



Southwestern

NEWS

ISSUE 02
When God
Calls



When God Calls

Todd Pylant's obedience to God's call shown in faithful ministry highlighting discipleship, prayer

Give Us This Day, Our Daily Bread

For 30 years, the Sutherland family has been used by God to fulfill a daily prayer in the lives of Southwesterners

Using Her Ministry Skills in West Texas

Women's ministry is a natural fit for Melissa Meredith

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2024

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
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Steps toward renewal

The Southwestern Seminary community continues to be encouraged by and thankful for the measurable progress that has been made in moving toward institutional stability in multiple areas of our shared work. We are particularly grateful for the fine work, initiative, and dedication of Provost Madison Grace and vice presidents Travis Trawick, Adam Dodd, and Chandler Snyder, as well as for the wisdom, commitment, and experience that Dale Ford and Jack Terry bring to the leadership team at this time. It is a joy to watch all six of them work together and to work with and provide leadership for others across the Southwestern campus.

Core Values and Institutional Stewardship

We are excited to see the renewed embrace of Southwestern's mission, identity, heritage, and new core values: grace filled, Christ centered, scripturally grounded, confessionally guided, student focused, and globally engaged. Efforts to prioritize institutional stewardship are being modeled by numerous faculty and staff members. The development of a context that encourages a commitment to prayer, worship, shared service, collaboration, cooperation, and institutional unity, including the breaking down of various silos across the campus has been pleasing to observe.

The enhancement of a campus culture that reflects the institutional core values to serve the students, faculty, and staff of Southwestern well, together with the initial implementation of aspects of the institutional plan known as Southwestern 2030 has been a source of rejoicing for many. To help explain our core values, brief videos featuring Southwestern and Texas Baptist College faculty have recently been posted to the seminary's website. I invite you to watch them at swbts.edu/corevalues.

Encouraging enrollment trends

In the 2022-23 academic year, the number of

credit hours taught increased from 33,253 to 34,836. The number of credit hours taught in the Fall of 2023 was 15,821, compared with 15,342 in the Fall of 2022 and 14,761 in the Fall of 2021. At the time that we penned this column, Spring 2024 enrollment totaled 2,711 compared to 2,640 last Spring, and the number of credit hours taught for this term is 14,709, compared with 14,152 in the Spring of 2023, and 13,352 in the Spring



We are excited to see the renewed embrace of Southwestern's mission, identity, heritage, and new core values: grace filled, Christ centered, scripturally grounded, confessionally guided, student focused, and globally engaged.

of 2022. The five largest seminaries in North America for this academic year according to the Association of Theological Schools are Liberty, Southern Seminary, Midwestern Seminary, Dallas Theological Seminary, and Southwestern. We are thankful for these encouraging enrollment trends.

Campus and Student Life

Initial efforts have begun on much-needed deferred maintenance items across the campus.

Students are excited about the work taking place on the tennis courts, the walking track, and the pickleball courts. We are heartened by the work of the Student Life and Student Housing teams, especially with the whole-life discipleship emphasis that permeates their efforts.

Please Join Us

You are always welcome on the Southwestern campus, and we encourage you to do so when you are traveling to the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. We would enjoy the opportunity to see you and connect with you. Your partnership means ever so much. We hope that many of you will be able to join us at the Southwestern Alumni and Friends Luncheon on June 12, 2024, during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Indianapolis. At that time, additional and more detailed updates will be provided.

Toward Renewal

We hope that you get the sense that Southwestern has made important strides toward institutional stability and renewal in recent months. We believe that these things are answers to the prayers of many who have prayed to the Lord, asking Him to bring renewal to the Southwestern community. The Lord, in His kindness, has answered those prayers by bestowing His blessings and favor on the labors of many.

Thankful for Your Partnership

For your ongoing commitment to Southwestern we are indeed grateful. Please continue to pray, support, and encourage on a regular basis. Your financial gifts will make a big difference as we trust the Lord to help us take the next step toward institutional health for the good of our students and for the glory of our great God.

Faithfully,

David S. Dockery, *President*

O. S. Hawkins, *Chancellor*

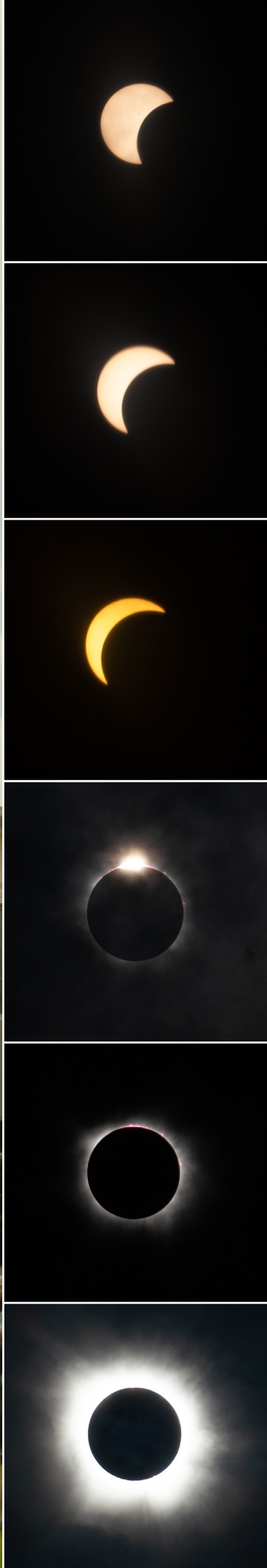
FIRST LOOK

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork."
(Psalm 19:1)

On April 8, the Southwestern community gathered on the Great Lawn in front of the B.H. Carroll Memorial Building to watch the rare solar eclipse that came over North America. As Fort Worth was in the path of totality, students, faculty, staff and their families enjoyed moon pies, music, and picnics to watch God's handiwork on display.

Photos by Amanda Williams and Emil Handke





Trustees receive reports of financial stability, enrollment growth



SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY BOARD of trustees heard reports of renewed financial stability and enrollment growth during the April 9-10 meeting held on the Fort Worth campus, marked by a spirit of unity, President David S. Dockery ('81) said.

"Southwestern Seminary is in a very different place than in September 2022," said Dockery, noting many factors. "All this has happened because of God's providential kindness to us."

Trustees unanimously approved a \$35.6 million budget, elected and promoted faculty, named faculty to academic chairs, and approved graduates for spring 2024 during the meeting.

Board Chairman Jonathan Richard ('14) thanked Dockery for his "capable leadership," commended trustees for their work during the meeting, noted the "high morale" among students and faculty, and affirmed the seminary's faculty as "one of our greatest assets to this institution."

Richard said trustees "continue to rely on the Lord for guidance" and during his tenure on the board he is "thankful for the sustaining presence of the Lord here."

He added that the seminary's current financial situation is "stronger than it has been in years, and I know that, with continued hard work and sacrifice, the financial future is hopeful."

The board approved a \$35.6 million budget for the 2025 fiscal year, a decrease of \$300,000 from

the original approved budget for the current year. Trustees also approved the firm Guinn Smith & Company as auditors for the fiscal year 2024.

In his report to trustees, Dockery noted the collective thankfulness "to God for His presence" and the "obvious presence of the Spirit leading us," resulting in a "genuine spirit of unity



All this has happened because of God's providential kindness to us.

and humility that was present in all aspects of our work." He added that everyone is "very hopeful for the days to come."

Dockery reported an increase in enrollment and hours taught. He said the credit hours taught in the 2022-2023 academic year was 34,836, representing an increase of 1,583 credit hours from the previous academic year. Enrollment also showed an increase of 171 students in the 2022-2023 academic year from the prior year.

Dockery added that there was an increase of 479 credit hours taught in the fall of 2023 compared to the fall of 2022 and the 15,821 credit hours taught in the fall of 2023 also reflected an increase of 1,066 credit hours taught compared to the fall of 2021.

He said the spring 2024 academic semester includes 2,711 students, an increase of 71 students enrolled in spring 2023 which was up from 2,561 the year prior. Dockery said that "uptick in credit hours is the key to our stable tuition revenue line which is so important for our overall budget."

Dockery noted that the total hours taught for spring 2024 has increased by almost 600 hours over spring 2023, for 14,709 credit hours taught in the current semester compared to 14,152 credit hours taught in spring 2023. The credit hours taught in spring 2024 represent an increase of more than 1,350 credit hours taught compared to spring 2022.

Citing data from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) annual enrollment report, which includes 274 divinity schools and seminaries, Dockery said that in the fall of 2023, Southwestern moved to fifth in total enrollment and sixth in total credit hours taught. The increases in enrollment and total credit hours taught make Southwestern, third and fourth, respectively, among Southern Baptist seminaries. Dockery

also noted that Southwestern was third among all of the ATS institutions regarding the total number of graduates in the past year and ninth concerning the size of the total endowment.

He added there is “no other Southern Baptist school that finished in the top ten” in all four categories of number of graduates, enrollment, credit hours taught, and endowment. He said the ranking “distinguishes Southwestern in a meaningful way” for which he gave “thanks to God.”

“What takes place at Southwestern is not just counting the numbers, it’s a recognition that each one of these numbers represents a person – a person called to serve in the church, to serve our denomination, to go to the mission field, to be in counseling sessions, to be in the classroom, serve in parachurch organizations, wherever God might lead that person and we never know where they’re going while they’re here,” he said.

Dockery told trustees the seminary is “very hopeful” about ongoing giving to the institution. He noted that unrestricted giving is “steady” and that temporarily unrestricted giving is “ahead of the last three years.” He said that the seminary’s operational budget is “in a good place” as it is more than \$1.5 million ahead of the same



What takes place at Southwestern is not just counting the numbers, it’s a recognition that each one of these numbers represents a person.

time last year. He added that the seminary currently has \$8.4 million in cash “which no one would have imagined this time last year.”

Dockery also mentioned the \$3.4 million that was placed in a “quasi-endowment fund” that is overseen by the board.

“We have moved from crisis to challenge to stability,” Dockery observed, adding “we’re not yet at a place where we can call institutional health; we still have work to do to get there.” He said the seminary will “continue to work as hard and as wisely and as carefully as we can, but we must not fail to give thanks to God for answering our prayers.”

During the meeting, Dockery publicly thanked the board officers for their decision to give him a raise and bonus, which he declined, explaining he wanted all employees to be rewarded while the president should be last. Richard said Dockery’s actions were “the Lord affirming to me that we have the right man in the president’s office.”

Trustees received an announcement of the appointment of Carl J. Bradford (’11, ’18) as the dean of Texas Baptist College, the undergraduate school of Southwestern Seminary.

Trustees approved the students nominated by the faculty and certified by the registrar as having met all the requirements for spring 2024 graduation.

Richard (New Mexico), Robert Brown (’85) (Tennessee), and Angela Duncan (At-Large), who have served as chairman, vice chairman, and secretary, respectively, were re-elected to one-year terms as officers of the board.

Three outgoing trustees were recognized for their service. Michael Trammel (Maryland-Delaware-DC), Ron Pracht (Kansas-Nebraska), John Rayburn (At-Large) were thanked by Richard for their time and valuable contributions provided during their tenures on the board.—*Staff*

FACULTY UPDATES

The board of trustees took the following actions regarding faculty during the April 9-10 spring meetings:

Faculty promotions

W. Madison Grace II (’06, ’12) to professor of theology

Dean Sieberhagen to professor of missions

Michael Wilkinson (’85, ’90) to professor of theology

Joshua Williams to professor of Old Testament

Faculty elections

Amy Crider associate professor of foundations of education

Jonathan Okinaga (’16, ’19) assistant professor of biblical counseling

Faculty named to academic chairs

Joseph R. Crider dean of the School of Church Music and Worship to the McKinney Chair of Church Music

O.S. Hawkins (’74, ’20) chancellor and senior professor of pastoral ministry and evangelism to the L.R. Scarborough Chair of Evangelism (“Chair of Fire”)

Jonathan Okinaga to the Hope for the Heart Chair of Biblical Counseling

Lilly H. Park associate professor of biblical counseling to The Hultgren Chair of Ministerial Counseling





Bradford appointed dean of Texas Baptist College

CARL J. BRADFORD ('11, '18), assistant professor of evangelism and occupant of the Malcolm R. and Melba L. McDow Chair of Evangelism, has been appointed dean of Texas Baptist College, the undergraduate school of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, the institution's leadership announced April 10.

"We are thrilled that Carl Bradford has accepted the invitation to serve as dean of Texas Baptist College," said President David S. Dockery ('81). "He and his wife, Andrea, have been deeply invested in the Southwestern community for several years."

Dockery added that Bradford "who is a gifted classroom teacher, has fine leadership gifts, a heart for the Gospel and the importance of sharing this Good News with others, a love for students, and a dedication to quality academics and to his colleagues."

Bradford also "knows and understands the best aspects of the Carroll-Scarborough tradition at Southwestern, which will be important as he develops a hopeful vision for TBC and TBC students for the days to come," Dockery said.

Bradford, who has served as the interim associate dean of the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions since July 2023, began teaching at Southwestern in 2018. A native of New Orleans, Bradford holds Master of Divinity (2011) and Doctor of Philosophy (2018) degrees from Southwestern in addition to a Bachelor of Science in business administration degree from Xavier University in Louisiana.

The appointment as dean of TBC is meaningful to Bradford for two reasons, he said, noting that first he is "honored, humbled, and inspired by the administration of SWBTS and TBC's belief in my capacity to lead TBC's students and faculty toward a promising and God-edifying future."

Bradford added that second, he is "grateful for the opportunity and the responsibility entrusted

to me to ensure that our six core values—grace filled, Christ centered, scripturally grounded, confessionally guided, student focused, and globally engaged—continue to serve as the guiding principles shaping the community of SWBTS and TBC."

Bradford said he is "motivated" to uphold Southwestern's core values "and to foster an environment where students experience an enriching Christian education, godly mentorship, and develop godly friendships."

The appointment is also a "personal milestone" to Bradford as he reflects on his first visit to the Southwestern campus in 2009 as a prospective student to tour the campus and learn about the seminary's Master of Divinity program and now he has the "opportunity to serve as faculty."

W. Madison Grace II ('06, '12), provost and vice president for academic administration, said that "Transitions can create challenges or opportunities" and "often raise questions about mission and stability." However, he added, with the appointment of Bradford he is "confident that the mission of Texas Baptist College will continue forward."



His evangelism focus is key to highlighting the Great Commission mission of Southwestern and his pastoral care will fulfill our Great Commandment imperative.

"Dr. Bradford is a long-time Southwesterner and his leadership will draw from the heritage of our school as he looks to the future of TBC," Grace observed. "His evangelism focus is key to highlighting the Great Commission mission of Southwestern and his pastoral care will fulfill our Great Commandment imperative."

Grace noted that he looks "forward to the future of TBC with Dr. Bradford leading and bringing stability, mentorship, and a heart for the Gospel."

In addition to his classroom teaching, Bradford leads Southwestern Seminary's Everyday Evangelism, a weekly initiative that allows students to share the Gospel in Fort Worth-area neighborhoods, parks, shopping centers, and universities. Since 2018, Bradford has also been the faculty leader for Southwestern's participation in Cross-over, an evangelism opportunity that occurs the week before the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting.

Bradford serves as the minister of evangelism at First Baptist Church of Mansfield, Texas, and is the evangelism consultant for the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC).

Bradford is a contributor to the History of Evangelism in North America, published by Kregel in 2021, and Seminary Hill Press publications, *The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture: Revised and Expanded* and *And You Shall Be My Witnesses: 31 Devotionals to Encourage a Spirit of Everyday Evangelism*. He has also contributed to the 2019 SBTC publication *Evangelism Takes Heart: A 9-Week Journey to Cultivating A Heart For Evangelism* and to the *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, Southwestern Seminary's academic journal.

Bradford and his wife, Andrea, a Doctor of Education student at Southwestern, are the parents of Carl Jr. and Abigail.

Bradford's appointment was effective May 6.

—A.A.

Dockery says ‘confessionally guided’ provides ‘hermeneutical lens’ to Southwestern’s core values

EXPLAINING THE HISTORY OF CONFSSIONAL STATEMENTS and how the core value of “confessionally guided” shapes the classroom and community of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, President David S. Dockery ('81) encouraged students, faculty, and staff to understand the “hermeneutical lens” of the institution’s fourth core value during the Jan. 23 convocation service to begin the academic semester.

Before delivering his convocation address, Dockery noted the “wonderful spirit” across the campus as new student enrollment for the spring 2024 semester has increased “over 11 percent from last spring” and the “significant” increase in credit hours taught for the academic semester.



Confessing our faith is something that each follower of Jesus Christ should do, but we do so not just in an individual way, we do so in community as we have done this morning.

“I want to try to answer the question why we have a statement of faith, why it is important to us [and] what this statement means for our entire community – faculty, staff, and student together,” Dockery explained. “We’ll do so because this core value runs the risk not so much of being misunderstood, but being underappreciated, often thought of as being only applied to those who teach in a certain subject matter or being relegated to the idea that it only means that Southwestern is merely a Baptist institution.”

Southwestern Seminary’s six core values, grace filled, Christ centered, scripturally grounded, confessionally guided, student focused, and globally engaged, were introduced in January 2023 and approved by the institution’s board of trustees in April 2023 as part of the seminary’s “Advance Southwestern: 2030” institutional plan.

Acknowledging that Southwestern is “certainly a Baptist institution,” Dockery said he believed it is “important to note not only what this core value means, but what it also does not mean.” He harkened to the words of the late Leon McBeth, distinguished professor of church history, who “observed” the two noticeable ways Baptists have used confessional statements, notably “to proclaim Baptist distinctives” and “to show how similar Baptists are to other Christians.”

Dockery recalled that when Southwestern Seminary was founded in 1908, the first president and founder, B.H. Carroll, was “insistent” the institution adopt the 1833 *New Hampshire Confession of Faith*, a “widely-circulated, nineteenth-century Baptist statement.” Dockery said that Carroll and Calvin Goodspeed, a professor of theology of the school’s founding faculty, “went to great lengths” after the statement was adopted to give a series of lectures that would later be known as *A Commentary on the New Hampshire Statement of Faith*.

Carroll “understood” a shared confessional commitment assisted in three ways, Dockery said, including helping “the institution to declare publicly its beliefs,” serving as a “teaching tool” for both students and the larger community to understand doctrine, and encouraging a “sense of genuine unity” for the seminary family.

Dockery traced the history of confessional statements, beginning in the Old Testament to the New Testament, noting the words of Jude in his epistle, “The faith once for all entrusted to the saints.”

“This idea of the faith is a confessional faith that refers to a body of beliefs not so much our personal experience of faith but our shared community of faith commitments,” Dockery explained. The “true Christian faith” has been passed on in “various forms,” including *The Apostle’s Creed*, *The Nicene Creed*, *The Chalcedonian Confession* or *The Athanasian Creed*, he added.

Dockery noted that 17th-century early Baptists “gladly connected themselves to this wonderful confessional tradition in both General Baptist’s *Orthodox Creed*” and “the Particular Baptists in the *Second London Confession*.” He said Article 38 of *The Orthodox Creed* “specifically affirmed” *The Apostle’s Creed*, *The Nicene Creed*, and *The Athanasian Creed*, “declaring that all three ought



to be thoroughly received and believed. For we believe that they may be proved by the most undoubted authority of Holy Scripture and are to be understood by all Christians.”

The need for confessions of faith “have often arisen” in order to “address and correct misguided ideas like Gnosticism, Docetism, Arianism, or other heretical movements,” that “made their way into the church and have continued to do so,” Dockery observed.

“Confessing our faith is something that each follower of Jesus Christ should do, but we do so not just in an individual way, we do so in community as we have done this morning,” Dockery said, noting the personal and communal elements of the confession of faith. “There is a beautiful aspect of the Christian tradition that invites people when they confess their faith to do so by loving one another so that with one mind we can confess our shared faith.”

As the fourth core value at Southwestern Seminary, Dockery said to be a confessionally guided institution “means that we joyfully accept our responsibility to pass on this faith not just to this community, not just to this generation, but to the next generation so the Gospel can be extended to the ends of the earth.”—A.A

Preview Days draw record numbers of attendees

DURING THE SPRING PREVIEW DAYS for Texas Baptist College (TBC) and Southwestern Seminary, held March 22 and April 12, respectively, a record number of prospective students participated to learn about the seminary's four graduate schools and undergraduate college.

At TBC Preview Day, prospective students heard a current student testimony from Toby Dinger, a Christian studies junior from Allen, Texas. Dinger, who came to faith in Christ during his senior year of high school, said he planned to earn a business degree at the University of Arkansas. However, the COVID-19 pandemic began and "not only did Jesus change my life, but the world changed." Dinger shared his remarks during a special TBC chapel hosted specially for Preview Day.

The changes prompted him to attend community college and, not enjoying his experience, Dinger said he began to "work and serve" in his church, First Baptist Church of Allen, Texas. As he started serving "more and more" in his church, while simultaneously praying, he realized "that there was nothing else I wanted to do with my life other than serve God's people." Many of the pastors at his church had attended Southwestern and Dinger said he learned from the seminary's website that the institution had an undergraduate college – TBC.

Dinger said at his own Preview Day in spring 2021, he met friends who are now "lifelong friends." He added that his "favorite thing" about TBC is "that it's Christ centered," noting the focus on Christ in the classroom, chapel services, Student Life events, and dorm life events. He said his "other favorite part of the school is the

professors" as they are "instrumental in making this place special."

Following chapel, prospective students and their families were led in groups on a campus tour that allowed them to learn about TBC's student financial services, campus community life, housing, and the Writing Center. Attendees also learned about classes and campus life at TBC from a panel of faculty and students, including Blake McKinney, assistant professor of history and humanities, Brian Berry ('19), instructor of biblical studies, and Jill Cabal, instructor of history, and three current TBC students, Deborah Guzman a Bachelor of Arts in Christian studies student from Guadalajara, Mexico; Alaina Travis, a Bachelor of Music in worship studies student from Bueno Aires, Argentina; and Bryce Blackwell, a Bachelor of Arts in Christian studies student from Fort Worth, Texas.

At the April 12 Southwestern Seminary Preview Day, Chandler Snyder, vice president for enrollment and student services and dean of students, said the increased interest in Southwestern is both a blessing from the Lord and a sign of the stability of the seminary and its leadership. He noted that, while past Preview Day events have combined the seminary and TBC, the seminary's event was offered as a "curated experience" for those seeking graduate degrees.

The day began with welcome and worship. Students from the School of Church Music and Worship led the crowd in song, and President David S. Dockery ('81) greeted prospective students and their guests, telling them his decision to come to Southwestern in 1979 was "one

of the best decisions I've made. I love this place, and I hope you will come to love it."

He outlined the seminary's history, noting that Southwestern was the first seminary in the country to have a focus on evangelism, and was a pioneer in establishing a school of church music. Dockery also noted that the seminary has prepared more people to serve in a global context than any other seminary, adding that the faculty "are here to invest in you."

Attendees also were treated to a campus tour, academic preview sessions, and a lunch that featured a panel of alumni talking about their Southwestern experience. Snyder moderated the panel, which included Chris Shirley ('94, '02), dean of the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries and the Jack D. and Barbara Terry Chair of Religious Education at Southwestern; Katie Frugé ('10, '19), director of the Center for Cultural Engagement & Christian Life Commission for the Baptist General Convention of Texas; and Jeff Chapman ('19, '21), a two-time Southwestern graduate who currently is pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy at the seminary.

W. Madison Grace II ('06, '12), provost and vice president for academic administration, himself a two-time graduate of the seminary, told the luncheon attendees that Southwestern is about the care of the person and is "not just a machine we're punching [them] through." He said Southwestern's faculty, staff, and leaders care about what God is doing in their lives and what He has called them to do, adding, "We are all co-laborers together."—*Staff*

Barber exhorts Southwestern graduates to go to the 'harvest'

GET TO WORK IN THE HARVEST, Bart Barber ('96, '06), president of the Southern Baptist Convention, challenged the 301 graduates of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Texas Baptist College during spring commencement held May 3 on the Fort Worth campus.

While the 339 men and women in the fall 2023 graduating class represented 30 states and United States territories and 18 countries outside of the U.S., the spring 2024 graduating class included students representing 27 states and 22 countries. Seventy-seven of the 301 certificates and diplomas awarded in the spring were for non-English degrees and certificates.

"This class represents the student body at Southwestern, which is now a multinational, multi-ethnic, intercultural, intergenerational community," President David S. Dockery ('81) said, noting the names listed in the commencement program that were representative of "every region of the country and multiple nations around the world, and we celebrate God's goodness in bringing them here."

Framing his commencement address around Jesus's exchange with the disciples following His encounter with the woman at the well in Samaria in John 4, Barber, who has pastored First Baptist Church of Farmersville, Texas, since 1999, noted the disciples encouraged Jesus to eat. Jesus refused and told the disciples that His food was to do the will of His Father, which was to sow and reap for the harvest of the Kingdom of God, Barber explained.

Barber reminded the graduating class that the education and training they received at the seminary is an "investment" by the students themselves and the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention that is to be put "to work in the harvest."

"Unlike some educational institutions, we have not led you to knowledge merely for knowledge's sake, in and of itself," Barber observed. "But instead, there is great need in the world for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we launch you into that world in order to accomplish the purpose for which God has raised you up."

First, Barber noted, the new graduates' studies should give a "hunger for the harvest."

"A seminary education is supposed to light a flame in your heart," Barber said. "It is supposed to give you a vision and a passion in addition to giving you technique and information and know-how about how to pursue it." He added a seminary education should "light" a "vision for the evangelization of the world, for the rescuing of souls from the domain of darkness and bringing them into the light of God."

Barber said the disciples wondered why Jesus was not hungry when "Jesus in effect turned to them and said, 'I'm wondering why you're not hungry. I'm wondering why you're able to walk by these people who are in need of the truth – in need of the Gospel and all you care about is food.'"

Second, Barber said, the graduates needed to have a "perception of the opportunities to harvest that are around" them. He observed that Jesus was "training" the disciples, but He also told the disciples "the harvest is ready now" as "the fields are white unto harvest."

Third, Barber encouraged the graduates to have "an optimism about the harvest."



"There is joy found in the ministry that you will pursue as you go from this place and there is opportunity that is there," Barber said, while noting the graduates leave Seminary Hill "into a season of time that some have called the 'great de-churching.'"

"You have heard it said that the opportunities are few. And you have heard it said that people are running away. And you have heard it said that your prospects are going to be difficult serving in ministry," Barber observed before reminding the graduates that church history records "seasons of decreased interest in the Gospel" that are "usually followed by seasons of spiritual awakening." He said that "we're seeing something like that happening."

He added that "people say" the churches of the SBC are "shrinking and waning," but, he said, "that is not true." Barber said the last published statistics show "an increase in baptisms" in the SBC and said he predicts "that is a trend that will continue to grow in the days to come."

"If you will be faithful to plant the seed, God will be faithful to bring forth the harvest," Barber said.

Barber concluded his remarks by encouraging the graduates to "be optimistic about what Jesus can do through your ministry – about what Jesus can make of your faithfulness."

"You are among the best trained Christians in the world on this day," Barber concluded. "May you also be among the most zealous Christians in the world going forth from this day and may God make much of your labor in Him."

Barber's sister, Traci Barber Smith ('24), was one of the graduates, having earned a Master of Theological Studies from the seminary's School of Theology.

The ceremony also included the awarding of the David S. and Lanese Dockery Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence to Joshua Williams, associate professor of Old Testament and director of the seminary's Research Doctoral Studies program. Williams, who has served at Southwestern since 2006, was nominated for the award by his faculty colleagues based on the award's criteria of faithful and effective teaching of students and genuine care and concern for the spiritual development of students inside and outside of the classroom.

—A.A.



George recounts Newman's contributions to Southwestern Seminary during Founder's Day address

RECALLING THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS of Albert Henry Newman, founding dean and an inaugural faculty member of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, distinguished Baptist theologian Timothy George reviewed the life and influence of the “scholar par excellence” during the Fort Worth institution’s Founder’s Day chapel service March 19.

“Founder’s Day is a very special day,” said David S. Dockery (’81), the institution’s tenth president. “It’s a time in which we just pause, take a step back, reflect upon God’s providential care for this institution for 116 years.”

Dockery noted that “through good times and bad, Southwestern Seminary has continued to move forward, preparing ministers for the Gospel to serve the churches, to take the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ to the nations.”

Founder’s Day commemorates the chartering of Southwestern Seminary on March 14, 1908, and is celebrated on the chapel day closest to the seminary’s date of charter.

In his remarks, George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School, noted that while Newman was not B.H. Carroll, the seminary’s founder and first president, or L.R. Scarborough, Carroll’s administrator and the institution’s second president, the founding dean “bequeathed to Southwestern the tradition of academic excellence and sound, thorough theological scholarship.”

George added that Newman “helped to save Southwestern” from becoming a “mere Bible institute, a trade school or a degree mill” but also assisted the newly formed seminary to “become a leading school in the development of church history as a theological discipline.”

A native of Edgefield, South Carolina, Newman began his studies at Mercer University in Georgia, where he met his wife, Mary, an Alabama native with whom he would have three sons and one daughter. George explained Mary was instrumental in Southwestern Seminary’s 1910 move from its original location at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, to its current location in Fort Worth. George noted that Mary Newman was “captain



Through good times and bad, Southwestern Seminary has continued to move forward, preparing ministers for the Gospel to serve the churches, to take the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ to the nations.

of the ship” of the seminary’s relocation and was made superintendent of Fort Worth Hall, the seminary’s first building that housed classrooms, the library, chapel, and dorms.

Observing that Newman did not begin as a church historian but was influenced by a “visit” to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, then located in Greenville, South Carolina, which “changed his direction,” George said. While at Southern, Newman studied for one year under Crawford Toy who was introducing new ideas to

his students that included “rationalistic methods of studying the Bible” which were “casting aspersion on biblical authority and inerrancy,” he explained. Though Newman “learned a lot” from Toy, George said, he “could not follow the radical conclusions to which Toy had come” and left Southern Seminary after a few years. Toy’s views ultimately led to his departure from Southern’s faculty.

However, George explained, Newman had also studied Patristic Greek at Southern Seminary with John A. Broadus. A letter from Broadus to Newman marked “a turning point” in the young seminarian’s academic life and work, he said.

Quoting from the letter, George read that Broadus encouraged Newman to continue in his work in church history as “we have no American Baptists but you and [W.H.] Whitsitt” who were “really making researches into that great subject” and the larger denomination was becoming “interested” in the subject.

“With that letter, Newman changed subjects, areas of study,” George said. “The world lost a great Semitic scholar and gained a first-rate church historian.”

Calling Newman an “amazingly prolific writer,” George highlighted Newman’s works, including his 1897 *A History of Anti-Pedobaptism* and his two-volume work on church history in 1899 and 1903, and in 1901 wrote *A Century of Baptist Achievement*, which provided a “magnificent record” of the previous 100 years.

George noted Newman’s church history books were “widely used” as church history textbooks, including in classes at Southwestern Seminary, while the history of 19th-century Baptist achieve-

ment included essays from significant figures in Baptist life. The “volume played an important role in promoting the spirit of Baptists unity and cooperation, which led to the founding of the Baptist World Alliance in 1905,” George added.

Newman joined the faculty of Baylor University in 1901 and became the founding dean of Southwestern Seminary in 1908. Noting the importance of Carroll’s “ability to choose the right person for the right job at the right time,” George highlighted the roles of Scarborough and George W. Truett, chairman of the seminary’s board of trustees, at Southwestern’s founding, and asked, “who else but A.H. Newman could have brought together academic integrity and scholarly credibility for the founding of a fledgling seminary in the heart of Texas?”

However, he added, Newman had “troubled waters” during his time at Baylor and South-

western. Newman was involved in the controversy resulting from Whitsitt’s rejection of the “idea of a lineal succession of true Baptist churches going back through the ages to apostolic times, or to Jesus Himself” and that baptism by immersion as an ordinance had not been introduced to Baptists in England before 1641. George said “the Baptist house was divided” over the issue and Southwestern became involved as Carroll was chairman of the board of trustees at Southern Seminary, where Whitsitt was president. George noted Carroll was “not happy” about Whitsitt’s views.

After Southwestern Seminary relocated to Fort Worth from Waco in 1910, Newman came into conflict with Carroll after Newman, as the dean of the institution, sought to change the curriculum. Carroll’s health began to fail, and he lapsed into a coma, George explained. Newman, J.J. Reeve, a

faculty member, and other faculty “got together and redid the curriculum, to attenuate and almost eliminate the introduction to the English Bible,” Carroll’s favorite course. When Carroll woke from his coma and learned of Newman’s actions, “he summoned Newman and J.J. Reeve to his home here on Seminary Hill, and peremptorily fired them,” George said.

George concluded that Newman’s greatest legacy to Southwestern is three-fold.

“His greatest legacy was a life of serious historical scholarship as a service done to God, worth doing with excellence,” George said. “He bequeathed that legacy to all who come in his train. An attention, or close attention, to sources rooted in the Baptist tradition, which he believed sincerely, most closely reflected the apostolic Christianity of the New Testament.”—A.A.

Hale, Grahams honored with Carroll, Scarborough awards

SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY honored two long-time ministry partners for their generosity and support during the annual Founder’s Day Awards Luncheon held March 19. JoAn Hale received the B.H. Carroll Award, and Jack (’76, ’80) and Deborah Graham received the L.R. Scarborough Award.

The luncheon opened with remarks by Jack D. Terry Jr. (’62, ’67), interim vice president for institutional advancement and former dean of the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries, which was named in his honor in 2009. Terry welcomed guests and told of the history of the awards.

In presenting the B.H. Carroll Award, President David S. Dockery (’81) noted that Carroll was the “founding visionary” of the seminary, adding it was appropriate that the award be named for him.

The B.H. Carroll Award is given to honorees actively engaged in the life and ministry of the seminary, who have given sacrificial and significant gifts to the seminary, and have a life and witness consistent with the Christian mission and teaching of the seminary.

Dockery introduced the 2024 recipient, JoAn Hale, whom he said models consistency, faithfulness, and generosity to Southwestern.

“I’m a nervous wreck, so say a prayer,” Hale said, drawing laughter from attendees during her remarks upon receiving the award. She noted that her late husband, Clifton, had been the speaker, not her. She said that when their son died, her husband wanted them to think about doing more for “the Lord’s work.” The couple gave their first gift to Southwestern in 1988, and she has been a consistent supporter of the seminary’s mission ever since.

Dockery then presented the L.R. Scarborough Award, named in honor of the seminary’s second president and the namesake of the school’s evangelism academic chair, the “Chair of Fire.”

The award is given to honorees actively engaged in the life and ministry of the seminary, who have given and/or directed significant gifts to the seminary, and have of life and witness consistent with the Christian mission and teaching of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. This year’s recipients were Jack and Deborah Graham.



Dockery said Jack Graham, senior pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano and two-time Southwestern Seminary graduate, has “served Baptist churches well.” Graham was given the Distinguished Alumnus Award by Southwestern in 2001 and served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 2002-2004.

As he looked upon the faces of the attendees, Graham said there were “a lot of memories in this room.” He added that “Southwestern has done more for us than we have ever done for Southwestern.”

Dockery closed his remarks by noting that in September 2022 the seminary had claimed Psalm 90:17 as its verse and asked God to “renew this place.”

“The Lord is doing that,” Dockery continued, adding that he is encouraged by everything he sees at the seminary and asked that people “please continue to pray.”—K.G.

Southwestern alums named to SBC leadership posts

JEFF IORG ('90), A DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary who served as president of Gateway Seminary in Ontario, California, was elected president and CEO of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention in a special called meeting March 21 in Dallas.

Iorg, who holds a Doctor of Ministry from Southwestern, announced his plans to step away from the senior leadership post of the California-based seminary in the fall of 2023. Having led Gateway

since 2004, Iorg led the seminary's 2016 relocation from Mill Valley, California, situated outside of San Francisco, to its current location in Ontario, near Anaheim, California. Simultaneously, Iorg oversaw the institution's name change from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary to Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Though born in Forsyth, Georgia, Iorg was raised in Abilene, Texas, where he earned a bachelor's degree at Hardin-Simmons University. In addition to his doctoral degree from Southwestern, Iorg holds a Master of Divinity from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Before serving as Gateway's leader, Iorg was the executive director-treasurer of the Pacific Northwest Baptist Convention and was also the founding pastor of Greater Gresham Baptist Church in Gresham, Oregon.

The author of several books on leadership, including *The Character of Leadership*, *The Painful*

Side of Leadership, and *Shadow Christians*, Iorg and his wife, Ann, are the parents of three adult children and grandparents to five grandchildren.

Iorg assumed his responsibilities on May 13.

Iorg was succeeded as president at Gateway by Adam Groza ('03, '09), a two-time Southwestern Seminary alumnus who has served as the vice president of enrollment and student services and associate professor of philosophy of religion at the California seminary since 2010.

From 2007 to 2010, Groza served as Southwestern's director of admissions and as an appointed faculty member. Additionally, from 2005 to 2007 he was the director of the Riley Center, the institution's on-campus conference center and hotel.

A native Californian, Groza has ministry experience at churches in Texas and California.

Groza and his wife, Holly, a former staff member at Southwestern, have four children.

Groza began his responsibilities May 13. —A.A.

Students preach the Gospel, learn classroom application through Revive this Nation

AT THE END OF HIS WEEK SERVING in Snowflake, Arizona, Cody Hall, a student in the 5-year program at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Texas Baptist College (TBC), saw "revitalized joy in the members and a hunger to reach the lost in Snowflake."

Hall was one of 12 students who preached revival messages in 13 locations from California to Florida through Revive this Nation (RTN), an evangelism initiative of Southwestern Seminary that allows male students to preach revival services during Spring Reading Days. RTN, which has been also known as Pioneer Penetration, Operation Penetration, and Spring Practicum, has a "rich history dating back to 1959," said Carl J. Bradford ('11, '18), dean of TBC and faculty leader for RTN.

"Through serving churches across the nation, participants contribute to the mission of spreading the message of Christianity and engaging with Christian communities," said Bradford, who also serves as assistant professor of

evangelism and occupies the Malcolm R. and Melba McDow Chair of Evangelism. "Since 1959, God has used over 5,000 students to win 14,000 people to Christ and encourage thousands of churches to rekindle their flame for soul winning and spiritual maturity."

During the five sermons he preached over four days at Valley View Southern Baptist Church in Snowflake, a community of 6,000 people located near the central region of Arizona, Hall said he "saw God bring one to salvation."

Snowflake, founded in 1878 by Mormon pioneers Erastus Snow and William Flake, still has strong ties to its Mormon roots as "mostly all the people are Mormons," Hall said. "Everyone was really nice, but lost."

"Niceness does not get you to heaven," Hall added.

Hall said that eight members of the church made commitments "to do evangelism with the church weekly." The mayor of the town, who is a Mormon, attended the services when Hall



preached on Monday night and he said, "I pray a seed was planted."

Hall's experience in Arizona was different than Patrick Hackett, a Fort Worth native earning a Master of Arts in Christian Education (MACE) at Southwestern. Participating for the second time in RTN, Hackett spent the week preaching in Iantha, Missouri, a town of 80 people.

Hackett said that the "Lord led me to preach a series on faith for His people," during the five services he preached at Iantha Baptist Church. His messages were focused on Psalm 139, defining faith, the lives of Abraham and Noah,

and explaining what it means to have faith the size of a mustard seed.

His experiences during RTN helped Hackett see that “The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a bridge that can be used for us to walk into different cultures and environments with the sole purpose to minister a message of hope and salvation to a dying people and generation in need for Jesus Christ,” he said.

Through his second experience serving through RTN, Hackett said he “honestly” feels “that I have connected with lifetime friends and supporters of the ministry.”

Medford, Oregon, native Christopher Readus spent his first RTN experience serving in Lincoln, Arkansas, a “small, rural town that has economic

challenges,” he said. Readus served at the First Baptist Church of Lincoln.

Readus, a MACE student with a concentration in discipleship, said the people he “met in the community during our door-to-door evangelism were somewhat open if they opened the door.” The community of Lincoln reminded him of “Southern hospitality,” he said.

Though the day-to-day of his Sunday through Wednesday time in Lincoln included preaching the revival services, sharing meals with the pastor and families from the church, and attending a gathering of Southern Baptist pastors, Readus said he was able to see his classroom instruction used in practical application.

When there was a death in the family who

had been visiting the church, Readus said he “witnessed God use the church” as “the church rallied around the family and helped the kids with transportation and food [and] to get to the funeral.”

“I got to see how important the work and calling is that we have signed up for – in class it is all theory,” Readus explained. “But there is a hurting world that needs ministers, pastors, and disciples of Christ, and these individuals need to be able to reach the hearts and minds of the people.”

He added that “it is not just an academic lesson” as “people need more than just book knowledge.”

“If we cannot relate to them, we will not be able to earn their trust,” Readus concluded. —A.A.



Gospel-Centered Counseling Conference focuses on grief, suffering

IN DEALING WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE GRIEVING, a pastor must study two books: the Bible, and “the book of the human heart,” Ed Welch said, adding they must know people nearly as well as they know Scripture.

Welch, a faculty member and counselor at the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation (CCEF), spoke at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Gospel-Centered Counseling

Conference held April 4-5 on the Fort Worth campus. The two-day conference focused on using biblical principles to help those who are grieving or suffering.

The first night of the conference focused on theology. Lilly Park, associate professor of biblical counseling in the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries at Southwestern, told attendees that people don’t hear enough about

theology, so they turn to other things when suffering. Park organized the conference, which was offered to students, pastors, church leaders, and counselors.

Welch and Stuart Scott, executive director of One-Eighty Ministries, spoke during the event’s plenary sessions and in a panel discussion moderated by Park. The conference also included what Scott called “a biblical theology of suffering” presented by Stephen Yuille, professor of church history and spiritual formation in the School of Theology at Southwestern.

Scott spoke of the paradox of “both and,” explaining biblical examples of being both sorrowful and rejoicing as in John 16:22. Based on passages from Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians, he said it takes trust that events in people’s lives are ordained by God and that the best of times can be in the worst of times.

Welch spoke during the closing session, noting that every grieving person hears hurtful and thoughtless words, noting that it can change their lives and will change the body of Christ as they pull away from the church.

“From my perspective, we don’t seem to be gaining ground,” he said, adding that people seem to have come out of the COVID-19 pandemic with fewer interpersonal skills.

Welch said the guide for offering comfort and counseling to those who are grieving should be to seek words that contain “wisdom that rests on compassion and humility.” He defined compassion as “Love that is unmistakable; love that is evident.” Humility, he said, is acknowledging that believers live under God and need to hear His Word, and when they hear His Word, they respond.—K.G.



Sending Church Summit focuses on Great Commission

THE GREAT COMMISSION IS A MANDATE, or command, meaning there is no option. It's "the marching orders of the church," said Carroll Marr ('84), senior pastor at Southcliff Church in Fort Worth.

Marr was the opening speaker of the second Sending Church Summit, hosted March 4 by the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's World Missions Center (WMC). The conference focused on equipping churches to spread the Gospel to all nations.

While Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20 told His disciples to go to the most remote parts of the world, He didn't tell them how to do it because "there's no wrong way [to do it] as long as it gets done," Marr said. He encouraged churches to become a "going" church.

"I believe a 'going' church is a 'sending' church," he said.

Marr said his church has created a culture of expectation, opportunity, and celebration when it comes to missions. When people join his church, he said, one of the questions they're asked is, "Is your passport current? We expect them to go." The church also creates an opportunity for all age groups to go on a mission trip, and they celebrate whenever someone goes.

During the "Reaching the World Across the Street" breakout session, Stu Cocanougher ('92), strategy pastor with Southcliff Church, said while churches are excited about international missions, ministry to internationals living in the United States often takes a back seat.

Cocanougher cited a 2021 population count that showed 46.2 million immigrants living in the U.S., a figure higher than the population of some nations, and said churches need to find ways to reach these people.

When churches start developing programs for immigrants, some of the stories about what's happening in foreign mission fields start happening in their own church, he said.

The afternoon session of the conference featured a panel discussion on what missionaries wished their sending churches knew. Micah Englehart ('22), associate director of Student Life at Southwestern Seminary, led the discussion with panelists Michael Copeland ('18), associate director of the WMC; Mackenzie Norman, a student and NextGen Mobilizer with the International Mission Board (IMB); and students Chandler and Kelli Snyder. Chandler Snyder also is vice president for enrollment and student services at Southwestern Seminary and an instructor of missions in the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions.

The conference concluded with a talk on developing a missions strategy for a church, led by John Mark Terry ('75), an affiliate professor of missions and evangelism at Southwestern Seminary.

Reasons for developing a strategy include achieving a unity of purpose, being a good steward of a church's resources, and focusing on the church's efforts, he said. The sad truth, he said, is that "your church can't be all things to all people," and a missions leader, will end up saying no to a lot of good things.

Terry outlined the steps to a mission strategy, but emphasized that the key word in any strategy is multiplication. Any strategy used should serve to multiply disciples and churches, he said.—*K.G.*



Southwestern students, faculty use experience in evangelism, biblical counseling during Japan mission trip

JAPAN IS ONE OF THE MOST UNREACHED COUNTRIES in the world when it comes to the Gospel being spread there. With this fact in mind, 18 students and one faculty member from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary took part in a mission trip to Nagoya, Japan, to both share the Gospel and lead a biblical counseling conference from December 2-12.

Jonathan Okinaga ('16, '19), assistant professor of biblical counseling, said that the biblical counseling certificate conference had more than 50 participants, with about 40 people attending a seminar addressing suicide. Along with Okinaga, there were several students who helped lead the biblical counseling conference.

The other part of the mission team, known by those on the trip as the evangelism team, partnered with a church in the area of Nagoya, whose pastor and most of its members are Brazilian, to share the Gospel through multiple avenues.

"Our evangelism team sang Christmas carols at a retirement home for people there," said Cody Hall, a Bachelor of Arts in Christian studies and Master of Divinity in missions student at Texas Baptist College and Southwestern Seminary from Fort Worth, Texas. "We also evangelized at the train station and on the local bus. A team went out and shared the true Christmas story to students at a language school."

Hall said that God is "at work in the hearts of the Japanese" and that the church they partnered with "was hungry to hear more about biblical counseling."

Amanda Williams, a Master of Arts in biblical counseling student from Spain, said that she was able to see God at work through the work of those on the trip.

"I saw God use our efforts through evangelism in starting conversations with people and even with one joining us for church on Sunday," Williams said. "We had many other great conversations started by topics addressed in the biblical counseling conference such as depression, addiction, and suicide."



Through mission trips, believers are able to refine their calling from the Lord and even sense other callings that are revealed through serving the Lord, she added.

"God used this time to not only show me the importance in humility in ministry, but what it looks like to fully live life as if wasn't ever yours to begin with," Williams added. "I heard stories of Brazilians and Hispanics coming to Japan, leaving their families and jobs to come to Japan where they knew they would have to start from the ground up because God led them to. It has shown me how obedience is simple and full of blessing when we trust God."

On December 10, the group was able to worship with Missão Apoio Church in Tokai, Japan, and see some of the people they witnessed to show up for the service. Hall was able to witness to one person and get the person's contact information the Saturday before.

"I didn't hear from Shota [a person I shared the Gospel with] all Saturday evening and Sunday morning," Hall said. "I prayed before bed, asking the Lord to lead Shota to church, and 30 minutes before church started, I was talking to the pastor ... and I received a message from Shota saying he arrived at the church. I was filled with joy and ran to him to greet him."

Hall added that Shota "walked over a mile" to attend the church service that morning. He also said that he was "praising the Lord" for leading him to join them for church that Sunday morning.

"Through this trip, God has allowed me to see how He works all things for good," Williams said. "I was able to use Spanish and Portuguese on this trip. He has opened my eyes to a new way of serving Him with my past, gifts, and limits. Giving back to Him what was never mine to hold." —J.D.



Students plant seeds of hope during Spring Break mission trip to New York

A TEAM OF SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST Theological Seminary students spent their Spring Break planting seeds in Coney Island. Sponsored by the World Missions Center, the seven men and women spent eight days serving with Graffiti Fellowship sowing seeds of hope in the New York City neighborhood in the borough of Brooklyn.

Working with Stephen Trainer, pastor of Graffiti Fellowship, the students took part in what for them was a different kind of evangelism. Nate Childs, a Master of Divinity in apologetics student from Oklahoma City, said he was expecting “more along the lines of explicit spoken Gospel-sharing evangelism,” but was “humbled with what we got to do instead ..., letting the Lord have His way the whole week.”

Ashley Allen ('03, '09), assistant professor of women's ministries at Southwestern and leader of the mission team, said *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Unique Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus* by Steve Sjogren was one of three books the students were required to read prior to going on the trip. Allen said Trainer mentioned the book in a phone conversation last fall and its subject became the emphasis for the weeklong mission trip. The book talks about what it means to be “biblically kind” and not do things for some kind of repayment, “but to show the love of Christ,” Allen said.

Team members cleaned bathrooms and washed windows of businesses along Mermaid Avenue, a major thoroughfare of Coney Island. They also picked up trash after gale-force winds blew through the community and performed other acts of service throughout the week. Childs said serving in a fourth-grade classroom touched his heart. When it was time for him to leave after two days and he said goodbye, “the whole classroom erupted into a roar of ‘byes,’ which I didn’t expect.” He said he hopes “the Lord will use the seeds we planted to get the Gospel out to that school somehow, in His way.”

The team also visited laundromats and offered to pay for the laundry of the customers there. Bill Bonar, an Austin resident enrolled in the seminary’s Missions 2+2 program, said one woman in a wheelchair was in tears and told the students no one had ever done anything like that for her. Chiwon Ahn, a Master of Divinity student in missions and evangelism from South Korea, was able to talk with a laundromat owner in her native Korean and believes that may have opened a door for the Gospel to enter.

“There was a joy in me when I was serving,” Ahn said, adding he didn’t mind cleaning bathrooms or doing the other activities because of the joy he

felt. Ahn said he was most impacted by what “Pastor Stephen” said about the need for consistency in evangelism – that it “shouldn’t be something that you only do when you go on a mission trip; it’s something that should be part of your life.”

Moain Kumsangmar, a Master of Theology in missions student from India, served on the 2023 spring break NYC team and said she felt compelled to return to the city because “despite its worldly illumination, there’s darkness where many live without knowing the real light that is in Christ.”

For Carrie Choi*, a Master of Arts in Christian Education student from East Asia, the trip helped her realize that “sharing the Gospel is not only through speech, but also through actions.” Choi also is a student worker at Southwestern.

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It is a hard place to share the Gospel. But we have to go to hard places because they still need Christ just as much as everybody else.

Hannah Li*, a Master of Theological Studies student from East Asia, described NYC as “a city teeming with life and energy, yet also harboring pockets of profound need and hardship.” She said Pastor Stephen shared a parable of a dirty penny, dismissed and rejected because of its outward appearance. Just like that penny, some people may be overlooked or dismissed because of the way they look. However, she said, just as every penny holds inherent worth, each individual possesses “immeasurable value in the eyes of our Creator.”

She said the parable “served as a poignant reminder of the importance of looking beyond outward appearances and extending grace to all whom we encounter.”

Richard Silva, a Master of Divinity student from Brazil who is enrolled in the five-year program, said he was honored to be part of the mission trip. “We as [the] church are called out. All the knowledge we’ve been acquiring in the seminary is [to] be light for those living in the darkness, pain, and fear. I’m glad we had the opportunity to shine Jesus’ light in Coney Island.”

Allen said a lot of people know about the Boardwalk in Coney Island but don’t know about the generational poverty and high rate of crime and violence in the rest of the community.

“It is a hard place” to share the Gospel, she said. “But we have to go to hard places because they still need Christ just as much as everybody else.”—K.G.

**Names changed for security reasons and to protect future mission work.*

Retired Terry School faculty commended with portraits hanging in Price Hall

FIVE RETIRED FACULTY MEMBERS from the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries received commendations for decades of service to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary with portraits hung in J.M. Price Hall January 17. Current Terry School faculty welcomed the former professors with a lunch and reception in their honor.

"We are glad you're here and welcome. It is very meaningful that we can reconnect the Southwestern family. It is something that is important for all of us," said President David S. Dockery ('81). "I want you to know that the current Terry School faculty is carrying forward your work in very capable ways."

Speaking of the portraits that are hung on the second floor of Price Hall, Chris Shirley ('94, '02),

dean of the Terry School, said that "the picture on the wall may be passing, but your influence here has made an eternal difference." Shirley commended the faculty members for their service and thanked them for their contributions to the academy and the Kingdom of God.

The five faculty members honored were William "Rick" Yount ('75, '78), David McQuitty ('69, '82), Marcia McQuitty ('69, '92), Wesley "Wes" Black ('78, '85), and William "Budd" Smith ('71, '78).

Yount served Southwestern from 1981-2012 as professor of foundations of education. He wrote multiple books focused on teaching, learning, discipleship, and statistics, among others. He has also contributed chapters to books and articles. In 2008, Yount also served as the editor of the second edition of *The Teaching Ministry of the*

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We are glad you're here and welcome. It is very meaningful that we can reconnect the Southwestern family. It is something that is important for all of us. I want you to know that the current Terry School faculty is carrying forward your work in very capable ways.

Church, which included chapters from every Terry School faculty member at that time.

David and Marcia McQuitty both served as faculty members. David began in 1984 and Marcia in 1992. Both served until 2012. In addition to his faculty role as professor of administration, David served as dean of students and director of student aid. Marcia served as professor of childhood education. Additionally, she served as the director of the Naylor Children's Center and began the seminary's certificate in childhood education program. Before serving in her faculty role she served as the seminary's director of international students.

Black served as professor of youth/student ministry from 1983-2012. He wrote three books and has contributed chapters and paragraphs to books and articles. Additionally, he served as the interim dean of the Terry School from 2008 to 2009.

Smith served as professor of foundations of education from 1979 to 2004 and was the first occupant of the J.M. Price Chair of Religious Education. Smith wrote *Disciple Youth Leadership System* for what is now known as *Lifeway Christian Resources*.

The reception concluded with comments from Jack Terry ('62, '67), interim vice president for institutional advancement and senior professor of foundations of education. Terry, for whom the Terry School is named, served as dean of the school from 1973-1996.

"I love each one of you more than you'll ever know," Terry told his former colleagues with tear-filled eyes. "I've prayed for you all more than you have ever been. I pray for your families." —J.D.



Southwestern's Board of Reference hears seminary updates, advances

MEMBERS OF THE RECENTLY FORMED Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Board of Reference heard updates about the Fort Worth-based institution from senior administrators during a Zoom conference call on March 21.

Jack Graham ('76, '80), chairman of the Board of Reference and two-time Southwestern alumnus, remarked on the "great spirit" on the campus. Graham, who also serves as senior pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, was on campus March 19 for the institution's Founder's Day, which included a special chapel service and the awarding of the B.H. Carroll Award and the L.R. Scarborough Award. Graham and his wife, Deborah, are the 2024 recipients of the latter.

"I believe God is at work at Southwestern in a very special way," Graham said, adding the Southwestern students enrolled in the internship program at Prestonwood are "excited about the opportunity they have and the education they're receiving" as well as the "spiritual atmosphere on campus, from the classroom to the hallways."

"We have moved from crisis to challenge to a place of near stability," said David S. Dockery ('81), who has led the seminary as president since September 2022. "The challenges are still here, but we're moving closer toward a level of stability. We have a long way to go to get toward what I would call institutional health."

However, Dockery said, "stability creates a different kind of context for us. It means we can come to campus each day thinking less about how we deal with today's crisis and thinking more about tomorrow's opportunities."

Dockery attributed the change to people who have "prayed and begged God to bring renewal to this place and to restore favor to the Southwestern campus and to bless the work of our hands." He asked the members of the Board of Reference to continue to pray for Southwestern. He also commended the dedicated efforts of faculty, staff, and administrators across the campus.

Dockery provided an update about the sale of the Carroll Park property, a 20-acre piece of land

previously used for student housing that was not contiguous with the seminary's main campus. Dockery said the sale of the property has allowed the institution to "pay off" \$6.1 million in short-term debt. He added another \$3.4 million has been set aside in a quasi-endowment account, "which needs Board approval to be used" while another \$3 million has been set aside in reserves.

"Though budget matters remain tight," Dockery said, "the reality of having some cash reserves is a positive step forward, for which we're very, very grateful."

O.S. Hawkins ('74, '20), chancellor of Southwestern, said he was "encouraged" by a "continual uptick in enrollment and especially by the spirit on the campus." Hawkins also said in the time he has been serving at the seminary his "most pleasant ... observation" has been the institution's faculty.

Chandler Snyder, vice president for student services and enrollment, said the "last 18 months have created a level of stability that Southwestern hasn't experienced for quite some time."

Snyder explained over the last three semesters, Southwestern has seen a "stop of the negative downward trend" in enrollment and "has actually started to see an uptick in trend." He said over the last three fall and spring semesters administration has seen an "increase by at least 500 credit hours each semester being taught to our students."

He attributed the gains to "the incredible quality of our faculty" and the "partnership that we are

working to build across the institution." Snyder also reported an "increase of over 13 percent in new enrollment" at Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College, the seminary's undergraduate college, for the spring 2024 semester.

John Mann ('06, '11, '18), assistant to the president for constituent relations, said he asks himself, "How can Southwestern Seminary better serve our churches?" He said the answer is a "two-way conversation" that allows him to "speak to our churches about the great things that are going on in Southwestern Seminary" while also bringing "back word from those churches" and providing the "conversations" to the institution's senior leadership team.

Mann said he desires for the seminary to "serve in this capacity so that our churches can look at Southwestern Seminary and say that we are a tremendous resource as they are seeking to fulfill the Great Commission."

Trey Moss, associate vice president for academic administration, shared about Southwestern's online learning, which includes a full-term option that allows students to watch a course live via Zoom or watch the recording later and an "accelerated eight-week model, which has six entry points per year to get prospective students started on their seminary journey and training."

Moss noted that the seminary is working to connect more intentionally with online students, including working with the Student Life Office to launch more online-specific mentorship groups beginning with the fall semester. He said his office is currently working on inculcating a "culture of collaboration across the institution in terms of our online learning" and working with other departments to "identify our online student demographics and then to recruit them."

Dockery thanked those in the meeting for their commitments to and ambassadorship in behalf of the seminary. Graham concluded the meeting by asking the members of the Board of Reference to continue to pray and financially support Southwestern.—A.A.



We have moved from crisis to challenge to a place of near stability.

Southwestern Seminary exists to train people for the work of ministry. And it's the people who make Seminary Hill a special place. It's easy to see why.

1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8

Cristina Aguilera

Current Doctor of Education student; Master of Arts in Christian Education, 2019; Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling, 2021

"THE ASPECT THAT I VALUE THE MOST about Southwestern is the central role the Scripture has in every class that I have taken. Through well-designed assignments, professors have modeled for me how to engage ideas with biblical lenses, and the importance of considering the Word of God the ultimate authority. When I started studying here I thought that I had a biblical worldview, and many times I disagreed with what some of the readings and lectures were telling me, but I realized that there were areas where I just chose what I wanted to believe without considering what the Bible said. I will be forever grateful for the biblical lenses I have been given here; I feel more comfortable engaging culture with a different perspective."



STUDENT



FACULTY

1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8

MICHAEL COPELAND

Assistant Professor of Missions; Associate Director of the World Missions Center; Doctor of Philosophy, 2018

"I HAVE COME TO TEACH at SWBTS because here I find an astounding and precious combination of being able to remain 'on the go' making disciples of all nations, while also propelling others to go. Here, I get to have my hands on both sides of the map, standing in a place I can bless and serve passionate students from around the world who long to obey and glorify the Lord."



ALUM

Robert Brown

Master of Divinity, 1985; Executive Director at Lakeway Christian Schools, Morristown, Tennessee; Vice-Chairman, SWBTS Board of Trustees

“MY WIFE AND I PULLED ONTO THE CAMPUS OF SWBTS in January 1982 as newlyweds with a car, a small U-Haul trailer, and no clue for what God had planned. We were just trying to be obedient to what we discerned to be His will for our lives. But why Southwestern? There were three reasons: First, a commitment of Southern Baptists to the Cooperative Program. Frankly, we had no money. We had explored other seminaries, but the financial help received from the CP made it possible for us to receive a world-class theological education without incurring debt. Second, a commitment to conservative theology. In those days Southwestern was clearly the school of choice for those holding to a high view of Scripture. Third, a commitment to missions and evangelism. We were told, ‘The sun never sets on Southwestern’ in reference to graduates doing Gospel ministry all over the world. This was deeply embedded in every course of study during my time there. Even today over 40 years later I can say with deepest gratitude, the impact these commitments made by Southern Baptists and Southwestern Seminary have never set on me.”

1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8



STUDENT

SAM IBARRA

5-year program student: Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies and Master of Divinity

“I CHOSE SOUTHWESTERN BECAUSE this is a place where God is the focus and center of everything; a place where we as brothers and sisters in Christ share the one goal of glorifying God with our lives. Southwestern Seminary teaches and equips us for ministry and how to further the Gospel. I chose Southwestern to obey God’s calling for my life.”

1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8

Fred and Karen Walsh

Donor

AFTER HELPING THEIR DAUGHTERS, Bethany Walsh Jerkins ('08) and Emily Walsh Ballard ('06) complete their degrees at Southwestern, Fred and Karen Walsh continued to give to the seminary.

Fred explains the couple “lived in Texas a long time and we always knew a lot of great preachers who came from Southwestern. And when we were at Prestonwood, we attended all the extension classes that were held in Plano and got to meet just awesome, awesome professors. ... Southwestern has such an important impact in our lives, even before I ever

stepped foot on campus, when our daughters were there.” Karen adds she and her husband were “always just so impressed with the people that we met while our girls were there. It was just so interesting to find out about their background, how they got to Southwestern, their love for the ministry that they were going into.” She said the couple has been “blessed” as they have sat “under pastors that have graduated from Southwestern,” including Jack Graham ('76, '80), Jarrett Stephens ('06), and Steve Gaines ('84, '91).



DONOR

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ALUM

1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8

Lindsey Miller

Master of Arts in Church Music, 2013; freelance guitarist and worship team member at Brentwood Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee

“**THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION** that I received in the worship and the philosophy of ministry classes has really helped me just keep grounded in, like, what I do every day. ... I also serve really regularly at my church, Brentwood Baptist Church” while also having “opportunities to talk to people about why music is important to churches, [and] why choirs are important” to help ensure “the people in leadership all understand, like, why music is a necessary part of worship.”



FACULTY

1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8

MATTHEW MCKELLAR

Professor of Preaching; George W. Truett Chair of Ministry; Master of Divinity, 1985; Doctor of Philosophy, 1991

“**I COUNT THE PRIVILEGE TO TEACH** at SWBTS as one of the greatest blessings of my life. I teach here because I resonate completely with seminary’s passion to be a grace-filled, Christ-centered, scripturally-grounded, confessionally-guided, student-focused, and globally-engaged institution. Next, I teach here because, by God’s grace, I hope to encourage and support the next generation of preachers and church leaders in the same manner I was encouraged and supported by the faculty during my days as a student at Southwestern. Finally, I teach here because I view every class I teach as an opportunity to promote the Gospel and invest in eternity.”



DONOR

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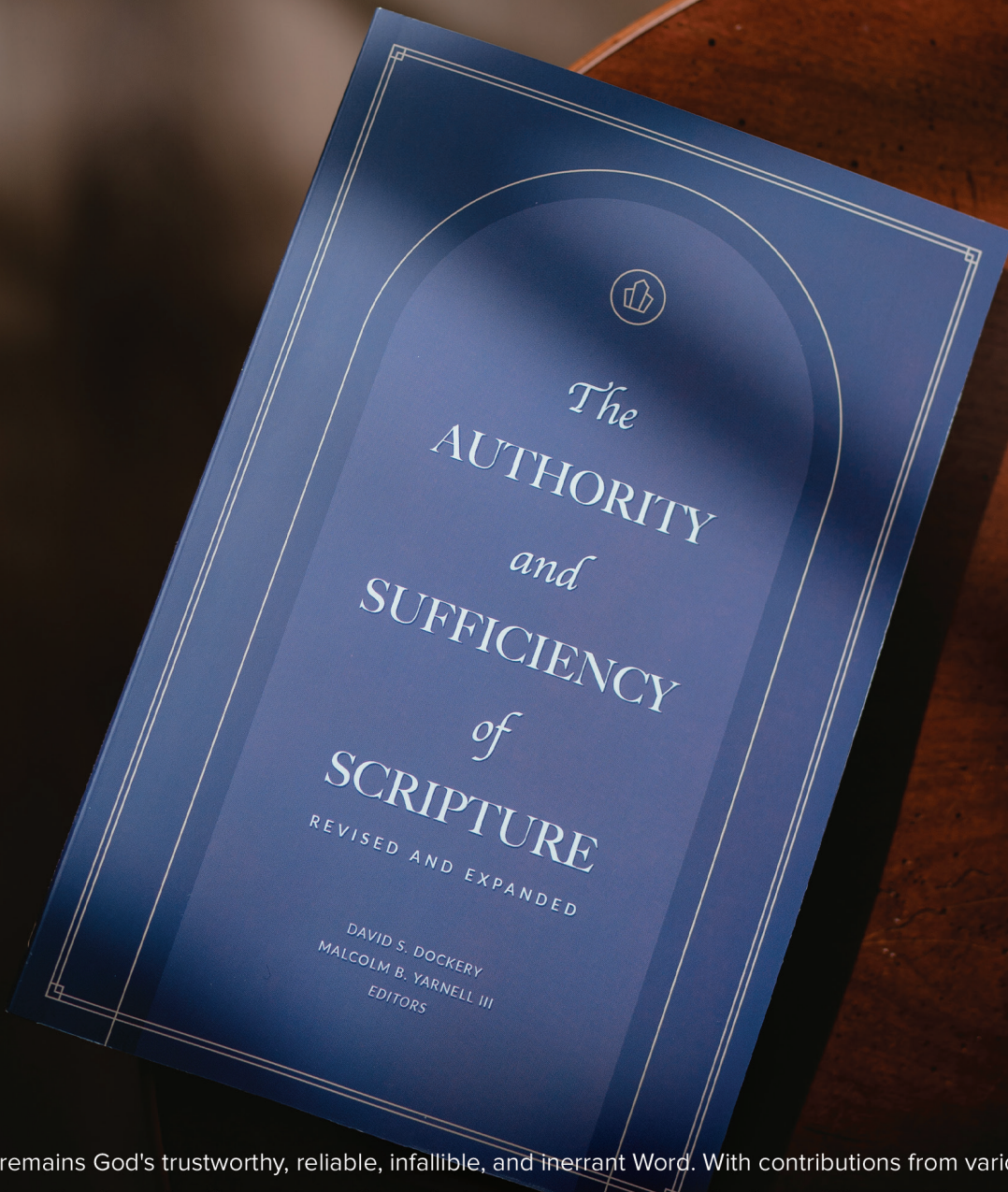
MARY ROBERSON

Donor

MARY ROBERSON AND HER LATE HUSBAND, Robert, began giving to Southwestern after their pastor, James “Jimmy” Draper (’61) moved to Nashville, Tennessee, to assume the presidency of Lifeway Christian Resources.

“Southwestern named a chair in his honor and we had appreciated his service to the pastorate so we chose to donate to that. And so that was our first time to be involved at the seminary. And Dr. [Jack] Terry became our Sunday School teacher a few years later and invited us to become part of the Advisory Council for the seminary. And after spending time with staff, and professors, and students, God just showed us what an impact Southwestern has in the forming of young men and women who have been called to serve God all over the world. And we just felt like that was a very worthwhile and God-pleasing thing for us to do.”

New from Seminary Hill Press



Scripture remains God's trustworthy, reliable, infallible, and inerrant Word. With contributions from various Southwestern Seminary faculty members, this anthology examines the implications of that doctrine on a variety of ministry areas, from preaching and counseling to evangelism and worship.

How to lead worship services following biblical priorities



IN CORPORATE WORSHIP, what purposes should we prioritize? Without an answer to this question, local church worship issues will be difficult to address. I'd like to suggest five biblical priorities for corporate worship that every pastor and worship leader should consider.

Proclaiming the Gospel

In the New Testament, we find John the Baptist (Luke 3:3), Jesus (Luke 24:47), and the apostles (Acts 10:42) all prioritizing proclamation. The Book of Acts ends with Paul "proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (28:31). As we call the church to join in gathered worship, we have the opportunity to proclaim the truth of the Gospel.

Adoring Christ

Gathered worship allows us to express our love for Jesus. This is our adoration. Throughout the Bible, in a range of words and actions, we find adoration. Just read the Psalms! Adoration is what the author of Hebrews is talking about when he instructs believers to "continually offer up a

sacrifice of praise to God" (Heb. 13:15).

Participating together

While Christians can respond to God privately, their worship is not complete without participation in corporate worship. Christians need to hear God's Word together (1 Tim. 4:13), pray together (Matt. 6:9), and sing together (Eph. 5:19). As we see in 1 Corinthians 10:16, the Lord's Supper is even a participation in the body and blood of Christ. The church is called to worship Jesus together.

Building up one another

As emphasized in Ephesians 4, spiritual gifts given to individuals are used for the benefit of the whole (vv. 11–12). Specifically, this includes strengthening "the unity of the faith" (v. 13), increasing "the knowledge of the Son of God" (v. 13), and growing in maturity in Christ (v. 15). Thus, proclaiming, adoring, and participating build up the church.

Anticipating eternal worship

Currently, we have the privilege of joining with the believers that make up our local congrega-

tions. These believers represent just a small number of Christians worshipping the Triune God. But, as we participate in local worship, we anticipate the worship to come, where the worshipers include "a great multitude that no one could number, from all tribes and peoples and languages" (Rev. 7:9).

Aren't these worthy goals for our corporate worship? How can you focus your church's worship services on these biblical priorities? [📖](#)



JOSHUA A. WAGGENER
is professor of church
music and worship at
Southwestern Seminary.



When the Fires of Heaven Fell

By Malcolm R. McDow

This first of two volumes examines the history of revivals from Mount Sinai to the Reformation. Malcolm McDow, retired professor of evangelism at Southwestern Seminary, outlines the principles of spiritual awakenings, as well as how those principles impact our lives and congregations to this day.

SEMINARYHILLPRESS.COM

How to refocus a church for missions


IN RECENT YEARS TIM KELLER, JD Greear, and others developed the Missions Manifesto. In it they ask: Does the church have a mission or does God's mission have a church? The answer speaks to the very existence and core of the church. If the church has a mission, then it's one of the things that they do among many other activities. Or is the church by definition, God's missionary agent in the world? God is a sending God, and as God sends the Son, the Son sends the church (John

20:21). Does this then mean that the church does missions and we do not need called-out missionaries to go to the ends of the earth?

The key is understanding and being active in what Jesus commanded in the Great Commission – "make disciples." This is the heart of being a church that God uses for His mission. This means the church I belong to should be defined by how it makes disciples. If we have a significant area that cannot be connected to making

disciples then we need to question its relevance. Does your church have a mission statement that is defined by discipleship? Ask all the areas of ministry to be directly connected to this.

Part of being defined by discipleship means a church membership that understands each person's place in making disciples seven days a week. The leaders model and teach the members how to live out their faith throughout the rhythms of their lives daily. One way to promote this is to weekly profile a member who is taking their faith into the workplace.

The church will be actively involved in making disciples locally, while simultaneously having a concern for the ends of the earth. This means sending those who will cross language and cultural boundaries to make disciples to the ends of the earth. Sending means prayer, encouragement, support, and short-term trips to help. If a church is small with limited resources then it cooperates with others – the beauty of how Southern Baptist churches work together in missions. An action step is to be sure you are involved in giving and supporting Southern Baptist agencies like the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board. The answer to our question then is that the church does missions by actively involving its members in disciple-making locally as well as sending out disciple-makers who will plant their lives in another language and culture. When this is what defines a church we can say that God's mission has a church. 



DEAN SIEBERHAGEN is the interim dean of the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions at Southwestern Seminary.

A photograph of a middle-aged man with a grey beard and glasses, wearing a plaid shirt, sitting in a patterned armchair. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is a bright, blurred indoor setting with large windows and greenery.

When God Calls

Todd Pylant's obedience to God's call shown in faithful ministry highlighting discipleship and prayer

BY ASHLEY ALLEN

On the outskirts of Shawnee, Oklahoma, along a tree-lined but sparse road in Pottawatomie County, sits Hilltop Baptist Church. In the church's stone building, as a visitor in a congregation of seven people, is where Todd Pylant ('93), pastor of First Baptist Church of Benbrook, Texas, heard the Lord calling him to ministry.

Pylant was in the middle of his freshman year at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, but he was "pretty miserable," he recalls. Thinking he had selected the wrong college following graduation from L.D. Bell High School in Hurst, Texas, where he had grown up since he was five years old, Pylant set out to find a different institution for his undergraduate education. While visiting a friend at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma, Pylant went to her church that Sunday morning.

It was the fall of 1985 and the pastor, a young Joseph Chambers who was only in the second year of his first pastorate, preached a sermon titled, "When God Calls," Pylant remembers.

As the sermon was preached, Pylant says it was "just one of those experiences, you know, where you feel like the light is shining on you, and everyone's staring at you" as he began to realize "part of what my misery was and unhappiness was: I had been wrestling with that calling and pushing it away and when I said 'yes' to God's call "that misery and everything just lifted."

More than three decades later, Pylant explains his experience that Sunday morning in rural Oklahoma "encouraged" him as it reminds Pylant that when he preaches today and does not see a response, he has "no way of knowing what God does" in the lives of those who listen to his sermon.

Pylant returned to his undergraduate studies at Baylor as a religion major and, as a junior, began serving as the student minister to the six students at First Baptist Church of Elm Mott, just outside of Waco. He says it was a "formative" experience as it was his first opportunity to teach Bible studies to youth on Sunday and Wednesday nights "week in and week out." However, when Pylant was a senior in college, the church's pastor injured his back and "was literally bedridden for a month." The deacons asked Pylant to fill the pulpit in the pastor's absence.

"That was the first time I had ever preached four sermons in a row," he remembers, adding the experience was "one of the best things to ever happen to me" as he sensed a gift in preaching that was affirmed by the congregation.

Though he was born in Abilene, Pylant grew up in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex in a "loving, stable home" with parents who were "the real deal with their faith." While attending a summer church camp as a teenager at Falls Creek Conference Center in Davis, Oklahoma, with his fellow youth from North Richland Hills Baptist Church in North Richland Hills, Texas, Pylant realized he was not a Christian.

The camp preacher, Barry Wood, delivered a sermon that included an analogy about a restaurant under new management and the change that takes place when a new manager is leading.

"I think that was the first time I really realized that 'I don't know that I have been changed,'" Pylant recalls. "I was just in this lane as a good kid, but, have I ever really come under new management, so to speak?"

He says it was a "very real experience" as it was "where I think I started becoming a new person in Christ." Pylant was disciplined by the student minister at North Richland Hills Baptist Church who "invested" in the young believer "personally."

When Pylant began as a Master of Divinity in biblical languages student at Southwestern Seminary in January 1990, it was with the encouragement of one of his professors at Baylor who told him at the Fort Worth-based institution they would “teach you how to think.”

More than 30 years after graduating from Southwestern, Pylant believes his time of study on Seminary Hill taught him “a very high view of Scripture” in hermeneutics and Old and New Testament classes, and to treat the Scriptures as “the inspired Word of God” with a “core conviction.” He notes that “later on in life” he had “some interaction with either liberal churches or liberal academic places” where the high view of Scripture was “absent.”

Following his 1993 graduation from Southwestern, he married his wife, Kelli. Two weeks later the newlywed couple moved 10 miles outside of San Angelo, Texas, where Pylant began to pastor the newly formed congregation of less than 30 people who were part of the new mission church of First Baptist Church of San Angelo called Dove Creek Baptist Church.

He remembers the experience was “a challenge” as he and his wife were hours away from their families in their first year of marriage, but he also had his first opportunities to work with lay leadership and preach weekly. The ministry also included his first funeral – for a local high school senior who died suddenly walking out of her high school English class.

Though Pylant served the West Texas church for only two years, he says the opportunity allowed him to “start learning and doing and practicing some of the basics of being a pastor.” Pylant and his family moved to Waco, where he enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy program at Baylor. Simultaneously, the First Baptist Church of Elm Mott, where he served as youth minister when he was an undergraduate student, called him to serve as their interim pastor. However, after a year, he left the doctoral program as the church called him to be their full-time pastor and he and his wife welcomed their first child.

Pylant served the congregation at First Baptist Elm Mott for four years – a “really good four years,” he recalls – but at the end of this time serving he was “wrestling” with the question, “What do I want to be when I grow up?” His roommate from his seminary days was serving at the First Baptist Church of Augusta, Georgia, and explained there was a staff opening for a minister to young families. Pylant began serving in the northeast Georgia church at the beginning of 2001.

The three and a half years he spent serving in Augusta taught him the necessity of having a “Gospel-centered, biblically based pulpit,” Pylant says. When he began serving as the senior pastor of First Baptist Church

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What do I want to be when I grow up?

TODD PYLANT

of Benbrook in October 2004, he came with the desire to be “biblically based, Gospel-centered, and Spirit-filled” in his preaching. Pylant adds the three-fold basis for preaching is “essential” for the “rest of the church to be able to operate.”

“It has to have that Gospel engine driving the train,” he explains.

When Pylant was interviewing with the Benbrook church, David Crutchley (’80, ’85), former dean of the School of Theology at Southwestern, was leading the church as the interim pastor. Pylant recalls that Crutchley had assisted the church in future casting as he helped the church define “who we want to be.” Resonating with the vision, Pylant, who spent time praying and discerning the Lord’s will, remembers thinking he could “lead in that lane.”

Twenty years later, Pylant says the move for his family has been “fantastic” on “all levels.”

Linda Johnson, a church member at First Baptist Benbrook for 40 years, and her husband, Wayne, served on the search committee that called Pylant in 2004. Johnson explains at the time congregation was “becoming an aging church” and the potential new pastor’s “passion” for “family and children” was a draw.

In the 20 years Pylant has been her pastor, Johnson says he has been “amazing” as he has served the “church family” as both a preacher and pastor.



Johnson adds that Pylant is “very supportive” as he gives “authority” to the church staff and deacons and “participates with our youth.”

“He doesn’t have to be in charge of everything,” Johnson observes.

However, it is Pylant’s dual passions for prayer and disciple-making that have had a lasting impact on the church body. Pylant’s passion for making disciples was sparked when he first arrived at the Benbrook church and a 40-year-old man came to faith in Christ.

“I felt called, ‘You need to disciple this guy,’” he remembers. “And it dawned on me: I had no idea how to do that.” He began to look for a discipleship curriculum to work through with the man one-on-one. Pylant says that he was a “success story” and “he’s still faithfully following.” But, when that was not the case for a young adult man who came to faith in Christ, Pylant began a “journey.”

“If I’m the only one who’s involved in discipleship, then obviously our church is not going to make very many disciples,” Pylant recalls thinking. “And the method that I’ve been using, I’ve got one loss, one win. The win percentage is not real good.”

His observations led him to wonder what other churches were doing to make disciples. Around the same time, he was given a sabbatical from his church, which he used to “research” and visit other churches to find answers to his questions, including how churches used curriculum, and defined discipleship group leader qualifications and training requirements, he says.

Pylant’s discoveries led to finding a discipleship “method” that works for the First Baptist Church of Benbrook, but also the culmination of his research in the 2013 publication *D14: A Strategy for Making Disciples Who Make Disciples* at the First Baptist Church of Benbrook. One of a handful of books Pylant has authored, the book focuses on the disciple-making strategy the Benbrook church uses and gives an overview of discipleship methods and core issues related to each method.

At First Baptist Benbrook, the church began “small” using Scripture and peer-based discipleship groups, D-groups as the church terms them, Pylant explains. The groups are composed of three to five people of the same gender and have been on a “slow growth,” he says. However, Pylant adds, as the groups have grown over the years, the church is reaching “critical mass where it’s becoming part of the DNA of the church.”

Retired Air Force Col. George Steere (’93, ’03) has served as the chairman of deacons at the church since the fall of 2023. He says that discipleship is one of Pylant’s “priorities.”

Pylant is “constantly” asking “How are we doing? Are you memorizing the Scripture? Are you doing the different kinds of things you need to be doing?” Steere notes. As Pylant preaches “he’s always talking about discipleship,” Steere adds. “He’s always talking about people: people winning people, leading people to lead people.”

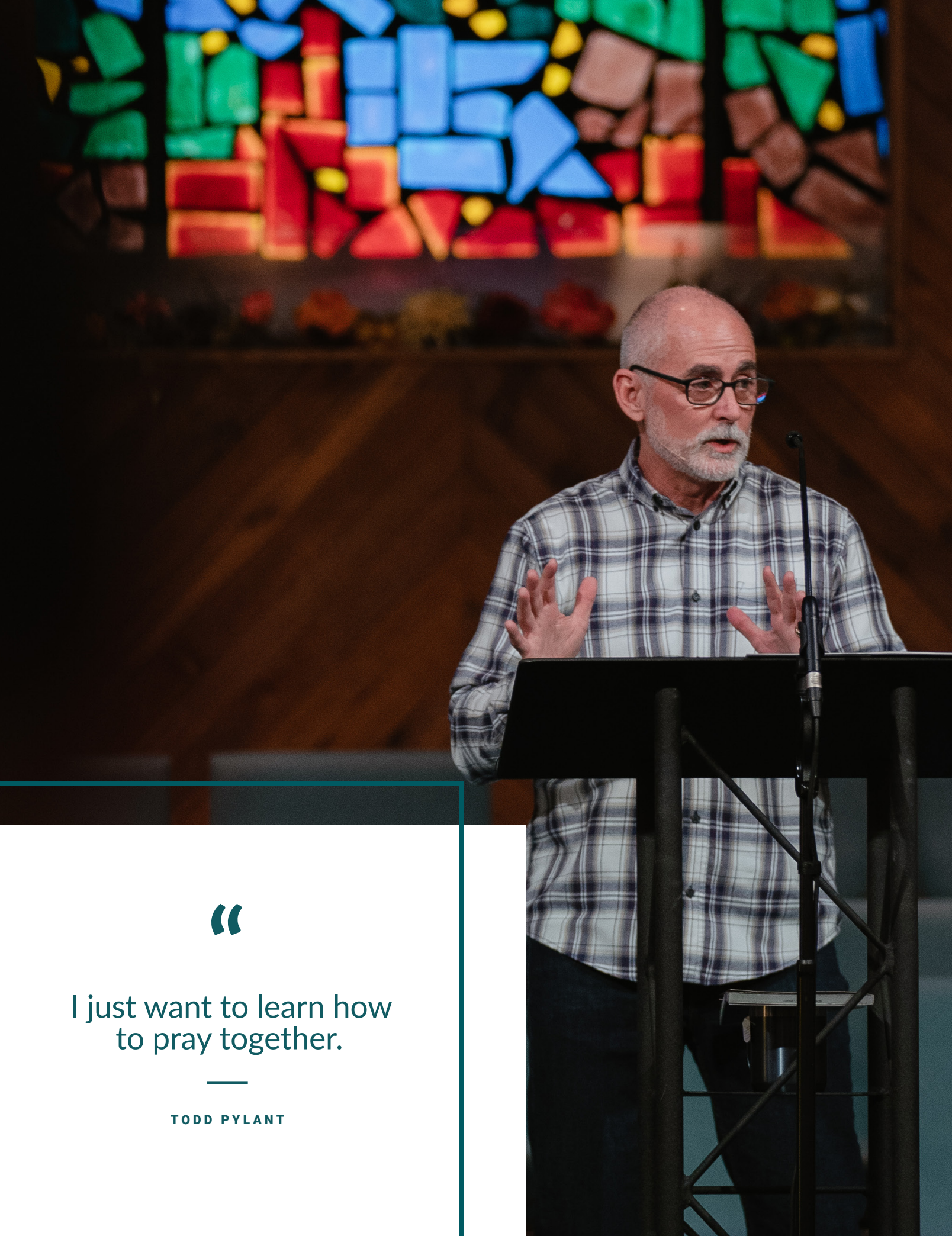
Johnson, though, says Pylant’s desire for discipleship stems from his “passion for prayer.”

Prayer meetings at First Baptist Benbrook had been on Wednesday evenings and Pylant recalls attendance was “tanking, tanking, tanking.” Realizing he had “grown this thing down to seven people,” Pylant remembers saying to his congregation, “I just want to learn how to pray together. I have no idea how to do that. Would y’all be willing to follow my lead and we’ll try to figure this thing out together?” The church agreed.

Pylant began reading and “trying stuff,” while also listening to the members of his church. When those who served in various ministries on Wednesday nights explained they could not attend the prayer meetings, the meetings were moved to Sunday evenings. Pylant says the move allowed more people to be involved.

Five years later, Pylant honestly attests that “leading corporate prayer meeting is still one of the hardest things that I do because I think prayer is





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I just want to learn how
to pray together.

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TODD PYLANT

one of the hardest things that we do.” He explains when there is a lack of relationship, care, or knowing whether there is an answer to prayer, then prayer is “easy.”

However, he says, when a person begins praying for people who are in close proximity, then “prayer gets really hard.”

“It’s hard to knock on the same door over and over and ask the same thing,” Pylant remarks. “It forces you to have faith questions.”

“We’re trying to learn as a congregation how to pray about things that matter,” including “how to pray with fervency” and “how to pray about kingdom stuff,” he adds. Pylant says as a congregation they are learning to “pray together in a way that is active praying” rather than listening to “each other pray.”

“The discipleship groups and the prayer groups, I think, has really had a pretty marked impact on ... the discipleship nature of our church,” Pylant concludes.

Pylant’s influence extends to Seminary Hill, as well, as he is a member of Southwestern’s recently formed Board of Reference. Current Southwestern students are interns serving in the church’s multi-faceted ministries, and many seminary alumni serve on the church staff, including Gary Waller (’72, ’79), who formerly served as professor of administration at Southwestern, Timothy Tucker (’24), and Blake Theiss (’18). Additionally, Joseph Crider,



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TODD PYLANT

dean of the seminary’s School of Church Music and Worship (SCMW), serves as the church’s traditional worship leader.

In addition to Crider and his wife, Amy, associate professor of foundations of education, a number of the seminary’s administration and faculty are members of First Baptist Church of Benbrook, including President David S. Dockery (’81) and his wife, Lanese; Charles T. Lewis Jr. (’93), associate dean of the SCMW; W. Michael Wilson (’74), senior professor of pastoral and applied ministry; Michael Wilkinson (’90, ’11), associate professor of theology and director of professional doctoral studies; and Marc Brown, assistant professor of church music and worship.

A number of retired International Mission Board missionaries call First Baptist Benbrook their church home, as well.

As Pylant enters his third decade of leading the First Baptist Church of Benbrook, he recognizes the “undeniable call” God has on his life, and knowing to do anything else would make him “feel like I would be abandoning or forsaking the good work that God has created me to do.”

Ashley Allen (’03, ’09) is managing editor of Southwestern News.





GIVE US THIS DAY, OUR DAILY BREAD

For 30 years, the Sutherland family has been used to fulfill a daily prayer in the lives of Southwesterners

BY ASHLEY ALLEN

When Scott Patel*, a Master of Divinity student from Southeast Asia, was told about the food ministry on the campus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, it was an answer to prayer.

Patel came to the Fort Worth campus on Aug. 8, 2022, as a new student. Following the three days of new student orientation, he remembers he did not have food for a week. Fellow new students were too busy to take him to the grocery store and he was “relying” on bread he had received. He says his family in Southeast Asia “was getting worried” about him because he did not have food. However, he continued to pray for God’s provision.

A friend eventually told Patel about Daily Bread Ministry, a food ministry that is open every Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. in the Walsh Counseling Center building on campus.

“That ministry has been a great blessing,” says Patel who has visited the ministry every Tuesday since that initial visit.

Patel is one of hundreds of Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College students and their families who benefit from the Daily Bread Ministry weekly.

The Daily Bread Ministry began in April 1995 when Coby (’07) and Vivian Sutherland, who were then members at First Baptist Church of Haslet, Texas, received a call from a local Kroger grocery store explaining they had an “excess” of baked items that “were available for pick up if they wanted to get on their schedule,” their daughter, Tammy Sutherland Eck (’99), remembers.

At the time Coby Sutherland was in his thirtieth year working on the assembly line for General Motors. The Sutherlands served at their church

and “they looked around in their neighborhood, and then their church community and tried to find out if there was a place that could utilize it since it was offered to the church,” Eck says. However, “the Methodists informed them that they were taking care of everybody in the community and there was no need,” she notes.

Eck recalls her parents then thought of the students who served on their church staff and “how much of a struggle some of those students had with not being able to work full time and go to school” as they were studying at Southwestern. She adds her parents also thought about “all the international students.”

The Sutherlands contacted the director of Student Life at Southwestern at the time to ask if they could leave the food items for the students somewhere on campus. Eck recounts the director told her parents, “Well, I don’t think our students really need food” but he was willing to allow them to “try” to distribute it among the students. Initially, the Sutherlands used a table outside of the coffee shop in the Student Center to set out all the food supplies, which was really “a basket of groceries worth of stuff” such as “stuff from the bakery: cupcakes and cinnamon rolls and things like that.” Eck says students “didn’t really know about it in advance, but they just kind of came by and took it all and it was all gone.”

The next week the Sutherlands returned with more food. Eck remembers, “By the third week, there were people waiting when they got there to help them unload their truck.” That is when the family realized, “Well, we better get some more food,” Eck recalls.



The search for more food resulted in finding supplies at Mrs. Baird's, a Texas-based bakery, which led Coby on a search for peanut butter because "if you have bread, you need to make a sandwich," Eck remembers her dad saying.

What began as one table in the Student Center in 1995 that initially helped 30-40 students, has since expanded to an entire weekly ministry that occupies space in the back of the Walsh Counseling Center building on campus.

Every Tuesday morning laughter and joy emanate from the small space along the Walsh building's south entrance where students and their families line up to file inside to select food supplies offered through the Daily Bread Ministry. The laughter and joy begin with the Sutherland family themselves. "You're my best friend!" Eck calls out to every small child holding a parent's hand or resting on a hip. The heartfelt greeting that is extended to children and parents alike elicits shy smiles from kids and hugs from students – each of whom the Sutherlands know by name. It is not unusual for Eck to hold a child on her hip while she simultaneously greets students, ensures food supplies continue to remain stocked along the shelves and bins that line all four walls of the space, and catches up on what is taking place in the students' lives.

Clearly, the ministry is not just about the food.

The food that fills the black bins and is neatly displayed and arranged on shelving units is marked to let students know the quantity they are allowed to put in one of the shopping bags they receive when they step into the facility. Canned goods, boxes of cereal, pasta, juice, and bags of rice are some of the many food items found on the shelves. Fruit and vegetables fill the bins and cartons of eggs are on the table that sits in front of the floor-to-ceiling window that makes the south wall of the ministry's space.

As students select their food items, there is a camaraderie as they greet the Sutherlands and one another. Students will often look out for friends who are in class and cannot make a weekly visit to the ministry for food supplies. A sense of gratitude is apparent to any bystander. There are no arguments, disputes, or fighting over food, but a true display of thankfulness – by the students, the Sutherlands, Eck, and the team of weekly volunteers.

When the ministry first began in the Naylor Student Center, the need and the amount of food supply quickly outgrew the space. After the first year, the Sutherlands were allowed to distribute the foodstuffs from tables set up on the basketball court of the Recreation and Aerobics Center (RAC). At the time, the entire seminary campus closed at noon for lunch, which provided an ideal window for the ministry to be "open." However, in 2020 when the seminary and world shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so did the food distribution – temporarily. Knowing students still needed food, the ministry set up at Gambrell Street Baptist Church, directly across the street from the east side of campus.

The move off campus caused the ministry to dwindle to serving 20 students weekly, Eck remembers. Though the ministry was only one city street away, the Sutherlands realized the necessity of having a place on the seminary campus. Simultaneously, the building housing Brother's Keeper, a ministry that provides clothes, home goods, and other supplies for students, had a pipe burst. When the leaders of Brother's Keeper began to look to relocate to the Walsh Counseling Center building, they reached out to the Daily Bread Ministry to inquire if they would like to join in using the facility.

Initially, the Sutherlands and Eck thought they could return to using the basketball court at the RAC. After they viewed the space, though, they realized it would be ideal in two ways. First, the permanency of the location would allow them to keep all of the food supplies stocked on the shelves. Previously following the weekly food distribution, they would pack everything up and store it at the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth. The new



By the third week, there were people waiting when they got there to help them unload their truck.

TAMMY SUTHERLAND ECK



“

You make sure you thank the Lord and pray over this when you partake.

COBY SUTHERLAND

space eliminated the extra work. Second, the new space was adjacent to the kitchen in the Walsh Center, which opened the door to storing fresh items, including dairy and meat products, in the refrigerator and freezer.

The availability of meat products has been helpful to students, including Cristina Aguilera ('19, '21), a Doctor of Education student from Colombia. Before beginning her seminary studies, Aguilera was a petroleum engineer who worked worldwide and is now the administrative assistant for Hispanic Programs. Aguilera is also a diabetic and says when she first visited the Daily Bread Ministry as a new seminary student many years ago her diet restricted her from getting many of the foods offered, so she “quit going.”

However, when a classmate told her of the meat and dairy products offered through the Daily Bread Ministry after they relocated to the space in the Walsh building, Aguilera found food supplies that not only helped with her diet but also rising food costs in a post-COVID economy.

“There are a lot of [foods] that [are] protein and a lot of other items that I could get – a lot of canned beans that I can eat,” Aguilera explains. “So, it has been really a blessing.” She adds that on occasion chicken is part of the weekly offering and as a single woman “a whole chicken will last me several meals.”

The provision through the ministry as a “gift” from the Lord has not been lost on Aguilera.

As a native of the Caribbean coastline of Barranquilla, Colombia, Aguilera was accustomed to seafood in her diet – specifically shrimp. She recalls one Saturday grocery shopping at a local market and seeing shrimp in the freezer. Realizing her seminary student budget would not allow her to purchase the shrimp, she was “very upset” and remembers telling the Lord, “If You had not taken the [petroleum engineering] job from me, I would be able to buy shrimp whenever I want to.” The following Tuesday when she visited the Daily Bread Ministry, “they were giving shrimp away” and “it was such a direct connection to what I just told the Lord during the weekend,” she says.

Throughout the nearly three decades the ministry has served Southwestern students, food provisions have come from a variety of places

across Fort Worth. What initially began with donations from Kroger, has ebbed and flowed over the years to include Mrs. Baird's discount bakery, other discount food stores, and local churches that have held food drives or given money to purchase food supplies, which the Sutherlands began doing from the Tarrant Area Food Bank beginning the second year of the ministry's existence and continue to do today.

Southwestern alumni who were recipients of the Daily Bread Ministry when they were students also give to the ministry to help current students. Eck says some alumni who are pastors budget a gift to the ministry into their church budgets. She adds parents of former seminary students have also sent gifts to the ministry to help purchase foodstuffs.

The opportunity to serve Southwestern students is not one Coby sees as "doing it for seminary students," but rather as "doing it for Jesus." His perspective is shaped by Jesus's words in Matthew 25:34-40 where Jesus tells the disciples when He returns He will acknowledge those who fed the hungry as doing so to Him. The words of the Lord also inform the Suther-

lands' and Eck's desire not to be thanked or acknowledged. Coby is quick to add that when students do thank him, he tells them, "You make sure you thank the Lord and pray over this when you partake."

A grateful people, though, cannot help but express their gratitude to the Sutherlands and Eck. After the 2007 academic year, the students who were served through the Daily Bread Ministry assembled a scrapbook that included pictures and letters of thanks from students and their families. Still today, the family receives cards and letters from former and current students who have been helped by the ministry.

"I wish we had a whole grocery store," Coby concludes. However, he and his family rest in the knowledge that they are "being used to serve the Lord by helping some of these students" who are "making all the sacrifice."

Ashley Allen ('03, '09) is managing editor of Southwestern News.

**Name changed for security reasons.*






Trusting God at the crossroads

Lilly Park finds her ministry in teaching

BY KAREN GARCIA



Lilly Park has come to many crossroads in her life. At each one, she's turned to her "go to" Bible passage, Proverbs 16, "because it says the answer of the tongue is from the Lord," she notes. "And that's what I think about, is that the Lord will answer in His way, in His timing, and I don't need to worry, but trust Him."

Park, associate professor of biblical counseling in the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, sees the Lord's hand in every move she has made and is "just truly grateful to be able to invest in students and teach and meet with students."

Park grew up in Maryland after her parents immigrated from South Korea when she was two years old. She says her parents took her to church as she was growing up, and when they moved to a new city, her mother took Park and her sister to Lighthouse Community Church, a now disbanded church plant of the largest church in the city of Columbia, Maryland.

"And I remember the pastor asking us to please come back the following Sunday because their new youth pastor would be here from California," she says. "And I don't know why, but that just is very distinct, that he really wanted us to visit again. And we did, and I'm so glad we did because it was through his ministry that I accepted Jesus as my Savior and wasn't just going to church."

Park accepted Christ at age 15 and, along with another high school student, was discipled by the pastor's wife once a week. Park calls it "one of the sweetest times in my life. She would just teach us what it means to be a Christian woman, and we would go through Christian books together. And I learned so much from her life of faith and as a mother and a wife."

Her pastor would host student leaders in the couple's home on Sunday afternoons, teaching them what it means to be a Christian and how to lead small groups, Park says, adding she "really didn't know what I was doing,

but I just loved everything about them and the youth ministry and I wanted to participate as much as I could.”

Park says her youth pastor taught them not to believe his teachings just because he was the pastor, but to compare everything to God’s Word.

“Little did I know how much it would really play a role in my life decades later,” she says with a laugh, noting that she tells her students not to believe her teaching just because she’s the teacher, but to “compare everything to God’s Word.”

Park was very involved in her youth group in high school and continued that involvement in college, where she served on her college ministry team. When she was asked to lead a women’s small group, she says, “I felt like that was the highest honor, to be honest, because I just thought of my pastor’s wife who disciplined me and she made such an impact on my life, and to do something like that with other college students was just so meaningful and such an honor.”

Park studied business at the University of Maryland, majoring in marketing and human resource management. After graduation, she began working in one of the largest management consulting firms in the country, but things changed after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Park lost two colleagues at the Pentagon.

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I just had this deep sense of, this deep desire and confidence in the Lord about it, that He will provide.

LILLY PARK

“And in my early 20s, I had, like, a midlife crisis,” Park says. “I had an awareness that life is short.”

Though she enjoyed her job, Park began to question whether that was what she wanted to do with her life.

She kept thinking, “If I could do anything, what would it be?” And I thought I should take my own advice with college students, the women I was discipling. I would tell them, ‘What is your passion?’ And for me, it was very easy: it was ministry.”

Park wasn’t sure what ministry would look like for a woman, though, because she’d never known any woman who went to seminary. A short time later, a new couple came to her church. The wife had graduated from seminary and answered all of her questions, Park says, adding that the woman was “very honest” about what seminary life is like for a woman.

Park says she first heard about biblical counseling from the pastor’s wife at the church she was attending. The woman arranged for Park to talk with an acquaintance who worked in the biblical counseling department of The Master’s College [now The Master’s University], a private, nondenominational college in California.

The conversation piqued her interest in biblical counseling, Park says, adding that she quit her job and moved to California to attend The Master’s College. When people asked her what she was going to do for work, she told them she didn’t know.

“I just had this deep sense of, this deep desire and confidence in the Lord about it, that He will provide,” she recalls.



Park says she loved her program. While she'd had good, expository teaching in the church where she had been saved, she says, it wasn't until studying in this program that "Hebrews 4:12 really stood out that the Word is living and active." The verse also was "so convicting about my sins that I don't take seriously. And it was convicting but exciting, because I never saw Scripture in that way – so relevant for everyday life."

Shortly before graduation, Park began working as assistant to the pastoral care pastor at Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California. The full-time position with benefits would allow her to use what she'd learned in her Master of Arts in biblical counseling program, and while she learned a lot about church ministry, she says, "there was a desire to learn more of God's Word. And I didn't really tell many people about it, but somehow, one of the professors heard about it."

That professor, Stuart Scott, was moving to Louisville, Kentucky, to start a biblical counseling program at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and asked Park if she would consider studying there and assisting him. She studied for her Master of Divinity in Christian ministry at Southern Seminary and worked as a teaching assistant for most of her time there. She also worked as the assistant for the counseling center.

As her studies were coming to an end, a couple of professors approached her about the Doctor of Philosophy program.

"And I just thought, 'Oh, that's okay. I'm done with school now,'" she says with a laugh. As graduation drew closer, however, "the Lord changed my heart to be more open about it."

Park earned her Ph.D. at Southern Seminary and says she's grateful for everything she learned and for her mentors there. After graduation, she began teaching at a Bible college in Indiana. She briefly returned to Southern Seminary before being contacted about coming to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"At this point in my life, I'm not wanting to just pursue another job and just keep moving," she recalls. However, after praying about it and talking with "a lot of godly people," she reconsidered. Park says it was a choice between Southwestern and another school, and "the Lord seemed to confirm Southwestern Seminary," she says. Park began teaching at Southwestern in 2020.

Park says she sees teaching as her ministry but adds it's more than that. "It's teaching, but it's equipping people for wherever the Lord will place them," she says. "But also it is walking alongside people who are carrying different burdens."

Park believes part of her role as a professor is to serve the church and sees the seminary as serving the church. However, she adds, "seminary doesn't replace the church." As a professor, she says, "I am here to teach the biblical, theological, and practical knowledge for ministry, but I always want students to be faithful members of the church."



I am here to teach the biblical, theological, and practical knowledge for ministry, but I always want students to be faithful members of the church.

LILLY PARK

Park says her classes include a lot of coverage of Scripture and theology, “because I want students to know that our confidence is in Scripture and theology, but the catch is, I want you to know how to relate it to contemporary issues.”

Matthew McCraney ('23), who graduated in December with a Ph.D. in biblical counseling, says Park is an “amazing teacher” who presents different perspectives but always brings the discussion “back to the Word of God and how we apply that as Christians.”

Park also served as the dissertation supervisor for McCraney, an Army chaplain who completed his Ph.D. while serving full-time active duty. McCraney says Park “is just an incredibly intelligent yet humble individual. She has that perfect balance of competence and humility, and pushes you to do the best academic work that you can.” He adds that Park “has been a great blessing in my academic work. She has helped me get published. She is just a wonderful resource.”

Jerome Jones ('23), who received a Master of Divinity with a pastoral ministry concentration in December, took several of Park's classes for his electives and says it was “a real joy getting to know her.”

Jones says you can tell that Park “really loves the students, but more importantly, I think she doesn't miss out on her opportunity to disciple right then and there while she's also instructing.”

Park also reaches out to students beyond the classroom by leading a Faculty Mentorship Group. She participated in the same type of program when she was a seminary student and says it was meaningful to get to share burdens with other classmates and know she wasn't the only one going through some of the challenges students face. Park says she wants “to play a small role in replicating something like that with this group.”



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I'm incredibly grateful to God for directing my path throughout my years.

LILLY PARK

In her time away from the seminary, Park attends Trinity River Baptist Church in Fort Worth, where she serves in the children's ministry and counsels a small group of women.

She also enjoys running.

“It pushes me to be disciplined, and it helps me to enjoy God's creation,” she says.

She's found a running partner in colleague Ashley Allen ('03, '09), assistant professor of women's ministries. They even ran in the Dallas Marathon, beginning with the half marathon in 2022. That race garnered them more attention than they intended.

Park says she and Allen were unaware that the Dallas Marathon had used a photo of them taken during the half marathon to promote the race on social media, on the marathon's website, and in advertising.

Park says she and Allen went to a running store to buy something after a run, “and we saw our face on the wall outside,” she exclaims. When they went to the expo to pick up their packets for the December 2023 full marathon, she says, their photo was on a banner.

Park says the attention was exciting, but they didn't know how widespread it would be.

“So we've been joking they should've paid us commission,” she says with a laugh.

Park and Allen did complete the full marathon in December.

“By God's grace, we finished,” Park says with a laugh. “There's no way to avoid it; you're just going to be in a lot of pain the next day.”

The two continue to run together regularly, and Park says she's “thankful just to have a colleague and a friend who encourages me spiritually, and that we can exercise together but it's also meaningful spiritually.”

Park says they often pray together after their runs.

“We pray for each other, our families,” she says. “We pray for our students, and we pray for the seminary. We pray for leaders.”

Looking back over the journey that brought her to Southwestern, Park says the Lord sustained her at each crossroads – through moving to a new state, a new school, and in searching for a new church.

“I'm incredibly grateful to God for directing my path throughout my years,” she says.

Karen Garcia is a news writer for Southwestern News.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY IS A NATURAL FIT FOR MELISSA MEREDITH

USING HER MINISTRY SKILLS IN WEST TEXAS

BY KAREN GARCIA

Growing up in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with parents who were believers, Melissa Meredith (13) says it's natural that she, too, would come to the Lord.

Her father was a former music and youth pastor, and her mother disciplined her at the family's kitchen table.

"I saw the love of the Lord played out every single day in our home," she says.

Meredith, director of the women's ministry at Southcrest Church in Lubbock, said she's a product of the mentorship and discipleship of women who taught her to love the Bible.

While Meredith's family attended a few churches as she was growing up, she calls First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow her home church. Her father baptized her at Liberty Baptist Church in Tulsa when she was 8 years old, and she "just really fell in love with the Lord." She "fell in love with God's Word" in sixth grade during an *Experiencing God* Bible study with her church youth group.

"I was really shy growing up," she says. "I was the quiet girl in every group." Still, she felt that God was calling her to full-time ministry.

Meredith surrendered to that call at Falls Creek, a Baptist youth camp in Davis, Oklahoma, the summer she turned 16. She remembers walking down the aisle of the amphitheater and seeing her mother's best friend who happened to be serving as a counselor down in front of the stage. As she approached, Meredith says, the woman told her it was "about time" she surrendered, because they had all seen her calling.

"Having somebody else who knew me, who knew my family, who knew my story, see that and proclaim that over me was really powerful," Meredith says, adding that the woman is still a mentor to her today.

Meredith studied Christian education at Hannibal-LaGrange University in Missouri. About to graduate and unsure what she was going to do next, Meredith was helping set up a seminary fair for her local church and decided to walk through the tables.





SOUTHWESTERN WAS THE ONLY ONE THAT HAD A BROCHURE SPECIFICALLY FOR WOMEN AND ABOUT THE DIFFERENT PROGRAMS THEY HAVE FOR WOMEN.

MELISSA MEREDITH

“Southwestern was the only one that had a brochure specifically for women and about the different programs they have for women,” Meredith says. She picked up the brochure and still has it to this day.

Meredith earned her Master of Divinity in women’s studies from Southwestern Seminary in 2013 and has fond memories of her classes and professors.

“They taught me to sit in Scripture with awe and wonder and hold it and read it exegetically and in context, and they developed [in me] really a love for God’s Word even more than I had,” she recalls.

Her classes at Southwestern also have been beneficial in her current ministry, Meredith adds, teaching her how to “share life well.” She said professors invested in and walked alongside her and taught her to “look for those one or two people that I can pour into and invest in” through her own ministry.

Meredith singled out classes with Terri Stovall (’91, ’01, ’12), dean of women, interim associate dean of the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries, and professor of educational ministries. She says she has kept all her binders from Stovall’s classes and uses them to help inspire her for projects in her current ministry.

Stovall has fond memories of her former student as well. She notes that Meredith had left Southwestern to take care of her mother who was ill, and after her mother passed away, Stovall contacted Meredith about an opening for a director of Southwestern’s Horner House, which was shifting from an academic building to housing the women’s ministry program.

“She was the first person I thought of,” Stovall says, adding that Meredith worked for her for several years. When the women’s ministry position at Southcrest opened up, “I was very excited for her because I felt like it was a perfect fit for her,” Stovall adds. “She’s such a people-focused person across all ages and a discipler, and I just thought that would be the perfect place for her.”

Stovall says one of her goals is to connect Southwestern students to women in a variety of ministry settings to show them the many opportunities available to them. She points to Meredith as an example to her students who are single women who wonder if they’ll be able to take care of themselves. She said Meredith, a single woman who moved to West Texas on her own, shows that “God is providing for that, and she’s also using her gifts for the Kingdom, and so it gives women hope that God’s definitely going to use them.”

Meredith believes her passion for women’s ministry started as a teen when her mother began writing a Bible study curriculum and conference curriculum for teenage girls and women. Her mother would take Meredith around as she taught the curriculum and shared it with churches.

“I just remember feeling so proud as I watched her teach and use her giftings,” Meredith remembers.

It also was a ministry they could do together, as her mother brought Meredith in to share her thoughts as she was writing.

“And so when I went to college, I thought I would be going into mission work full time, and just through the Holy Spirit and God’s leading, that really honed it in to women’s ministry,” she recounts.

Meredith explains her role at Southcrest has given her the opportunity to connect with women whom she might not have crossed paths with otherwise. As one of the largest churches in the Lubbock area, she says, Southcrest is “kind of a lighthouse” to the community, drawing people from all walks of life.

“My week is full of helping women in crisis,” she said. Those crises can range from women who find themselves homeless, to women trying to leave an abusive situation, or women trying to figure out their next step in



life. The ministry also partners with other Lubbock churches to help women who are serving jail sentences or who are survivors of sex trafficking. The ministry also partners with New Legacy Home of Lubbock, which serves women who are leaving prison, recovering from addiction, or seeking a positive change in their lives.

Katrina Ballantine, director of organizational development and director of the communications team at Southcrest, says Meredith is “probably one of the most intentional people I know,” adding that she has been “really intentional in how she set up her ministry and how she connects with all of the women there.”

Meredith has ensured that the women’s ministry includes discipleship programs and events for women of all ages, Ballantine says, adding that Meredith is “cross-generational, so she sees the benefit of how the older generations can pour into the younger, and vice-versa.”

Ballantine describes Meredith as “an empathetic soul” who has been able to make women feel seen and heard, “especially women who might not feel that way in other spaces, in traditional church spaces. So we’ve just seen an outpouring of that where she’s been able to connect with people who we might not have been able to connect with before.”

Meredith has ministered to her as well, Ballantine says, adding, “The fact that her door’s always open and I’m able to come in and just be myself and be honest with her is a real gift.”

Laura Taylor (‘88), the women’s ministry associate for the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, also sees Meredith as a gift. Taylor leads a team of 14 volunteers across the state who teach, write material, hold conferences, and speak at conferences. As the women’s ministry’s West Texas representative, Meredith does all that in addition to serving as chair of the social media team.



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KATRINA BALLANTINE



Taylor says Meredith is “an exceptional communicator” who is able to connect with women of all generations. She adds that Meredith’s skills and “bubbly” personality provide a good representation for the ministry’s work in West Texas.

“It is fabulous, because I can’t be everywhere, and I don’t want to be,” Taylor explains. “You know, any ministry that’s limited to one person is very limited. So I’m so grateful for her and for the other team members that can minister using the tools that we created to reach more women across the state, because, you know, Texas is a big place.”

Taylor says she appreciates Meredith’s help, whether it’s working to solve a problem or creating a tool that will minister to Gen Z women. She adds that Meredith seems to instinctively know what other women are struggling with and how to meet their needs. She also has a really good knowledge of the Word of God and shares it well, Taylor says.

“I don’t know what we’d do without her in West Texas,” Taylor says, noting that Meredith has the women of Southcrest involved in missions, discipleship, and Bible study.

“She’s rocking it,” Taylor says. “She’s a gift, for sure.”

As a minister, Meredith doesn’t have a lot of free time because “ministry is 24/7,” she notes, adding it makes her appreciate the “level of relational equity” Southwestern’s professors gave to their students.

“Looking back and realizing how much that they poured into us really means a lot,” she says, adding that the relationships didn’t end with graduation.

When she does find free time, Meredith says she loves writing, on her own blog and for publications. She also loves to travel.

“I am always up for a good adventure and road trip,” she adds. She also enjoys spending time with her family in Oklahoma.

“I’m an ‘aunt to four.’ That’s one of my favorite titles in the whole world, ‘aunt to four,’” Meredith says, adding that she enjoys going to their sporting events and doing other fun things with them.

Meredith says that when she looks back over her life, she is grateful for her time at Southwestern Seminary.

“The investment and every, every part of it God used to grow and shape me into the minister I am today,” she says.

Meredith says women’s ministry is important to her because of its emphasis on women helping each other grow.

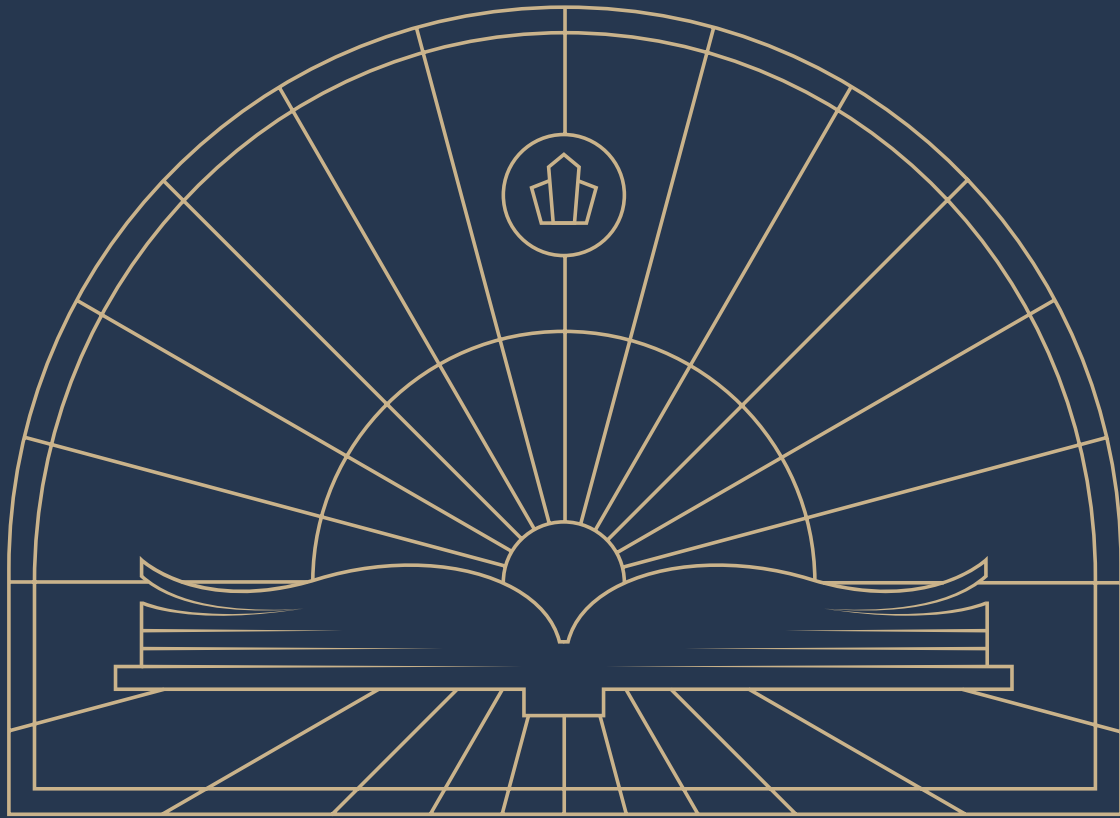
“I think that that’s why it’s really special to me is that I’m a product of that mentorship and discipleship,” she concludes. “I’m a product of the Great Commission being lived out in women’s lives, and so to be able to serve in a local church and to gather women and to teach them God’s Word, and to teach them how to mentor and disciple other women, it’s me carrying on the legacy that was given to me by other women who were faithful and who loved the Lord and who walked as women worthy of the Lord.”

Karen Garcia is a news writer for Southwestern News.

GOD'S PERFECT BOOK

*An excerpt from The Authority and Sufficiency of
Scripture, Revised and Expanded*

by David S. Dockery and Malcolm B. Yarnell III



The Holy Bible is the perfect book. God gave it to humanity to save us from subjection to sin, death, and the devil, and to lead us into a righteous, holy, and loving relationship with Himself. The Bible is perfectly sufficient because it speaks with the perfect sufficiency of the eternal triune God. It was inspired by His Holy Spirit; it reveals Jesus Christ, the Son of God who saves us by His death and resurrection; and it leads those who believe it is good news into a glorious relationship in the Spirit through the Son with the Father. The Bible speaks with the perfect authority of God because it is the living voice of God. As such, the Bible speaks with perfect authority in every arena of human existence. The Bible's perfect authority provides the rule by which every discipline must be taught and by which every teacher must be judged.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary was established in 1908 on the solid and durable basis of its first foundational conviction, "We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired." The founding president of our seminary, Benajah Harvey Carroll, of course, believed in the basic dogmas, such as, that God is Trinity, that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human, and that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, along with many other important dogmatic truths. Indeed,

he argued for the necessity of a credal rule of faith, which derives from the Bible's own standard, "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," to guide those who taught the Bible. However, Carroll was convinced, rightly we believe, that the avenue to such truths necessarily leads through the inspired and inerrant Word of God, the sacred Scriptures, the complete set of the inspired words which God deemed necessary for the world's evangelization and the church's edification.

This book has been written by 15 of our seminary's current faculty to demonstrate two great truths about Scripture. These two truths are indispensable for all the churches of Jesus Christ to maintain and to teach. We believe the Holy Bible speaks both with perfect authority and with perfect sufficiency into every aspect of the life of the people of God and into every aspect of the theological education which helps the people of God to know both God and His will for our lives. The inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit of God, who perfectly guided the prophets and apostles of the Old Testament and the New Testament to write their words, ensures those words are inherently perfect. Because the Bible's very words are perfect by reason of the Spirit's inspiration, they continue to manifest the power of the Holy Spirit in authority and sufficiency.

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We do not have two authorities, one, the authority of Christ, the other, the authority of the Bible, but one. Christ speaks to us through the Bible.



The Authority of Scripture

Both Carroll and W. T. Conner, the second great theologian in Southwestern Seminary's history, emphasized Scripture's "living" authority. The Bible continues to speak as the Word of God, such that its writings actively address people today, just as God once actively engaged the original recipients of those writings. The Bible speaks with authority now, because it is the living Word of God. "The Bible is authoritative. It is authoritative as the voice of God is authoritative to the soul of man. It finds man, searches him, makes him realize his need of spiritual help. If God speaks to man, he must speak in tones of authority. He is not simply offering to man advice on spiritual matters which man may accept or reject as a matter of indifference."

James Leo Garrett Jr., the third great theologian in the history of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, made five claims about the authority of Scripture. First, the biblical canon is "authoritative primarily as a book of religion or of divine revelation." Second, "the message of the Bible transcends the societal, geographical, and chronological matrix" of the time and place where its contents were originally written. Third, "The authority of the Bible is that of the sovereign God, who commands and persuades but does not coerce human beings and who redeems or liberates but does not enslave human beings." Fourth, Scripture is authoritative "as it is accurately and faithfully interpreted in its historical context and by the criterion of Jesus Christ." Finally, the Bible shows its authority "as the Holy Spirit bestows illumination."

The "Carroll-Conner-Garrett" tradition of Southwestern Seminary provides a fulsome doctrine of the authority of Scripture, an authority which derives from Scripture's inspiration and illumination by the sovereign Holy Spirit. However, these authors were also careful to ascribe the Bible's authority to God. "We do not have two authorities, one, the authority of Christ, the other, the authority of the Bible, but one. Christ speaks to us through the Bible." The Bible's authority is a "moral imperative" that requires humanity to "submit to rightful authority." Moreover, the authority that belongs to God carries His character. He is a God whose authority "emancipates conscience and reason and develops man as a free personality in right relationship with God." As the words of the God who frees us to submit to Himself, Scripture teaches human beings to show respect towards other human consciences, even as the churches exercise confessional authority in their teaching.

The authors in this volume demonstrate the same commitment to the authority of Scripture and the responsible freedom in relationship that it fosters between God and humanity and between various human beings. The authors approach their various disciplines according to their common commitment to the authority of God and His Word but work from the freedom of their own relationships with God and His Word. They are consistently committed to the authority of Scripture and remain free to apply that authority according to the Spirit's leading of their consciences in line with their convictions for our common confession. Carroll noted a similar movement within the inspired text as each Gospel writer developed his own "viewpoint."

The Sufficiency of Scripture

The second major "attribute" of Scripture which the authors of this volume address is its God-given sufficiency. The authors believe Scripture not only has authority over their disciplines but is sufficient to govern the undertaking of those disciplines. Scripture is sufficient to speak to the classical disciplines of Biblical studies, historical theology, and systematic theology, as well as Baptist studies and the humanities. Scripture is also

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The sum and substance of the teaching of the Word of God is that doctrine must be transmuted into life. We must not only bloom, but bring forth fruit.



sufficient for the more practical disciplines of pastoral ministry, preaching, and worship, as well as discipleship, family ministry and evangelism and missions. We must also note that Scripture is sufficient to govern the newer theological discipline known as public theology, which includes subjects as diverse as social ministry and political theology.

As with the authority of Scripture, the major theologians in the history of Southwestern Seminary paved the path for our contemporary treatment of the sufficiency of Scripture. The first president of Southwestern Seminary developed his doctrine of inspiration before he made ten “observations” about how Scripture works. Carroll’s tenth observation concerned “the sufficiency of the Word.” According to this first great theologian at Southwestern Seminary, sufficiency means “that the inspired record is complete; that it is all-sufficient.” In his commentary on 2 Timothy, Carroll found five ways in which Scripture was sufficient.

Carroll agreed with the apostle Paul that Scripture was breathed out by God to enable us to perform every work for God and submit every aspect of life to God’s Word. “That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17). We believe Carroll would approve of the faculty who follow him in their amazing diversity of applying the sufficiency of Scripture to so many areas of life and theological conversation. He concluded his discussion of the locus classicus for the doctrine of scriptural sufficiency with these words: “The

sum and substance of the teaching of the Word of God is that doctrine must be transmuted into life. We must not only bloom, but bring forth fruit.” Scripture must have “effect on life, bringing men nearer to God.”

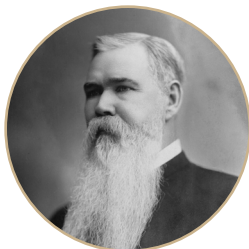
There is so much more we could say about the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, but we want to encourage you even now to begin reading the following essays. They have been written by some of the finest theologians, biblical scholars, historians, philosophers, and practitioners to be found anywhere. We are profoundly grateful to God for sending each man and woman to teach their diverse and necessary disciplines with conviction, expertise, and passion at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Soli Deo Gloria,

David S. Dockery ('81) serves as the tenth president of Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College.

Malcolm B. Yarnell III ('91) is research professor of theology at Southwestern.

This is an edited version of the preface of the recently released Seminary Hill Press publication, The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture, Revised and Expanded. To purchase a copy, please visit seminaryhillpress.com.



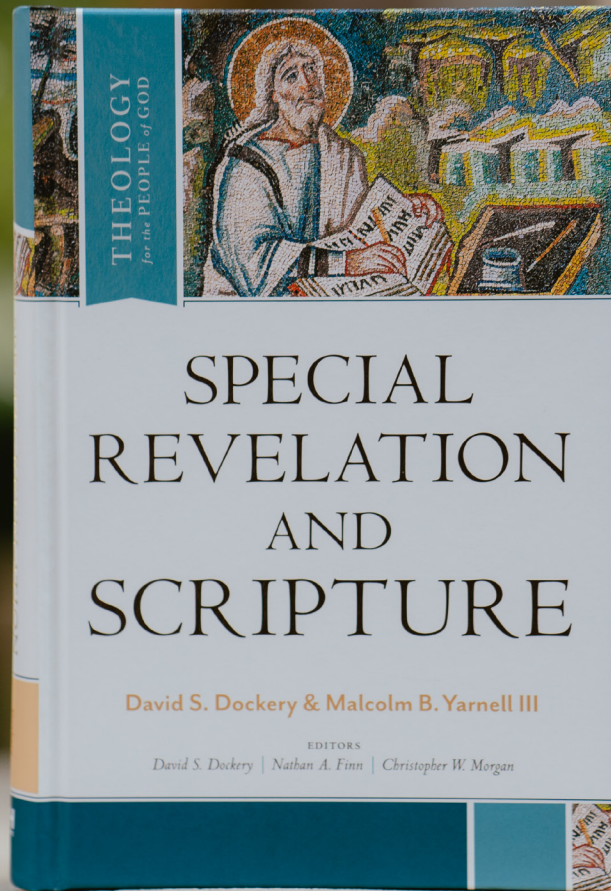
B.H. Carroll



W.T. Conner



James Leo Garrett



Special Revelation and Scripture

Latest release in Theology for the People of God series

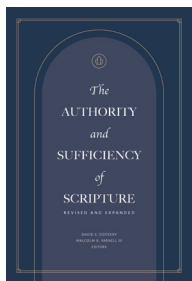
In the fifth of six published books so far in the Theology for the People of God series, David S. Dockery ('81) and Malcolm B. Yarnell III ('91) examine the inspiration, reliability, and authority of Scripture – foundational elements of divine revelation – while also providing the reader with an understanding of how these elements mold and shape a believer's comprehension of theological doctrines, ethical teachings, and worldview. Through the 12 chapters included in *Special Revelation and Scripture*, Dockery and Yarnell affirm the special revelation of Scripture as they emphasize the truthfulness, inerrancy, sufficiency, and authority of God's Word. The authors also highlight the role of the Holy Spirit in showing what Scripture says regarding the forming of theology and church practice.

“David Dockery and Malcolm Yarnell have served faithfully in Christian higher education for decades.

This volume contains their mature reflection on the foundational doctrines of special revelation and Scripture. Steeped in and founded on Scripture, each chapter of *Special Revelation and Scripture* interacts with the writings of a wide range of Christian thinkers to present the Triune God revealing himself to humanity—chiefly through Scripture's disclosure of Jesus Christ. The result is a reliable study from trustworthy scholars.”

— ADAM HARWOOD ('01, '07),

McFarland Chair of Theology, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary



THE AUTHORITY AND SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE: REVISED AND EXPANDED

Seminary Hill Press (2024)

DAVID S. DOCKERY ('81) AND MALCOLM B. YARNELL III ('91), EDS.

In this revised and expanded edition, *The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture* includes contributions from 15 of the faculty of Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College as they expound on the sufficiency of Scripture in their respective academic disciplines, including biblical theology, Christian worship, Christian discipleship, biblical counseling, and humanities.



WHEN THE FIRES OF HEAVEN FELL: VOLUME 1

Seminary Hill Press (2024)

MALCOLM R. MCDOW ('62)

Through the first of a two-volume set, McDow traces the history of revivals from Moses's encounter with God on Mount Sinai to the Reformation, with an explanation of outcomes of each. McDow provides the reader with an understanding of how revival is defined and the various types of revival.



CRISWELL: HIS LIFE AND TIMES

B&H Books (2024)

O.S. HAWKINS ('74, '20)

Hawkins, former pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, provides an examination of the life of W.A. Criswell, longtime pastor of the historic downtown Dallas church and Hawkins's predecessor. The biography gives an understanding of Criswell's influence as a pastor, Baptist leader, mentor, and friend.

BYLINES

Human dignity and the image of God

David S. Dockery ('81)

president

“Men and women have dignity different than any other aspect of creation because everything else in creation is designed to support men and women, whereas the creation of men and women, we're designed theocentrically. We're designed to worship God, and to serve God, and to follow God. To be Christ followers is the ultimate redemptive goal of our very being.”

(on moodyradio.org)

What is Christian nationalism? Here's what Rob Reiner's new movie gets wrong

Daniel M. Darling

director of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement

“One of the best ways to bring about unity is to diagnose problems as they are, not as we imagine them to be, and to avoid a broad brush in describing our fellow citizens.”

(on usatoday.com)

Go Beyond Arguments with Augustine's Apologetics

Coleman M. Ford

assistant professor of humanities

“It's true some are trained as professional apologists, but every Christian is called to be an apologist. At the end of the day, apologetics is conversational. It answers honest questions while seeking to love one's neighbor in the process. There's no one-size-fits-all approach to defending and advocating for the Christian faith. The context of unbelievers' questions may change, but the basic principles of apologetics remain the same.”

(on thegospelcoalition.org)



Former Southwestern administrator Lloyd Elder dies at 90

SOUTHERN BAPTIST STATESMAN and former executive vice president at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Prentice “Lloyd” Elder died Nov. 3, 2023. He was 90.

Elder also served as the seventh president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, now known as Lifeway Christian Resources, from 1984 until he retired in 1991.

“I had the privilege to get to know Lloyd Elder in his various roles in Baptist life,” said David S. Dockery (’81), president of Southwestern Seminary. “Dr. Elder served Southwestern Seminary well during his years as pastor at Gambrell Street as well as in his key administrative responsibilities at the seminary. He loved Southwestern and we are grateful to God for his life, service, and influence.”



A native of Dallas, Texas, Elder was born May 8, 1933. In 1956, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in history from Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas. Elder was a two-time graduate of Southwestern Seminary, having earned a Bachelor of Divinity in January 1961, which was later converted to a Master of Divinity in March 1973, and a Doctor of Theology in July 1966.

According to a *Baptist Standard* article published in 2016, Elder began serving as a bi-vocational pastor in 1953 in five churches in Alaska and Texas. These led to full-time pastorates in Texas.

He served as a local church pastor for 22 years.

Elder was pastor of Gambrell Street Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, from 1969 to 1975, before he assumed the role of assistant to the executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT). He served on the staff of the BGCT until 1978 when he was appointed executive vice president of Southwestern Seminary, where he served until 1983 when he transitioned to the chief leadership position at the Sunday School Board.

Following his retirement from the Sunday School Board in 1991, Elder began teaching at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee, where he was the H. Franklin Paschall Chair of Biblical Studies and Preaching. He held the chair until 2000 and taught courses in leadership in Christian ministry, worship and preaching, and Baptist history.

In 1996, Elder became the director of the Anna and Ernest J. Moench Center for Church Leadership at Belmont. The center focused on providing

leadership skills for ministers. Elder led the center until he retired from the role in 2004.

Through the Moench Center, Elder developed SKILLTRACK, which was a multi-course curriculum to develop and refresh leadership skills for ministry based on his own study and experiences in ministry, leadership, conferences, and consultations.

In addition to SKILLTRACK, Elder authored *Blueprints: Ten Challenges for a Great People*, which is among more than 20 textbooks and workbooks he penned during his lifetime.

In 2006 Elder became a volunteer and chair of the development board of the Bivocational and Small Church Leadership Network (BSCLN), which is based in Nashville, Tennessee. Through the BSCLN, Elder helped raise funds for the network and helped contribute to resources to assist those who were serving as bi-vocational pastors and leaders of smaller churches in the United States.

Southwestern Seminary honored Elder in 1985 with the Distinguished Alumni Award and he served as the national presiding president of the seminary’s National Alumni Association from 1989 to 1990.

Elder is survived by his wife of more than 70 years, Sue, and one daughter Donna Sue Maas, and her husband, Richard, of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by two children, his son, Philip Lloyd Elder, and his daughter, Janet Lynne Elder.—A. A.



Retired counseling professor Wynona Elder dies at 89

WYNONA TIPTON ELDER, retired professor of psychology and counseling at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, died March 15. She was 89.

"The Southwestern Seminary community is grateful for Dr. Wynona Elder's years of service

to students and colleagues alike," said President David S. Dockery ('81). "We offer our prayers and Christian sympathy to her family and friends during this time of loss."

Born in Lubbock, Texas, on June 26, 1934, as the daughter of a preacher, Elder taught at Southwestern from 1984 to 1998. She held three degrees from what is now known as the University of North Texas (UNT) in Denton, including a Bachelor of Science (1956), Master of Education (1967), and Doctor of Education (1976). Additionally, she earned a Master of Arts in Religious Education from Southwestern in 1988.

While serving at Southwestern, Elder was also the director of Walsh Counseling Center.

Before she began teaching at Southwestern, Elder worked as a licensed psychologist in private practice in Carrollton, Texas. Prior to earning her doctorate, Elder worked as a public school teacher and counselor. While she was a student at UNT, she was an adjunct teacher and graduate assistant. She also worked as an instructor in psychology at what is now known as Dallas

College Brookhaven campus as well as serving as the program coordinator and therapist in an alcoholism program.

Elder married her husband, Carl, in 1953 and the couple was married for 63 years until his passing in 2016. Carl served as a pastor of churches in Texas, Ohio, and Alaska, before becoming a consultant with the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The couple parented three children, Mona, Carla, and Mark.

In addition to her teaching experience in Texas, Elder was a guest professor at the Baptist Theological Seminary in North Brazil and the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary in Hong Kong.

Elder held memberships in the American Psychological Association, the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, and the American Association of Christian Counselors. She was also a certified family life educator by the National Council on Family Relations and an approved supervisor of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.—A. A.

ALUMNI UPDATES

1970

Dwight Wilson (*MDIV 1979*) to Spring Valley Baptist Church, Tusculum, AL as pastor.

1980

Martin R. Stidham (*MDIV 1985*) to Tulsa Chinese Christian Church, Tulsa, OK as congregation pastor.

Charles Craig Carlisle (*MDIV 1987*) to Etowah Baptist Convention, Gadsden, AL as director of missions.

1990

Danny Bryant Forshee (*MDIV 1990*) to Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, Grapevine, TX as president.

Todd Woodfin Young (*MARE 1994*) to First Baptist Church, Pelham, LA as executive pastor.

Timothy Michael Pierce (*MATH 1995, PhD 2000*) to Wayland Baptist University, Plainview, TX as dean of the university's School of Christian Studies.

Trent Clifford Davis (*MDIV BL 1996*) to the Department of the Air Force, Arlington, VA as deputy chief of chaplains.

David Allen Rose (*MADIV BL 1999, PhD 2009*) to Trinity Baptist Church, Lake Charles, LA as pastor.

2000

John Allen Roland (*MDIV BL 2001*) to Beulah Baptist Church, Sterrett, AL as pastor.

2010

William Clinton "Clint" Culpepper (*MATH 2017, MDIV 2020*) to Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, Birmingham, AL

as Auburn University Baptist Campus Ministries campus minister.

RETIREMENTS

1980

Ronald Royce Lynch Jr. (*MARE 1982*) retired with wife, Debbie, living in Arab, AL.

Rick Anthony Stone (*MARE 1983*) retired with wife, Rosemary, living in Huntsville, AL.

Steven Wayne Thompson (*MDIV 1986*) retired with wife, Cinda, living in Florence, AL.

1990

Robert Ellis Cook (*Asc. DIV 1991*) retired with wife, Mona, living in Lone Oak, TX.

MEMORIALS

1950

Leland Franklin Webb (*BDIV 1957*)

1960

Dickson Hughes Rial (*BDIV 1961*)

Daniel Eugene Williams (*MARE 1964*)

June Whitlow (*MARE 1964*)

1970

Larry Brent Earnest (*MARE 1970*)

Troy E. Key (*MARE 1970*)

David Richard White (*MDIV 1971*)

1980

Samuel Ralph Windle Jr. (*MDIV 1980*)

Edgar Oliver Wilson Jr. (*MCM 1983*)

Edwin Stanley Shamburger (*MDIV 1983*)

Clyde D. Meador (*DMIN 1985*)

Benny Ray Gresham (*MDIV 1989*)

Darrell Woner Robinson (*Ex BDIV*)



KEEP IN TOUCH

We love to hear from Southwesterners from all over the world. If you have recently changed your ministry positions or celebrated a retirement, anniversary, or birth, we would love to hear about it. Please contact us at:

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Phone (local)

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Email

alumni@swbts.edu



The Southwestern Story of
Marianne Arrendell

BY
ASHLEY ALLEN

Fulfilling a legacy

SOME PEOPLE READ ABOUT HISTORY. Others live it. Southwestern Seminary donor Marianne Arrendell falls into the latter category.

On the night of Nov. 9, 1989, Arrendell and friends drove the short distance from their community of Falkensee in East Germany, very close to the border of West Berlin – a border that had cut off their entrance into that section of the capital city since 1961.

The border was the Berlin Wall, a 27-mile concrete-guarded wall almost 13 feet high that surrounded West Berlin and separated half of the capital city from East Berlin and East Germany since it was built seemingly overnight when Arrendell was six years old.

Arrendell was raised in East Germany, in a small town of 4,000 people 20 miles north of the border – “behind the Iron Curtain” – in a Christian family where her father sang in the church choir and her brother served as a deacon. She says her father was a “founding member of the Christian party in town” and she had grandparents who “all were Christians.” When Arrendell graduated from high school in the 1970s, she studied domestic trade business at a college in East Germany. Though pressured to join the Communist Party, Arrendell resisted and began working as a supermarket manager in 1974.

Around 10:00 p.m. the evening of Nov. 9, 1989, a college friend on the East German coast had contacted Arrendell to tell her they were hearing reports on television that were not “confirmed,” but that something was taking place on the “border.” Arrendell says she was home writing a letter to a friend in West Berlin, not knowing she would see that same friend a few hours later face-to-face. Her college friend communicated that news reports were “talking about that the border will be open,” she recalls, remembering she scoffed at the idea because she had always been told the “border will not open.” Arrendell says that when she and a group of friends arrived at the border checkpoint north of Berlin, “there were already so many cars there and people and there was a camaraderie there.” She says hearing people “waiting and demanding, ‘Open that gate!’ was surreal.”

“Nobody knew what to expect,” Arrendell recounts. She says people were listening to their car radios and reporting that “Checkpoint Charlie,”

“It was like a dream, so much light after midnight in ‘no one’s land’ by passing the checkpoint and so many West Berlin people there to welcome us in that cold night,” Arrendell recounts more than three decades later. “The Wall was up for 28 years, [and] no one knew how to get around in West Berlin, no cell phones, no MapQuest only helpful West ‘Berliners.’”

When Arrendell re-entered East Germany early the next morning, Nov. 10, she had enough time to “clean up a little bit” before opening the supermarket where she worked as a manager. All the while, she remembers, the news broadcasts on the radio kept reporting the opening of the wall was a “mistake” and the wall would be reclosed that day. At the supermarket, she realized her colleagues knew “nothing” about the border opening. She said she began to ask each one, “What did you do last night?” and the responses indicated no one knew of what had transpired overnight.

Not able to “contain it any longer,” Arrendell says

three different churches and ran a successful landscape maintenance company. Through his company, Arrendell explains, Cammid had contracts with the State of Texas to maintain rest and picnic areas and helped distribute the blue-bonnet seeds to help beautify the Texas highways with the state flower in the springtime.

Arrendell was introduced to the work and ministry of Southwestern when she moved from Germany to San Antonio in 1995. She remembers she began studying English at the local community college before earning a degree in economics from the University of Texas at San Antonio. As she took classes, she helped Cammid in his business.

The couple was married on the Southwestern Seminary campus on Sept. 11, 2000, by then-President Kenneth S. Hemphill. Their joint involvement and support of Southwestern Seminary has included service through both the Southwestern Advisory Council (SWAC), the President’s Club, and the seminary’s board of visitors.

“There’s something bigger than yourself and especially freedom. It’s bigger— bigger than you.”

– MARIANNE ARRENDELL

the most widely known of the checkpoints along the wall that separated East and West Berlin, was open. She remembers that the military officers along the northern checkpoint where she was were “running back and forth” as “they did not know what to do.”

However, “then came the pressure,” she says, adding, “As I have experienced, unity makes strong.” The crowd, which Arrendell estimates was 100 to 200 people, said among themselves “if this information is not correct, we all will be on the train to Siberia tomorrow,” she remembers.

Almost 35 years later, a tearful Arrendell says, “There’s something bigger than yourself and especially freedom. It’s bigger – bigger than you.” Though the guards pressured her and the group to complete visas to enter West Berlin while being told they “might” or “might not” be able to re-enter East Germany, she recalls, she and others were able to enter West Berlin. Arrendell remembers the celebration of that night – “everybody was blowing the horn” – as they celebrated the wall that separated a nation and a people for 28 years coming down.

she put a map and “treats,” including chocolates that had been thrown into their car as she and her friends passed back into East Germany, she collected from the evening on the table in the breakroom and said, “I would be interested if someone would ask me what I did,” to which one of her co-workers asked, “What did you do last night?”


“I went to West Berlin,” she recalls responding, which caused her co-workers to ask if she was “feeling okay.” She told them to look at all the items on the table and they turned on the radio to hear the news. “There was no other topic in that store that day or that week,” she says.

Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Arrendell managed a supermarket in what was once West Berlin.

A few years later, Arrendell met her late husband, Cammid, when he was on a mission trip to Hungary. A Southwestern Seminary graduate, Cammid earned a Bachelor of Divinity from the seminary in 1958. In 1943, Cammid began serving in the United States Army Air Corp, where he later served as a chaplain. He also pastored

Additionally, they have provided student scholarships through the Marianne Arrendell Women’s Auxiliary Scholarship, the Marianne D. Arrendell Endowed Scholarship Fund, and the Cammid O. Arrendell Endowed Scholarship Fund.

Arrendell has been active in Southwestern’s Women’s Auxiliary, Dressed for Service, and since Cammid’s passing in January 2022, Widow’s Might. She said that Southwestern’s “vision for education and ministry was ingrained” in Cammid and she believes his vision “is now mine to honor and fulfill.”

Arrendell says she continues to give to Southwestern because it is her “moral responsibility” to her late husband to “fulfill his legacy.” She adds the “love” she and Cammid shared for Southwestern and its mission, as well as the “personal friendships formed with faculty and staff members” spans close to three decades and it “inspires” her to continue to support the seminary. 

Student focused—in word and deed

BY
CHANDLER SNYDER

“As Southwestern had begun deploying our values, we have worked to be a student focused by creating spaces to actually listen to our students!”



My family and I had the pleasure of serving Christ and His church in sub-Saharan Africa for a decade. Throughout our time we planted churches, made disciples, evangelized, and partnered with churches filled with local believers. We also got to observe models of unhealthy churches and messages that caused us to scoff and judge – namely the prosperity message that “names it and claims it.” Obviously, this message exists in churches on this side of the world, too. The idea that we can simply name something we want to happen and watch it passively come about is unbiblical. This experience helps to drive my passion to ensure our students have the best theological education that prepares them well to serve Christ across the globe.

Too often organizations establish guiding principles and values that only live on the “about” tab of the website. The work to establish a culture of that value and guiding principle is abandoned as soon as the website is completed. At Southwestern, we are continually committed as a community to living and reinforcing our values in word and deed. Moving beyond simply stating our values to embodying them in our affections, attitudes, and actions.

The commitment to living our values applies from the classroom, where incredible faculty point students to the goodness and grace of Christ, from the Scriptures, aligned with our confession and doctrinal commitments; to the globe where students engage in the Great Commandment and Great Commission loving and reaching both their neighbors and the nations. We do all of this with a commitment to being student focused.

It is my great joy to serve Christ at Southwestern Seminary by engaging our students and helping cultivate an environment and culture where students are prepared and launched to the neighborhoods and nations carrying with them a deep affection for the Southwestern community.

Building this culture takes remarkable teamwork, from faculty delivering an outstanding preparatory experience to staff offices that, as President David S. Dockery says, “delivers on the hidden curriculum.” This “hidden curriculum” includes the experiences that students have with administrative offices. Let’s be honest, this is not always the easiest to deliver, after all, nobody enjoys paying tuition! But as students interact with each member of the community, they are expected to both extend, and be

treated with grace and respect – living a Romans 12:10 reality.

In addition to remarkable teamwork, building a community where people have a deep affection for having belonged to it requires a willingness to listen. This essential ability is often overlooked in a seminary environment. Too often students come in and go through a “cage” phase where they believe they know all the answers – that’s their picture of ministry, having and providing the answers for others that need them! But ministry is listening, assessing, and pointing people to the source of truth and life.

As Southwestern has begun deploying our values, we have worked to be student focused by creating spaces to actually listen to our students! Listening in town hall meetings, communicating through community newsletters, gathering in all student meetings, always having an open-door policy, participating in student events, and destroying guys in Saturday morning basketball are just a few ways that we have worked to create spaces to listen to our students.

Listening is the first step, but not the last step. Taking the feedback, courageously and (often) gracefully provided by students is just the first step. Responding thoughtfully, explaining the rationale behind the decisions, and making positive changes are the steps that reinforce the trust of the community and build affection. Regular, two-way communication builds trust and I pray that this consistent pattern of dialogue reinforces the “hidden curriculum” and allows students to see what the work of ministry requires.

There is still much to do in the Southwestern community, but by God’s grace and our students’ participation, I am confident that together we will send well-prepared Southwesterners to neighborhoods and nations that will make an eternal Gospel impact. As the Lord provides a bountiful harvest, these Southwesterners, having left with a love of their seminary experience, will send that harvest back to prepare more laborers at Southwestern and continue the work that the Lord began here in 1908 and now extends around the world, for the glory of Christ!

Chandler Snyder is vice president for enrollment and student services and dean of students.



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