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A mining office in Hatcher Pass, Alaska, near the town of Wasilla, where Southwestern alumnus Rodney Kovtynovich pastors Schrock Road Community Church.

*(SWBTS Photo/
Adam Covington)*

Download the new Southwestern App from page 55 to see additional events on campus.

SEPTEMBER

7	Labor Day	Classes Dismissed/Offices Closed
7-11	International Church Planting Week	
11-12	College Retreat	
11-12	Certification in Biblical Counseling Levels 1&2	swbts.edu/biblicalcounseling
16	Inauguration of the Dorothy Kelley Patterson Chair of Women's Studies	MacGorman Chapel
26	Widows' Might Conference	
9.28-10.2	Fall Break	Classes Dismissed

OCTOBER

3	Bonn Commencement/Convocation	Bonn, Germany
5	Advanced Expository Preaching Workshop	
6-8	Northcutt Lecture Series - Dr. Abraham Kuruvilla	
15-16	Preview Conference	swbts.edu/previewconference
16-17	Certification in Biblical Counseling Levels 1&2	swbts.edu/biblicalcounseling
18-19	Board of Visitors Meeting	
19-21	Trustee Meeting	
21	Women's Auxiliary Luncheon	Riley Center, 11:30 a.m.

NOVEMBER

2	College Legacy Banquet	
3	Messiah Concert	Truett Auditorium
9-10	SBTC Annual Meeting	Champion Forest Baptist Church, Houston
10	SWBTS Alumni & Friends Breakfast	Champion Forest Baptist Church
23-27	Thanksgiving Break	Classes Dismissed 23-27 Offices Closed 25-27

DECEMBER

3	President's Club Dinner	
3	Keyboards and Carols at Christmas	MacGorman Chapel
18	Graduation	MacGorman Chapel
24-25	Christmas Holiday	Offices Closed
12.31-1.1	New Year's Day Holiday	Offices Closed

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SOUTHWESTERN
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a letter from **THE PRESIDENT**

RAY I. RILEY WAS A SON OF THE WEST TEXAS OIL EMPIRE. A ROUGHNECK, HE WORKED IN THE OIL fields at hard man's labor, and his life was little different from that of most of the men who labored through the long, hot summers and cold winters on the rigs. But one day, Ray heard the word of Christ, responded, and trusted the Lord as his Savior. Not many more moons had passed before he felt the call of God to become a preacher. He determined that he would come to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and study. Bringing his whole family, he devoted several years to diligent study and spent the remainder of his life faithfully serving Christ in small, west Texas churches. Nobody in Washington, and probably no one at the Dallas Morning News, ever checked up to see how his work was going. He faithfully served Jesus, led many people to faith in Christ, counseled hundreds of hurting believers, married a fair number of young people, and buried not a few of the saints. His son, Harold, cherished his days on the campus of Southwestern Seminary, where people loved him and where J.W. MacGorman ministered to his whole family. In time, Harold built not only the Conference Center but also the chapel for Southwestern, honoring the memory of a noble father who served in multiple churches in west Texas.

My own experience focused on a small church in west Texas, Sardis Baptist Church, on the open prairie, nestled among the cotton farms, not too far from Roby and Rotan, Texas. Some months ago, I was called to do the memorial service for a cousin of mine whom I had actually never met until a few days before his home-going. While he was sitting at my dinner table and we were developing a friendship, he suddenly looked at me and said, "Will you do my funeral?" Though he was well-blessed with years, he seemed in excellent health, and I had no idea that within a few days I would hear that he had transferred his residence to heaven. The memorial service was in Roby, Texas, and at the close of the service, I was greeted by Ivan Martin. What a pleasant surprise. Ivan was my most faithful deacon at Sardis. He took me to see where the Sardis church had been moved. It now serves as a Hispanic congregation on the edge of Roby with a thriving ministry.

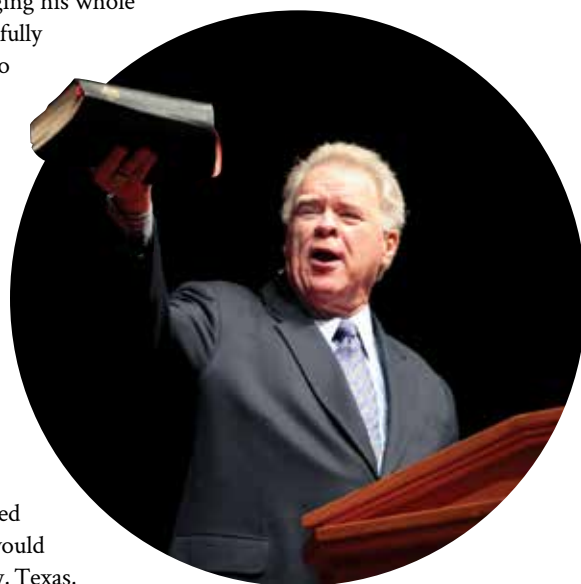
In this issue of the Southwestern News, you will read the stories of prophets of God who serve our Lord in small churches. Some, like me, will go on to serve the Lord in venues where they are well-known, and every one of those small churches that they served will receive a wonderful reward in heaven for the opportunities given to the young preacher.

But the majority will do what Bro. Riley did. They will faithfully serve the Lord, unknown and unnoticed—well, actually that's not quite true, because the truth is that, in the Lord's work, the prophet has an audience of One. It does not matter whether he is little known or well-known, his audience is the Lord, and if, at the end of his journey, he should be met by his Lord, who says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," that commendation is worth more than all of the accolades of the human family. As you read these pages about pastors who labor in relative obscurity, I pray that it will bring the deepest conceivable blessing to your life, knowing that you have made the ministry possible—a ministry that will finally and profoundly be approved by God.

Until He Comes,



Paige Patterson







LOUISIANA

Coushatta, La., might not be on any tourist's must-see list, but the First Baptist Church of this small town has quality ministries nonetheless, effectively preaching and teaching God's Word and seeing lives changed consistently, just like anywhere else.





ALASKA

The glacial waters of the Little Susitna River originate in Hatcher Pass, a historic mining area in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley of Alaska. The Little Su (as it's known by locals) borders the northern limits of the city of Wasilla, Alaska, and flows out to the Cook Inlet just west of the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. Characterized by large, rounded, granite boulders near its head, the river is well-known for the abundance of salmon that run up it during their annual spawn in the summer months.



Unsung Heroes

Written by Tommy Kiker

So many in our society are looking for a hero—someone to emulate and admire. We live in a celebrity-crazed culture, and in these technology-driven days, people can follow nearly every aspect of the day-to-day lives of their favorite singer, actor, athlete, or other celebrity. Though we may not want to admit it, this celebrity-crazed mentality, in many ways, has penetrated the day-to-day attitudes of the church community.

There are many prominent preachers who are incredibly well-known in evangelical circles. They are invited to preach at the biggest conferences, they publish the most popular books, they appear on talk shows, and they are recognized by many wherever they go.

Many of these “Christian celebrities” are genuine, gifted, and loyal servants of the Lord Jesus Christ and are genuine heroes of the faith (although other highly popular preachers can be described in less flattering ways). We all can name many of these well-known Christian leaders. We respect and honor their accomplishments and, in many cases, we should.

However, I want you to consider another type of Christian hero. These heroes are far less known, but they are thankfully much greater in number than the previously described group. These heroes are rarely, if ever, invited to speak at the largest conferences. These heroes are normally not known by many outside of their normal daily circles. These heroes serve faithfully in the rural and obscure parts of our country. They oftentimes serve for little or no pay, and many even work another career to support their families while they minister day by day. These heroes are the pastors of the average church in America, and I have spent hours upon hours with them.

They serve small congregations in communities scattered all across America, and they do so because they sense a clear call from God to shepherd their particular flock of God’s people. They are not looking for fame, they are not looking for accolades, and they just desire to minister faithfully to the body of Christ and love the sheep that God has entrusted to their care.

Now do not get me wrong: Not every pastor of a small church is a hero just because he serves a small church. Just as with any

group, there are many who are not faithfully serving, many who are not pure in their walk with the Lord, many who are just plain lazy, and some who just are not called of God. But let us consider the MANY who simply love Jesus, are called by Jesus, are faithful to Jesus, and passionately and consistently serve the body of Christ where Jesus has placed them.

What are some of the traits of these pastors, these heroes of the faith? They are content where God has them and are not driven by personal ambition to move somewhere that is “bigger and better.” They only desire to serve faithfully where God has placed them. These heroes work countless hours fulfilling tasks that many others are unwilling to complete.

THESE HEROES ARE NORMALLY NOT KNOWN BY MANY OUTSIDE OF THEIR NORMAL DAILY CIRCLES. THESE HEROES SERVE FAITHFULLY IN THE RURAL AND OBSCURE PARTS OF OUR COUNTRY... THESE HEROES ARE THE PASTORS OF THE AVERAGE CHURCH IN AMERICA, AND I HAVE SPENT HOURS UPON HOURS WITH THEM.

They oftentimes drive great distances to make a simple hospital visit. They become beloved members of their communities, even earning the respect of those outside of the church. They are worthy of honor in this life, and in this edition of Southwestern News, we attempt to highlight the testimonies of some of these unsung heroes.

I pray that you will find the articles that follow to be inspiring and encouraging. The stories found here could be told of a vast number of pastors who have served throughout the ages. Few may know their names, but heaven knows them and lauds their labors. I take a special interest in these types of heroes because my favorite pastor belongs in this category.

When I was 6 years old, my dad loaded up our family into an old farm truck and a Ford Pinto and headed off to seminary. All Dad knew was that he was called to preach, and that included a call to prepare. With an expecting wife, a 6-year-old son, and less than \$100 in the bank, he stepped out in faith. For the last 36 years, I have watched him faithfully serve small Southern Baptist churches in Virginia and North Carolina, always trusting the Lord in whatever circumstance that came.

My dad, Roger Kiker, just announced his retirement, effective the end of this year. Like many others, it appears “retirement” is just a transition to other ministry opportunities, but I believe that my dad’s impact on the Kingdom is already immeasurable. Certainly, over four decades, there are hundreds of families that have been eternally impacted. There are vast numbers of counseling sessions, weddings, funerals, hospital visits, sermons, phone calls, letters, etc. that made an impact. There is greater fruit that we do not yet see, but we can be assured that God has, indeed, done more than what we can see with the human eye.

I am grateful for every life that has been touched by my dad’s ministry; however, the impact for which I am most grateful is the one on my own life. The Lord Jesus has used the faithfulness of my dad to help guide and direct me through the years. In so many real and tangible ways, I sense my dad’s continued influence. I am convinced that I would not be where I am now in my walk and ministry if it had not been for my dad’s obedience to his calling. There may not be thousands who know his name, but there are countless throughout the years who have been and will be impacted by his faithfulness. We should thank God for these heroes and be encouraged to stay faithful in whatever task God has granted us.

TOMMY KIKER serves as associate professor of pastoral theology and occupies the James T. Draper, Jr. Chair of Pastoral Ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also chairs the seminary’s pastoral ministry department.

A man with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a grey suit, white shirt, and blue tie, is speaking on a stage. He is gesturing with his right hand. The background is dark with some blurred lights.

SET APART FOR

SERVICE

PASTOR WHO RAN FROM CALL TEACHES CHURCH TO PURSUE GOD'S WILL

By Alex Sibley | Photography by Neil Williams



Success in ministry is seeing people come to find what God has gifted them with and finding a way to share those gifts to further the Kingdom,” says Alan Grisham, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Buffalo, Texas. “I believe that the pastor is not supposed to be ‘everything’ in the church, but my role is to help equip and encourage those in the church to find what God has called them to be and help with the resources to get them there.”

Given this perspective on ministry and apparent passion for equipping the saints to serve the Kingdom, one might be surprised to learn that Grisham actually ran from his call to ministry for nearly 30 years. Initially called as a teenager, Grisham surmised that a life of ministry would prove unappealing. But after spending years in the business world and achieving monetary success—complete with a nice house, cool cars, and a key position in a Fortune 500 company—Grisham found no peace. Eventually, he realized that running from God’s will is an exercise in futility.

“The reality is that if God has called you, you have been set apart, and you will never be able to be used and shine like God wants you to until you surrender to your call,” Grisham says. “I have found that it is not about the house, it’s not about the cars, it’s not even about who you are—it is only about what God can do through you.”

Grisham’s long journey to the pastorate of FBC Buffalo began early in his life. The

product of a Christian home, Grisham was 8 years old when he accepted Christ at an “old fashioned” tent revival under the preaching of Evangelist Freddy Gage in San Antonio, Texas. Six years later, at a church in Wichita Falls, Grisham sensed the call to ministry.

“I knew that God had set me apart,” he says, “and I went forward and made my call public in a Sunday morning worship service.” Grisham says this action would prove important, as his mother would often ask him about it in the years that followed.

When Grisham’s family moved to Nassau Bay, Texas, he became active in the youth group of Nassau Bay Baptist Church,

but he downplayed his call to ministry. In fact, the only ones who knew about his call were his family members, as he neglected to share it with anyone at their new church. By the time high school graduation rolled around, he had all but abandoned his earlier commitment.

Grisham explains, “I had determined that a young kid really did not know what God had called him to do; rather, [I thought] I knew what was best. I was determined to go to college and seek a degree plan that suited my liking rather than my calling.

“During this time, my mom would continue to remind me of the decision I had made that Sunday morning, and I believe she prayed for me to follow whatever was God’s calling on my life. She never promoted ministry as a career choice; only to seek God’s will.”

Unsung Heroes

PASTOR
Alan Grisham

WHERE
Buffalo, Texas

CHURCH
First Baptist Church of Buffalo

*Earned Master of
Divinity in 2010*

PASTORAL ADVICE

“Learn how to manage your time—but not because it is your time, but because it is the greatest resource God has gifted you with. Ministry is not about how easy to make your life or even how important you are or think you are—it is about people who are struggling in life and need the Lord. If you are going into the pastorate, it should be because you have been given the greatest calling God could bestow upon you.”



Grisham attended Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, in pursuit of a degree in agriculture. However, he quickly realized his distaste for academia, and he dropped out of school in order to go into business with his parents. The three of them purchased an appliance store in Richardson, Texas, and, over the next 18 years, saw it develop into one of the largest dealers of whirlpool appliances in Dallas County.

During this time, Grisham married his wife, Nan, whom he met at Stephen F. Austin. After they married, Nan, who had only been a Christian for a short time, wanted to become active in church, but Grisham was, in his words, “not willing to face [his] unwillingness to follow [his] call.” When they began to have children, Nan told him that even if he did not want to attend church, she and the kids were going.

“It was the best ultimatum I was ever given,” Grisham says. “We joined Allen Heights Baptist Church in Allen, Texas, and this became the greatest growth period in my walk with the Lord.”

Although he understood that he was not following his call, because of his unwillingness to let go of his work and lifestyle, Grisham tried to make up for his disobedience by working hard in church. He served in several areas, including teaching, working on various committees, and later being ordained as a deacon.

“But all of those jobs, while important, did not serve to provide the relief that following my call would give,” Grisham says. “I finally changed my prayer from, ‘I will do anything, God, except preach,’ to ‘God, if you really want me to preach, prove it!’”

As if in response to this prayer, the next season of Grisham’s





life presented many difficulties. His wife, mother, and father all experienced health crises, and various factors led his family to close its appliance business.

“The loss of the business was devastating to me and my family, but that was still not enough to convince me to follow God’s hand,” Grisham recalls. “Before I even had the entire inventory out of the store, I received a call asking if I would be interested in working for Countrywide Home Loans (which is now Bank of America). I thought this was an answered prayer, so I took that job, thinking God must want me in the banking business.”

The ensuing years with Countrywide proved to be good but ultimately unfulfilling. Though he remained active in church, Grisham could not rid himself of a perpetual sense of unease. After some prayerful consideration, he finally concluded that totally surrendering to his call was the only option he had for peace. This decision, decades in the making, would lead to some drastic changes.

Before he could become a pastor, Grisham knew that he needed a seminary education, which would have to be preceded by the completion of his college degree.

Fortunately, Dallas Baptist University had opened a satellite campus near his work, and they were willing to consider his work experience toward a business degree.

So, by working during the day and taking classes at night, Grisham earned his bachelor’s degree, and within two weeks of his graduation, he quit Countrywide and moved his family to Fort Worth so he could begin studies at Southwestern Seminary. “When I arrived,” he says, “I knew the presence of God was not only on this place, but on my life.”

Grisham soon obtained an on-campus job, working on, interestingly enough, appliances. “God used my history of our family business to allow me to work at Southwestern,” Grisham points out. “God uses our past and all we are to further the Kingdom.”

Grisham says the professors at Southwestern had a particular impact on his ministry. “[They] taught me so much not only about theology, church history, and languages,” he says, “but about being men of honor, integrity, and grace. They demonstrated the character and grace that is required for successful ministry.”

In 2010, as he neared completion of his Master of Divinity, Grisham began sending

his resume to various churches. He was soon contacted by FBC Buffalo, who at that point had gone more than two years without a pastor, and it was quickly determined that Grisham would be a good fit. So, after having run from his call for nearly 30 years, Grisham finally began serving as pastor at FBC Buffalo in October 2010 with the stated ministry goal of seeking God’s plan for his life and pursuing it.

In the context of FBC Buffalo, accomplishing this goal means helping members of his congregation discern God’s plan for their own lives and strive to fulfill it. Having waited decades to serve the Kingdom as God intended, Grisham understands the danger of running from God’s call, and so now he endeavors to see that no one else makes his mistakes. Due in part to these ministry efforts, Grisham commends the people of FBC Buffalo for their willingness to live according to God’s will.

“This church is truly an encouraging, loving, and giving church,” he says. “I am constantly amazed at how, when a need is found, this church gives to fill the need. The church family is loving toward each other and willing to help equip one another to seek God’s plan for their lives.”



SPENT FOR HIS

GLORY

ASSUMING THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP IN A 140-YEAR-OLD CHURCH

By Alex Sibley | Photography by Adam Tarleton



At the First Baptist Church of Atlanta, Texas, a woman serving in the 2-year-olds Sunday School class has been there for 55 years. That means the children from her first class are now 57 years old, with children and perhaps grandchildren of their own. One of this woman’s co-teachers has been there more than

30 years. Beyond this Sunday School room, there are church members who have been at FBC Atlanta for 70 years. Evidently, when people join this church, they plant themselves there in order to minister to generations of people in their community. Not surprisingly, then, FBC Atlanta is celebrating this year its 140th anniversary.

Southwestern alumnus Wes Mills is the church’s 40th senior pastor since its founding in 1875. Assuming this responsibility in 2013, Mills noted that multiple members of his congregation have been there longer than he has even been alive. For this reason, he says, it is important for him to understand how things have been done there in the past and show sensitivity and care as they move forward, especially in the areas that change.

“Being pastor to a church that is 140 years old is a good and humbling reminder that

God has been working in His people here long before I arrived,” Mills says. “He doesn’t need me. And yet, He called and planted my family here in order for me to serve Him by serving FBC Atlanta as their pastor. We’re grateful—it’s special!”

Prior to serving at FBC Atlanta, Mills was both a student and an employee at Southwestern Seminary. Earning his Master of

Divinity in 2008 and subsequently enrolling in the Ph.D. program, Mills held multiple positions at the institution, from assistant director of Student Life to a three-year stint as director of Financial Aid.

Mills says the greatest benefit of his years at Southwestern was that it instilled in him a high view of Scripture. “In large part, affirming the inerrancy of Scripture has shaped my philosophy of ministry and thus impacts how I preach, counsel, mentor, and lead from day to day,” he says.

While working for Student Life, Mills met James Williams, a fellow Master of Divinity student. The two became friends, and Williams, who is currently enrolled in Southwestern’s Ph.D. program, says they often dreamed of being able to do ministry together, although they did not know if such a thing could ever be realized.

Unsung Heroes

PASTOR
Wes Mills

WHERE
Atlanta, Texas

CHURCH
First Baptist Church of Atlanta

*Earned Master of Divinity in 2008
and enrolled in Ph.D program*

PASTORAL ADVICE

“Even if you’re not called to pastor while in seminary, I encourage you to faithfully serve God and others in a local church. Practically ministering the Word in love to others is not always easy; it can be complicated and messy, especially when you have a family, go to school full-time, work full-time, etc. But please trust me: while you’re in seminary, you do not want to (nor can you afford to) forego such a blessed and needed opportunity for on-the-field learning through real-life local church ministry.”

- Wes Mills





“To be able to find a church willing and able to support two pastors right out of seminary seemed far-fetched,” Williams recalls. Given how things turned out, however, he notes that, as evidenced by their experience, “all things are possible with God.”

Through a family connection, Mills learned of an opening at FBC Atlanta for a senior pastor. After going through a process that included multiple meetings, preaching before the search committee, and then finally preaching before the congregation, the church voted to call Mills as their 40th senior pastor in January 2013.

The associate pastor at that time, having served at FBC Atlanta for nearly three decades, was ready to retire. Although he committed to stay until the church found a new pastor and subsequently helped Mills through the transition time, he announced his retirement the following summer. So, in need of an associate pastor, Mills recommended Williams to the search committee. He was accepted, and he joined the pastoral team in August 2013.

The dream of these two friends had been realized, but in adopting the mantle of leadership in a church with such a history as FBC Atlanta’s, they had taken upon themselves the substantial responsibility on continuing a long-established legacy of ministering God’s Word to the people of that community. The previous senior pastor and associate pastor had served at the church for 35 years and 28 years, respectively, and so the people of Atlanta knew them well. “Then, all of a sudden,” Williams says, “they had

two guys in their 30s come along whom they had never met. I think that could be hard for anybody.”

Mills continues, “Currently, we have three pastors [myself, Williams, and the also-recently hired family and missions pastor, Cody Howard] who are all under the age of 38 and have been here fewer than three years. So as you can imagine, such tradition coupled with turnover and new vision fosters a healthy but perhaps unique dynamic.”

Nevertheless, both pastors agree that the church was both accepting and welcoming of its new pastoral team. “Even though they didn’t know us,” Williams says, “they gave us an opportunity to earn their trust. There was never a time when I didn’t feel welcomed by our people. They have been a great support.”

Although being part of something so much larger than himself could prove a daunting task, Mills rests on the assurance that God brought him there, and so his goal for ministry remains unchanged: to teach and preach God’s Word faithfully to those whom He places underneath his care and to see them transformed into the image of Christ. “I want to be used by God to lead this church to be a healthy, deliberate body,” he says, “full of disciple-making disciples who have a grand view of God and His glory and cherish Christ and His Word.”

Over the last two years, the church has begun two unique ministries. The first is the Church Under the Bridge (CUTB) ministry. CUTB was started by the church’s family and missions

PASTORAL ADVICE

“True leadership takes time, it takes trust, and it takes a lot of patience. It’s tempting for guys fresh out of seminary to go to a church and try to bring reformation within the first year. While the Lord can certainly bring it about that quickly, He doesn’t always do so. It takes wisdom to know how to follow the Lord’s leading and how quickly to implement change.”

- James Williams



pastor, Cody Howard, before he came on staff and is a ministry devoted to reaching and ministering to the poor and homeless community in Texarkana, Texas. Mills says this has essentially become the church for the homeless in Texarkana. Every Saturday morning, Howard and others gather under a local bridge to worship God and study His Word together.

The church’s other new ministry is Mission Atlanta, which was also begun by Howard. Mission Atlanta comprises an outreach center located in downtown Atlanta, which provides shelter and ministers to the poor and homeless in the community. In the latter part of 2015, this ministry will also begin a feeding program to provide food for those in need a few times per week.

Williams says that, having gone two years without a senior pastor prior to Mills’ hiring, the people of FBC Atlanta are grateful to have a full pastoral team to not only “feed” them spiritually but also lead them to do ministry. He explains, “We have seen people who were nominal in their walk with the Lord really come alive by a work of the Spirit. Several of our people have taken major roles in Mission Atlanta and CUTB ministries, and a fire has been ignited in them for sharing the Gospel.”

Reflecting on his role as one in a long line of senior pastors serving a church that has endured for 14 decades, Mills says, “Occasionally, I get to see God take dead people and supernaturally give them new life in Himself. I get to be used by Him as an instrument of His grace to redirect people’s misplaced desires and affections. I get to see fellow brothers and sisters in Christ grow in their love for the Lord, become more satisfied in Him, and surrender everything to be spent for His glory.

“The privilege to lead and feed a flock and be spent for the advancement of God’s Kingdom alongside some of the most loving people I know is rewarding. It is not always easy, but it is always rewarding.”



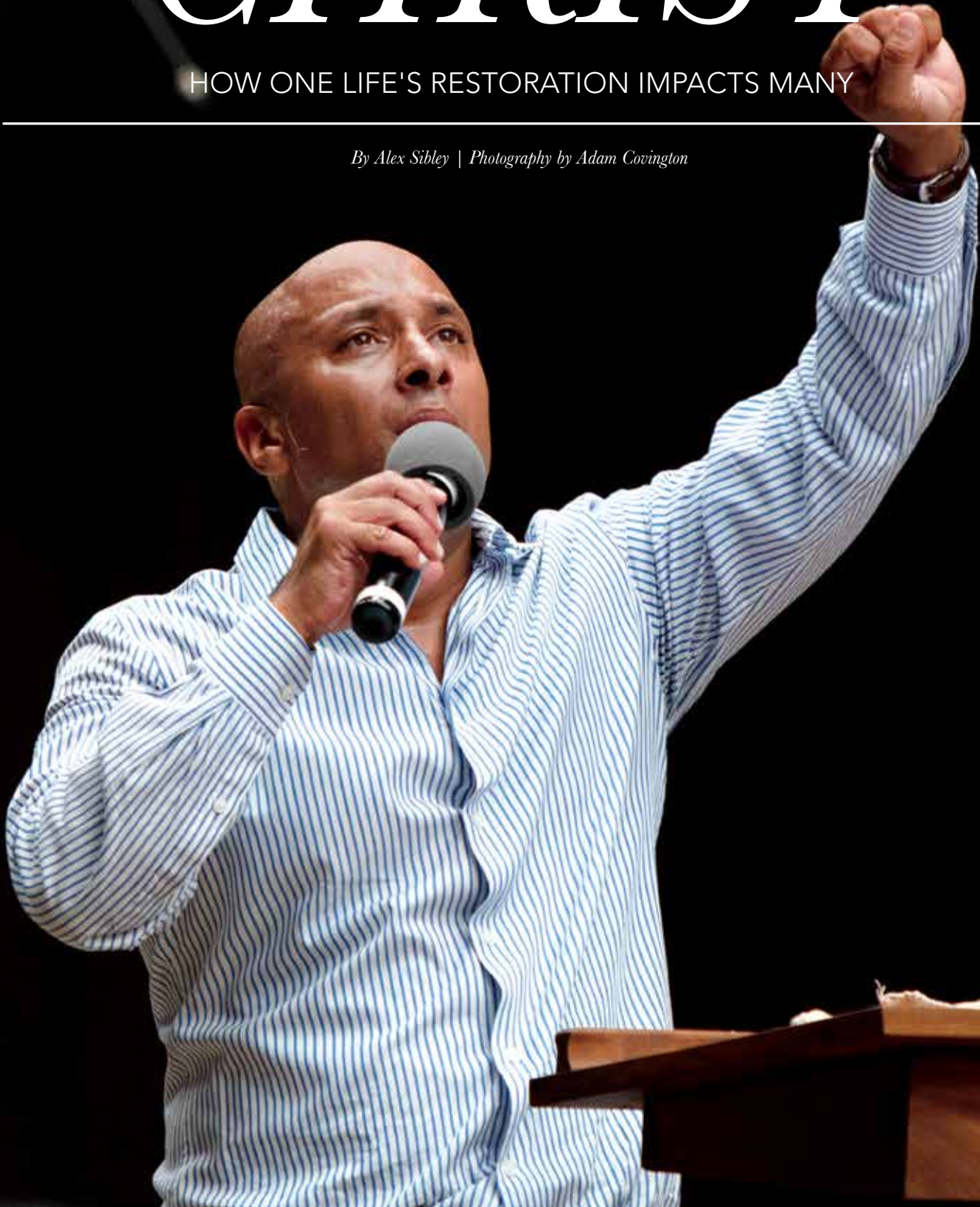


IN THE BUSINESS OF

CHRIST

HOW ONE LIFE'S RESTORATION IMPACTS MANY

By Alex Sibley | Photography by Adam Covington





In John 5, Jesus encounters by the pool of Bethesda a man who has been an invalid for 38 years. When Jesus tells the man to get up, take up his bed, and walk, the man is instantly healed, and he immediately obeys Jesus' instruction.

Connecting this story to his own philosophy for ministry, Von Minor, pastor of Restoration Community Church in Dallas, Texas, explains, "[The invalid's] physical body is restored; spiritually, he's restored. You get to see him be made whole as he follows the instruction of Christ to get up, take his mat, and walk."

"When I think of that restorative process," he continues, "there is no restoration without Jesus, and there is no restoration without following the command of Christ. The restorative process of lives being made whole is the business of Christ, but it's our responsibility to walk in obedience and to see that wholeness materialize in our lives."

For Minor, this God-given restoration has been manifested as a long road from layperson to senior pastor. Having himself been restored from his previous life of sin, he has now made the restoration of unbelievers his primary goal, joining in the business of Christ to see the lost saved and the saved grow. As his church's mission statement articulates, Minor's

ministry is about seeing the restoration of one person at a time so that that person can impact others.

'JESUS IS CALLING YOU HOME.'

Born in West Virginia, Minor spent summers with his mother in Dallas before moving there permanently as a sophomore in high school. Through the influence of godly grandparents, aunts, and uncles, Minor had what he calls "a clear God-consciousness" by age 7. As he explains, "I don't know if he was Lord of my life at 7, but he definitely was Savior." Despite his Spirit-empowered living in his early years, however, his teenage years were characterized by rebellion.

While pursuing his bachelor's in communication at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Minor played in a basketball league in the school's recreational center. There, he befriended a fellow student named Jody. A Christian, Jody, unlike the other members of the basketball team, never used profanity on the court, instead using harmless expressions that Minor characterized as "Christian cuss words"—much to the amusement of his fellow teammates.

One day, Minor finally asked, "Jody, why don't you cuss?" Jody answered simply, "Because I love Christ."

Unsung Heroes

PASTOR
Von Minor

WHERE
Dallas, Texas

CHURCH
Restoration Community Church

Enrolled in Master of Divinity program

PASTORAL ADVICE

“Pray. This is a labor of the Lord. Really seek the Lord in that call, because the responsibility is great. What I’ve learned in [my] two years [as a church planter/pastor] is that this is the business of God, and it has very little to do with me. So [my advice is] to seek godly counsel, to seek the Lord, to hear from God, and to make sure that that call is confirmed in the Scripture for you.”



“That was the first time in my life anybody had said anything like that to me,” Minor says. “He was making a decision to live morally based upon a relationship that he had with Christ, living his life out of this incredible depth of appreciation for what Jesus had done for him. And it just ... it rocked me.”

Although Minor identified as a Christian at the time, his actions and behavior said otherwise. As he and Jody became friends, Minor found himself feeling more and more convicted.

On a Sunday evening, in the midst of a game of Ultimate Frisbee, Minor and Jody conversed on the bleachers. At one point, Jody abruptly told Minor, “Jesus is calling you home.” Minor responded to this simple statement with weeping, and he decided at that moment to finally surrender his life to God.

“I want whatever you have,” he told Jody. “I want a relationship with Jesus. I don’t want Him to be my get-out-of-jail-free card; I want Him to be Lord of my life, Lord of my decisions.”

Reflecting on the profundity of Jody’s statement, Minor says, “I wanted to stamp my ticket; I wanted to get on that train; I wanted to go home; I wanted to go wherever Jesus was. And it radically changed my life.”

‘HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT PREACHING?’

Although his conversation with Jody was a significant milestone in his spiritual journey, the call to ministry was not yet on Minor’s radar. Following his graduation from Texas Tech, Minor returned to Dallas to begin working in television, both in front of the camera and on the business side of things.

While seeking a Bible-teaching church, Minor, at the invitation of a friend, attended Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship and found himself mesmerized by the expository preaching of its pastor, Tony Evans. Minor quickly joined the church and later became involved with the youth ministry.







When the youth pastor discerned Minor's heart for God and ability to communicate, he offered him a teaching position for a Wednesday night class. Having never taught before, Minor initially resisted, but the youth pastor convinced him to accept.

"So I started teaching this class on Wednesdays with the high school juniors and seniors," Minor says. "We started off with about 15-20. That 15-20 became 50; 50 became 75; and then they had to break the partition open in the classrooms because we didn't have enough classroom space. Kids were inviting their friends. It was crazy."

Soon, the question was posed to Minor, "Have you ever thought about preaching?" Reflecting on his rebellious teenage years, Minor deemed himself unworthy of such a task. When the question was presented a second time, Minor brought the matter to his wife, Rebecca. Together, they decided that because their current circumstances were so ideal, and because nothing in their past indicated a future in vocational ministry, they would never seek an opportunity to preach. "Literally, that's what we told God," Minor recalls. "We will never seek an opportunity to preach."

The very next Sunday, a man offered Minor the opportunity to preach an evangelistic sermon at a concert. Remembering their commitment, Minor and his wife met this offer with tears. "That became the impetus for us to begin to really seek God on whether or not He was calling us to ministry," Minor says.

God confirmed this call with another preaching offer not long after, with Minor preaching his first sermon at Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship on June 20, 2001. Realizing that a call to preach is a call to prepare, Minor knew the next step was seminary.

Minor enrolled in Southwestern Seminary in pursuit of a Master of Divinity, taking classes occasionally over the last several years (as of spring 2015, he still has roughly 40 hours left to complete). He says the ministry training, his understanding of theology, his lifelong friendships, and even his time playing basketball in the Recreation and Aerobics Center have all proven significant to him.

Regarding the seminary's impact on his life so far, Minor says, "My grandmother had an expression she would always say



about the Lord—‘You outdid yourself.’ It was tongue-in-cheek, and we would always laugh when she would say it, but as an adult, I have a great appreciation for that sentiment. [Thinking about the impact Southwestern has had on me], it’s like, ‘Wow, God. You outdid yourself.’”

RESTORING ONE TO IMPACT MANY

Minor soon became student minister at Oak Cliff, serving in that capacity seven years. But as this time came to a close, he found himself unsure of what to do next. As if to give him an idea, numerous people asked him at the time, “When are you going to plant a church?”

“I’m never, ever going to plant a church,” Minor replied. “Ever. That’s the last thing I would ever do.”

Minor was eventually introduced to Mike Fechner, founder and president of Hope in Salvation (HIS) BridgeBuilders, an urban missionary organization that ministers to the poor in Dallas. Already intrigued that the organization ministered in the area of Dallas in which he grew up, Minor was impressed by the organization’s outreach and by Fechner’s ministerial heart.

“I never knew what living missionally looked like until I met Mike,” he says. “To see what God was doing within this context and to have a focus on the ‘least’ ... to see that lived out was absolutely fascinating; it just blew me away.”

Minor joined the ministry as director of community development, serving in that capacity for the next five years. Soon, however, he discerned the need to plant a Bible-believing church that could partner with HIS BridgeBuilders in reaching the urban

community of Dallas with the Gospel. Fechner agreed, so he and Minor decided to begin Restoration Community Church (RCC). Thus, another thing Minor had told God he would never do, he did—he planted a church.

Meeting in a “gutted” warehouse, RCC had its first gathering in November 2012 and then launched publicly in August 2013. From an original group of roughly 20 people, the congregation has grown to nearly 200. Because it is located at the convergence of both upper and lower class neighborhoods in central Dallas, the congregation features a variety of races and social classes, from doctors to former drug dealers.

Regardless of their circumstances, however, Minor’s ministerial goals remain the same for each of them: to see their lives restored by the power of the Gospel, to educate them in biblical foundations, to see them live in authentic biblical community (such as through small group meetings), and to lead them to serve others. “I believe if those four areas are fleshed out in the lives of our people, then we’ll see restoration really take root in the lives of our people,” he says.

Minor’s own restoration had already impacted many, and through the ministry of RCC, God has used him to impact many more. His life, therefore, serves as an illustration of RCC’s mission: “restoring one to impact many.”

“Restoration was fleshed out in my life, and it will impact my house,” he says. “And it’s so rewarding to see people owning that and it impacting their lives so that they can impact the lives of so many other people. There’s no more rewarding feeling than seeing that manifest.”



— *AN UNDERSHEPHERD OF THE* —

FLOCK

STEWARDING A PULPIT FOR 66 YEARS AND COUNTING

By Alex Sibley | Photography by Neil Williams



Fred L. Sain has served as pastor of Prairie Hill Baptist Church in Prairie Hill, Texas, since 1949. When he first started, Harry Truman was president of the United States; gasoline cost 27 cents per gallon; World War II had ended fewer than five years ago; and the Soviet Union had just tested its first atomic bomb. Needless to say, during Sain's 66 years in the same pulpit, the culture around him has undergone radical changes.

"I thought I'd probably stay about two years till I went to seminary," Sain says about accepting the pastorate in 1949. "When time came to go to seminary, I offered to resign, and they said, 'No, we'll try to increase your pay a little so you'll have money for car and gas. Try staying with us another year or two.' So I did... and I'm still here."

As the world has changed over the last six decades, the same two objectives have characterized Sain's ministry: preaching the Word and maintaining continual evangelistic outreach. And lest anyone suspect that his years of service have gone to his head, Sain says he still aims to be a better pastor.

"I don't think you can ever stop and look back; you have to keep looking forward," he

says. "My goal as a pastor is to continue to grow in my faith and knowledge of the Word."

Raised by godly parents, Sain became a Christian through the influence of a devout Sunday School teacher. After several of his fellow students made decisions to follow Christ, Sain was asked, "Fred, this is a decision you need to make. Do you understand how to be a Christian?" Sain replied that he did. So, during the invitation later that morning, Sain went forward. He was subsequently baptized into the fellowship of the First Baptist Church of Tahoka, Texas, at 11 years old.

God called him to ministry several years later. While attending the First Baptist Church of Slaton, Texas, Sain heard a sermon on Romans 10. He was struck by verse 14, which says, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" Until that point, Sain had been, in his words, a "common, unconcerned teenager," but upon hearing that sermon, he knew God had called him to preach the Word so that the lost would hear, believe, and call on the name of the Lord and be saved.

Unsung Heroes

PASTOR
Fred L. Sain

WHERE
Prairie Hill, Texas

CHURCH
Prairie Hill Baptist Church

*Earned Master of Religious Education
and Bachelor of Divinity in 1954*

PASTORAL ADVICE

“You have to start out with the belief that you must be called to the church, people must be called to you, and you need to be humble and stay in the Word. Try not to build a church on yourself, but build it on the Word.”



“I didn’t go forward in the church service,” Sain says, “but I talked to my pastor later, and he counseled me and led me along the way, and I surrendered my life to ministry.” He was licensed by FBC Slaton on Sept. 1, 1946.

Sain’s first pastorate was at McClung Baptist Church near Lubbock. Although he says God blessed his ministry there and taught him how to preach, after only a year and a half, Sain felt called to attend Baylor University, so he resigned from the church and moved to Waco.

During his senior year at Baylor, Sain was asked to preach at Prairie Hill Baptist Church, located northeast of Waco. He did so, and the church liked him so much that they asked him to return soon after. For his next visit, they asked that he preach in view of a call and subsequently offered him the pastorate. He officially accepted the position on Sept. 21, 1949, and he has been there ever since.

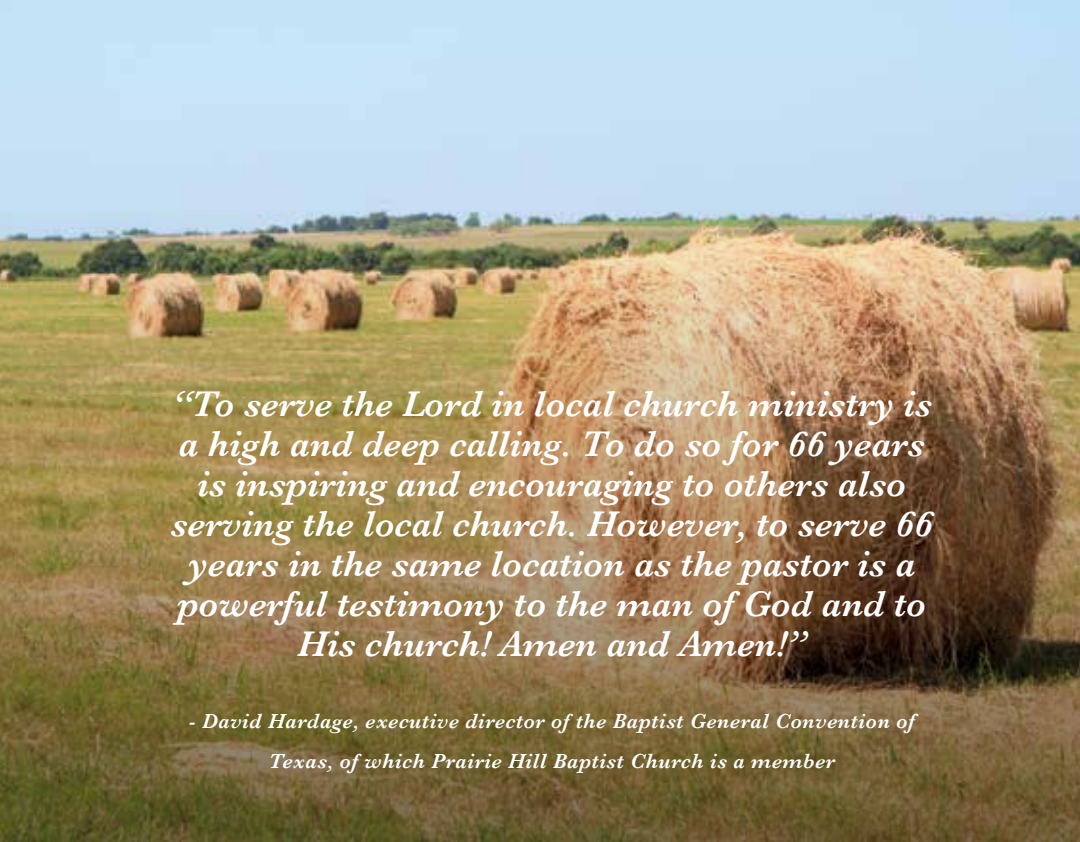
“In the neighborhood of our church, there have been 11 or 12 churches that have disappeared,” Sain says of the changes in Prairie Hill over the past 66 years. “In other words, these are rural churches that just aren’t here anymore. [But] our church has continued because I’ve been here and I’ve worked with it, and we have members now that come from several different places outside the community as well as in the community.”

When Sain was hired, he informed his congregation that he was still in school, with plans to further his education at Southwestern Seminary. They assured him that would not be an issue and even gave him a raise in order to support his travels to and from Fort Worth.

After earning both a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Baylor, Sain moved to Fort Worth in order to attend Southwestern. As he pursued his Master of Religious Education and Bachelor of Divinity simultaneously, he commuted to Prairie Hill (roughly 100 miles away) on weekends.

Sain says his time at Southwestern has been a great enrichment to his ministry. Studying under the likes of J.M. Price, the first dean of the School of Religious Education; Boyd Hunt, a distinguished professor of theology; and John Newport, distinguished professor of philosophy of religion, Sain says, “More than the books I read, I remember the professors that I had. The teachers’ attitudes and





“To serve the Lord in local church ministry is a high and deep calling. To do so for 66 years is inspiring and encouraging to others also serving the local church. However, to serve 66 years in the same location as the pastor is a powerful testimony to the man of God and to His church! Amen and Amen!”

- David Hardage, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, of which Prairie Hill Baptist Church is a member



their outlooks on life certainly influenced my outlook on life. All of them were just top-notch people.”

When he graduated in 1954 and returned full-time to Prairie Hill, Sain assumed that he would someday move on to another church. After more than 60 years, however, that has yet to happen, and it appears unlikely that it ever will.

“There have been [other opportunities],” Sain says. “I don’t recall all of them now, but when other churches opened up, I never felt it was the right decision to make at the time and I still had work to complete here, and so I just kept staying here.”

“About 20 years ago, I realized that I’d be here until I retired. It was just a general sense that I wouldn’t be moving on. We had our home here, and I just felt like my work was here.” With a laugh, he concludes, “And I’d become so immersed in [the work here] that I wasn’t sure I could fit into anyone else’s program.”

Because of the passage of time, Sain has essentially ministered to four different congregations. Although he says the current congregation has been the most difficult because of his age and the radical changes in culture, he has nevertheless continued to minister the same way he always has—by preaching not himself, but the Word of God.

“Humility is a great virtue that you have to learn right quick if you’re a minister,” Sain says. “You need to be humble and stay

in the Word. Try not to build a church on yourself, but build it on the Word.”

As a result of Sain’s upward focus, since last September, Prairie Hill Baptist Church, which has an average attendance between 50 and 75, has baptized 13 new believers. Additionally, members of the church have become like members of the family. “We have a very close, loving relationship with all the people in the church,” he says, “and we have very few times when we have difficulty cooperating together.”

Regarding how he has personally benefitted from his years of ministry, Sain says, “It has certainly made me study more, because if I repeat a sermon that I preached 10 years ago, someone will remember it and remind me that I preached it 10 years ago. So I have to keep studying and finding new material. I stay in the Word, and I try to keep up with the needs of the people.”

After nearly seven decades in the same pulpit, Sain nevertheless remains humble about his ministry. His success is not based on the length of his tenure, nor is it his ambition to gain recognition. “I don’t consider myself anything exceptional,” he says. “I’ve just been here a long time—a little longer than most people serve.”

“My success is to be a faithful servant of Christ; being an undershepherd to a flock that He has placed in my trust. That’s my ambition.”

NOT LIMITED BY

GEOGRAPHY

SMALL-TOWN PASTOR MINISTERS WHEREVER GOD PLACES HIM

By Alex Sibley | Photography by Adam Tarleton





People often ask Nathan Davis how he ended up in Coushatta, La., a 3.4-square-mile town situated on the east bank of the Red River roughly 45 miles south of Shreveport. His answer to them is simple: “Because the Lord called me here. There is no other reason.”

“When He calls,” Davis explains, “we must answer the calling, even if perceived better opportunities come our way. We must be faithful to preach God’s Word and allow Him to use us in whatever way He decides.”

A native-born Texan raised in a Christian home and saved at 6 years old while watching a Billy Graham crusade, Davis was 17 when he felt God’s call on his life to the ministry. Although he initially wrestled with the call for fear of speaking in front of people, Davis found comfort in Luke 12:12, which says, “... the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

Though he did not immediately sense the specific call to be a small-town church pastor, Davis nevertheless established a clear goal for ministry: “To be faithful with what the Lord has given me. To make an impact wherever I am, regardless of the population or size of congregation.”

Davis prepared for ministry by attending Southwestern Seminary. He chose Southwestern because of its rich history and conservative values that he wanted to be taught.

“I also knew Southwestern was known for being a seminary that produced great preachers of the Gospel,” he says. “I desired to be such a preacher.”

Earning his Master of Divinity in 2006 and his Doctor of Ministry in 2013, Davis says Southwestern has had a profound impact on his life. “I believe I received solid biblical training from this fine biblical institution,” he says. “I met some wonderful professors such as Dr. David Allen and Dr. Steven Smith, whom I believe are lifetime friends, as well as

Unsung Heroes

PASTOR
Nathan Davis

WHERE
Coushatta, Louisiana

CHURCH
First Baptist Church of Coushatta
Earned Master of Divinity in 2006
and Doctor of Ministry in 2013

PASTORAL ADVICE

“Make sure you are called to pastor. You are not a hireling, and pastoring isn’t for sissies. It isn’t easy, but it is fulfilling if that is what God has called you to do. Study hard while you are in seminary, but study harder when you are out of seminary, because you should be a lifetime student of the Bible. Enjoy the relationships you have cultivated in seminary and make sure you don’t neglect your friends in ministry.”



others along the way who have helped me become the person that I am today.”

Beginning at age 20 and continuing through his years at seminary, Davis served in various ministerial roles—from youth minister to associate pastor to senior pastor—in five different churches. The Lord brought him to FBC Coushatta in January 2010.

“At the time,” Davis says, “I was wrestling with where God was leading me. When FBC Coushatta contacted me, I was talking to a larger church about being their executive pastor, but when I prayed about it, the Lord was clearly leading me to the great FBC Coushatta.”

Over the last five years, Davis says God has blessed the church in a mighty way, both numerically and spiritually. Two years ago, for example, the church completed a multi-million dollar Family Life Center, debt free, and earlier this year, they added a new parking lot to accommodate the need, also debt free. In addition, they have seen many come to know Christ.

Davis says people often think that, in small towns, the quality of ministry is less than that of a larger church. He points out, however, that at FBC Coushatta, visitors see that the church has quality ministries, from a youth ministry that aims to train its students as messengers of the Word to a women’s ministry that hosts an annual conference, various women’s events, and a craft night every quarter. “We preach and teach God’s Word effectively,” Davis says, “and we see lives changed consistently, just like anywhere else.”

Because Coushatta does not have an influx of people (in fact, its population decreased between the 2000 and 2010 censuses), Davis says that to experience God’s blessing in an area like theirs is amazing. He often tells people that Jesus’ work is not limited by geography, reminding them that, during His earthly ministry, Jesus frequently did His greatest work in the least likely places.

“Success in ministry is being effective wherever you are,” Davis concludes. “Effective in ministry’ doesn’t mean you will serve at the largest church in the convention or that you will be recognized for your hard work. Effectiveness means seeing lives changed for eternity, and that is the key to being successful.”



BIVOCATIONAL

MINISTRY

A CHANNEL OF BLESSING IN BOTH THE MINISTERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL WORLDS

By Alex Sibley | Photography by Matt Miller





Having served as a bivocational pastor for nearly 30 years, Steve Charles, pastor of New Covenant Baptist Church in Canandaigua, N.Y., has a heart for small-church pastors—that is, those who, by nature of their ministry, must find employment outside the church. He says that while most bivocational ministers feel forced into this situation and would prefer to be fully funded, he sees it as a tremendous opportunity for ministry both inside and outside the church.

“I am intentionally bivocational because that’s what God called me to be,” he says. “I really wrestled with the question of whether I was ducking ministry by being bivocational; whether I was depending on something ‘safe’ instead of trusting God. But He showed me that He was in charge and I could follow Him freely.”

Reflecting on his own experience at New Covenant, Charles says, “A tiny church, just starting out, was able to get a seminary-trained pastor. We were able to invest so much more money in ministry rather than staff. The people give themselves to ministry because I am one of them and understand the pressures they are facing.”

For this reason, Charles’ advice to seminary students preparing to enter the pastorate is to consider bivocational ministry. “Take the skills God has given you,” he says, “and invest them in missions.”

After becoming a Christian at age 7, Charles received his call to ministry as a college student. The summer following his freshman year, God convicted him that he had not been living biblically at school. Charles repented and, in his words, gave God “all that I am and all that I have.”

“A few weeks later,” Charles says, “I felt God telling me that if I didn’t surrender to the ministry, I would never be the strong Christian that I wanted to be; that I needed the focus and pressure of ministry to keep me straight. I could choose to follow Him in ministry or be cold and weak as a Christian. I’m a pastor because I’m too weak not to be one!”

Before Charles would prepare for ministry through seminary studies, however, he first spent several years serving in the military. Stationed in Michigan, Charles found his time in the army gave him his first exposure to the Northeast.

“Having grown up in Florida, that first winter with three blizzards was quite an experience,” Charles says. “I thought, ‘Why do people live here? Why don’t they just move!’”

Unsung Heroes

PASTOR
Steve Charles

WHERE
Canandaigua, New York

CHURCH
New Covenant Baptist Church

Earned Master of Divinity in 1985

PASTORAL ADVICE

“Consider bivocational ministry. I am intentionally bivocational because that’s what God called me to be. ... The people give themselves to ministry because I am one of them and understand the pressures they are facing. Take the skills God has given you and invest them in missions.”





Charles left the army in 1981 and headed to Southwestern Seminary, convinced that God would eventually call him to “a red-brick Baptist church somewhere south of the Mason-Dixon Line” where he would not have to shovel his driveway anymore. While at Southwestern, however, in the midst of receiving what he calls “fantastic preparation” in languages, theology, and practice, Charles also caught the seminary’s heart for missions. During a business trip to upstate New York, Charles, in spite of his reservations about the climate, felt called to serve there.

When Charles graduated from Southwestern with his Master of Divinity in 1985, he sent his resume to three different associations. The director of missions in Rochester, N.Y., called and said that God definitely wanted him in Rochester. They paid for him and his wife to visit, and there God affirmed their call to move to the Northeast. In addition to his vocational ministry, Charles was also able to find a job in the computer field.

For his first ministry effort, Charles attempted to plant a church on the east side of Rochester. These efforts, however, proved unsuccessful. In 1986, following the departure of its former pastor, Charles began supply preaching for New Covenant Baptist Church. Before long, he became the interim pastor.

After several months in this position, Charles noticed that the pastor search committee was no longer looking at resumes or listening to sermon tapes. Taking the hint, Charles and his wife took a weekend to seek God’s will for their lives. They decided to apply for the pastorate at New Covenant, and the church unanimously approved. He began officially serving in August 1987.

In the ensuing years, Charles has served as New Covenant’s pastor while simultaneously working various jobs in the computer

field, including the IT department at the University of Rochester. Currently, he does remote support of payroll for a large company, which allows him to work from the church office and travel perhaps once a year. As a result of having a salaried position outside the church, church funds that would otherwise go toward his income have instead been invested in ministry, allowing New Covenant to impact the community in more and better ways than it could if Charles were full-time.

In addition, Charles’ position in the ministerial and professional worlds has allowed him to be a channel of blessing to both. “The church has been very supportive of the idea that it is their ministry,” Charles says of New Covenant.

“I can’t be available all the time, so they step up. Early on, we realized that if I weren’t bivocational, the church would be tempted to let me do it all and miss ministering themselves.” He adds, “The only way my ministry has worked is through a committed church. They do the ministry.”

“In the work field,” he continues, “I’ve almost always had bosses who were intrigued with the fact that I am a pastor, even if they weren’t Christians themselves. One of my bosses was inspired to go back to church and is thriving today.”

Regardless of context, Charles calls his life of ministry a rewarding one. “I get to share the living, exciting, life-changing Word of God,” he says. “I get to see people come to trust God, be transformed, and grow to minister to others. I get to walk with people in the most meaningful events of their lives. I am truly blessed. If I’d never asked back in 1987 if my boss would let me work for and pay me for only four days a week so I could pastor the other day, who knows what I would have missed?”

— CARRYING THE BATON OF —

LEADERSHIP

DEVOTING ONE'S LIFE TO THE LOVE AND CARE OF GOD'S CHURCH

By Alex Sibley | Photography by Adam Tarleton





Fresh out of high school, Wes Terry began at Broadview Baptist Church in Abilene, Texas, as an unpaid mission intern, later working his way up to part-time mission assistant. In 2006, when the church planted its west campus, Terry was appointed the campus' worship pastor. There, Terry's call to ministry solidified and eventually became a clear call to preach the Gospel. As Terry sought to become better equipped for ministry, Broadview supported him by paying for his education at Southwestern Seminary. Additionally, the west campus pastor graciously allowed Terry to preach every other week.

During this time, David Cason, senior pastor at Broadview for nearly 40 years, in light of his impending retirement, saw the need to pass the baton of church leadership to a younger generation. Specifically, he needed to groom a new senior pastor to take his place. Although the search committee initially looked elsewhere, they soon discerned in Terry a heart for the Lord and for the Word, as well as a level of maturity found in few others his age. After some prayer, the committee agreed that God had been grooming Terry as their new pastor all along.

When Cason first approached Terry with this proposition, Terry's immediate

thought was, "No way!" Given his relative lack of experience, the 23-year-old Terry questioned his ability to lead a church the size of Broadview, especially if it meant succeeding a senior pastor who had led the congregation for nearly four decades. After praying about the opportunity, however, God confirmed in his heart that this was the right thing to do.

He thought to himself, "Even if this fails, at least I'll be personally mentored by one of the greatest pastors I know. If this doesn't fail, I will be living every seminarian's dream [not long] after my graduation from seminary."

The transition process began in 2008 and culminated in Terry's succession as senior pastor of Broadview in February 2013. Although the transition presented difficulties, by the grace of God and with the protection and encouragement He provided, the church has embraced Terry as their new shepherd, and the transition has been celebrated as a great success.

Terry was born in Midland, Texas, in 1985. After accepting Christ at age 7, he received the call to ministry as a high school student. While attending a community college in Abilene, Terry, a guitar player and singer, sought a church in which he could serve. He discovered Broadview through its

Unsung Heroes

PASTOR
Wes Terry

WHERE
Abilene, Texas

CHURCH
Broadview Baptist Church

*Earned Bachelor of Arts in 2009
and Master of Divinity in 2011*

PASTORAL ADVICE

“Be careful that you don’t overestimate what you can do in the first two to three years, and don’t underestimate what you can do over 20-30 years. If you’ll love your people and let them know it, then they will put up with a lot of your mistakes. Focus on discipleship, not church growth. Some people focus on building a church and hope to make disciples. If you’ll focus on making disciples, then Jesus will build the church.”



website and emailed its mission pastor, Vernon Ferguson, about the church’s apartment ministry.

“I thought I’d be a help leading worship at different apartments,” Terry says. “I showed up one night to one of the apartments, got out my guitar, and started singing. There was a quick and meaningful connection between Vernon and me, so I went to one of Broadview’s services.”

Terry began attending Broadview regularly, and his connection with Ferguson led to his being hired on staff. As he worked his way up through the ranks, Terry followed the advice of a friend to attend Southwestern Seminary. He began in spring 2006, finishing his Bachelor of Arts in Humanities in May 2009 and then his Master of Divinity in December 2011. He says the college was instrumental in teaching him how to think, and the apologetics and philosophy courses helped him understand how to love God with his mind.

“Southwestern gave me a love for Scripture, tools to preach and teach it, and resources to defend it when necessary,” Terry says. “I had a crisis of faith during my time at Southwestern. I questioned everything from the existence of God to the proper approach to baptism. But the doubts deepened my faith and strengthened my Baptist convictions; they didn’t destroy them. I think the atmosphere at the seminary was a large reason why.”

Terry’s transition into the senior pastorate at Broadview began unofficially in 2008, while Terry was still a student. To complement his institutional education, Pastor Cason, also a Southwestern graduate (M.Div., 1975), actively groomed Terry in the practical and experiential aspects of leading a church.

Among the most significant methods for doing so were their daily 4 o’clock meetings for coffee at Starbucks. These meetings comprised exhaustive discussions on as many matters relating to church ministry as they could conceive, from how to conduct staff meetings to how to love the church even when it is a source of great pain.

Noting that these meetings took place over six years, Terry jokes, “I have a caffeine addiction to this day because of those mentoring sessions.” Nevertheless, these meetings have proved invaluable for





Terry. He says, “Maybe nothing has shaped my ministry more than conversations with Pastor Cason over a cup of coffee.”

Other means for equipping included hospital visits, book recommendations, prayer meetings, staff meetings, and Sunday morning preaching. After five years, Terry spent one year as Cason’s co-pastor, meaning that they shared pastoral responsibilities and made every decision together. At the end of that year, Cason officially retired, and Terry became the senior pastor.

Terry says that while this transition was not harmful to the church, it was difficult for everyone involved—the congregation because it was losing its pastor of 40 years, Cason because he was entrusting his years of faithful service to the hands of someone else, and Terry because he was inheriting a senior pastorate barely a year after graduating from seminary. Nevertheless,

Broadview managed to avoid many of the typical problems associated with transition.

“The primary reason the transition was successful was because of the prayers of many Broadview members and the amazing grace of our Lord,” Terry says. “Pastor David was an instrument in the Master’s hands. His humility allowed God to do what only He could do. God gave the transition His blessing.”

During his two years as senior pastor, Terry has led Broadview toward its “2015 vision”—which was adopted during Cason’s tenure—to see 500 people come to faith in Christ and be baptized and to see 600 people go on short-term mission trips locally and abroad. Through June of this year, the church has baptized 241 new believers and seen 566 people go on mission trips. In addition, Broadview has adopted a church plant in Oregon and an unreached/unengaged people group in Africa.

Cason, who, after taking a year off, now serves as Terry’s associate pastor, says Terry, in spite of his lack of experience, has stepped up and shown himself to be a leader, as evidenced by the congregation’s willingness to follow him. “They’re all on the same page,” Cason says, “and that’s been the biggest thing I’ve seen—just the welcoming. He’s led, and people have followed, and there’s overall a great unity within the church.”

Regarding the projected length of his pastorate, Terry says, “I’d love to be for Broadview what Pastor Cason was—a pastor who gave his life for the love and care of God’s church in a single location for most of his time in ministry. I’m hopeful that the longer I stay, the more folks will believe that about me. I want to stay here for the rest of my ministry ... but that’s up to the Lord.”

A LONG AND HARD
ROAD

FOLLOWING GOD'S CALL TO THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN

Written and Photographed by Adam Covington





The vast majority of people in the United States had never heard of Wasilla, Alaska, until 2008, when Republican Presidential Nominee John McCain announced Sarah Palin as his vice presidential running mate. Suddenly, this small city (yet the sixth largest in Alaska) was thrust into national prominence as Palin's hometown. Among Alaskans, Wasilla has long been known as the headquarters of the Iditarod Trail, a 1,000-mile trail system frequently used in winter months by dogsledders to deliver mail, gold, and supplies to and from the farthest reaching outposts of Alaska.

It was at the First Baptist Church of Wasilla in 1987 that Rodney Kovtynovich first responded to God's call on his life, and it was there in Wasilla that he would later find a pastorate. Upon responding to his call, Kovtynovich, who now serves as pastor of Schrock Road Community Church in Wasilla, quickly sensed the need to help small churches that could not support a full-time minister, in spite of the difficulties that would present. "God impressed upon me and my wife at the very beginning that this was going to be a hard, long road," says Kovtynovich.

Called to preach the Word of God, Kovtynovich realized through the counsel of his pastor and associate pastor that if he were going to have longevity in ministry, he would need to spend time preparing for the ministry. So, in 1989, the Kovtynovich family moved to Fort Worth, Texas, so Rodney could begin work on a Master of Divinity with an emphasis in biblical languages at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Kovtynovich says Southwestern gave him a base of knowledge to do the work of ministry. "My professors challenged me to think my theological beliefs all the way to the end. Professors Justice Anderson and Bud Fray instilled a love and understanding of missions that still impacts me today and impacts how we see and support missions at Schrock Road."

During his time at Southwestern, Kovtynovich balanced days that consisted of full-time study, full-time employment, and full-time fatherhood, leaving little time for much else. These long days would set the pace for the pastorate to which God would later call him.

Upon completion of his M.Div., Kovtynovich sent out his resume to churches all across the U.S. He and his wife, Anita, prayed and waited, looking for where the Lord would send them.

Unsung Heroes

PASTOR
Rodney Kovtynovich

WHERE
Wasilla, Alaska

CHURCH
Schrock Road Community Church

Earned Master of Divinity in 1993

PASTORAL ADVICE

“Give God time to work in your ministry wherever He puts you. Be willing to stay where He puts you even through the times of dissatisfaction, because there are a lot of those times. I don’t know how many times I’ve been ready to throw in the towel, so to speak, and do something different because it is so tough. Stay long enough to let God do His work wherever you are; don’t worry about what you want [your ministry] to be.”





“When I was in seminary I heard about guys who had their ministerial careers lined out, and I was kind of appalled by that,” says Kovtynovich. “I heard a lot of these young guys with their plans for ministry, and I just wanted to say, ‘Give God time to work in your life and in your ministry, because it’s not always our timeline.’”

While he waited on the Lord’s timing, Kovtynovich found employment in Fort Worth, working for the United States Postal Service, a job similar to one he held in Alaska prior to his call to ministry. In 1996, Kovtynovich called up a friend and former manager from Wasilla to see if any positions were open at the post office there, and they offered him a spot. Kovtynovich accepted, and the family moved back to Alaska.

“We figured we’d go back up to Alaska, and if God wanted us somewhere else, we’d just move again,” Kovtynovich recalls. “So He

brought us up here, and I had several churches I was working with [while I was employed full-time at the post office], but one by one, all of those places just kept disappearing.”

In 1997, Kovtynovich was approached by a couple from FBC Wasilla who were working with children from a small part of the community near LaVerne Griffin Youth Recreation Camp, a Southern Baptist camp located just on the outskirts of Wasilla. The couple asked if he would consider pastoring a church in this community. The Lord had put on the couple’s hearts the conviction that these children, who had been shuttled to various churches around the area, needed a church in their own neighborhood. In speaking with this couple, Kovtynovich felt the same conviction in his own heart, and so he followed the Lord’s leading to become the founding pastor of Schrock Road Community Church.

Surrounded by birch trees and in the shadow of Baldy Mountain, the church, meeting on a small gravel patch in a trailer with a lean-to, began to minister to families in the community through weekly services, Wednesday night Bible studies, and focused outreach efforts like Vacation Bible School. The challenge they faced as they started the church was reaching all the members of the families in their community. “Our ministry is mostly to children; that’s how it started, and that’s how it continues in so many ways,” says Kovtynovich.

Alcoholism, drug-abuse, and fractured families plague many of the people in the rural context of Alaska, and building trust can be a difficult task. “Some people were distrustful of our intentions [initially] because other churches had tried and quit because results were not quick and the children and families would not be able



to support the church,” Kovtynovich explains.

As they developed deeper relationships in the community, the Kovtynoviches were struck by the reality that so many of the children in the community lacked a good picture of what a healthy marital relationship looks like. So, in addition to preaching the Word, Rodney and Anita have modeled a Christ-exalting marriage to the generations of children who have come through Schrock Road in the past 18 years.

During that time, Kovtynovich has continued to work at the post office, which means his time is often split between shepherding his flock and working a full-time job. And even though he never intended for it to be the case, he recognizes the blessing of the Lord in allowing him to be a bivocational pastor.

“I never thought I was going to stay at the post office,” Kovtynovich says. “I never started the work at the church thinking that, 20 years later, I’d still be working at the post office.” But he and his family continue to see how the Lord has provided for them through this full-time position.

“One of the benefits of being at the post office is I see a lot of people, and people know me,” Kovtynovich explains. “They also know that I’m a pastor. [So] people come to the counter, and they oftentimes will say things because they know I will remember it and pray for them. I have an opportunity to pray for the community in a way that a lot of other people don’t.”

Almost five years after its launch, Schrock Road Community Church officially opened the doors to a modest yet cozy church building next to the trailer in which they had been meeting. However, fewer than four months later, a malfunction with the building’s furnace resulted in a fire that destroyed the entire facility.

“That’s one of those things they just simply can’t prepare you for in seminary,” Kovtynovich says. “To have to stand there and watch your church burn to the ground.”

Though this was obviously a setback, the reminder that the Lord called them to this place and to this flock kept the Kovtynovich family from giving up at this point in their journey. The church met in a handful of locations over the next year, including the Kovtynoviches’ living room, the garage of one of their members’ homes, and under an open-air canopy on the church property during the summer. They were eventually able to begin construction on a new building on their property, and the church now meets in a building more than double the size of the building that burned down. Though this experience certainly qualified as a “bump” in the road, God nevertheless confirmed that He was sovereign over the situation and that Kovtynovich was meant to stay there.

In speaking of what success looks like at Schrock Road, Kovtynovich prefers to leave it all in the Lord’s hands. “Statistically, my pastorate may never be perceived as a successful pastorate, but I have remained true to what God called me to, and so [even if] it’s only going to be a success in God’s eyes, that’s where I have to leave that. Success will be measured as we continue to see lives changed through the work of Jesus.”



DID YOU KNOW?

SOUTHWESTERN

90,900
VISITS TO THE
LIBRARY



107

YEARS IN EXISTENCE

2,645

PROFESSIONS OF FAITH FROM
MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM
PRACTICUMS (2008-SPRING 2015)

6 NUMBER OF
SCHOOLS



EXTENSION CENTER
LOCATIONS

7

1 *SINGLE GOAL:*
PREACH THE WORD,
REACH THE WORLD

8



NUMBER OF PRESIDENTS



14,086

REVIVE THIS NATION
SALVATIONS

80 NUMBER OF
SCHOOLS WITH
WHICH GTI HAS PARTNERED

45

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES REPRESENTED BY STUDENT BODY

7

WEDDINGS CONDUCTED IN GAZEBO SINCE 2010



MORE THAN

450,000

NUMBER OF SWBTS LIBRARIES EBOOKS

5,000

(ANNUAL AVERAGE)

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED ANNUALLY THROUGH PECAN MANOR



17,000

NUMBER OF BOOKS CIRCULATED IN ROBERTS LIBRARY THIS PAST YEAR

44,417

NUMBER OF GRADUATES SINCE SCHOOL'S FOUNDING

16

NUMBER OF (MAJOR) BUILDINGS



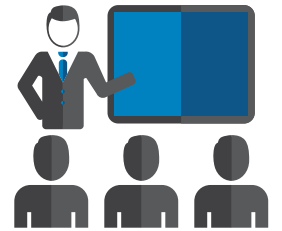
210,000

NUMBER OF SWN MAILED IN A YEAR



107

NUMBER OF FULL-TIME FACULTY



1,787,201

NUMBER OF TITLES IN ROBERTS LIBRARY (PRINT BOOKS)



163,285

MILES TRAVELED IN U.S. BY ADMISSIONS TEAM (2014-2015 YEAR)

200

ACREAGE OF MAIN CAMPUS



436

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS ON CAMPUS

129

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES THE PATTERSONS HAVE VISITED





SOUTHWESTERN STUDENTS PLANT GOSPEL SEEDS, REAP ABUNDANT HARVEST IN ANNUAL CROSSOVER EFFORT

By Alex Sibley

This year, 51 Southwesterners hit the streets of Bexley, a suburb of Columbus, Ohio, in order to saturate the community with the Gospel, June 8-13, as part of the Southern Baptist Convention's annual Crossover evangelism push prior to its annual meeting in Columbus. Before Crossover even began, however, students were already eager to share the Gospel. Doctor of Philosophy student Brandon Kiesling, who led Southwestern's team, reported on Sunday, June 7, that two people had already professed faith in Christ as a result of Southwestern students' evangelistic witness. Regarding one of these professions, Kiesling said, "Idris is a taxi driver who

brought one of our students from the airport and became a child of God before he dropped her off!"

This report would prove to be indicative of the fruit that the Southwestern team would see throughout the week. Visiting nearly 8,000 homes and engaging in more than 300 Gospel conversations, the team saw a total of 49 people receive Christ.

The week consisted of three primary activities: morning classes taught by Kiesling and other Southern Baptist seminary professors, evangelism in the afternoons, and debriefing sessions in the evenings. These evening sessions included worship, Bible

study, and praise reports regarding what had happened each day.

Kiesling says, "I just stood back and watched our students go, and it was incredible how intentional they became. One of my first lectures was on overcoming fears in evangelism. Several of our students admitted to having some of these fears in their lives, but by the end of the week, they were bold; they weren't even affected by them."

In addition to door-to-door evangelism, the team also partnered with Paramount Church, a young church plant in Bexley. As a means of aiding Paramount in reaching its community, Southwesterners handed out fliers for the church, inviting local residents to a block party hosted by the church that took place Saturday, June 13. Kiesling says they were able to observe the fruits of their labor during the block party, as more than 500 people attended.



FORMER PRISONER, HAVARD GRADUATE RECEIVES ALUMNI AWARD

By Alex Sibley

Southwestern graduate Brandon Warren received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Lee College at the Texas Correctional Education Conference, June 18. Upon accepting the award, Warren, who earned an associate's degree from Lee College while an inmate in Huntsville Unit, shared his testimony with attendees and explained how God has used him since his release from prison. Specifically, he explained that, after enrolling in the master's program at Southwestern's Havard campus in Houston, he became heavily involved in the seminary's Darrington prison program, doing for those prisoners what Lee College did for him.

Warren became a Christian several years into his prison sentence. Having studied and even participated in multiple religious practices, Warren was finally led to the Lord by a Christian friend of his. The call to ministry came immediately thereafter.

When he was released from prison, Warren pursued his Master of Divinity at

Southwestern Seminary's Houston campus beginning in January 2010. At that time, he met Denny Autrey, dean of the Havard School, who was intrigued by Warren's passion for prison ministry.

The following year, when discussions began about Southwestern establishing a prison program in Darrington Unit, Autrey immediately contacted Warren, informing him of the opportunity and insisting that he be involved. So, in January 2011, Warren was officially hired by Southwestern as an administrative assistant for the Darrington extension.

"Brandon has played an essential role in our program," says Director of the Darrington Extension Ben Phillips. "As a former prisoner, he has provided a unique and indispensable perspective on what our students face, what is driving them, and how they think and talk. God has used Brandon to counsel and encourage students and also to provide wise counsel to me as the director of the program."

Darrington held its first graduation



ceremony in May 2015. A total of 33 inmates received bachelor's degrees. As a way to honor these men, with whom he has built strong friendships, Warren, who completed his Master of Divinity that same semester, obtained special permission to delay his graduation from Southwestern so that he could receive his degree at the prison graduation ceremony. When he walked across the stage, the inmates erupted in applause.

While accepting the distinguished alumni award from Lee College at the Texas Correctional Education Conference, Warren showed the FOX 26 news report on the Darrington graduation, showcasing what God has done over the years in that program. He also spoke of his joy at being able to serve men who are in the same position he once was with the good news of Christ.

STUDENTS SOW GOSPEL SEEDS IN JAPAN

By Katie Coleman

Seven Southwestern students and faculty spent four weeks reaching the people of Nagoya, Japan, with the Gospel, May 29-June 27. During their time in the third largest city in Japan, the group engaged in 75 spiritual conversations through university campus ministry, "five-minute English lessons,"

and other various ministry opportunities. Although they did not see any salvations, team members say many seeds were sown and important foundations were laid for people to be receptive to the Gospel in the future.

For many of the Southwestern students, God used this trip to affirm their calling to

serve long-term in Japan. "Japan really needs workers," says Master of Divinity student Vanessa Lim. "Not just workers, but disciplers. Japan really needs mature leaders to lead the rest of them."

JEANNIE ELLIFF DIES AFTER BATTLE WITH CANCER

By Katie Coleman



After a nine-year battle with cancer, Jeannie Elliff, beloved wife of former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and

International Mission Board (IMB) president and Southwestern alumnus Tom Elliff, passed away July 20.

After graduating from Southwestern in 1971, Elliff's husband, Tom, pastored churches in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Colorado. The Elliffs served as IMB missionaries in Zimbabwe from 1981-1983. Elliff also served alongside her husband while he was president of the SBC for two consecutive terms and later president of the IMB for three years.

In 2014, Elliff was honored with the Willie Turner Dawson Award during the Ministers' Wives Luncheon at the annual meeting of the SBC. The award is given to a minister's wife recognized for making a distinct denominational contribution beyond the local church.

Elliff co-authored *Letters to Lovers: Wisdom for Every Season of Your Marriage* with her husband and was a frequent guest on "FamilyLife Today." She was known by many for her intercessory prayer for missionaries and encouragement to women.

Dorothy Patterson, wife of Southwestern Seminary President Paige Patterson, says of Elliff, "[She] was an extraordinary woman—a wife who joyfully helped her husband, a mother who diligently nurtured her children, and a grandmother who creatively invested in her grandchildren. Her influence reached far beyond the family circle. She was mentoring and faithful to me and other friends; and then via her life, testimony, godly counsel, and prayers, she reached multiple generations of women literally around the world.

"No one has encouraged me more in the woman-to-woman teaching we are doing here at Southwestern, and no one shared my passion for the importance of the homemaker more than did Jeannie Elliff. In fact, I can say without doubt that, in true Southwestern tradition, 'The sun never set on Jeannie Elliff' and her outpouring of all she had for the Savior into whose arms she has now been received."

FORMER PROFESSOR OF MISSIONS MIKE BARNETT DIES AT 62

By Alex Sibley

Mike Barnett, former professor of missions at Southwestern Seminary, died suddenly on Sunday, August 9. He was 62.

"Mike Barnett was one of my best friends," says Frank Page, president of the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. "He and his family are very close to my family, and he will be deeply missed. A scholar, a passionate follower of Christ, devoted to missions totally, Mike Barnett was a man whose passing has made heaven richer. I'm in shock over his passing and praying passionately for his wife and children."

In the years preceding his death, Barnett served as dean of the College of Intercultural Studies and professor of intercultural and historical studies at Columbia International University (CIU) in Columbia, S.C. He earned his Master of Divinity from Southwestern in 1987 and his Ph.D. in Church History in 1995. He later served on the seminary's faculty, becoming assistant dean for evangelism and

missions studies and director of the World Missions Center in 2002.

Prior to his career in academia, Barnett and his wife, Cindy, served as missionaries with the International Mission Board for 12 years. He was also, at one time, a minister of missions and church planter in North America. Barnett transitioned into the academic world because, as stated on his faculty bio on CIU's website, God's call on his life was "to equip the saints for being on mission with God among all peoples on earth."

Michael Dean, senior pastor at Travis Avenue Baptist Church where Barnett was a member prior to his transition to Columbia, says, "Mike's heart for the lost world was an inspiration to me. He helped us think strategically about how we can join God in developing on-mission followers of Jesus. We are saddened to learn of Mike's death; our hearts go out to Cindy and the rest of the family."





AUSTRALIA TEAM WORKS WITH LOCAL CHURCH TO EVANGELIZE BRISBANE

By Katie Coleman

Southwestern students and faculty partnered with City Tabernacle Baptist Church in Brisbane, Australia, July 7-23, to engage the city with the Gospel. In addition to evangelizing on the streets of the city, the Southwestern team was also involved with various ministries of City Tabernacle. Ultimately, the mission team engaged in more than 130 Gospel conversations and saw four people profess faith in Christ.

“It was great to see that a majority of the professions of faith during our trip came from people who had already been touched by City Tabernacle,” Doctor of Philosophy student Brandon Kiesling says. “One of the hardest things to do is follow-up. It’s great to know that the church will be able to follow up with these [new believers] because they have already connected with them several times.”



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OXFORD STUDY TOUR ENGAGES IN EVANGELISM, MISSIONS IN CROSS-CULTURAL SETTING

By Alex Sibley

On the eve of their return from Great Britain, the participants in this year's Oxford Study Tour received a final exhortation from the program's director, Malcolm Yarnell. Speaking from 1 Peter 2:9-12, Yarnell reminded the nearly 60 Southwestern and Southeastern Seminary students that, as believers, they are strangers in this world, having been kept here in order to live a holy life and lead others to Christ.

Yarnell, who serves as professor of systematic theology at Southwestern, said, "Now what's



your purpose here? So that [nonbelievers] will look at your life, hear your words, and be attracted to the kingdom of God, so that at the day of visitation, when God comes and holds them accountable, they will have reason for rejoicing rather than reason for lament."

Although this was the final word delivered to the tour, participating students and faculty nevertheless had the opportunity to honor this teaching throughout the preceding three-week trip, July 6-23. The annual Oxford Study Tour offers students the opportunity to take classes and visit historical sites significant to Christian and Baptist heritage, but the main purpose of the trip, as evidenced by Yarnell's teaching, is to engage in missions and evangelism in a cross-cultural setting.

As Yarnell explained during their final time together, this goal was, indeed, met. Speaking of those working at Regent's College, where the study tour stayed for the majority of their trip,



Yarnell said, "The staff here, many of whom are not Christians, are impressed by your spirit as much as by your words. You're a kind people. That's a good witness. That brings honor to our Lord in their presence."

In addition to this ongoing witness of holy living, the group also engaged in direct evangelism. As a result of the many doors God opened for the sharing of the Gospel, much soil was tilled, many seeds planted, and one person accepted Christ as her Lord.

STUDENT TAKES 'SECOND MILE' EFFORT TO LOCAL CHURCH

By Katie Coleman and Alex Sibley

Luke Romans, a Master of Divinity student at Southwestern, leads an accountability group through the "young marrieds" Sunday School class at Birchman Baptist Church. Realizing that evangelism was the most important area in which they needed to grow, Romans started bringing his students along with him as he participated in Southwestern's "Going the Second Mile" initiative, the seminary's effort to evangelize every home within a two-mile radius of the campus.

Eventually, however, the group began to feel a burden to bring this kind of evangelistic outreach to the community surrounding their church, primarily for the sake of discipling the new believers whom they ushered into the Kingdom. Fellow Sunday School member Thomas Miller specifically suggested they look into reaching the neighborhood just north of Birchman as well as open the evangelism opportunity to the entire Sunday School class.

So, beginning in April 2015, Romans' Sunday school class has engaged in a class-wide evangelism effort to impact the community

around their church. Each Tuesday night, 8-12 individuals, all young married couples, canvass the neighborhood north of Birchman. Over the last several months, the group has visited more than 130 homes, engaged in countless Gospel conversations, and seen two people give their lives to Christ.

One of these salvations took place July 7. After knocking on three doors and receiving no answers, a group of four Sunday School students had one door closed in their faces. Not allowing discouragement to halt their efforts, the group continued to a fifth house, where Richard, a man in his 20s, answered the door. Considerate of the evangelists' labors, Richard allowed them to speak. Tim Sullivan, a member of the group, began the interaction by sharing his personal testimony and then the Romans Road.

When he completed his Gospel presentation, he asked if Richard would like to make a profession of faith. Richard said, "Yes!"

As noted by Matt Queen, L.R. Scarborough Chair of Evangelism ("Chair of Fire") at

Southwestern, "The aim of evangelism is not complete whenever someone confesses Jesus as Lord, but rather when they are baptized into a local church and are taught obedience to the commands of Christ." With this in mind, Sullivan has followed up with Richard regarding baptism and discipleship; and since Birchman is less than a mile from his home, the personal connection that they have established is sure to grow.

Although such professions of faith are the class' ultimate aim, Romans says they have a three-fold goal in their efforts: share Christ, show that Birchman cares, and show others how to share. "Regardless of the external metrics we may or may not see week to week," Romans says, "we know that we're growing each and every week in one of those facets."

To learn how to better reach your community and create a culture of everyday evangelism in your church, contact Southwestern's evangelism department at 817-923-1921, ext. 6480, or everydayevangelism@subts.edu.

MADAGASCAR TEAM SEES 347 PROFESSIONS OF FAITH

By Alex Sibley



Keith Eitel, dean of Southwestern's Roy Fish School of Evangelism and Missions, says that when going on a mission trip, he and his teammates do not set a quota for how many Gospel presentations they want to make, professions of faith they want to see, etc. Instead, they lay out specific tasks that they will try to accomplish.

"So we do them," he says, "and then we're stunned and surprised as God blesses beyond even what we could have imagined. So that's probably the most eternally significant kind of blessing—to be able to see God call people to Himself."

During this year's mission trip to Madagascar, May 21-June 7, God so blessed the Southwestern team's efforts that they saw

347 professions of faith, 502 people show a keen interest in exploring Christianity further, and 30 local pastors and church leaders receive in-depth ministerial training. In total, the mission team shared the Gospel with more than 2,000 people.

Southwestern has been sending teams to Madagascar since 2012, when President Paige Patterson accepted IMB President Tom Elliff's call to embrace an unreached, unengaged people group. Southwestern adopted the Antandroy people of Madagascar, and this year marked the seminary's fourth mission trip to this East African country. As in years past, the team's efforts this year comprised both one-on-one evangelism as well as mass evangelism, which included preaching,

storytelling, and showing the "Jesus" film.

One such mass evangelism experience took place among the extended family of one of the Southwestern team's translators. Interestingly, though, the experience was not part of the team's original plan. The team had intended to visit another location but was prevented from doing so. Although this was initially viewed as a disappointment, the team soon realized that this was actually God's appointment. The team went instead to the village of one of their translators and engaged in storytelling evangelism. The translator's extended family gathered to listen, and 22 of them made professions of faith. As Eitel summarizes, "What we thought was a disappointing change became what God was really planning."

One of the mission team's ministries unique to this year was an effort to train local Antandroy leaders. The IMB missionaries in the area with whom Southwestern has partnered, Adam and Suzie Hailes, are tasked with facilitating the growth of local clusters of believers into churches. Eitel says this is accomplished by investing in the leaders who are surfacing in these cluster groups. Eitel, as well as Assistant Professor of Missions and Islamic Studies Dean Sieberhagen, assisted the Haileses' efforts by leading a small pastor's conference.

Master of Divinity student Nirintsoa Mamitiana, who is an Antandroy, says he has not previously seen as much hunger for truth and for God as he saw in his fellow Antandroy this year. "The people were open to the Gospel," he says. "They were very receptive and eager to know more about God. I loved seeing people taking a stand, saying that they want to live for Jesus alone, and willing to leave tradition and witchdoctors."





SOUTHWESTERN TEAM LEADS 26 TO CHRIST IN THAILAND

By Katie Coleman

From July 1–21, a team of 18 Southwestern students and faculty traveled to Chiang Mai, Thailand, and a neighboring village, striving to share the Gospel with the lost in this Southeast Asian country. The group was able to show the “Jesus” film in the Karen language and have numerous Gospel conversations with hundreds of university students, connecting many of them to Bible Studies through a local campus ministry. Over the course of the three-week trip, the team saw 26 people come to Christ and one believer reaffirm his faith.

Keith Eitel, dean of the Fish School of Evangelism and Missions and leader of this year’s team, says that although Buddhism is woven into every aspect of life in Thailand, this year’s team found that many are open to hearing the Gospel and eager to ask questions. Encouraged by this year’s experiences, he says, “You can see the social fabric loosening. It’s ripe for change. There have been more than 100 years of seed-sowing, and we can see God doing something in Thailand.”

ERRATA

In 1998, Southwestern Seminary announced the gifting of An Exposition with Practical Observations upon the Book of Job by Joseph Caryl, dating to 1677. This antiquarian volume was given to the seminary by Geoffrey and Beryl Breed to be added to the extensive Breed Collection. Unfortunately, in the original press release, the volume was attributed in error to SWBTS founder B. H. Carroll, whose dates of writing and ministry were in a later century. This rare commentary has been added to the Breed Collection and is available in Roberts Library to be used by researchers.

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SOUTHWESTERN MUSIC CAMP PREPARES HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO REACH THE WORLD THROUGH MUSIC

By Katie Coleman



Southwestern's 2015 Music Camp, June 8-12, gave 36 high school students the opportunity to spend a week with School of Church Music faculty to learn more about their art as well as how to use their musical gifts for the Lord. On the last day of music camp, campers demonstrated what they learned during the week at a recital for family, friends, and fellow music campers.

Music Camp operates under the mission of "reaching the world, one skilled musician at a time." Leo Day, dean of the School of Church Music, says the faculty and camp counselors (who are Southwestern students) try to teach campers the importance of stewarding the gifts God has given them.

"We show them how serious God takes the musical art that He has endowed them with,"

Day says. "He wants to show Himself through what we do."

For high school students making decisions about college, music camp offers a unique opportunity to experience a week on Southwestern's campus and to interact with each faculty member from the music school. "What is unique about our camp is that each student gets a private lesson every day from a member of the music school faculty," Day says. "We don't hire out people from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. We want them to know us and to feel like our family here."

Throughout the week, campers had numerous opportunities to improve upon their musical skill. Each morning began with a time of worship and a devotional from faculty members who explained what it meant to use

one's musical talent as part of one's testimony. After morning worship, campers spent time in history of worship and music theory classes. The afternoon was designated for private lessons and movement classes, followed by a choral component in which camp counselors joined the campers to create three numbers to perform at the Friday recital.

Performing in front of family and friends can be a source of anxiety for many, but counselors and faculty encouraged campers to take their focus off of themselves and turn their focus to God. "Camp is about getting them past that stage so they can really render their heart up to heaven so that God can use them and show Himself to others," Day says.

To view dates for the 2016 music camps, visit swbts.edu/musiccamp.





WELCOME WEEK *CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY*

By Katie Coleman

Southwestern Seminary's fall semester kicked off with a week of activities for new and returning students, Aug. 21-28. This annual tradition, known as "Welcome Week," is hosted by Student Life and is designed to connect students with faculty, campus community, and local churches.

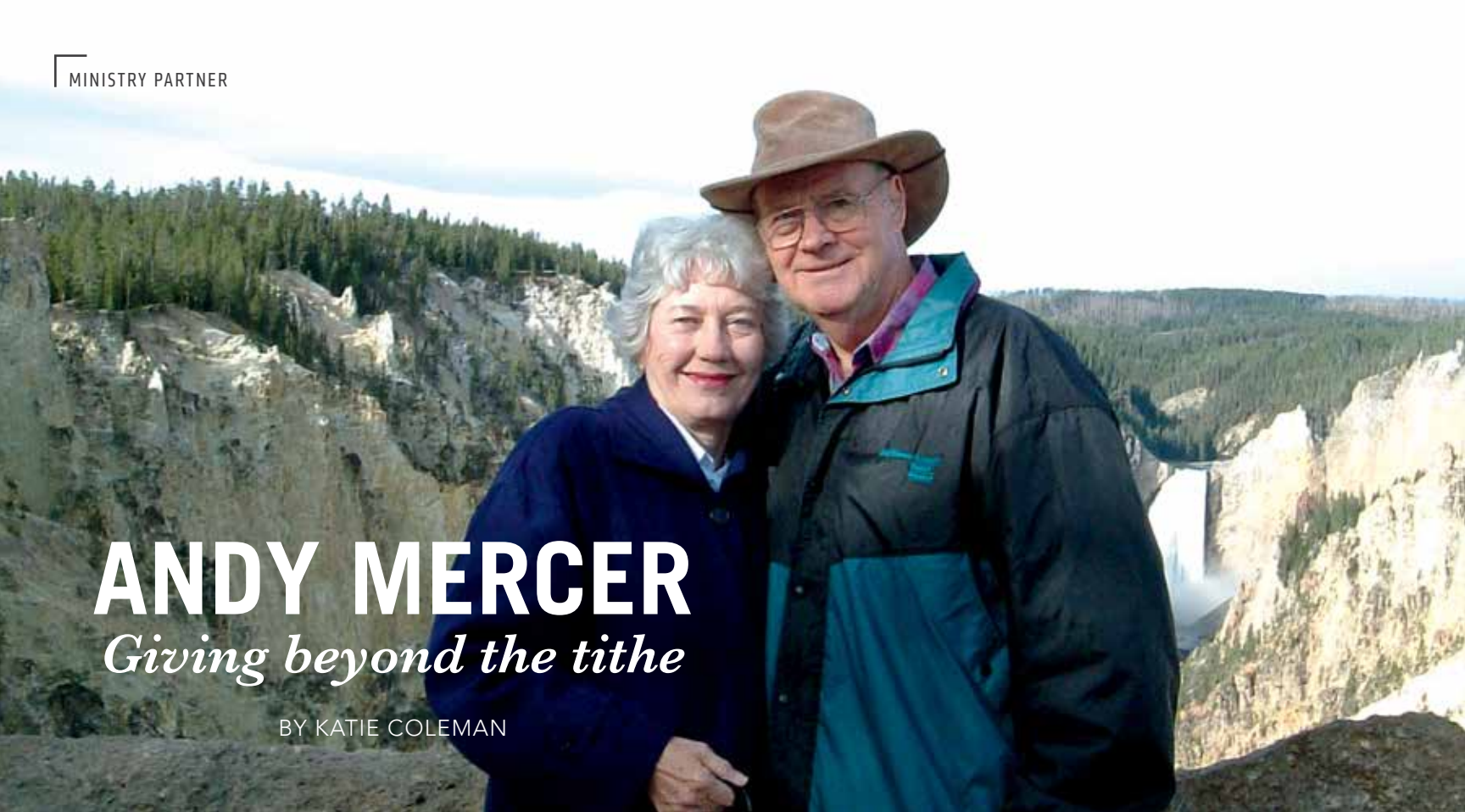
Activities included New Student Orientation; women's and men's dinners collectively attended by roughly 600 students; a nighttime game of Capture the Flag; Library Palooza, an inaugural event in Roberts Library that welcomed students to play games such as mini golf and bowling among the libraries' holdings; and a block party and church fair on the final night.





To see additional photos as well as videos from Student Life and other campus activities, visit [Facebook.com/swbts](https://www.facebook.com/swbts)





ANDY MERCER

Giving beyond the tithe

BY KATIE COLEMAN

Growing up on a farm in Central Arkansas, Andy Mercer valued Christian principles and attended the occasional church service with his family, but he did not formally give his life to Christ until his late 20s. In fact, he did not even hear the Gospel until he moved to Louisiana at age 19.

Mercer heard the Gospel for the first time while attending a church service with some relatives, and in that moment, he realized he was not right with God. Even so, although he sensed the Lord calling him to Himself, Mercer ignored the calling and resisted the Holy Spirit for eight years.

Mercer enlisted in the United States Air Force in October 1951, serving four years during the Korean War before returning to Louisiana to study engineering at Louisiana Tech University. Throughout his four years of school, Mercer tried to live his life by Christian standards, but in all his work to be “morally good,” something was still missing.

While attending a church banquet just before graduation, Mercer found himself seated at the same table as the pastor of the church he had been attending. After a conversation with the pastor, Mercer realized the missing piece in his life: whole-hearted submission to Christ.

So, the following Sunday, Mercer finally gave his life to Christ. Reflecting on his journey, Mercer says, “I often say that the second verse of the hymn ‘He Lifted Me’ is my testimony: ‘He called me long before I heard; before my sinful heart was stirred; but when I took Him at His Word; forgiven, He lifted me.’”

In 1959, Mercer accepted a position at General Dynamics, an aerospace and defense company, so he and his wife, Jan, whom he met in the Baptist Student Union at Louisiana Tech, moved to Fort Worth, Texas. The couple joined Tower Baptist Church in White Settlement, later transferring their membership to First Baptist Euless

in the early 1980s. Throughout his time there, Mercer has served in multiple capacities, such as singing in the church choir and teaching Sunday School classes.

Since moving to Texas, especially during his time at First Baptist Euless, Mercer has met numerous Southwestern students and faculty who have impacted his Christian life. “My wife and I always appreciated the biblical authority in everything done through Southwestern,” Mercer says.

Mercer credits Jimmy Draper, who was his pastor when he first joined First Baptist Euless, as an important influence in his life and Christian walk. “Jimmy preached Bible-based messages and gave practical, real-world insights based on solid biblical principles,” Mercer says.

In 1996, when Mercer and his wife learned that Southwestern would establish an academic chair in Draper’s name, they decided to make a financial gift to the seminary to help endow the academic chair. Impressed by the work of Southwestern to equip its students to serve both locally and globally, the couple was later compelled to financially partner with the institution and make contributions on a monthly basis. Even after his wife’s death in 2005, Mercer says he was motivated by Southwestern’s ongoing desire to reach the world with the Gospel to continue giving to the seminary, going beyond his tithe.

“I recognize the importance of training new preachers, missionaries, religious educators, and other Christian leaders,” Mercer says. “My prayer for Southwestern is that they will continue to be true to the Word; that they will train and prepare young people to serve in local churches and as missionaries to effectively lead the nations to Christ.”

To give monthly like Mercer, visit subts.edu/give.

Alumni Updates

1990

Gary G. Gerber (MM 1990, DMA 1993) to Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., as dean of the School of Fine Arts

Bruce D. Smilie (PHD 1999) to Main Street Baptist Church, Grand Saline, Texas, as pastor; wife Tina M. Smilie

Anniversaries

Alfred Chong (MRE 1952, BDIV 1954) and May Chong, 61st anniversary

Awards

Dan R. Crawford (BD 1967, MDIV 1973, DMIN 1981), senior professor of evangelism and missions and Chair of Prayer Emeritus, has been named Distinguished Alumni of the Year for 2015 at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas.

Memorials

Sherrri Allen

Helen Duncan

Thomas Adair Lawrence

Donald Raymond McNally

Pat Cora Schuringa

Mary L. Shillings

Larry Don Slaughter

William "Bill" Souder

Leslie Stubbs

Wiley Elton Zinn

1940

James Harvey Vermillion (MTH 1946)

Earl William Miller (BSM 1949, MSM 1950)

1950

James B. Thompson (BDIV 1953, MDIV 1968)

James H. "Red" Duke (BDIV 1955)

Frank K. Edwards (BDIV 1955, MRE 1955)

Kenneth Elwin King (BDIV 1955, MDIV 1973)

Max C. Copeland (BDIV 1956)

James Milton Dunn (BDIV 1957, THD 1966, PHD 1979)

1960

Ted E. Savage (BDIV 1960, MDIV 1973)

Fred Leon Levrets (BDIV 1964)

Peggy Place Bartley (MRE 1966)

James Seldon Hackney (DipCM 1967)

William Robert Floyd (MRE 1968)

Russell Arnette Herrington (MACM 1968)

1970

Joe Bob McGinnis (MDIV 1978)

Arthur Phillip Lineberger (MDIV 1975, DMIN 1979)

1980

Darlene Marie Jiles (MA Church Soc Serv 1988)

Mike Barnett (MDIV 1987, PHD 1995)

1990

Karrie Ann Oertli (MDIVBL 1991)

Dennis William Campbell (MARE 1997)

Keep in Touch

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

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817.923.1921, ext. 7200

Email:

friendsofsouthwestern@swbts.edu

Sherri Allen, wife of David Allen, dies at age 57

Sherri Allen, wife of Dean of Southwestern's School of Theology David Allen, died Aug. 26 after a multi-year battle with cancer. A devoted wife, mother, and grandmother, Allen always gave herself unselfishly to her family's needs. Always quick with a kind word, always sensitive to the needs of others, Allen lived out her love for Christ by loving other people.

During the last four years of her life, as she battled cancer, Allen demonstrated courage, tenacity, and spiritual depth. Her email and Facebook updates to her "prayer warriors" exhibited an incredible testimony of how Christians face suffering triumphantly through Jesus Christ, and thousands were blessed and encouraged by the heartfelt and straightforward chronicle of her journey.

WE ARE A SMALL-CHURCH CONVENTION

By Frank S. Page

In military encounters, the generals are highlighted and are normally credited with battles won or blamed for battles lost. While the generals get the highlights and news coverage, the foot soldiers are the ones who normally spill the blood and pay the ultimate price in conflict and battle.

In our world among Southern Baptist churches, often larger churches or mega-churches receive a great deal of attention. Many are led by truly great leaders. However, I happen to know that the vast majority of work done in our convention is done by small- or medium-sized churches. I am not denigrating my friends in the larger churches. The last church I pastored would be classified as a mega-church; however, I know that the vast majority of our churches are much smaller. In fact, of the 46,000-plus churches in our Southern Baptist Convention, only 184 average more than 2,000 in attendance. Obviously, that means the vast majority of our churches are small- or medium-sized churches. That statistic is important and will never be forgotten by me. As I travel from coast to coast and beyond, I am well aware of the fact that most of our churches are primarily in the smaller category. I spend much of my time with the pastors in those churches. What a great group of people they are!

Recently, when I was on my vacation, I had the opportunity to preach in a local church in Conway, S.C. That church, Maple Baptist Church, is pastored by Gary Reeves. What a wonderful church doing a great work for the Lord near Conway, S.C.! When another pastor in the area heard I was going to be preaching

that morning, he begged me to come earlier in the morning to preach at his church. They actually “flip-flopped” Sunday School and worship so I could share with the congregation. I was delighted to speak at the Pleasant Meadow Baptist Church in Loris, S.C. That pastor’s name is Mark George. Both of these men are great examples of the true heroes of our convention. Perhaps they will never be elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, but they are faithfully shepherding these dear churches and will leave behind a tremendous spiritual legacy. They are true “unsung heroes.” I believe that God will have a special reward for pastors such as these.

Another group of unsung heroes that I like to recognize are the bivocational pastors in our convention. In some states, the number of churches that are pastored by bivocational pastors runs as high as 80 percent. It could well be that they are the largest number of churches in our entire convention. These pastors are also heroes to me. Working full-time jobs in a variety of vocations, they attempt to juggle ministry and family in the remaining hours. Many struggle doing so. The Executive Committee has begun an initiative entitled “Small Membership Church and Bivocational Church Advisory Council.” We have brought together leaders of these groups from around the nation and are meeting with them regularly to hear their concerns, gain their input, and seek their deeper involvement. We thank God for Ray Gilder and the bivocational network that is already at work to help connect these pastors to resources and encouragement.



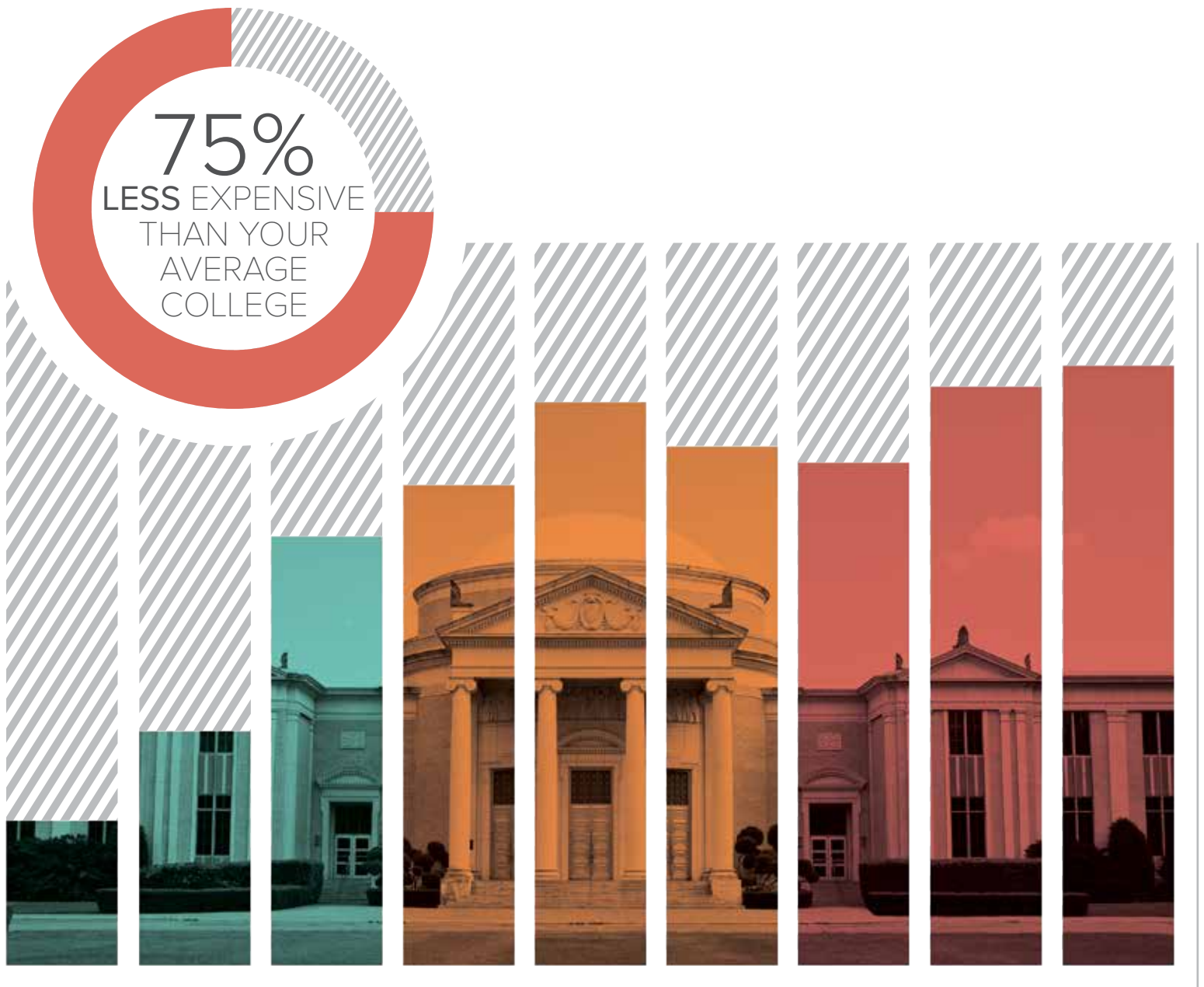
After our most recent annual meeting, I heard from one pastor who wanted to know if he was truly “not alone.” He felt very alone working as a bivocational pastor. I immediately called him—and have had others do the same—so that he will know he is truly not alone. We need to appreciate these pastors, as their work is difficult and often unrecognized. I believe our Lord recognizes them and believe He has a special reward for those who serve in these very difficult situations.

During this next month, I will be traveling and ministering to smaller churches in Maryland as well as other states. It is a great honor and opportunity to encourage those saints of God. In my role as CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention, I have often stated that I would rather be seen as the “chief encouraging officer.” I pray for these churches and these pastors and hope they will recognize their importance in the Kingdom of God and in our convention.

FRANK S. PAGE is the president and chief executive officer of the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. He earned his Master of Divinity from Southwestern Seminary in 1976 and his Ph.D. in 1980.

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