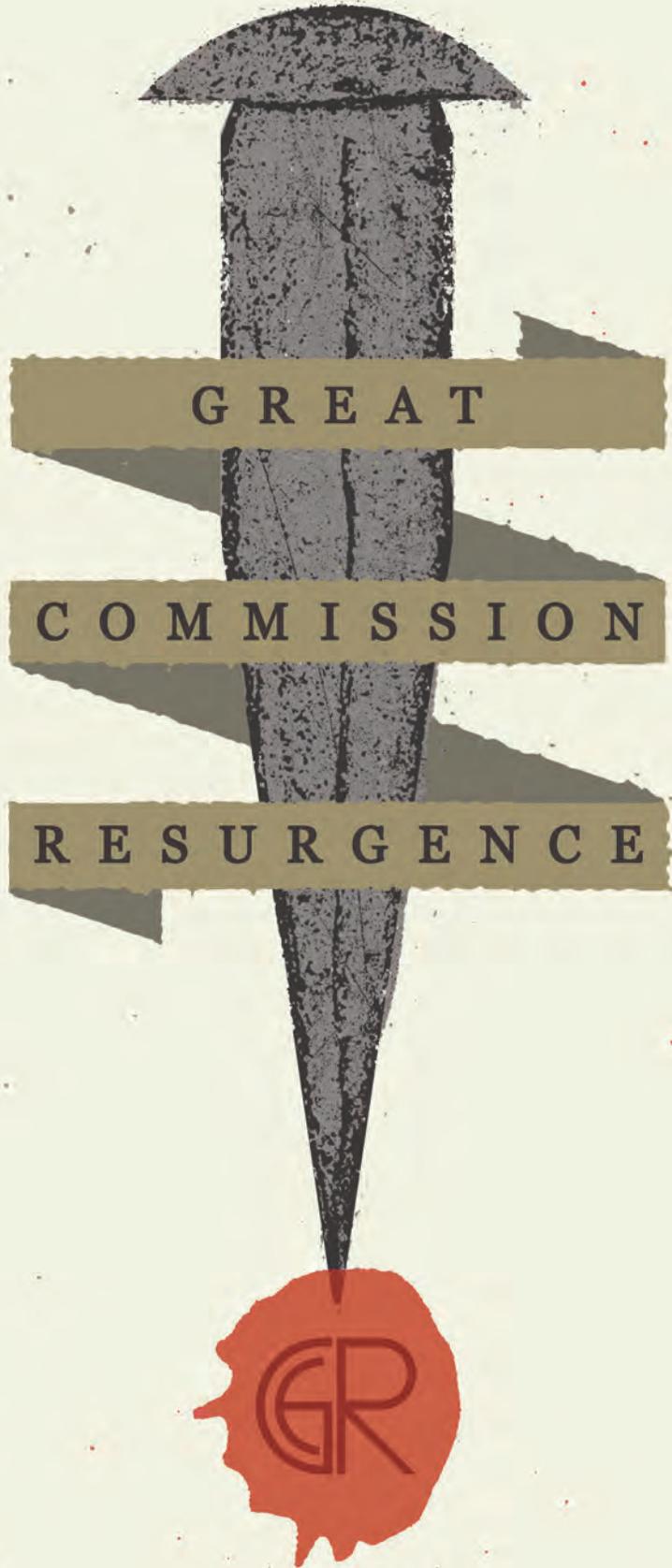


SOUTHERN SEMINARY



WINTER 2010 | VOLUME 78, NUMBER 1



A LETTER *from the* PRESIDENT

IT IS AN encouraging time to be a Southern Baptist, particularly with the reality that so many young pastors who are driven by the Gospel, animated by the authority and sufficiency of God's Word and riveted on seeing God glorified in all things, are leading our churches.

Recently, I spent a really encouraging few hours with a group of younger pastors — men who are being greatly used of God to reach their own generation and far beyond. That experience made me thankful, and also led me to think about why Southern Baptists should be especially thankful for the rising generation of young pastors.

They are deeply committed to the Gospel and to the authority of Scripture.

They are men driven by conviction and the ability to “connect the dots” theologically. They understand the threat of theological liberalism and want nothing of it. They love the Gospel and have a firm grip on it.

They love the church. They have resisted the temptation to give up on the church or to be satisfied with a parachurch form of ministry. They love people and see the body of Christ in terms of God's redemptive purpose. They like the gritty work of the ministry and are not afraid. They understand the joy of authentic Christian community and they give their lives to it.

They are gifted preachers and teachers.

They rightly divide the Word of truth and they make no apology for preaching the Bible. They are dedicated to expository preaching and they actually know what that means.

They are eager evangelists.

They are driven by an urgency to see lost people come to know Jesus and become both believers and disciples. They are innovative in methodology and boldly proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They affirm that Jesus is indeed the Way, the Truth and the Life, and they know that there is no other Gospel that saves.

They are complementarians who affirm the biblical roles for men and women in both the church and the home.

They love God's gift of marriage and the blessing of children, and they make clear that Christian discipleship requires faithfulness in marriage, family, parenthood and sexuality, and they embrace the Bible's teaching concerning the roles of men and women. They motivate younger men to embrace God's plan for their lives and lead. They talk openly about their joy in their wives and children. They change diapers.

They are men of vision.

They apply intelligence and discernment to the building up of the church and the cause of the Gospel. They see and seize opportunities. They are planting and building churches that glorify God by reaching the world, preaching the Gospel and changing lives. They are innovators and churchmen. They love a challenge. They would be embarrassed to aim low.

They are men of global reach and Great Commission passion.

They long to see the nations exult in Christ. They know nothing of a world with fixed borders and nationalistic aims. They eagerly send, go and give. They refuse to let their congregations fixate on themselves. They look at unreached people groups and hear the call.

They are men of joy.

To be with them is to sense their joy and their lack of cynicism. They are not interested in complaining about the church. They are planters and fixers. They scratch their heads as they look at many denominational structures and habits, but they have not given up.

Most denominations now look to the younger generation and wonder if there will be any pastors, or if the younger pastors will love the Gospel, preach the Word and commit themselves to the church and the Great Commission. Southern Baptists are now blessed to look at the rising generation of pastors and see so much that should bring satisfaction, hope and joy. The younger you



PRESIDENT R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.

go in the Southern Baptist Convention, the more conviction you discover. There is reason for great hope.

I go to bed tonight having been encouraged by my time with these young pastors. I get to see this rising generation every day on the campus of Southern Seminary. I also know that none of this would be happening here if a generation of SBC pastors and leaders had not fought the good fight and recovered this denomination for the cause of truth, the authority of the Bible and the furtherance of the Gospel.

As we labor together for the glory of the one true and living God, let us continue to pray that He will be pleased to use the churches of the SBC as instruments to spread the fame of His infinitely great name among all the nations of the earth.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Albert Mohler Jr." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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ON THE COVER
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idols

calling students to single-hearted devotion

3/19-20/2010
Boyce College
Louisville, KY

speakers:

Albert Mohler
Josh Harris
Russell Moore

worship led by:
Shane & Shane

this conference is for junior high and high school students who aren't afraid to think.

event details and registration online at:
events.shhs.edu

WHAT IS *The GREAT* COMMISSION RESURGENCE?



On April 16, 2009, in a chapel service at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southeastern President Danny Akin delivered a message entitled “*Axioms of a Great Commission Resurgence.*”

THE CONTENT of the sermon received input and affirmation from SBC leaders like Convention President Johnny Hunt; James Merritt, senior pastor of Cross Pointe Church in Duluth, Ga.; R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Thom Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources. Akin’s message was a response to a groundswell of hopes and concerns being echoed throughout the churches of the convention.

Building on the momentum generated by the message, Hunt worked with Akin and others in drafting what became “The Great Commission Resurgence Declaration.” There was an immediate and overwhelming response to Hunt’s call for a renewed focus on the Great Commission as embodied in the declaration. Persons were invited to sign on, pledging their support to this movement. To date, more than 4,350 Southern Baptists have signed the declaration.

At the June 2009 annual meeting of the SBC in Louisville, Ky., Mohler moved that the SBC respond to the GCR declaration and empower Hunt to appoint a task force to study the convention and bring back recommendations at the 2010 convention. The motion was as follows:

“Moved: That the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting June 23-24, 2009 in Louisville, Kentucky, authorize the President of the Southern Baptist Convention to appoint A Great Commission Task Force charged to bring a report and any recommendations to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Orlando, Florida, June 15-16, 2010, concerning how Southern Baptists can work more faithfully and effectively together in serving Christ through the Great Commission.”

The response to the motion was overwhelmingly positive: 95% of the messengers said “yes.”

Responding to the wishes of the SBC, Hunt appointed a 22-member Great Commission Resurgence Task Force that is chaired by Ronnie Floyd, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Springdale, Ark., and The Church at Pinnacle Hills in Rogers, Ark. The task force is working to find ways for the SBC to reorder its priorities, refocus its vision, reclaim its mission and see the nations exult in the name of Jesus.

The Great Commission Resurgence Task Force maintains a website for the churches of the SBC and their members; www.pray4GCR.com. “The GCR Declaration” can also be viewed at this website. The Task Force requests prayers and deeply covets support in the days ahead.

IN SHORT

news events reviews thoughts

Documenting change in Sudan

By EMILY GRIFFIN

In July 2005, still-photographer Coury Deeb led a small team to Sudan to capture the culture of the Sudanese people on film. Sudan had been embroiled in civil war nearly non-stop since the 1950s until a peace agreement was reached in 2005. Deeb traveled to the country to create a five-minute video that would bring awareness to the country's most pressing needs. Sudan affected Deeb in a way he wasn't anticipating, and he soon started dreaming about what a full-length documentary film would look like.

The trip inspired the creation of Nadus Films, a non-profit organization under Deeb's direction, based in Louisville. Nadus (Sudan spelled backwards) Films is comprised of photographers, film makers and designers and laymen that use their talents and artistry to share Sudan with as many as possible. William Wallace, videographer for The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and his wife Lindsay joined the Nadus Film crew in 2007 after meeting Deeb at Sojourn Community Church in Louisville.

Deeb and Wallace journeyed with a small team to Sudan in 2007 to capture footage for a full-length documentary. The crew elected to use the film to emphasize the country's greatest needs: education, medicine, clean water and church development.

"Before I went on the first trip, I had read a lot about Sudan and seen the footage that Coury had captured in 2005," Wallace said. "The only thing I really knew was that this was the first time of peace in Sudan in 50 years. And really, if you look 400 years back, there has always been war in Sudan through tribal



(Photo Courtesy of Nadus)

wars. For the first time in the country's history there was a chance for development. For instance, there were motorcycles and bottled water: you would have never seen that even two years prior."

Over the last two years, generous financial backing has allowed the Nadus Films team to edit 120 hours of footage collected over two trips to create the 85-minute documentary film, "The New Sudan." The film, which was completed in fall 2009, reviews the history of the civil war fought between the heavily Islamic north and largely Christian south regions of Sudan. It also depicts the Sudanese government's efforts to develop and grow and shows the prospect of sustainable peace. Actor William Mapother, who plays Ethan Tom on

ABC's "LOST," narrated the film. Deeb and Wallace are currently taking "The New Sudan" through a series of national film festivals before they release it to the general public.

Nadus Films has broadened its scope beyond film production, serving now as an agency of awareness and action for the people of Sudan. Today the organization goes simply by Nadus, and their work is vast. They organize and assist in the delivery of medical supplies, the creation of clean water wells, equipping teachers and supporting the churches that support the Sudanese people.

For more information on Nadus, see www.nadusfilms.com. To view a trailer of "The New Sudan" see www.thenewsudan.com.

IN SHORT

BGS introduces Certificate in Islamic Studies

By EMILY GRIFFIN

As of January 2010, the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is offering a Certificate in Islamic Studies. The five-course certificate program will equip students to better understand the Islamic religion and culture and inspire students to connect with this largely unreached people group.

“This program came about through an initiative from President Mohler, who properly sensed the growing influence of Islam within the world,” James D. Chancellor, W. O. Carver Professor of Christian Missions and World Religions at Southern, said. “This type of program is part of a trend that is appearing at more and more seminaries. The Islamic religion is growing and Southern Baptists are taking part in an endeavor to reach this unreached people group.”



The Islamic Studies Certificate, which can be completed in two years, was developed by Chancellor; Chuck Lawless, dean of the Billy Graham School; George H. Martin, M. Theron Rankin Professor of Christian Missions and associate dean of the Billy Graham School; and Michael Clark, a Southern doctoral student and assistant director of the seminary’s Great Commission Center.

The group began building the foundation for the program in summer 2009, creating several new courses and developing the curriculum. The program developers and the Billy Graham School plan to offer Islamic Studies courses online in the future.

For more information on the Certificate in Islamic Studies, contact the Billy Graham School or visit www.sbts.edu/bgs.

Lawless launches new blog

By EMILY GRIFFIN



In October 2009, Chuck Lawless, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism, launched ChuckLawless.com. The weekly blog is hosted by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and addresses issues and offers resources related to missions, evangelism and church growth.

ChuckLawless.com will host monthly podcasts featuring interviews with Great Commission leaders in North America and around the world. Facts about the needs of the world and Great Commission quotes will challenge readers to find their role in meeting these needs. Lawless has also included “Great Commission Prayer Moments” to encourage readers to pray with knowledge and passion.

IMB couple spends semester at SBTS

By EMILY GRIFFIN

Randy and Kathy Arnett haven’t stayed in one place for long since they began serving in ministry in the early 1980s.

The Arnetts have been missionaries to the countries of West Africa since the mid 1980s. The couple recently returned to their home in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, also known as the Ivory Coast, after attending classes through the Billy Graham School. While stateside last fall, the Arnetts lived on the Southern Seminary campus and used the opportunity to attend classes and visit with fellow missionaries and students awaiting their commission to the field.

Upon returning to Côte d’Ivoire, Randy continued his work as the International Mission Board’s theological education consultant to Africa,

a post he was honored with in 2009. He is one of four education consultants working across the world in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe. Randy and his global counterparts will be finding ways to liaise U.S. seminaries and global theological institutes to offer support, help with curriculum development and, in some instances, provide professors and planning.

The Arnetts will remain at their home in Abidjan for the next two years. After that, moving could be a possibility. Randy’s service with the IMB has included time at the Baptist School of Theology of West Africa, as a human-needs facilitator for a region of 22 West African countries and as the organization’s regional leader of West Africa.

The Arnetts anticipate returning to

Southern’s campus annually for Randy to further his doctoral work and Kathy to finish her masters course work.



Mohler addresses UofL students

By JEFF ROBINSON

In November, R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, spoke on his book, "Atheism Remix," to a capacity crowd at the University of Louisville's "Red Barn." The event was hosted by Highview Baptist Church's Campus Church, which is under the pastoral leadership of Dan DeWitt, vice president of communications at Southern Seminary.

Mohler gave a clear and compelling presentation, arguing that the two primary options for people today are the new atheism or biblical theism. Mohler responded to the new atheism worldview, which he said demands Christian attention and a Christian response. After speaking for 30 minutes, Mohler engaged the audience in a question and answer session.

A full audio and video recording of Atheism Remix is available at www.thecampuschurch.info.



Alumnus of the year returns to Southern

By EMILY GRIFFIN

Osadolor Imasogie hasn't been a student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary since 1972, but he can still vividly remember his fellow classmates, his students and his family's residence at the Village Manor Apartment complex, unit M10.

"It was a very happy time because of the relationships among the students," he said. "Also, I was a teaching fellow when I was here and I enjoyed that greatly."

While working toward his doctorate at Southern, Imasogie and his family attended St. Matthews Baptist Church and Mrs. Imasogie earned her master of English literature degree from the University of Louisville. Imasogie hadn't been able to return to Southern Seminary's campus since the mid-1980s until this past November when two of his sons accompanied back to campus.

"I had to come and look at it because I had been told the whole place had changed. It has changed and I am very impressed," Imasogie said.

Since graduating Imasogie has served the Kingdom in a number of ways,

including a six-year tenure as president of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. He also served as the president of Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary from 1979-1993, contributing greatly to the school's growth and serving as the institution's first indigenous president.

After retiring from his presidency, Imasogie served as a vice president of the Baptist World Alliance from 2000-

2005. Since leaving the Baptist World Alliance, Imasogie has kept his calendar full with speaking engagements, writing, working with the Nigerian Baptist Convention and visiting his four children, who are spread out between Canada, the United States, England and Nigeria.

Southern Seminary honored Imasogie in 1987 with its Alumnus of the Year Award.



Eghosa, Osadolor and Osagie Imasogie during their November 2009 visit to Southern Seminary.

IN SHORT

Moore joins Evangel

By EMILY GRIFFIN

Evangel, a daily blog hosted by FirstThings.com, has welcomed Russell D. Moore, dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary, as a contributing writer.

“A group of us evangelicals are launching a brand-new group effort today (October 19, 2009),” Moore wrote. “*First Things* magazine launched the Evangel blog, featuring evangelical writers such as Joe Carter, Justin Taylor, and John Mark Reynolds. I’m glad to be a part.”

Moore describes the Evangel blog as, “set up to be a kind of casual back-and-forth, along the lines of National Review’s ‘The Corner.’ We start off with a conversation about the old nail-biter of evangelical identity.”

Evangel can be viewed at: firstthings.com/blogs/evangel.

The screenshot shows the Evangel blog interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'FIRST THINGS' and 'ANCIENT CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE' logos. Below that, a search bar and a 'Masthead' section listing various authors like Matthew Anderson, Hunter Baker, and others. The main content area features a post titled 'The Princess and the Frog? Yes and Neaux' by Russell D. Moore, dated Tuesday, December 15, 2009. The post text discusses the Disney film 'The Princess and the Frog' and its setting in New Orleans, touching on racial and class tensions. A sidebar on the right contains a search bar, a 'Masthead' list, and a 'Recent Comments' section.

SBTS remembers legacy of Raymond Coppenger

By JEFF ROBINSON

Raymond Coppenger, who celebrated his 100th birthday this year, died on Nov. 24, 2009, in Arkadelphia, Ark. Coppenger was a 1936 master of theology graduate of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a 1951 doctoral graduate of the University of Edinburgh.

Coppenger celebrated his 100th birthday on Sept. 20, 2009, with a large gathering of family and friends in Arkadelphia, Ark. He received a televised birthday greeting from former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, a Ouachita Baptist University alumnus, who closed his Fox News Channel show, "Huckabee," on Sept. 20 by noting, "Dr. Coppenger is one of the most brilliant scholars I've known, and his Edinburgh-trained intellect was matched by his humble and gracious spirit. As he and his family celebrate his 100 years, I thank him for his investment in my life."

Coppenger was the patriarch of a family that has developed deep ties with Southern Seminary. Coppenger attended Southern during the Great Depression; his son, Mark, today serves as profes-

sor of Christian apologetics at Southern and his grandson, Jedidiah, is a doctoral student.

“Southern Seminary has always been a special place for my family,” Coppenger said in an interview four years ago.

Raymond Coppenger’s life and ministry are themselves a story that spanned most of the 20th century. Born outside the tiny Appalachian community of Coker Creek, Tenn., Coppenger spent most of his formative years in Atlanta. He grew up attending church, riding four miles from home to Sunday school and worship services in a hay wagon pulled by a mule team.

As a high school senior in Atlanta, Coppenger surrendered to the call to ministry at age 18. Coppenger assembled a lengthy and impressive ministry resume, pastoring churches in Tennessee and teaching philosophy at Cumberland University, Ouachita Baptist University and Boyce College, Southern Seminary’s undergraduate institution.

Coppenger’s doctoral dissertation was published in 2009, 59 years after its completion by Joshua Press: “A



Messenger of Grace: A Study of the Life and Thought of Abraham Booth (1734-1806).”

(Adapted from reporting by Ouachita Baptist University and Baptist Press.)

Upcoming Events at Southern

Want to know what's going on?

Look to Southern's new webpage dedicated to sharing information regarding upcoming campus events; <http://events.sbts.edu/>. The website is a collaboration between Southern's Event Productions, Campus Technology and Communications departments and serves as the best way for students, alumni and guests to learn about all of the upcoming guest lectures and speakers, conferences, preview weekends and graduation festivities.

GIVE ME AN ANSWER

COLLEGIATE CONFERENCE — February 12-13

ADOPTING FOR LIFE CONFERENCE — February 26-27

GIVE ME AN ANSWER

HIGH SCHOOL CONFERENCE — March 19-20

HOME SCHOOL SEMINAR — June 4

YOUTH SUMMER CONFERENCE — June 28-July 1

VIGILANCE: REBUILDING PERSPECTIVE

ON SAFETY AND SECURITY — July 20-22

CONNECTING CHURCH & FAMILY CONFERENCE —

August 20-22

ANDREW FULLER CONFERENCE — August 30-31

KERYGMA CONFERENCE — September 30-October 1

AVAILABLE ON THE WEB: EVENTS.SBTS.EDU

IN SHORT

SBTS alums to lead 2010 SBC Pastors' Conference

By EMILY GRIFFIN

Kevin Ezell, president of the 2010 Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference and an alumnus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said he is excited to be working alongside young, energetic pastors in the planning of the 2010 Pastors' Conference, June 13-14, in Orlando, Fla.

"We are hoping to help the younger pastors see that there is a place for younger people within the Southern Baptist Convention," Ezell, pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, said. "We are working as a team to put together a program that will include a great line-up of speakers, as well as worship with Travis Cottrell and singing from the Watoto Children's Choir."

Ezell was elected Pastors' Conference president at the 2009 Pastors' Conference in Louisville, Ky. Southern Seminary alumni Jimmy Scroggins and Ben Mandrell were also elected to the positions of vice president and secretary-treasurer, respectively. Scroggins serves as pastor of First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach, Fla., and Mandrell is the pastor of Englewood Baptist Church in Jackson, Tenn.

Ezell, Scroggins and Mandrell have developed the conference's four sessions to challenge pastors to consider the "Greater Things" they can achieve in their personal walk, for their family, for their churches and for missions.

"We are very thankful for the past but we still think the best is yet to be,"

Ezell said regarding the theme.

Conference speakers include Francis Chan, teaching pastor of Cornerstone Church in Simi Valley, Calif.; C.J. Mahaney, leader of Sovereign Grace Ministries; David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham Ala.; Andy Stanley, senior pastor of North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, Ga.; and Russell D. Moore, preaching pastor of Highview Baptist Church's Fegenbush location in Louisville, Ky., and senior vice president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary.

The Pastors' Conference is not limited to SBC pastors; the entire event is open to anyone wishing to attend. Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga. and SBC president, is hoping for 18,000 attendees at the two-day event, which immediately precedes the SBC annual meeting.

Ezell earned his doctor of ministry



from Southern. Scroggins earned both his master of divinity and doctor of philosophy from Southern and served as dean of Boyce and preaching pastor of Highview Baptist Church's Fegenbush location prior to relocating to Florida in May 2008. Mandrell earned his master of divinity at Southern.

For more information about the SBC Pastors' Conference visit www.sbpc.net.





FALL FESTIVITIES

Southern celebrated R. Albert Mohler Jr.'s 50th birthday and Heritage Week during the fall semester. At Mohler's birthday celebration current and former faculty members spoke as did Southern's first lady Mary Mohler. For Heritage Week, Mohler and the seminary's trustees visited Cave Hill Cemetery, burial site of the seminary's founding faculty, and welcomed James Merritt to speak in chapel.



IN SHORT



GRADUATION

Southern concluded the fall semester by saying goodbye to 223 students during December graduation ceremonies. R. Albert Mohler Jr. challenged graduates with an address from 1 Corinthians 3, reminding them that faithful ministers plant the seed of God's Word, but God makes it grow.



Panel Discussion: Southern Baptists and the GCR



The following is adapted and condensed from a live blog by Garrett E. Wishall of the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) panel discussion that took place at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on Oct. 22, 2009. R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, moderated the discussion, which included panelists Russell D. Moore, senior vice president for academic administration, dean of the School of Theology at Southern and preaching pastor of Highview Baptist Church's Fegenbush campus; Chuck Lawless, dean of Southern's Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism; Jonathan Akin, lead pastor of Highview Baptist Church's Valley Station campus; and Nick Moore, lead pastor of Highview Baptist Church's Spencer County campus. For complete audio and video of the GCR panel discussion see www.sbts.edu/resources.

Q. Is the GCR a movement in the same vein as the Conservative Resurgence?

RUSSELL D. MOORE: The Conservative Resurgence was a matter of an already conservative denomination recovering at the institutional level what was already the case at the local church level. There is a difference with the GCR, in that we are calling for a resurgence at both the institutional and local church level. In that way, I think the GCR is something bigger and broader than the Conservative Resurgence.

Q. What is the generational component to the GCR? Is this a season in which the next generation of SBC pastors is deciding whether or not to buy into the SBC?

NICK MOORE: I think this is a critical hour, where young men are making that decision. We, young pastors, if we are called to reach the nations for Christ — and we are — how are we going to do that? Are we going to do that by cooperating together in the Southern Baptist Convention? I think we should and that is the decision people are making.

Q. Is it fair to say that the Conservative Resurgence gave us the opportunity for the GCR?

AKIN: I would say yes. First, theology must drive method and missions. The Conservative Resurgence represented a stand for sound theology. Second, I would agree that we have the opportunity to carry out the GCR, but we are not there yet.

One thing I would say is we have established sound theology in the SBC, but we have not changed our structure one bit. Our theology should drive our practice, but it has not changed our practice one bit. We have just exchanged one bureaucracy for another. Our practice has not matched up with our theology. We still have, by and large, two-thirds of every dollar staying in states that are saturated with churches rather than going to a foreign mission field.

Here in the state of Kentucky, which has four million people, 63 cents of every dollar that is given to the Cooperative Program stays in the state of Kentucky. My brother serves in a country overseas in which there are 70 million people and that has less believers than there are in the state of Kentucky and we still have 63 cents of every dollar staying in Kentucky. We are not living up to our

theology.

Q. Are we trying to save the SBC? Is that what the GCR is about? Or is the GCR about capturing the energies of a generation for the Great Commission?

RUSSELL D. MOORE: Well, I don't think it is an either/or situation. If the SBC were to collapse right now, it would have a huge impact on all of evangelical Christianity and would be put in a very difficult situation because of the way that the IMB works ... It is an incredibly effective way to accomplish the Great Commission. I'm not saying that it is the only way to do it or that there won't ever be something that is better, but so far in church history this is a remarkably good way to do it. So, simply giving up on that and walking away from 5,000 missionaries across the world would be a tragic thing to do.

Having said that, simply assuming that generation after generation is going to pick up the status quo and do things exactly like the generation before is a false understanding of how this thing is going to work.

LAWLESS: The GCR should be about helping the SBC address questions like: How do we individually and corporately reinvest in my going to my neighbor, my city, my state, this nation and ultimately the ends of the earth to take the Gospel to people? How do we recapture the energy of this current generation and future generations? How do we make sure that those who come behind us have what they need? How do we capture their energy so they can continue to do the work behind us?

IN SHORT

SBTS exhibits strong presence at annual ETS meeting

By JEFF ROBINSON

Attendees of the 61st annual national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society Nov. 17-20, 2009, in New Orleans did not have to look far to see substantial traces of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's scholarly work.

At the year's largest gathering of evangelical scholars, theologians and ministers, Southern Seminary faculty members and students presented 27 papers in the daily sessions, including the presidential address by Bruce A. Ware, ETS president for 2009. Ware, who serves as professor of Christian theology at Southern, is the seminary's first-ever faculty member to serve in ETS's highest office.

During a reception for Ware following his presidential address, Southern President R. Albert Mohler Jr. said the seminary's impact upon ETS continues to increase each year.

"To pick up that ETS program and see the net weight of contributors to ETS that goes beyond professors to students and alumni is deeply encouraging," Mohler said. "Then, there is the fact that Bruce Ware, one of our own, was elected president of ETS and concluded his term with a brilliant and faithful, not only mind-stretching, but soul-enriching presidential address."

Nineteen papers were presented by

faculty members, including Mohler, School of Theology Dean Russell D. Moore and numerous other professors, many of whom chaired individual ETS sessions or panels. Southern's involvement was broad and included a number of diverse topics including systematic and biblical theology, history, ethics, culture and biblical studies. Eight students presented papers and the ETS presentation roster was also dotted with SBTS alumni.

"As a faculty member at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and president of ETS, it was deeply gratifying to observe the many papers read at this year's 61st annual meeting by Southern faculty colleagues and doctoral students," Ware said

"Excellent scholarship and theological leadership are both crucial to the ETS, and it encourages my heart to see Southern Seminary's influence in the ongoing growth and development of this important Society."

Ware delivered his presidential address on "The Man Christ Jesus," which included an unforgettable illustration on the sinlessness and impeccability of Jesus. Though He was both God as well as man, Jesus' inability to sin, His impeccability, had nothing to do with the fact that He is also God, Ware said. Instead, Christ resisted sin by the power

of the Holy Spirit.

"Jesus lived His life in reliance on the Spirit so that His resistance to temptation and His obedience to the will of the Father took place through, and not apart from, the empowerment provided Him as the second Adam, the seed of Abraham, the son of David," Ware said in the address.

"Recall again Peter's claim that God anointed Jesus 'with the Holy Spirit and with power,' and that he went about doing good (the moral life and obedience of Christ) as well as healing all who are oppressed by the devil (the miracles he performed), 'for God was with Him' (Acts 10:38).

"Although He was God, and although He was impeccable as the God-man, nevertheless He did not resist temptation and obey the Father by His divine nature but by the power of the Spirit who indwelt Him. ... He knew that to rely on ... His own divine nature, would be to forfeit the mission on which He was sent. Hence, He had to fight temptation as a man, in dependence on His Father and by the power of the Spirit, and so He did, amazingly, completely without ever once yielding to any temptation."

Ware's address was an excerpt from an upcoming book, "The Man Christ Jesus: Reflections on the Significance of the Humanity of Christ," due out from Crossway later this year.



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Russell D. Moore



David Platt



Jedd Medefind

2010 FACULTY RELEASES

Gregg R. Allison

Introduction to Historical Theology: An Introduction to the Development of Evangelical Doctrine. (Zondervan, 2010)

The Assembly of "The Way:" The Doctrine of the Church. Foundations of Evangelical Theology series. (Crossway, 2010)

"The Human Body," "The Ascension of Jesus Christ," "The Flesh," "The Virgin Mary" and "Original Sin" in *The Dictionary of Everyday Theology.* (Nav-Press, January 2010)

"The Theology of the Eucharist according to the Catholic Church," in *The Lord's Supper.* (B & H Academic, January 2010)

Edited by Matt Crawford and Thomas R. Schreiner

Timothy K. Beougher, William D. Henard and Adam W. Greenway

Taking a Step of Faith: A Practical Guide for Responding to Unbelief. (Cross-Books, 2010)

Theodore J. Cabal

Controversy of the Ages: Why Christians Should Not Fight Over the Age of the Earth. (B & H)

R. Bruce Carlton

Strategy Coordinator: Changing the Course of Southern Baptist Missions. (Regnum Books)

James D. Chancellor

"The Family / The Children of God" in *Religions of the World.* (ABC-CLIO Publishers)

"The Family: From Cult to Sect?" in *Post-Christendom Spiritualities Consultation.* (Morling Press)

James M. Hamilton

"Scripture: The Evangelical View," in *The Sacred Text.* (Gorgias)

The Center of Biblical Theology: The Glory of God in Salvation through Judgment. (Crossway, January 2010)

"The Lord's Supper in Paul: An Identity Shaping Proclamation of the Gospel," in *The Lord's Supper.* (B & H Academic, January 2010)

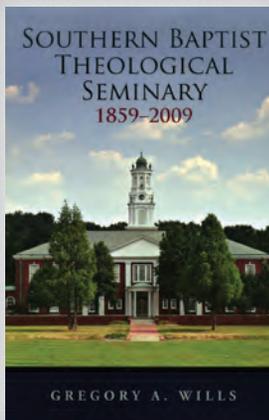
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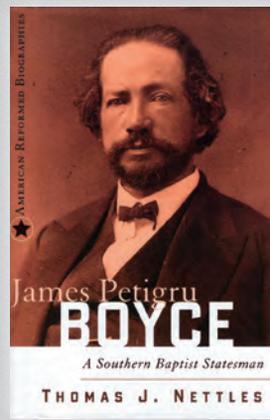
"The Pastor as Leader in a Great Commission Resurgence" in *Toward a Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God's Mandate in Our Time.* (B & H)

Edited by Adam W. Greenway and Charles E. Lawless

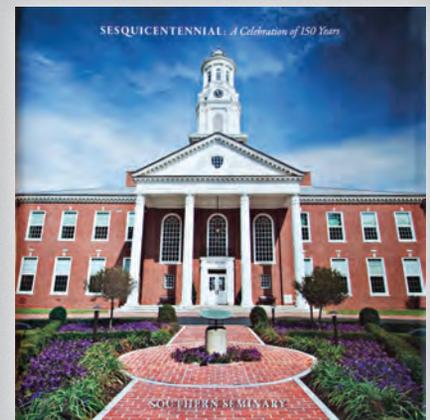
A strong legacy built our visionary future: the publications of the Southern Seminary Sesquicentennial



Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859-2009
by Gregory Wills



James Petigru Boyce: A Southern Baptist Statesman
by Thomas J. Nettles

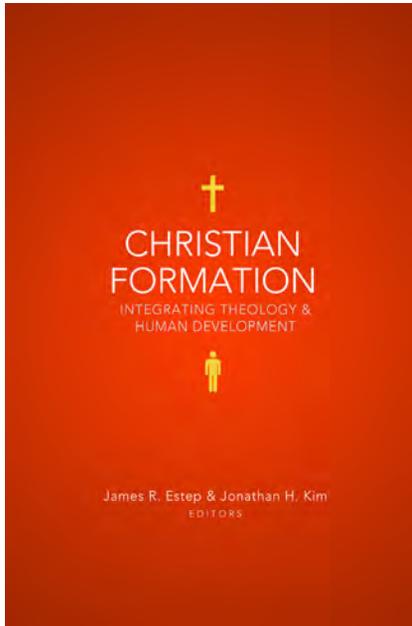


Sesquicentennial: A Celebration of 150 Years
by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

IN SHORT

Timothy Paul Jones

“Faith Development and Christian Formation” in *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development*. (B&H Academic, May 2010) with Michael S. Wilder



“Models of Family Ministry” in *A Theology of Family Ministry*. (B & H Academic)

Trained in the fear of God: A theology and history of family discipleship. (Kregel)
Edited by Timothy Paul Jones and Randy L. Stinson

Travis S. Kerns

contributions to *Baker Dictionary of Cults, Sects, and World Religions*. (Baker)

Thomas J. Nettles

Defending the Faith, Engaging the Culture. (B & H)

J. D. Payne

“So What about Us?: Eleven Implications of the Mission of God for the North American Church” in *Discovering the Mission of God in the Bible*. (B & H)

“Ethical Guidelines for Church Planters: A Suggested Proposal” in *Ethics in Missions: Serving Jesus with Integrity*. (William Carey Library)

Evangelism (Deepest Questions Answered): A Biblical Response to the

Questions You’ve Always Wondered About. (Paternoster)

“Mission and Church Planting” in *The Mission of God: A Biblical-Theological Framework*. (B & H)

Stuart W. Scott

The Faithful Parent: A Biblical Perspective. (P & R Publishers, June 2010) with Martha Peace

Robert L. Plummer

40 questions about Interpreting the Bible. (Kregel)

“In the Discipline and Instruction of the Lord: Family Discipleship in the New Testament and Early Patristic Era” in *Trained in the Fear of God*. (Kregel)

“The Power of the Gospel” in *Discovering the Mission of God*. (B & H)

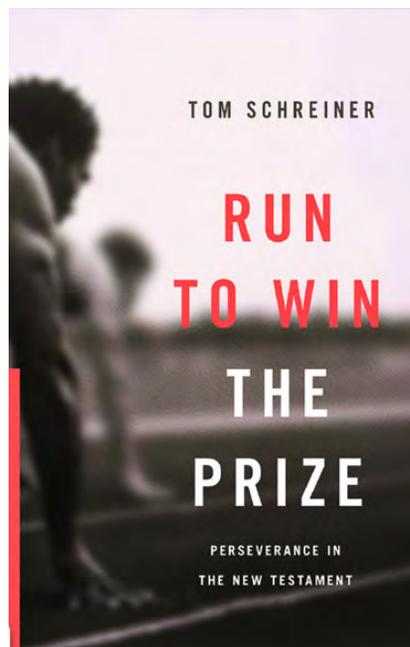
Thomas R. Schreiner

Magnifying God in Christ: A Summary of New Testament Theology. (Baker, February 2010)

Forty Questions on the Law. (Kregel)

Run to Win the Prize. (Crossway, May 2010)

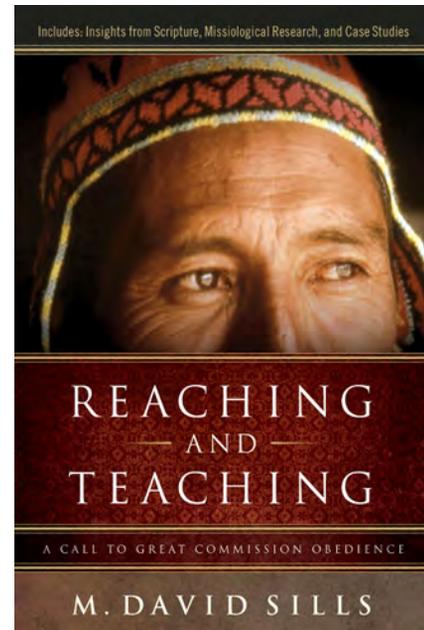
Interpreting the Pauline Epistles, revised edition. (Baker)

**Mark A. Seifrid**

“The New Perspective on the Self: Our Hellish Image in the Mirror of the Law” in *Perspectives On Our Struggle with Sin*. (B & H, Fall 2010)
Edited by Chad O. Brand

M. David Sills

Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience. (Moody, April 2010)

**Michael S. Wilder**

“Faith Development and Christian Formation” in *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development*. (B&H Academic, May 2010) with Timothy Paul Jones

“Developing Missional Families” in *Trained in the Fear of God: A Theology and History of Family Ministry*. (Kregel)
Edited by Timothy Paul Jones and Randy L. Stinson

Transmission: Making Disciples through Short-term Missions. (B&H Academic, May 2010)
with Shane W. Parker



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Where the wild things aren't

By RUSSELL D. MOORE

RECENTLY, I took my three oldest sons to see the movie “Where the Wild Things Are.” Some Christians are all exercised about the fact that the movie might be too frightening for children. They’re wrong. The movie is not a great one, but that’s not the reason why. As a matter of fact, “Where the Wild Things Are” fails because it’s not scary enough for your kids. And there’s something there Christians can learn about children, horror and the Gospel.

From the time my sons were babies I’ve read to them the Maurice Sendak classic picture book. They love it, and so do I. They’d sit attentively through “Goodnight Moon,” but they’d squeal “Let the wild rumpus start!” whenever we’d journey with Max to the place of the wild things.

Children, it turns out, aren’t as naive about evil as we assume they are. Children of every culture, and in every place, seem to have a built-in craving for monsters, dragons and “wild things.” The Sendak book appeals to kids because it tells them something about what they intuitively know is true: the world around them is scary. There’s a wildness out there. The Sendak book shows the terror

of a little boy who is frightened by his own lack of self-control, and who conquers it through self-control by becoming king of all the wild things.

The Sendak book, with its muted words but fantastic drawings, achieves this sense of wonder and wildness. The movie doesn’t. That’s because the movie tames the wild things too much. It’s not that they’re too scary for children. It’s that they’re not believable as scary. The dialogue sounds like it was lifted from an old episode of “Thirtysomething,” as the beasts talk through their psychodramas, jealousies and interpersonal offenses with one another. Kids will be entertained because the special effects are good. But they won’t “get it” deep inside like they do the book.

I’m amazed though by the way some Christians react to things like this. They furrow their brow because the Max character screams at his mother, and bites her, even though this is hardly glorified in the movie. They wag their heads at how “dark” the idea of this wild world is. Of course it is “dark.” The universe is dark; that’s why we need the Light of Galilee.

“Where the Wild Things Are” isn’t

going to be a classic movie the way it is a classic book. But the Christian discomfort with wildness will be with us for a while. And it’s the reason too many of our children find Maurice Sendak more realistic than Sunday school.

Too many of our Bible study curricula for children declaw the Bible, excising all the snakes, dragons and wildness. We reduce the Bible to a set of ethical guidelines and a text on how gentle and kind Jesus is. The problem is, our kids know there are monsters out there. God put that awareness in them. And they’re looking for a sheep-herding dragon-slayer, the One who can put all the wild things under His feet.

Your kids might be bored by the “Wild Things” movie but they won’t be bored by the “Wild Things” book. It’s their story, and mine. Read them the story of Max and his monsters, and then show them the Story they were knit together to love.

And let the wild rumpus start.

IN SHORT

Preparing for ministry: The School of Church Ministries casts a vision for pastoral leadership

Interview by EMILY GRIFFIN

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary recently merged its School of Leadership and School of Church Music and Worship to form the School of Church Ministries. Andrew Lucius is a student in the School of Church Ministries and Southern Seminary magazine recently sat down with him to get his thoughts on the new school and ministry in general.

Southern Seminary Magazine: What are your ministry goals?

LUCIUS: “I think the greatest goal that I have, and what I’ve seen lacking

“It is a hard balance to spend the appropriate amount of time in studying music and theology, but it must be sought out.”

in a lot of music leaders in the church, is that there is a lot of emphasis on music and not much emphasis on pastoral ministry. Of course that isn’t everybody, I know that is a broad statement, but that has been a trend that I have personally seen.

“As far as a goal, I want it to be more than playing music every week; I want people to see me as a pastor and not just a musician. I would like to leave Southern with the ability not just to lead music but also to divide the Word of God and preach if the time came where that would be needed.”

Q: What is the School of Church Ministries’ role in you working toward that goal?

AL: “The classes that the School of Church Ministries is requiring now are pushing people closer to that goal. It is still a growing process, but the people that are in the roles that can make change happen are certainly listening, specifically Dr. Randy Stinson and Dr. Greg Brewton. They are both listening to what the students are saying; at the same time they are not backing down from what they feel is important.

“I heard Dr. Brewton say one time, ‘We’re not getting rid of the School of Music. However, we are not training music teachers or music performers.

We are not a conservatory; we are a seminary, and we are training music pastors.’”

Q: What do you enjoy most about your coursework at the School of Church Ministries?

AL: “I enjoy the practical classes that are geared towards preparing people for ministry. Last summer I was able to take music ministry for adolescents and adults, and I just really enjoyed that class because it was more than learning music. It was more hands-on and addressed specific situations. That class helped me

put a lot of things into perspective and was a good reminder of what music ministry is like. My state of mind has shifted since I’ve been at this seminary; it

is now all about what I need to do to get ready to be a pastor more than what I need to do to play an instrument.”

Q: How do you see church music and music ministry changing?

AL: “One of the big changes is going to be instrumentation. Fifteen to 20 years ago, the guitar wasn’t really on the church music scene. Everything was primarily piano and organ based. Still today most music students are majoring in voice, piano or organ, but the guitar is slowly coming in. The overall instrumentation of what the church is experiencing now and what it will experience 10 or 15 years from now is going to change a lot with regard to musical

instrumentation.

“I think one of the dangers that church musicians will face will be to compromise theologically and musically. There are advantages and disadvantages to the guitar making its way onto the church music scene. The greatest advantage is that it takes little musical training to play the guitar well enough to lead a worship song. This allows more people to lead musical worship. This also means that the overall level of musical proficiency will probably diminish in the church as a whole if music pastors and churches do not hold the standard high for its song leaders.

It is a hard balance to spend the appropriate amount of time in studying music and theology, but it must be sought out. This has really given me problems in the last two years. I am trying to find a balance of musical proficiency and theological proficiency, where I can respond to someone in my church that says to me, ‘my mom just committed suicide, is she in heaven or hell?’ and then also lead a musical group with excellence. There is a shift that is moving more towards music ministers having a greater responsibility in pastoral ministry, and in 10 years that will be the expectation.”

Q: What is your ministry passion?

AL: “The greatest passion must be that Jesus is proclaimed as King and that, as a byproduct, the church be resolved to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The second passion would be to train myself out of a job. I want to be training others with a passion for pastoral music ministry in developing musical gifts and a pastor’s heart. I feel that this would be a long term goal as I am wrestling with what those things mean now.”



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Your calling is clear — but now, you see your need for training. You're looking forward to learning from seasoned practitioners who have invested their lives in ministry. Yet you also want to develop personal relationships with the professors whose books are reshaping entire fields of study.

If that's the sort of training that you're looking for, consider the School of Church Ministries at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. We can't call you to ministry — only God can do that. But, for those whom God has called, the School of Church Ministries provides theologically-grounded, vocationally-tested training with an emphasis on pastoral leadership, family discipleship and biblical worship.

We ...

A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

More than a century ago, it was Southern Seminary that launched the world's first seminary-based program in educational ministry. This program became the School of Leadership and Church Ministry in 2001. Now, the School of Leadership and Church Ministry has merged with the School of Church Music and Worship to form the School of Church Ministries, an innovative new school dedicated to training

God-called ministers in the areas of pastoral leadership, family discipleship and biblical worship.

Dr. Randy Stinson, dean of the School of Church Ministries, is a well-known Christian leader and president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Dr. Stinson is developing a distinguished faculty that is working on the cutting edge in the fields of family ministry, leadership, discipleship and worship.

Faculty member Michael S. Wilder recently co-authored "TransforMission: Making Disciples through Short-Term Missions," a guide to how mission trips can become catalysts for deeper discipleship. Dr. Timothy Paul Jones has authored or edited more than a dozen works in the fields of family ministry and church history, including "Perspectives on Family Ministry." Together, Drs. Stinson and Jones have developed the theological foundations for what has become known as "the family-equipping ministry model."

In other seminaries, you will read books about leadership, discipleship and family ministry. In the School of Church Ministries at Southern Seminary, you will study with the people whose books and ministries are reshaping these areas of study.

... Equip Leaders ...

A VISION FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

Our core values in the School of Church Ministries are simple: Everything we do revolves around equipping God-called ministers to lead in *biblical worship, family discipleship and pastoral leadership*. Our worship leadership degrees cultivate the knowledge and skills that are needed to disciple

people through *biblical worship*, guiding worshipers toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Every student in the School of Church Ministries — whether trained as a worship leader or executive pastor, collegiate minister or student pastor, women's leader or Christian educator — learns to function first as a leader in *family discipleship*, equipping parents to disciple their children.

Students preparing for pastoral ministry receive extensive equipping in *pastoral leadership*. This includes not only training in dealing with church conflicts and organizational transitions but also preparation to serve as a skilled teacher of God's Word.

... for Real-Life Ministry.

A LOVE FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

Professors in the School of Church Ministries view their responsibility to local churches as a sacred trust — and their passion for local-church ministry began long before they joined Southern's faculty. Faculty members in the School of Church Ministries have spent decades in the trenches of real-life ministry, and they bring into the classroom a wealth of effective vocational ministry experience.

If the deepest longing of your heart is to sequester yourself in an ivory tower, filled with lofty ideas but separated from the real-life struggles of God's people, the School of Church Ministries at Southern Seminary is *not* the place for you. But if you have been called to step into the struggles of real people's lives and to proclaim the Word of God, the School of Church Ministries is precisely the place where you will receive the training that you need.

On Mission...On Hold

By EMILY GRIFFIN

IF STEVEN CHAMBERS were to adopt a life motto it most certainly would be, "Hurry up and wait."

Chambers graduated from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in December 2009 and while many of his classmates are finding ministry positions across the globe, God is deepening Chambers' trust in Him by having him wait for deployment to the foreign mission field.

Chambers' desire for the nations has been cultivated and strengthened during his time at Southern, but the Lord has called he and his wife Christy to other things for now. This spring he will join

cross country at the small Christian college in Dayton, Tenn. Chambers gained a great deal from college: he graduated with a bachelor's degree in business, met Christy and developed a deep passion for unreached people groups.

"I had always had an interest in, and love for, the local church but through my college I had the opportunity to go on some mission trips. I went to Nicaragua and Peru, and I definitely think those were the highlights of college," he said.

After graduation Chambers was unsure if he was ready to live the life of a full-time missionary but was also uncertain on how he could financially

manage a seminary education. His thoughts returned to the military and he started pursuing advanced military training through the Coast Guard's Officer Candidate School.

But the Coast Guard placed Chambers on an applicant waiting list, a source of frustration for

Chambers, who describes himself as "a very driven person." Waiting encouraged Chambers to think and pray more about seminary. A friend had attended Southern and encouraged Chambers to send in an application. He did, and Southern, specifically the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism, welcomed Chambers into the master of divinity program in fall 2007.

"The year before I started at Southern, I had no idea that I would be here," he said. "A door got shut on the path that I thought I was headed down and I ended up coming here. It was hard at first, the academics were very challenging to me, but I have really enjoyed it."

Upon arriving at Southern, Chambers initiated a rapport with the local representative of the International Mission

Board and has since greatly valued that relationship. His coursework reaffirmed his desire to serve on the international mission field with Christy. Married in 2008, the couple desires to serve in North Africa.

Chambers graduated in December 2009 with a master of divinity in Great Commission Ministries, four months after he and Christy welcomed their first child, Andrew. The current economic instability has changed the couples' plans temporarily. With the IMB experiencing funding limitations and the young couple having a newborn baby, the Chambers were advised by individuals at the IMB to further strengthen Steven's ministry experience and business training with a master of business administration degree.

Bottom line: the mission field waits.

In 2010, Chambers will join the staff of Woolsey Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga., as adult ministries director. Overseeing Sunday school, pastoral care and church mission work will provide him the opportunity for hands-on church ministry work while also being able to work towards his MBA through a local university.

The Chambers feel abundantly blessed to be in Georgia, where they are near family and in a church that has been welcoming. They will keep in contact with the IMB while Steven completes his MBA and will happily wait on the Lord. Chambers doesn't resent his change in plans; rather he sees it as an opportunity that will strengthen his future usefulness on the field.

"I have a passion for unreached, Muslim people groups in the developing world. Those things are on my heart. I really want to use my business degree to bring value to their infrastructure, but our ultimate goal is to see people become believers and to see churches get planted, and then grow and develop," he said. "I believe that God uses works and means, and with my understanding and background in business, I foresee myself using that as a legitimate platform to meet needs and share Christ."



Bottom line: the mission field waits.

the staff of a church in Georgia and enroll in another masters program, both moves that were not in his original plan. Chambers is the first to acknowledge the value that can come from both experiences and from accepting a change in plans. He speaks from experience.

While in high school, Chambers considered entering the military after graduation. Several of his relatives had armed service careers and it seemed like a natural fit. As graduation neared, Chambers' plans were altered when he was presented the opportunity to attend Bryan College. A talented athlete, he was extended a scholarship to run track and



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THE PRESIDENT'S FORUM ON SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVE

By R. Albert Mohler Jr., President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

The following is a condensed transcription of a presentation delivered by R. Albert Mohler Jr., at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in August 2009. Audio and video recordings of the forum are available at www.sbts.edu/resources.

THE CONTEXT of thinking about the future of the Southern Baptist Convention has to start with gratitude because we are here having this discussion because so many people for so many years have given so much to make this denomination what it is and to afford us the opportunity to even have this conversation.

We need to be thankful for all those faithful Southern Baptists all over America who have been giving, praying, going, sending and again, even making this conversation possible.

In John 9:4, Jesus says, "We must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day, night is coming when no man can work."

Jesus says work the work of Him who sent me while it is day. This is a very urgent warning about a time that is coming when no man can work. This

ought to be a theme as we think about the urgency of our calling and the fact that as we're asking the question about the future of the SBC, it's not just an abstract question, and certainly not merely a bureaucratic, structural question. Instead it's an urgent question about the Great Commission, it's an urgent question about the grace and glory of God and it's an urgent question about the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The urgency is in the context of Jesus's very words here. It is an urgency to see the name of Jesus taken to the nations so that the nations exalt in the one true and living God. It is an honor to discuss this and to think about the future of the SBC together in a time when there are many other denominations that are more concerned with staying alive, stemming massive losses, finding a future or, in many cases, finding a reason for being. The big issue here is faithfulness. This gift is an opportunity and what we should pray and seek together is to find ourselves faithful, by the grace and mercy of God, as we stand before the One who called us, saved us and sends us out with His Gospel.

The SBC faces a critical crossroads and must move into the future with denominational structures and methods open to change or face serious decline. The SBC in 2009 continues to operate largely out of a model that the denomination adopted from corporate America in the early 20th century, a model that prioritizes efficiency over theological conviction in carrying out the task of missions.

Certainly in business, efficiency can be a make or break word between profit and loss. But when it comes to missions, the work of our churches and the work of the Gospel around the world, efficiency has a limited application. What the efficiency model marked, more than anything else, was an infusion of a business culture into the life of the denomination. Churches became concerned with efficiency and decisions were made on the basis of efficiency.

In the 1950s, the SBC underwent a restructuring that was calculated to bring greater denominational efficiency. This led to the adoption of a programmatic approach to ministry based more on corporate management practices than on theology. The approach worked for a time because in those days the SBC

THE FUTURE OF THE

NTION

largely held the evangelical franchise in the deep South and its programs were so vast that a Southern Baptist would develop a “tribal identity” that defined his church life from the cradle to the grave; Southern Baptist children would participate in all of the age-appropriate SBC programs from birth until death.

Though American culture, particularly in the Bible belt, has changed profoundly, the SBC has continued to operate out of a 1950s programmatic mentality. Two major American institutions are analogous to the situation the SBC faces: the General Motors Corporation (GM) and the shopping mall.

For most of the 20th century, more than half of all the automobiles sold in America were manufactured by GM. While the car-buying culture changed in the late 20th century, GM continued to operate out of a business model that worked well in the 1950s. Now, the automobile giant has declared bankruptcy and has ceased to be a publicly-traded corporation.

Similarly, shopping malls exploded in number over the second half of the

20th century, but today, hundreds of the hulking complexes sit empty because businesses today want to operate outside of malls so their storefronts will have increased visibility.

In the same way, the SBC faces a bleak future if it continues to minister out of a business model from the 1950s instead of one that is driven by theological and missional concerns, neither of which is susceptible to the shifting currents of culture.

The question we have to ask is the same question that General Motors should have been asking for the last 20 years: What has changed and why have we not? Or for those whose business is the shopping mall: Has the logic of this particular organizational pattern been eclipsed by something else? Are the people who are actually in our churches today, and the people we are trying to reach today, attracted to that kind of logic or does it seem like an age gone by?

The SBC faces at least 10 questions to address that I will put in terms of dichotomies. Southern Baptists in the future will be either:

Missiological or bureaucratic.

The denomination will be driven by the work of the Gospel mission as set forth in Scripture or it will die a slow death along a path clogged by bureaucratic red tape.

The missiological logic is the only logic that fits the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unless the SBC very clearly asserts an unashamed, undiluted and ruthless missiological logic, we are going to find ourselves out of touch with our churches, with the generation now coming into leadership and with the world we are trying to reach, because the logic of bureaucracy will never take us where we need to go.

Tribal or theological.

The SBC must be driven by common doctrine and not a “cradle to death” ethos in which one is a Southern Baptist by virtue of being raised in a SBC church. The SBC “tribal identity” no longer exists because the cultural assumptions that underpinned such a nostalgic identity have disappeared.

Convictional or confused.

The basis of cooperation among Southern Baptists must be a robust theology. Southern Baptists must not be afraid to discuss, and even debate, theology. If we avoid talking about theological issues, if we try to minimize the theological logic of this denomination or if we make every issue a first-order issue, we are going to have a very confused people. Southern Baptists are going to have to grow up theologically in this new age and we're not going to have any choice. Southern Baptists are no longer going to be insulated from the theological and ideological currents around us.

Secular or sectarian.

Southern Baptists are sectarian by their very nature, because of their allegiance to Christ and Scripture. They must be qualitatively different than the world in their mores, ideology and convictions. In the mid-20th century South, Southern Baptists did not have to be sectarian because they were "at home" within that culture, but no longer. The South became the Sun Belt and the primary religion of the Sun Belt is materialism. We have gotten contamination from other worldviews and we are going to have to recover the sense that the church

of the Lord Jesus Christ is always, in a New Testament sense, sectarian. It is going to be made up of resident aliens who are never fully at home in the culture because the culture itself is a Genesis 3 culture and the church is called to a different worldview under allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Younger or dead.

The SBC is losing two-thirds of its young people between adolescence and adulthood. Southern Baptists must reach the younger generation with a theologically-robust vision of the Christian life to rescue them from a deadly, therapeutic ethos that says God wants their lives to be worry-free, prosperous and happy.

Diverse or diminished.

Studies show that by 2050, 25 percent of all Americans will have a Hispanic grandparent. The denomination will have to become more racially diverse to reach America.

Missional or more methodological.

For a long time when you asked the question, "Who is a Southern Baptist?"

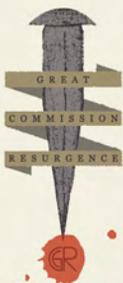
you got a methodological answer. You got a certain historical answer, a certain minimal theological answer, but, by and large, it was a methodological answer. By and large, that's not going to be an option in the future. The church is not methodological, but is deployed for the cause of the Gospel.

More strategic or more anemic.

Southern Baptists must update their missions strategy at every level. Local churches will have to become individual missiological units to reach their communities. A fast-changing world demands that Southern Baptist be constantly rethinking their missions strategy.

More bold or more boring.

This is a generation that is not going to be satisfied with boring. The kind of boring logic that says the same thing in roughly the same way every time — no surprises — is simply not going to work because that's not the way the New Testament is. The mission of the Lord Jesus Christ is so bold that it can never be boring. This means we are going to have to take risks.



Happy or bitter.

The SBC has gained a reputation for denominational crankiness. Southern Baptists often seem upset, angry and frustrated even while claiming to be happy. Crankiness often erupts on the floor of the SBC annual meeting. We criticize people who are not even there. We raise issues as if they were where the SBC should direct its energies. The risk here is that we will be cranky in all the wrong ways. If we stand by the Scriptures, we are going to have to say hard things to a culture around us that will consider us backward, unloving and intolerant, while having to stand by the truth. We cannot afford to waste our energy on being cranky about things that are irrelevant, unhelpful and extraneous to the life of the SBC. When we gather together there had better be evident joy, a unity of purpose and a commonality of heart or people will stop coming.



To watch the video of the President's Forum on the State of the Southern Baptist Convention visit our website at: <http://www.sbts.edu/resources/lectures/presidents-forum/video-the-presidents-forum-on-the-future-of-the-southern-baptist-convention/>

IN RESPONSE

In the previous pages, a synopsis of R. Albert Mohler Jr.'s "The Future of the SBC" address is presented. In that address Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, highlighted some key issues that he believes will have to be addressed by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in the very near future.

Southern Seminary Magazine asked Ronnie Floyd, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark., and The Church at Pinnacle Hills in Rogers, Ark., and chairman of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force, to respond to and expound upon several elements of Mohler's presentation.

Southern Seminary Magazine: Dr. Mohler said that in the future Southern Baptists will either be: "more strategic or more anemic," "more bold or more boring" and "diverse or diminished." As the leader of a SBC church, chairman of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force and a man with a heart for the Great Commission, can you respond to these dichotomies proposed by Dr. Mohler?

1. *"In the future Southern Baptists will either be more strategic or more anemic. Southern Baptists must update their missions strategy at every level. Local churches will have to become individual missiological units to reach their communities. A fast-changing world demands that Southern Baptists be constantly rethinking their missions strategy."*

FLOYD: "Every local church, state and national Southern Baptist entity must become strategic about the Great Commission. We cannot just do "good things," but we must do the main thing with the greatest intentionality and commitment. As a convention of churches, we need to present the Gospel to every person in the world and make disciples of all nations. This must be more than a verbal nod: it must become a strategy we embrace. Each church must see itself as a mission-sending station in the world. As Gospel churches, we need to plant Gospel churches that plant other Gospel churches. Our church is very committed to a reaching strategy in Northwest Arkansas, America and the world."

2. *"In the future Southern Baptists will either be more bold or more boring. This is a generation that is not going to be satisfied with boring. The kind of boring logic that says the same thing in roughly the same way every time — no surprises — is simply not going to work because that's not the way the New Testament is. The mission of the Lord Jesus Christ is so bold that it can never be boring. This means we are going to have to take risks."*

FLOYD: "Presenting the Gospel to every person in the world

and making disciples of all nations is a bold vision that needs to be embraced by every Christian who is a Southern Baptist. We have to exercise the needed courage to move from predictable to risking our lives and future for the advancement of the Gospel. Playing it safe must cease. If we desire different results through our churches, we are going to have to change the way we do some things. I am in the final moments of formulating a bold vision for our church to embrace that advances the Gospel in ways we have never done as a church."

3. *"In the future Southern Baptists will either be diverse or diminished. Studies show that by 2050, 25 percent of all Americans will have a Hispanic grandparent. The denomination will have to become more racially diverse to reach America."*

FLOYD: "Any church or denomination that desires to be relevant in our generation will have to become more diverse in every way. We need to own strategies in our convention to plant Gospel churches committed to reaching the vast diversity that exists in our nation. If we choose to remain a convention dominated by churches in the South that are mostly of the same race, we will lose impact and influence in advancing the Gospel in America. Somehow, we must go to the major cities of our nation, plant Gospel churches and reach into the vast number of language and people groups that need Jesus Christ. For the sake of seeing our nation reached, we must embrace this bold, courageous vision, risking all to attain it. Our church is committed to planting Gospel churches regionally, nationally and internationally."



Ronnie Floyd is senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark. and The Church at Pinnacle Hills in Rogers, Ark. He also serves as chairman of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force.

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By MARK T. COPPENGER, *Professor of Christian Apologetics at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

In the 1950s, it took around 20 Southern Baptists to win one person to the Lord each year according to statistics. Now it takes more than 40. Either way, it sounds like a bad Aggie joke: “19 (or 39) to radiate Christian virtue and one to hold the tract.” But the 1950s figures were certainly more encouraging.

What went wrong? Well, certainly, dead or near-dead churches can have a deadening effect on outreach, and we have our share of those. Hence, the observation, “That fired-up convert who kept sharing the Gospel with the lost had to backslide to have fellowship with the rest of us.”

Then there is the problem of doctrinal carelessness. After all, intentional soul-winning can be awkward, even scary, and it’s easy to neglect it when you start to think that, maybe, God will make allowance for the “sincere confusion” of the lost.

Some say the drop off in baptisms and church membership is largely a matter of demographics: indeed, we’re simply having fewer children today. Some couples are still stymied by biologist Paul Ehrlich’s “zero population growth” histrionics, and others are paralyzed by misleading estimates of the cost of raising a child. Prisoners of the “contraceptive culture,” they ignore the procreative mandate of Genesis 1:28.

Many fault the denomination and its leaders for embarrassing pronouncements, anachronisms, bureaucratic tangles and other infelicities. It’s a target-rich environment. But often missing is recognition that America has changed dramatically for the worse, and it only takes a couple of mission trips to understand how this can impact church growth. Compare the fruit of door-to-door witnessing in the Brazilian heartland with the same activity in Brussels. And when, back in 1990, we read of 56,000 converts in four weeks in the Kenya Coastal Crusade, did we think it could be replicated on the French Riviera? (I think also of our early church planting efforts in Evanston, Ill., where we knocked on 25 miles worth of doors, with not a single resulting visit to one of our services.)

Of course, God can work sweepingly, without hindrance, in any locale, and church history is full of miraculous outbreaks of the Spirit in the most unlikely places. But there is much to be said for examining the soil into which the Gospel is cast. And American soil is not very receptive at present. Perhaps we are approaching the coldness of the Chorazin, Bethsaida and Cana of Luke 10:13-16.

Consider our national adoration of money, sex and power:

Money:

The growth of American affluence has been staggering, and with wealth comes spiritual apathy. People self-medicate with purchases, “shooting up” with plastic downtown or online. Back in the 1970s, most newlyweds honeymooned up the road at a nice hotel; now couples go to the Caribbean. Back then, we kids wore canvas Keds; now it’s leather Jordans. And we all carry electronic devices with software better than NASA had for its first space shots. A cell phone used to be science fiction fantasy; now it’s a human right.

Meanwhile, a host of churches preach a prosperity gospel, and stewardship sermons have fallen on hard times. After all, “The king’s kids should wear velvet.” It’s gotten so bad that the December cover story for *The Atlantic* reads, “Did Christianity Cause the Crash? How Preachers are Spreading a Gospel of Debt.” Also, many citizens who have comparatively little (in American terms) stay hopped up on class envy and resentment and cherish politicians who fan the flames of their bitterness. This is spiritually deadly, for as man fixates on stuff for any reason, he becomes hardened to the Gospel.

Sex:

Illicit and explicit sex has exploded in America since the 1950s. I grew up in Arkansas where those wanting hard-core fare had to travel to Little Rock or Hot Springs. Now it’s easily available on the Internet in the most remote regions of the land. Wave after wave of degenerate enablements and encouragements have hit the shore – abortion on demand, decadent politicians and entertainers, politicians seeking to protect and advance unholy agendas, speech codes that silence the prophetic voice, media glorification of sodomy and other forms of licentiousness.

Intoxicated with sensuality, we growl like dogs at God when he extends his hand toward our bowls of offal.

Power:

It seems that everyone wants “to be somebody.” The feminist movement has demeaned the “scutwork” of homemaking and childraising. Post-modernism has sidelined truth and turned the marketplace of ideas into turf-grabbing, tribal warfare. Racialism does the same thing, obsessing over “our people” and not the commonwealth. Careerism is driving the ambitious, including pastors, to “higher” positions, even though God may be calling them to anonymity and holy victimhood.

This ungodly fixation on money, sex and power has had a baleful effect on Gospel outreach, and the culture has suffered mightily as we’ve surrendered vast sectors of the arts, the academy, media and government to the suffocating oversight of the lost. This sorry story is told in many articles and books, including Roger Kimball’s “The Long March: How the Cultural Revolution of 1960s Changed America” and Diana West’s “The Death of the Grownup: How America’s Arrested Development Is Bringing Down Western Civilization.” In the former, Kimball tracks the rise of “antinomian hedonism;” in the latter, West traces the ascent of the “perpetual adolescent,” for whom “limitation” is anathema. Neither development welcomes the Lordship of Christ and committed local church involvement.

Some say that we’ve failed at ingratiating ourselves to the culture, that we’re a public relations disaster. But others recognize, following Matthew 10:22-25, that the church will always and properly be a public relations disaster to many, and that we’ve become so slavish to the insipid tastes of the lost that we’re no longer salty.

The culture is sick, and we Southern Baptists can share in the blame, for, too often in our history we have been insular and insecure. Still, in our regional awkwardness we’ve found ourselves clinging to holy convictions cast aside by the elites — biblical inerrancy and the necessity and sufficiency of Christ. Thus we’ve retained, and have been able to employ, counter-culture resources. Witness the Conservative Resurgence, including the 1993 SBC bylaws revision in defense of heterosexuality, and the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message update, with its complementarian view of family and church.

Thankfully, we are not alone in this push-back against “European” culture. When, before each game, University of Florida Quarterback Tim Tebow puts a different Scripture reference in the paint beneath his eyes, the passage jumps to the top of Google searches that day. When New York Marathon winner Meb Keflezighi credits the Lord and the Anscombe Society at Princeton takes a stand for sexual holiness contrary to the campus paradigm, spiritual soil is being cultivated for planting. When a quarter million (and counting) believers sign off on the “Here-We-Stand” Manhattan Declaration (manhattandeclaration.org), and when Answers in Genesis opens a creation museum near Cincinnati and takes scholars on young-earth-geology raft trips through the Grand Canyon, we see good faith efforts to transform culture to the glory of Christ.

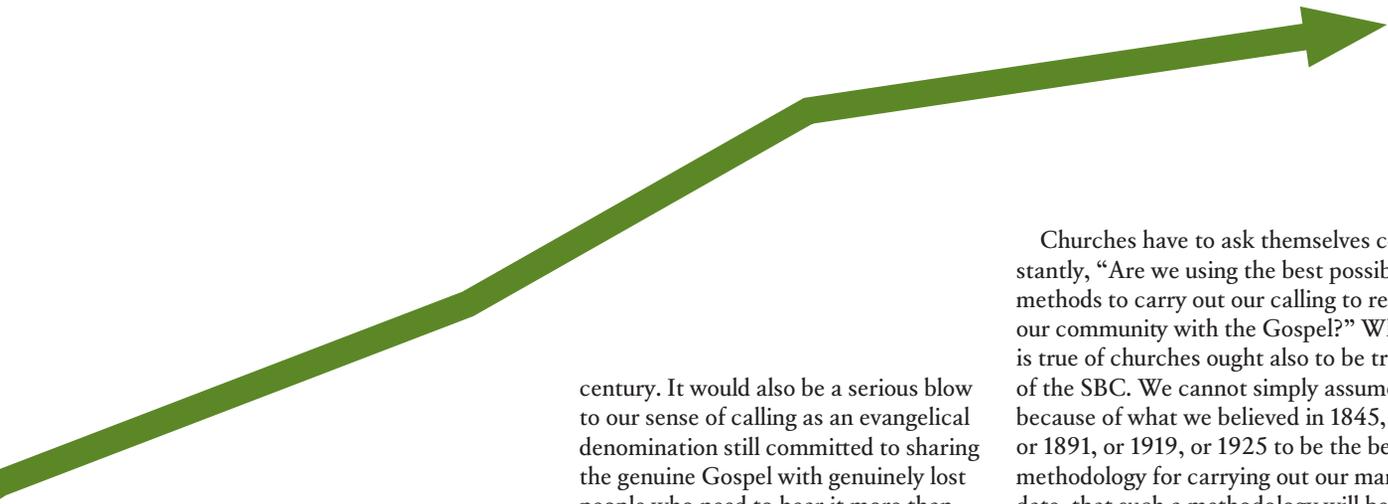
Yes, of course, let us pray for spiritual awakening to sweep our land. Let our pulpits ring with Gospel truth and penetrating, prophetic application. But right along, let us enter, and even pre-occupy, the marketplace of ideas with our unashamed, stunning devotion to God’s best. Who knows but many people will once again give God’s Word a fair hearing, much like the Bereans of Acts 17:11. Who knows but that the baptismal ratio might return to 1:20 and beyond.

OF SCARECROWS AND TIN MEN: THE GCR AND THE ECONOMIC HEALTH OF THE SBC AND THE COUNTRY.

By CHAD O. BRAND, *Professor of Christian Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

L. Frank Baum published “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” in 1900. Though it is now generally seen as one of the quintessential children’s stories, it was originally intended also as a political satire on the presidential election of 1896. The campaign was waged against the backdrop of the economic panic of 1893 that was almost as severe as the Great Depression. In the story, the Tin Man represents the factory workers, forced to work so many hours to make a living that

their grueling labor caused them to lose their hearts. The Scarecrow was the late-century farmer, duped by robber barons to get out of debt by making more silver coinage, thus devaluing the money through inflation, but, what did they know? “They hadn’t got a brain.” At least, so goes the interpretation. All of this was taking place on a stage set right before a new century dawned — a century of hope for the country, perhaps even for the world.



ON APRIL 16, 2009, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Daniel Akin preached a message entitled “Axioms for a Great Commission Resurgence.” It was in some sense a response to many concerns that had been voiced for several years throughout the SBC for more conversions and more baptisms both on the mission field and here at home. It was in another sense a clarion call for Southern Baptists to lift up their chins, to raise their heads, to clench their teeth and march forward in mission thrust as they had done in 1919 with the Seventy-Five Million Campaign. The response to Akin’s challenge from key SBC pastors and most of the entity heads was immediate and passionate. They saw this as a moment when we as Southern Baptists could once again say, “Let’s Roll,” and make it happen.

To make something like this happen, to see it through, takes more than a sermon and conference or two. It needs a strategy that takes into full account the strengths and weaknesses of our institutions, the real condition of our churches and the strength of our resolve. It also must consider the obstacles before us, obstacles of many kinds. One of those obstacles is the economic condition of our denomination and of our country.

All one has to do is to look at the receipts of the International Mission Board (IMB) in last year’s Lottie Moon Offering. The goal was \$170 million. The actual gifts total was \$141 million. That constitutes a \$29 million shortfall. The impact is real, it is significant, and it represents a potential retreat on the part of Southern Baptists in missions. This would be unprecedented in the last

century. It would also be a serious blow to our sense of calling as an evangelical denomination still committed to sharing the genuine Gospel with genuinely lost people who need to hear it more than anything else in their lives.

There have been significant efforts on the part of many churches and SBC entities to soften the blow of this shortfall by taking special Lottie Moon offerings in August. All of those are commendable, and those who have criticized these efforts (and many, especially on the left wing of the SBC, have been critical) have done so out of an agenda that is mainly bent on bashing the SBC. Still, the traditional strategy of the IMB getting about half of its budget through the Cooperative Program (CP) and about the other half from Lottie Moon is the formula which has worked for decades and is still likely the right strategy for the future. So, what will happen if 2009 witnesses a similar shortfall? The impact could be devastating.

One of the components of the GCR is Article IX, which calls for the SBC to consider what might be a “More Effective Convention Structure.” One of the key statements in the GCR document says this: “At the midpoint of the 20th century the Southern Baptist Convention was a convention characterized by impressive institutions, innovative programs, and strong loyalty from the churches. But the convention has too often failed to adapt its structure and programs to the changing culture. We are frequently aiming at a culture that went out of existence years ago, failing to understand how mid-20th century methods and strategies are not working in the 21st century.” There may be reasons why we ought to reconsider the structure of the SBC, at least in part for economic reasons. We do not have unlimited resources. (There is, in fact, no such thing as unlimited resources in the human, worldly economy.)

Churches have to ask themselves constantly, “Are we using the best possible methods to carry out our calling to reach our community with the Gospel?” What is true of churches ought also to be true of the SBC. We cannot simply assume, because of what we believed in 1845, or 1891, or 1919, or 1925 to be the best methodology for carrying out our mandate, that such a methodology will be perennially right for us into perpetuity. It is always good to reevaluate methodology, not message. That IS perennial. So, we should trust the task force to be a good steward of its mandate, and to give due consideration to its recommendations at the right time.

The economic challenges before us are real. Cap and Tax. The Bailouts. Health Care Reform. If all of these were pushed to the limits that some in Congress would like to see happen, there is little doubt that we as Americans would be more and more impoverished in the years and decades ahead. Already the printing of currency to stave off the economic crisis has seriously devalued the dollar and created an impending new crisis. Has anyone in Washington ever taken Economics 101? Has anyone in Washington any sense of historical perspective about what Germany went through in the 1920s? I wonder. The challenges of the future could be far more profound than we anticipate even now.

On the other hand, the IMB difficulties, severe as they are, could be easily solved. The shortfall was \$29 million. There are about eight million Southern Baptists who attend church at least once a month. Do the math. That is less than \$4 per person. If we can’t get Southern Baptists to pony up an addition \$4 per person for our mission offering every Christmas, then the problem is not the economy.

L. Frank Baum seemed dubious about the prospects of the future, but at least he could entertain the children. Let us hope we can do far more than that. There is much at stake.

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For more information about the Institute at Southern Seminary, e-mail institutechristianleadership@sbts.edu.

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Both programs are offered in English and Spanish.

The Southern Seminary iPhone App

Theology meets technology: SBTS launches iPhone app

On December 29, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary launched a custom designed SBTS iPhone application, or app. Russ Hawkins, director of software development at Southern, and David Yeiser, Southern Communication's lead designer, worked for months to develop the SBTS app which features audio and video files of chapel sermons and campus events, Twitter and blog feeds of campus leadership, and a complete concierge and information service.

"Working on all the technical aspects of the app was pretty challenging," Yeiser said. "It has been really neat to see how surprised people are when they see all the elements the app contains. Russ has designed the app in a way that is going to make it really beneficial to Southern students."

The free app is available through the Apple App Store;
www.sbts.edu/iPhone



Donor Profile: *Fuel for Thought*

Reporting By EMILY GRIFFIN

DAN A. GIBBS started his professional life in upstate New York with Standard Oil of New Jersey in July 1972. During his 34-year career, he held additional posts in Alabama, Tennessee and Texas and watched the company evolve and grow into Exxon and then ExxonMobil.

Today, Gibbs is retired and living in Houston, Texas, but his tenure with ExxonMobil is still impacting his life. Through ExxonMobil's corporate gifts matching program, Gibbs is able to generously support The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Since 2007 Gibbs has been a member of the Southern Seminary Foundation Board, a responsibility in which he takes great joy.

"Southern gives generously by fulfilling its stated mission – and it does this well. It is in this way that it has given back to me all that I expect for my support. I am thankful for Southern and for what it does to the glory of God," Gibbs said.

Southern Seminary Magazine spoke with Gibbs about his experiences with the Southern Seminary Foundation Board and how his career with ExxonMobil has enabled his giving capacity to increase.

Southern Seminary Magazine: How did you become acquainted with Southern Seminary, and what inspired you to contribute to the Southern Seminary Foundation?

GIBBS: "I became acquainted with Southern Seminary a few years ago while listening to Dr. Albert Mohler's radio program and viewing his web page.

"I was initially inspired by the way Dr. Mohler answered listener questions on the radio — with answers always given with a gentle spirit but also in a very direct and uncompromising manner straight from the text of Scripture. I wanted to support this ministry. The way I was able to do this was to support its source: Southern Seminary.

"Now, after visiting the Southern campus three times; reading Southern's history; talking with administrators, professors and students; and attend-

ing several classes, I am inspired by the essence of Southern: an institution under the Lordship of Jesus Christ that is totally committed to the Bible as the Word of God, to the Great Commission and to the service of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention through the training, educating and preparing of ministers of the Gospel for more faithful service."

Q: You became a Southern Seminary Foundation Board member in October 2007. What opportunities do you have as a member of the Foundation Board?

GIBBS: "In a nutshell, board members are expected to support Southern Seminary through prayer, financial giving and testimony to others who may also wish to support Southern. Also, we are encouraged to join with other Foundation Board members for business and fellowship at our semiannual meetings."

"I am also blessed by the fellowship that I enjoy with board members, trustees, faculty, students and staff that I meet on my visits to Southern."

Q: Can you share with us how ExxonMobil works with you on charitable giving?

GIBBS: "ExxonMobil provides monetary contributions to qualified charitable organizations based on hours of volunteer work that its employees/retirees give to these organizations. It also matches, on a one-to-one basis, employee/retiree contributions to certain cultural organizations. The company's most generous contributions, a three-to-one match with annual limits, are for qualified institutions of higher learning such as Southern Seminary.

"When I consider the current state that I am in now with regards to Southern, I am in awe at what God has done! The ExxonMobil stock that I gift to Southern, stock which has grown many fold since purchase, and which was matched by ExxonMobil one-for-one at the time of purchase provides, after the triple match at the point of giving, an amazing increase. I am not a financially



wealthy person, yet I am in a position to see God take some of what He has entrusted to me, what started out as a small amount, and turn it into much for His glory! Praise be to God!"

Q: How does ExxonMobil's corporate matching program and generosity inspire you?

GIBBS: "Throughout my 34-year career I have always been impressed and inspired by ExxonMobil's generosity to society. This generosity takes many forms including the encouragement and support ExxonMobil gives its employees/retirees who volunteer to help the community and the needy, and the direct and matching gifts it gives to qualified cultural and educational organizations. Its gifts to institutions of higher learning are especially generous. Although I am primarily motivated and inspired to 'give' by reflecting on what Christ has done for me, I am also inspired by ExxonMobil's longstanding and consistent culture of giving."

Many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will match charitable contributions made by their employees. The Southern Seminary Foundation encourages seminary alumni and supporters to inquire if their employers have a matching gift policy. Giving through such a program could have a significant impact on the seminary and the Kingdom.

In 2009 Southern Seminary celebrated her 150th anniversary, and in so doing we reaffirmed our core commitments of confessional integrity, Great Commission urgency and the training of ministers of the Gospel for more effective service.

The Lord has indeed blessed Southern Seminary beyond measure and he has placed before us opportunities for even broader Kingdom influence, yet with this blessing comes a profound stewardship. The task of training and educating ministers and missionaries is the highest task any institution can be assigned. The needs of Southern Seminary are great and I want to ask you to stand with us.

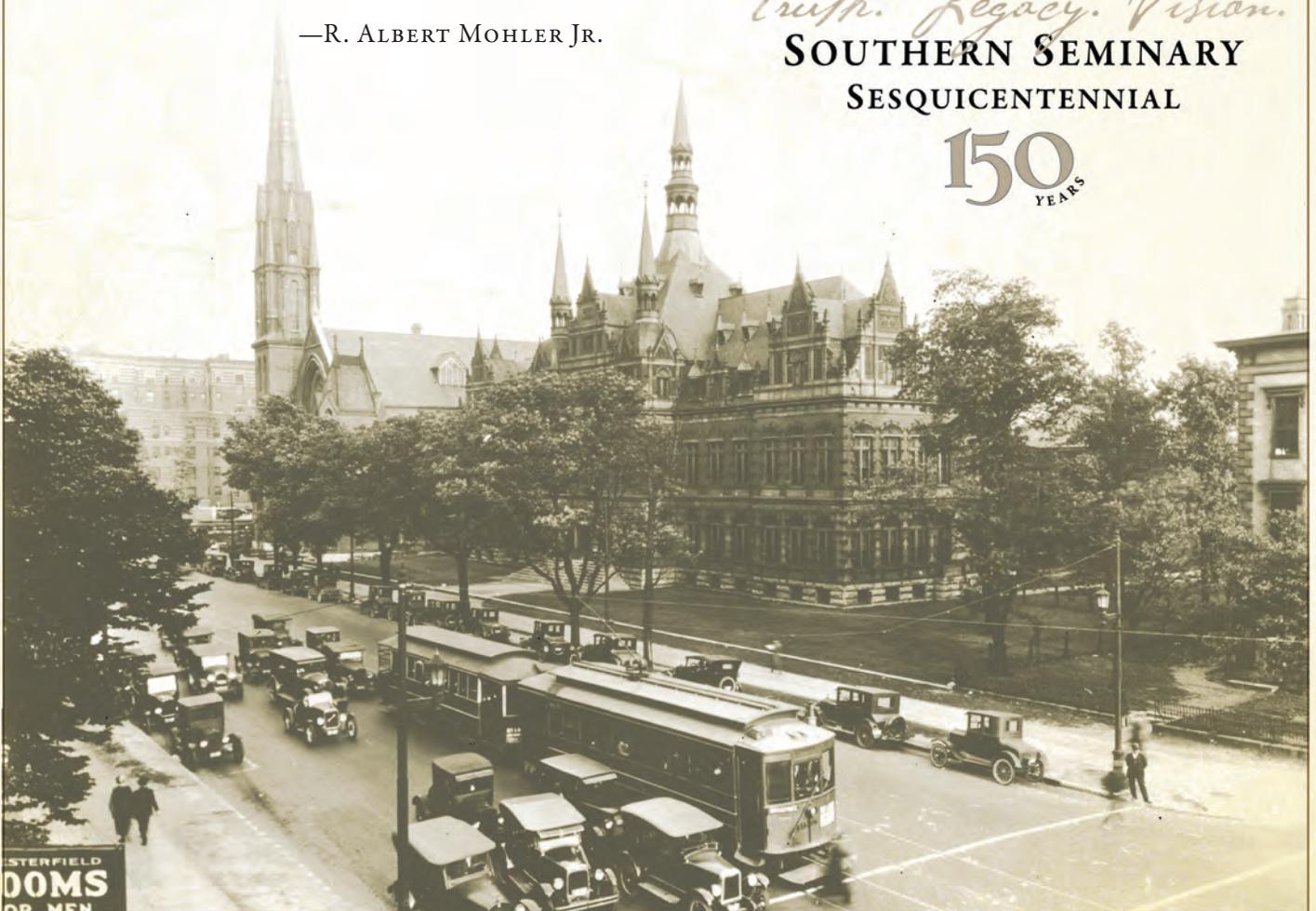
I know our Lord will prove faithful to sustain with work, and so often he demonstrates that faithfulness through friends like you. It is impossible for me to envision Southern Seminary faithfully fulfilling that which the Lord has called us to do without friends like you standing with us.

On behalf of the entire Southern Seminary community I want to ask you to generously support the Lord's work through this institution and sincerely thank you for your prayers and financial support.

—R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.



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The Best of Times & the Worst of Times:

The Perils and Promise of Modern Gospel Ministry

By JASON K. ALLEN, Vice President for Institutional Advancement at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Executive Director of the Southern Seminary Foundation

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...”

WITH THIS opening line Charles Dickens introduced the themes of contradiction and paradox in his classic novel “A Tale of Two Cities.” Dickens’ timeless words might aptly describe not only pre-revolution France, but also modern day ministry.

The “worst of times” is easy to document. Culturally, we see the rising tide of secularism encroaching all around. Geopolitically, there remains “wars and rumors of wars.” And, of course, economically, we find ourselves making our way out of a season of acute disruption.

Yet, in light of all of this, as believers in Christ we may rejoice. We rejoice because though consequential areas of life often appear to be moving in unfavorable directions, we are confident in the Lord’s kind providence in all of these things. Moreover, we rejoice because during these times of tumult we see before us open doors of unprecedented ministry opportunity, which positions our churches and Southern Seminary for Gospel service.

Culturally, the darkness of the times enables the light of the Gospel to shine all the more brightly. The church must have preachers who are equipped to rightly divide the Word and combat the forces of darkness, and resolute ministers who give their lives in service to the local church. Southern Seminary has an army of Gospel ministers training to do just that — speak words of light with prophetic boldness in an age of militant

darkness.

Geopolitically, while the evening news continually reminds us of the raging of the nations, the Lord is accomplishing a great Gospel work around the world. Doors of Gospel opportunity are opening all over the globe, and annually missionaries are penetrating countries previously closed to the Gospel. Remote people groups are hearing the name of Christ for the first time. The firsthand reports our graduates are sending back from the mission field are heartening, as they tell of the power of the Gospel that is changing lives, transforming villages and establishing indigenous churches. The nations are calling and our students are going.

Economically, the past two years have challenged our fiscal assumptions and humbled our market expectations. We have learned again Christ’s words to be busy storing up treasures in heaven and not on earth, where moth and rust destroy. Yet, the Lord’s work is not a seasonal endeavor: It is a perennial undertaking. Whether the culture is receptive or rejecting, whether the world is at war or peace, whether the markets are up or down, the Word must be preached, the Gospel must be spread and lives must be changed by the power of the Gospel.

In a very real way, Southern Seminary stands at the intersection of all these currents of change, and has been providentially placed for maximum Kingdom impact. As we stand faithful, will you stand with us? You can stand with us by praying for Southern Seminary’s



faculty, staff and students, and by mailing a financial contribution to Southern Seminary.

Indeed, in a strange way these are simultaneously the best of times and the worst of times. Will you join us in seizing the best in these times for the glory of God?

A theological education is like a well-spring from which a lifetime of ministry is continually fed. The well that was dug for me at Southern Seminary has produced the richest insights and tools not only my pastoral ministry, but also for my personal pursuit of Christ. I am continually blessed by the education that I received, and the lifelong relationships that began in the classrooms and halls of that wonderful place. The faculty is unparalleled in their scholarship, their passion for proclamation of the Gospel, and their love of Christ. It is obvious that God is at work in the ministry of Southern Seminary and I am blessed to call myself a Southern Alum.



—JASON DEES (Class of 2007)
Senior Pastor of First Baptist Covington

I'm very thankful for the years I had at Southern Seminary. I do not take for granted the sacrificial giving of Southern Baptists who made an affordable education possible. God used my concentrated study at Southern to prepare me for a lifetime of ministry in the local church.

From hymnology with Dr. Crookshank to New Testament theology with Dr. Schreiner, to doctoral work in church history with Dr. Wills, I am the humble beneficiary of Southern's commitment to train the next generation.



—AARON MENIKOFF (Class of 2008)
Senior Pastor at Mount Vernon Baptist Church

As a 2009 graduate of Southern Seminary I have been equipped to take the Gospel to my neighbor and to the nations. I can look back to a couple of moments where I felt as if God were removing the scales from my eyes as professors opened up the truths of Scripture and helped me to form a biblical worldview. I am also thankful for friendships I have developed during my time here and look forward to continuing to grow those relationships for a lifetime. This formative time at Southern Seminary has equipped me with tools that I will use for the rest of my life in ministry. There has never been a better time than now to take the truth of the Gospel to the cities, suburbs and ends of the earth!



—CHUCK HADDOX (Class of 2009)

I praise God for the blessing of spending three years at Southern Seminary. I have learned from a faculty that is firmly committed to glorifying God and serving the Church. By rightly dividing the Word of Truth, they have equipped me with the tools, both spiritually and practically, to prepare me for a lifetime of ministry. My theological education would not have been possible apart from the generosity of donors of the seminary. Thank you for the integral part you played in my life as a student at Southern Seminary.



—VIRGINIA WING (Current Student)

Growing Opportunities

By PAUL H. CHITWOOD, *Assistant Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and International Mission Board Trustee Chairman*

THE International Mission Board (IMB) is the largest international missionary sending agency in the history of Christianity. Working in 180 countries, IMB missionaries and their overseas partners are responsible for more than half a million baptisms and more than 25,000 new church starts each year. The organization employs more than 6,000 people whose singular focus is accomplishing the Great Commission.

While Southern Baptists devote less than three percent of their church offerings to this task, the annual budget of the IMB has reached more than \$325 million dollars. If we measure what is significant based upon the potential to advance the Kingdom of God, then choosing the next president of the United States pales in comparison to choosing the next president of the IMB.

But the IMB isn't the only vacant position in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) today, nor is it the only position that will facilitate the Great Commission efforts of Southern Baptists. Trustees of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and members of the SBC Executive Committee are also searching for new presidents.

NAMB has a critical role in assisting Southern Baptists in their evangelism and church planting in North America. In relation to the Great Commission, i.e. making disciples of panta ta ethne (all the nations), NAMB's traditional role

has been to help strengthen the home base. More Great-Commission-focused churches in North America will obviously help provide the missionaries and money needed to get the Gospel to the nations.

But God is giving Southern Baptists an ever-growing opportunity to reach the nations right here in our nation. Growing ethnic populations, particularly in the urban centers of North America, have NAMB and the IMB discussing new and creative ways to partner as they assist Southern Baptists in their efforts to reach the nations. The next presidents of Southern Baptists' two mission boards would be required to work in closer partnership than past presidents. To fail to recognize the overlap of their assignments and leverage the momentum of a strong partnership would be to miss a significant Kingdom opportunity.

Does the SBC's Executive Committee have any bearing on the Great Commission efforts of Southern Baptists? Indeed it does. The Executive Committee's role in recommending the Cooperative Program (CP) budget has always been important but even more so during these days of economic strain.

A struggling economy has not closed doors to the Gospel. Global events ranging from wars, regime changes and natural disasters have opened doors to the Gospel that have been closed for generations. More missionary candidates are knocking on the doors of the IMB than ever before. They are called, qualified and committed to going wherever the Gospel needs to be heard.

Yet, the 2010 budget of the IMB necessitates the reduction of our mission force by several hundred missionaries rather than its expansion. The Journeyman program, a program designed to send young adults to the mission field, will be reduced from sending 300 this year to 100 next year. The traditional Masters program, a program designed to give retired Southern Baptists an opportunity to serve as overseas missionaries, has been revamped and reduced to about one-tenth of its former sending capacity, with no salary and only limited benefits provided. The International Service Corps program, designed to give individuals and families a shorter term of service overseas, has been suspended. All of these changes are the direct result of a lack of funding.

The role of the Executive Committee in dividing CP funds among the agencies and institutions is unenviable but extremely important. Moreover, that job will become increasingly more difficult as CP funds fail to keep pace with the needs of our agencies and institutions.

Add to this situation the pressures created by talk of a Great Commission resurgence. Should this resurgence be interpreted to mean "put your money where your mouth is?" If so, the president of the Executive Committee may become one of the most unpopular persons in the SBC as he makes recommendations for CP spending. Popular or not, the next generation of Southern Baptists will need an Executive Committee president who is a bold and courageous visionary with eyes fixed on the world's

fields, which are white unto harvest.

The simultaneous vacancy of these three positions is a unique alignment. It represents not only a transition in leadership but a generational shift. Every generation of leadership faces challenges unique to their time and the same will be true for this next generation of Southern Baptist leaders. They will witness extraordinary opportunities to advance the Gospel but will be required to find new and creative ways to utilize their shrinking resources. Many traditional models and ministries that have been the staples of Southern Baptist life will have to be reevaluated as financial resources become more limited and getting the Gospel to the unreached and unengaged peoples of the world becomes a higher priority. The conflict between good and

great will yield unavoidable casualties as many good ministries have to be abandoned for the sake of obedience to the Great Commission.

Consequently, these are not jobs to be filled. Courageous leaders, called of God, committed to the Great Commission, and convinced that their own scalp is not worthy of consideration, must take hold of the reigns. Their respective board members or committee members must throw the full weight of their support behind their president. And Southern Baptists must throw the full weight of their prayers behind those who search for such leaders and the leaders God chooses.



A Picture of Something Deeper



By Russell D. Moore

The following is an excerpt from “Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families & Churches,” by Russell D. Moore, senior vice president for Academic Administration and dean of the School of Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

“The New Testament teaching on the adoption of believers in Christ isn’t a reassuring metaphor for the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Adoption doesn’t simply tell us who we are. It is a legal entitlement, one we are prone to forget. “If children, then heirs — heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,” the Spirit tells us (Rom. 8:17).

I don’t know about you, but inheritance was something I, growing up in my working-class world, never imagined would apply to me.

An inheritance was something rich people left their kids — for the spoiled trust-fund heirs who might speed around Malibu in their sports cars. It’s hard for us to imagine the place of inheritance in the world in which our Bible was first revealed.

In the world of the Bible, one’s identity and one’s vocation are all bound up in who one’s father is. Men are called “son of” all of their lives (for instance, “the sons of Zebedee” or “Joshua, son of Nun”). There are no guidance counselors in ancient Canaan or first-century Capernaum, helping “teenagers” determine what they want “to be” when they “grow up.” A young man watches his father, learns from him, and follows in his vocational steps. This is why “the sons of Zebedee” are right there with their father when Jesus finds them, “in their boat mending the nets” (Mark 1:19-20).

The inheritance was the engine of survival, passed from father to son, an economic pact between generations. To be an orphan was to lose one’s inheritance. To lose one’s inheritance was to pilfer

for survival. To pilfer for survival usually meant winding up somebody’s slave, just so you could have enough food to eat.

This inheritance structure is a picture of something deeper, more real — the inheritance that a Father God gives to those who share in his image. The Bible identifies Jesus as the One who inherits the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. He is the One of whom it is said, “You are my Son” (Ps. 2:7), to whom the Father promises to make “the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession” (Ps. 2:8).

This inheritance has to do, again, with the old controversies over circumcision. The Jewish believers in the early church weren’t to look to their biological ancestry for their inheritance. They were law-breakers whose only inheritance was death (Rom. 2-3). They were to look instead to the One in whom all the promises of God find their “Yes,” the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 1:20).

You see, that’s the whole story of redemption. The universe was meant to be a home — where the image-bearers of God rule and serve under their Father. It was all to be ours. The primeval insur-



rection in the garden, though, turned the universe into an orphanage — the heirs were gone, done in by their appetites. A serpent now holds the cosmos in captivity, driving along the deposed rulers as his slaves. The whole universe is now an orphanage.

But then there's Jesus.

When we were still orphans, Christ became a substitute orphan for us. Though he was a son, he took on the humiliation of a slave and the horror of death (Phil. 2:6-8). Jesus walked to that far country with us, even to the depths of the hog pen that we'd made our home, and hung on a tree abandoned by his Father in our place.

Only he could do this because only he, the one sinless human, didn't have the cosmic blackmail against him that the Accuser can call up for all of us. The Lord Christ simply announces that "the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me" (John 14:30).

Jesus' attitude is similar to what yours would be if a co-worker challenged you to a lie detector test for being part of an Islamic terrorist cell. You wouldn't cower under your desk (I'm assuming here that

you're actually a member of an Islamic terrorist cell) because you know it isn't true. Jesus doesn't fear Satan's accusation because he has nothing to hide — from the demonic watchers, from himself, or from his Father. He is truth, and the truth makes him free indeed.

We cannot consider our adoption as children of God without turning to the cross. When Jesus is stapled to this Roman torture device, he bears the full weight of the curse of an orphan creation. The apostle Paul is able to speak of us as receiving adoption as sons only because Jesus becomes "a curse for us." In the Gospel account, the Holy Spirit simply announces, "for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree' — so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3:13-14).

On a Friday two thousand years ago, a Roman soldier strikes a spear into the dead, bloodied flesh of this Man. Some government employee pulls spikes from the carcass melded to wood, then goes homes and scrubs off the blood of Christ

as he washes up for dinner. He may toss his children in the air with hands still embedded with the blood of Jesus under his fingernails. The body removal has to happen before dark; his body can't hang on that tee overnight because Israel "shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance" (Deut. 21:23).

But God lifts Jesus out of his hole in the ground and gives him the universe as his inheritance. The curse is lifted — for Jesus and for all who are found in him."

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The American Dream or the GREAT COMMISSION RESURGENCE?

The following is a condensed transcription of a sermon delivered by Al Jackson, pastor of Lakeview Baptist Church in Auburn, Ala., at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on Sept. 15, 2009. Audio and video recordings of the service are available at www.sbps.edu/resources. Jackson's message will appear in its entirety in the upcoming B&H Academic release "Toward a Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God's Mandate in Our Time," edited by Adam W. Greenway and Chuck Lawless.

"In recent days we've been challenged by SBC President Johnny Hunt to a Great Commission Resurgence. We have been reminded that while we have had a conservative theological resurgence, we now need a Great Commission Resurgence. My heart resonates with anything and everything done by anybody anywhere to get the Gospel to all the nations who desperately need to hear the good news of salvation through Christ Jesus.

But there's an obstacle to the Great Commission Resurgence that we need to face. That obstacle is not theology. Neither is that obstacle the lack of missionary candidates. The obstacle is not our doctrine. I am persuaded that the greatest obstacle to the Great Commission Resurgence is the American dream.

Last year in Southern Baptist churches, the income received totaled approximately \$12 billion. Of that \$12 billion only two cents out of every dollar made its way to our International Mission Board. In other words, we are spending 98 cents out of every dollar that we give to take the Gospel to the

United States and two cents out of every dollar to take the Gospel to the nations.

Even in these days of economic recession we remain an affluent people.

In comparison with the rest of the world we Americans are wealthy, even if we think we are not. Furthermore, we have bought into the American dream, perhaps unwittingly, but nonetheless we have done so. As a result we are suffering the consequences of being enamored with the American dream.

Southern Baptists are no longer a poor denomination. If you make at least \$25,000 per year, you are richer than 90 percent of the people in the world. If you make at least \$50,000 per year, you are richer than 98 percent of the people in the world. Like our fellow Americans, we are stuffed with stuff. We have so much stuff that we find it difficult to get into our closets. We are no longer able to park our automobiles in our garages because we have so much stuff in them.

I come, not as a role model, but a pilgrim on a journey, battling in my own soul the American dream. I do not have all the answers, but I do have a deep conviction that until we get over our love affair with the American dream, we will

never fulfill the Great Commission.

The time has come for Southern Baptists to become radical like Jesus was radical during the days of His earthly ministry. I have a deep conviction that the bottleneck in getting the Gospel to the nations in Southern Baptist life is not found in our missionaries. I believe that the problem lies for the most part with those who are pastors of our Southern Baptist churches. I believe our Southern Baptist church members will rise up with renewed missionary fervor and passion when the pulpits of our churches are aflame with a holy zeal to pay any price to get the Gospel to all nations. But first we must repent of our love affair with the American dream.

Will there be a Great Commission resurgence or will we merely give lip service to world evangelization while continuing to pursue the American dream? If Southern Baptists will find this to be their finest hour, it will be because we renounce the American dream in order to release the resources that God has already put in our pocketbooks to mobilize our God-called missionaries to take the Gospel to the nations.

Jesus spoke to this very pointedly.

"Will there be a Great Commission resurgence or will we merely give lip service to world evangelization while continuing to pursue the American dream?"



Jesus was and is counter-cultural. The message of Jesus is counter to the American culture. But the message of Jesus is counter to every culture in every generation and in every century. Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-24: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Two investments — earth or heaven

We have only two options for the investment of our resources. In verse

19 Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth." In verse 20 Jesus said, "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven." We either invest in earth or we invest in heaven. We invest our resources in the American dream or we invest those resources in the Kingdom of God. Jesus was always quite clear.

When Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth," He's simply saying that everything that we invest in this world we lose forever. We leave it behind. It's not that Jesus doesn't want us to have treasure. He wants us to have treasure, but He wants us to have eternal treasure, treasure in heaven. That which you and I store up in heaven we have forever.

Now the American dream is just the opposite. The American dream is to store up treasure on earth. When asked what his dream was one Christian university student responded, "To be able to buy whatever I want whenever I want it without having to worry about running out of money." To which I would ask this question: That's what Christ died for?

You and I know that's not the answer. We shouldn't blame this Christian student. Somehow he managed to grow up in a Christian home, attend a Christian church, get a Christian education at a Christian university and never have the whole idea of the American dream be challenged at any level. How could he have missed the counter-cultural message of Jesus?

There are only two things that are eternal — the Word of God and the souls of men.

What about Southern Baptists? How are we doing? Are we just holding on to our stuff for ourselves in our own churches? The statistics say we are. Last year, out of \$12 billion given by Southern Baptists in the offering plates of our churches, two percent — two cents out of every dollar — went to win the nations for Christ. And the other 98 percent we spent here in our homeland.

In verse 21 Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Where we put our money is where our heart goes. And based on Jesus' criteria in verse 21, about 98 cents out of every

dollar of the Southern Baptist heart has been invested right here at home, and our heart is about two cents out of a dollar to get the Gospel to the nations. If you find yourself not really caring for the nations, perhaps one way to deal with that is to start putting more and more of your treasure *in* the nations and see if your heart doesn't follow your treasure *to* the nations.

The contrast is stark but real. There are only two investment possibilities. One is heaven. The other is earth.

Two perspectives — temporal or eternal

In verses 22 and 23 Jesus talks about two perspectives: the temporal perspective and the eternal perspective. "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of

darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Jesus is using the example of physical sight to illustrate for us the importance of spiritual sight. Jesus speaks of a good eye and a bad eye. Taken in context it's obvious that the good eye represents an eternal perspective and the bad eye represents a temporal perspective. What Jesus is saying is sometimes we are nearsighted. We can see really well up close. We can see our immediate needs for ourselves, our families and our local churches, but we don't see much beyond these local contexts. And Jesus is calling us to see with spiritual sight, with eternal perspective.

It's not easy to do, because we are here and not there. We're in Kentucky or Alabama and we're not in Kenya or India. If you could go with me and walk through the vast cities of Asia or to the dusty villages in Africa and go from hut to hut, and see how the people live and see their desperation, you would have eyes to see.

In Africa today there are multitudes in bondage to witchcraft, fetishes and

charms. They do not have the Gospel of the grace of the Son of God. In India there are hundreds of millions who bow down daily before idols. In the Muslim world you will find some of the most devoted religious fanatics you will ever meet. Five times a day when the call to prayer is issued they bow down toward Mecca and pray to a god who doesn't exist. They are in spiritual bondage and Jesus is saying, "We need to see these people. They are harassed and helpless

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like sheep without a shepherd." And it is our responsibility and our privilege to get the Gospel of salvation through Christ Jesus to these who dwell in spiritual darkness.

If you only have a temporal perspective, if you have the bad eye, you're going to say, "I need this possession and I need that one. I need to go to the mall in order to take advantage of the sale prices." We buy stuff we do not need simply because we can afford to do so.

Contrast this pursuit of the American dream with what the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy: "Godliness with contentment is great gain; For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that." You say, "What about shelter?" The Bible does not say shelter. It simply says food and clothing. If it takes more than food, clothing and a relationship with God, there is something about our relationship with God that is lacking. I write that with full awareness that I personally have far more than food and clothing. I'm an affluent man. I have far more than most people

in the world, as do most Americans. As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are to use the surplus we have by investing it in the Word of God and the souls of men. We must have God's eternal perspective for that to take place.

Two masters – money or God

In verse 24 Jesus identifies two masters. Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." Jesus didn't say you *should not* serve both God and money. He just said you *cannot* do it. He said it was impossible. You serve one or you serve the other, but you can't serve both. It's a choice.

How much stuff do we need? I have had to ask myself: how much stuff do I need? How many suits do I need? How many fishing rods? Is there not a limit where somewhere along the way we say, "Enough?" Let's release some of these funds to mobilize our people who have been called to take the Gospel to the nations. That's the issue before us. It's not a matter of let's just divide up the pie in different ways so we can get some of the pie that is spent here to be spent overseas. It's an issue of releasing from the purses, checkbooks and bank accounts of Southern Baptist church members those resources to get the Gospel to the nations.

D. A. Carson said, "Either God is served with single-minded devotion or He is not served at all. All attempts at divided loyalty betray, not partial commitment to discipleship, but a deep seated commitment to idolatry."

Is he right? Are we worshipping our stuff? Have we put money before God? I am persuaded that we will never have a Great Commission resurgence until we have pastors who are willing to lead their churches to be Great Commission Christians. I have spent the better part of my life calling young men and women to go to the nations with the Gospel of salvation. Now we are seeing in Southern Baptist life an extraordinary response like never before. It's time for Southern Baptists to step up to the plate and pay the way of those who have been called by God.

Sadly, I have little hope for my generation. For the most part my generation of Southern Baptists has bought into the American dream. But I do have hope

for this generation of seminarians. My prayer is that in the providence of God some of them will be led of the Holy Spirit to go to some town, city or village and settle in for the long haul, to put down some deep roots in one community and in one church and fight those battles which must be fought and pay that price which must be paid in order to mobilize God's people to do great exploits for the glory of God among the nations.

Approximately 4.5 billion people on the planet do not confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Somewhere between 1.3 and 1.7 billion have little or no access to the Gospel of salvation. Yet we say, "I'm going to do something great for the Great Commission someday, but first we have to get the Family Life Center paid for. Then we have other local needs we must address." Where are the pastors who will stand before the people and call the people to give generously and sacrificially to mobilize the church of the Lord Jesus Christ?

We have at our disposal all the financial resources we need to send every God-called missionary through our International Mission Board. Yet we refuse to release those resources. I believe it is not so much a fault in the pew. Instead, I believe our people are waiting to be led. They are waiting for someone to blow the bugle, wave the banner and say, "This is the way for us to go! We can be used of the Spirit of God to mobilize ourselves to reach the nations with the Gospel of Christ." That means we've got to say no to the American dream. That may mean downsizing our standard of living. An increase in your salary should not call for an increase in your standard of living. It ought to call for an increase in your standard of giving.

Jesus is our example. Perhaps we don't want Jesus as our example. Do you remember when Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem? Beginning in Luke 9, we have the account of Jesus traveling from Jericho to Jerusalem and all the events that happened along the way. In one of those encounters a man came up to Jesus and said, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." Jesus was homeless during the days of His public ministry. He was dependent upon the hospitality of people like Mary, Martha and Lazarus and others. Sometimes Jesus slept under the open sky. I'm not advocating homelessness as something you ought to pursue but I am saying Jesus was not the kind of preacher that would have been elected Clergyman of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce. He was homeless. Apparently it is possible to have a fulfilled, satisfying life and walk with God and not have many material possessions, if Jesus is our example.

Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters." He is not saying you *should* not do it. He is saying you *cannot* do it. It is either God or money. We can choose either the American dream or we can choose the Kingdom of God.

During my early years as a pastor I grew to appreciate Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Pate. Mr. Pate was a retired sawmill hand. He had a limited formal education, having completed only the eleventh grade. He and Mrs. Pate were prayer warriors and soul winners. Mrs. Pate was "Mrs. Missions" at Lakeview Baptist Church. Like few people I have known, her heart's desire and passion was to declare the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Their only regular source of

income in retirement was a small Social Security check. When Mr. Pate died, Mrs. Pate's limited income became even more limited.

Some of the ladies in her Sunday school class were concerned that Mrs. Pate did not have enough money to buy food. The teacher of her Sunday school class took up an offering and converted it into a \$100 bill. She came to see me and said, "Pastor, we're concerned that Mrs. Pate does not have enough to eat. Would you give this \$100 bill to her? Do not tell her where it came from. Just say it came from an angel." I said, "I'll be happy to."

All this happened during the Christmas season. Like all Southern Baptist churches, during December we take up the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. When Sunday came, I put that \$100 bill in my coat pocket. Before the service, I went up to Mrs. Pate. I leaned across the pew, held out the \$100 bill and said, "Mrs. Pate, an angel told me to give you this money." She took the \$100 bill. She looked at me, and said, "Brother Al, do you think that angel would mind if I gave this to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering?" I said, "Mrs. Pate, I think that angel would be pleased." She needed that money, but more than that she had an opportunity to do what for her was something very, very significant. Her sacrificial gift paralleled that of the poor widow who was commended by Jesus when she gave two small copper coins.

Are we going to continue to pursue the American dream? Or are we going to be radical like Jesus and say, "I'm not going to buy everything I can afford. I'm going to give far beyond the tithe. I'm going to invest in the Word of God and the souls of men for the glory of the name of our great God among the nations."

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