

SUMMER 2018

# SWN

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## EVANGELISM

### HEARTBEAT OF AN INSTITUTION



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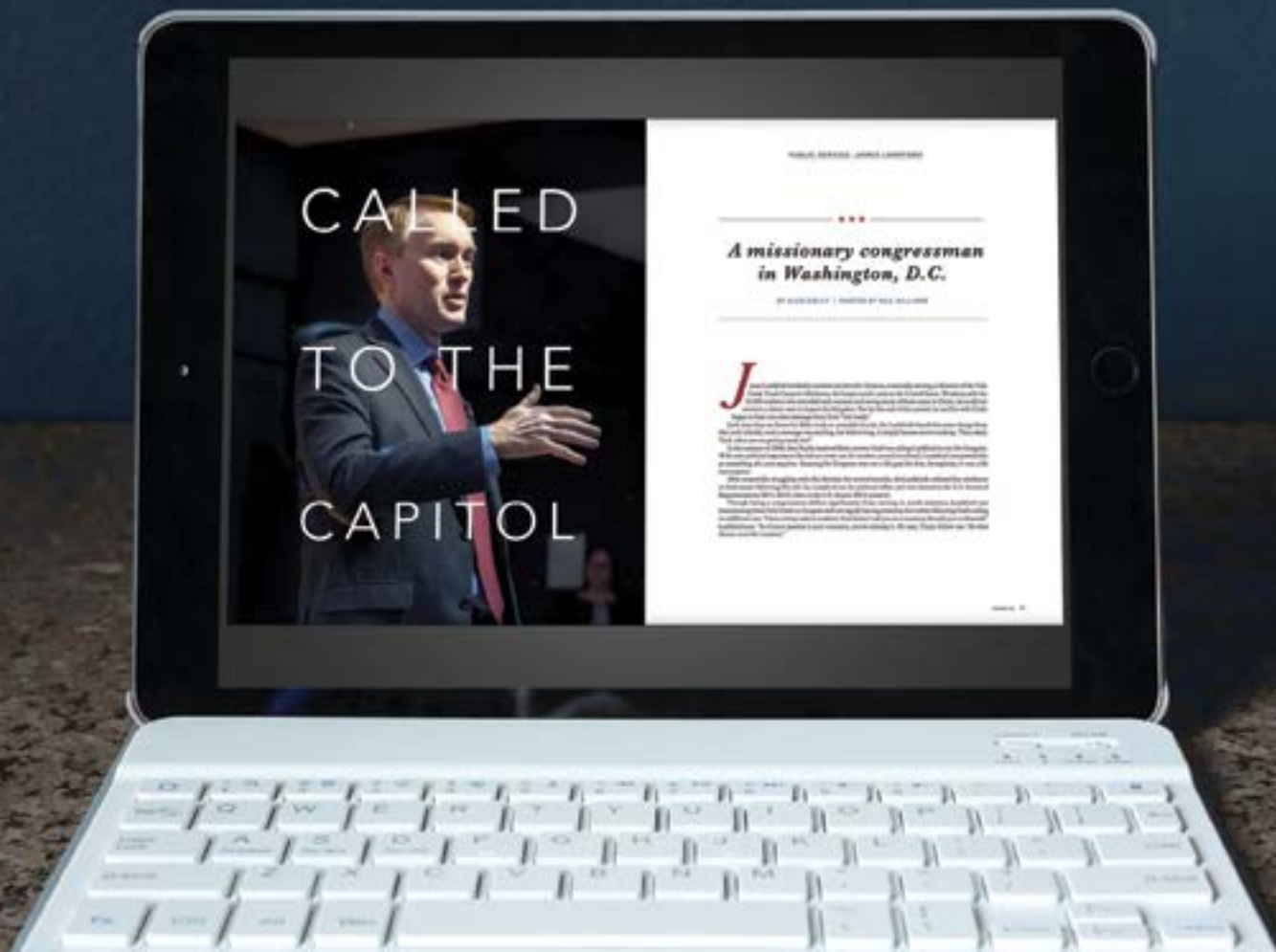
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|      |                               |   |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| 4    | <b>Independence Day</b>       | Offices closed/classes dismissed            |
| 4-23 | <b>Thailand Mission Trip</b>  |   |
| 9-13 | <b>Smart Phone Photo Camp</b> | For grades 7-12<br>Naylor Children's Center |
| 9-25 | <b>Oxford Study Program</b>   |   |

## AUGUST

|       |   |                   |
|-------|---|-------------------|
| 20    | <b>New Student Orientation</b>                              | Houston campus    |
| 21    | <b>New Student Orientation</b>                              | Fort Worth campus |
| 23    | <b>Convocation</b>  | Fort Worth campus |
| 24-25 | <b>Certification in Biblical Counseling:<br/>Levels 1-3</b> |                   |

## SEPTEMBER

|       |   |                                  |
|-------|---|----------------------------------|
| 3     | <b>Labor Day</b>  | Offices closed/classes dismissed |
| 21-22 | <b>Certification in Biblical Counseling:<br/>Levels 1 &amp; 2</b> |                                  |

## LOOKING AHEAD

|         |  |                   |
|---------|--|-------------------|
| Oct 1-3 | <b>Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) Annual Conference</b> | Fort Worth campus |
| Oct 8   | <b>Text-Driven Preaching Workshop</b>  |                   |
| Dec 8   | <b>President's Club</b>  |                   |
| Dec 8   | <b>Keyboards &amp; Carols at Christmas</b>                                   |                   |
| Dec 14  | <b>Fall Graduation</b>   |                   |

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a letter from **THE PRESIDENT**

**I**N ACTS 1, JUST BEFORE THE RESURRECTED JESUS ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN, HE TELLS HIS disciples to remain in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (verse 8). The rest of Acts sees the fulfillment of Jesus’ declaration, for after the Holy Spirit anoints the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, they preach to the locals in Jerusalem; and after persecution breaks out against the church, the disciples spread, some staying close by in Judea and Samaria, and others going to far-off places to share the Gospel in the remotest parts of the earth.

Here at Southwestern Seminary, we have tried to follow a similar trajectory. That is, we have tried to be witnesses for Christ locally, nationally, and internationally. Several years ago, through “Taking the Hill” and “No Soul Left Behind,” we shared the Gospel with everyone living within a one-mile radius of our campus. After that, we expanded it to “Going the Second Mile,” reaching everyone within a two-mile radius. Most recently, we have modified the program into “Everyday Evangelism,” encouraging our students and faculty to share the Gospel everywhere they go with whomever they meet. God has been gracious enough to let us see these local efforts bear much fruit.

On the national and international levels, our alumni are being deployed to serve in churches and on mission fields among those who desperately need to hear the Gospel. Again, the Lord has been very gracious to us in these efforts, and our graduates are being used of God to accomplish great things for the Kingdom.

This issue of Southwestern News tells the story of some of these alumni, serving locally, nationally, and internationally. David Nigh shares the Gospel with children through Good News Clubs in Fort Worth area schools. Dale Allen leads door-to-door evangelism efforts through nearby Great Commission Baptist Church. On the national stage, Steve Gaines and John Avant use their experience serving in local churches as well as their passion for evangelism to encourage congregations nationwide to seek the Lord and reach the lost. Finally, missionary couples Holley and Thomas Sieberhagen and Joy and Jeremiah Farmer serve on the foreign mission field, and they are seeing God perform great wonders through their ministries.

The third president of Southwestern, E.D. Head, wrote back in 1943, “We see in the future a mighty stream of young men and women coming into our halls to have their souls enkindled with love for the lost and their horizons enlarged for missionary conquest.” Much as Jesus’ words in Acts 1:8 are still being fulfilled today, so Head’s words are being fulfilled here at Southwestern. When people come here, they develop a love for lost people along with a vision for how to reach them. And when they graduate, they go and do it. May we be encouraged to do likewise.

Until He Comes,



Paige Patterson, President Emeritus



# CREPES GRATUITES

## BELGIUM

During an Ascension Day festival this past May, the town of Namur, Belgium, hosted an open-air market along one of its main streets. Across from a local Baptist church, missionary Thomas Sieberhagen and fellow church members set up a booth and distributed free crepes to passersby as they browsed the market. Sieberhagen has found that such outreach events often produce fruitful evangelistic conversations.







### EAST ASIA

Missionaries Joy and Jeremiah Farmer were the first missionary presence in a closed part of East Asia. Therefore, in addition to sharing the Gospel with the lost and leading them to Christ, the Farmers also had to intentionally disciple them in order to equip them to lead Bible studies and house churches of their own. Here is such a Bible study meeting, with young believers growing in their knowledge of God based on a biblically rooted curriculum produced by the Farmers.



BECOMING PART OF GOD'S FAMILY:

# EXPOSING CHILDREN TO THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

BY ALEX SIBLEY  
PHOTOS BY ADAM COVINGTON

**T**he young troublemaker had been sent to the principal's office again. Though arguably not the worst-behaved child in the elementary school, this juvenile delinquent was nevertheless becoming a proverbial thorn in his principal's flesh. And his parents had all but given up on curing his orneriness.

The principal decided to attempt an as-yet untested solution: sending the boy to the school's Good News Club. A ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), Good News Clubs provide after-school Bible lessons, worship songs, Scripture memory, and other Bible-related activities in order to expose children to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In so doing, the clubs also provide instruction on moral behavior, such as respecting one's parents, thus making the clubs an enticing program even to non-Christian families.

The principal—herself having come to know the Lord at a Good News Club as a child—called the boy's parents and explained to them how sending the boy to this club could help him. Reflecting their own exasperation, the parents responded, "Whatever you say, Principal. Whatever might work."

With the parents' permission thus obtained, the principal brought the boy to the club, where he was welcomed by David Nigh, chairman of the Greater Fort Worth chapter of CEF and leader of that particular school's







club. Nigh swiftly discerned the boy's reluctance to be there—clearly apparent to even the least observant in the group—and the boy sat down and grumpily lowered his head.

Despite this blatant lack of confidence in the group's valuation, the boy continued coming to the group's meetings in the weeks that followed. "I don't know if the parents made him or the principal or how that played out, but he became a regular at the club," Nigh says of these events, which happened roughly a decade ago.

Because all the club's activities revolve around the key components of the Gospel, each time the boy attended, he was exposed to the life-giving message of Jesus and His death, burial, and resurrection on behalf of sinners. Gradually, the walls that the boy had built up around himself became weaker, and eventually, they crumbled entirely. One day, when Nigh and his fellow CEF teachers extended their weekly invitation to respond to the Gospel in repentance and faith, the boy came forward and made known his desire to give his life to Christ.

"When that happens," Nigh says, "we talk with the child to see if he's understanding his own sin; if he's sorry for it. To see if he understands about Jesus' death, 'Why did He die?' 'What is that for?' 'How does that impact your sin?'"

"We also see if he's at that point of making a commitment; if he's thought this through. We go through the ABCs of 'admit, believe, and choose Jesus as your Lord and Savior.' We ask him open-ended questions to see if he's understanding those components. If he isn't, we say, 'It's great that you're coming; you're learning. Let's keep on learning.'"

But in this case, Nigh says, the boy did understand. He answered the questions correctly, reflecting his certain comprehension of the Gospel message. So, with his heart unmistakably touched by the Holy Spirit, the young troublemaker admitted he was a sinner;

believed that Jesus lived, died, and rose again; and confessed Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

Years later, the principal moved from the elementary school to a nearby high school. While monitoring students in the hallway, she quickly recognized this former delinquent, now a teenager.

"She went over to him, and, of course, he knew her—he had been in her office a lot," Nigh says. "She asked what had been happening in his life. He shared with her that, ever since elementary school, when he made that decision for Christ, his behavior has changed. He's on the honor roll now, he's helping in a Bible study—just a total transformation of behavior and the way he thinks about life."

When the principal excitedly shared this anecdote with Nigh, she said to him regarding this change in the boy, "I know what it is. The fact is he gave his life to Jesus, and it was at that Good News Club. That's what changed him."

For Nigh, this story excellently illustrates a significant truth of Gospel ministry: that God wants all people, even children, to come to saving faith in Him. As chairman of CEF for the Greater Fort Worth area, Nigh leads an organized effort to share the Gospel with 12,000 children in more than 100 schools across 17 counties in Texas (and CEF is trying to get into more area schools as well). Though evangelizing and discipling children certainly requires wisdom and discernment, Nigh nevertheless sees this ministry as crucial for the advancement of God's Kingdom.

"God cares for [children], and there's only one way that they can be with God, and that is through Jesus Christ—His death and resurrection, and then putting their trust in Him alone for salvation," Nigh says. "We want to make sure that children hear that message and that they can hear it in a way that makes sense to them so that they can have the opportunity to be part of God's family."



“WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT CHILDREN HEAR THAT MESSAGE AND THAT THEY CAN HEAR IT IN A WAY THAT MAKES SENSE TO THEM SO THAT THEY CAN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE PART OF GOD’S FAMILY.”

– DAVID NIGH



Nigh's passion for children's ministry is rooted in personal experience—he himself came to know the Lord at just 3 years of age. During Sunday School one day, the teacher inquired if anyone wanted to ask Jesus to come into his heart. Nigh responded.

"I knew that I had committed sins, that I needed my sins to be forgiven, that I needed a Savior, that Jesus was the only Savior, and that I needed Him to come into my life," Nigh says. "I didn't want to go to hell; I wanted to go to heaven. So I raised my hand, and I prayed that He would come into my heart and forgive my sins."

Others would later express skepticism at Nigh's ability to make such an important decision at such a young age, but he maintains that he understood what he was doing. Even so, Nigh does caution using wisdom when evangelizing children.

"There's a fine line," he says. "We do not want to pressure children in any way. We want to make the Gospel clear to them in terms they understand and be careful how we do an invitation. Because you can get every child to say a prayer. But it's not the prayer that saves you. You have to understand with your mind. With your heart, you have to trust Christ for salvation and repent of your sins."

"I don't think most young children do understand that," Nigh says. "They have to hear it several times."

Nigh's confidence in God's willingness to save children was later affirmed during a summer-long mission trip to Venezuela when Nigh was a teenager. Nigh preached a six-night revival, and several children responded to his invitations. He told the local pastor with whom he was working, "I'm not sure they're really understanding this. We need to go and visit every one of them."

"And we did," Nigh says. "And I was amazed that many of them did really seem to understand the Gospel in their own words."

"I'm very leery of asking children 'yes' or 'no' questions," he continues. "I want to ask open-ended questions where we can really see what they're thinking and feeling and if they're grasping it. Even as a young child, I did that."

Nigh later enrolled in Southwestern Seminary in order to study childhood education. He ultimately completed two master's degrees (both in 2005) and a Ph.D. (in 2012).

"I feel like I received excellent training here at Southwestern," Nigh says. "In the nine years I was here, I did a master's in missiology with Dr. [Daniel] Sanchez—a great man who really inspired me to do evangelism and church planting. And then Dr. [Marcia] McQuitty for master's in Christian education and Ph.D. She really inspired me that, yes, we are to reach the children. They are a very important part of the church and the community."



While in seminary, as part of a class project on developing a church planting strategy, Nigh began doing Good News Clubs in local schools. Going to the principals first, he received permission from them to start the program in their respective schools, and then he disseminated permission slips to the students' parents. These permission slips unambiguously communicated the biblical content of Good News Clubs. With their parents' permission, the students could attend these weekly after-school meetings.

In addition to impacting students, Nigh soon found that Good News Clubs provided opportunities to minister to parents, as well. "I started going to the parents of the kids who were in our Good News Clubs—meeting with those parents, sharing the Gospel with them," he says. "I found that there was more of an open door with those families because I was doing something for their children. It's a free program, and we talked about morals and obeying their parents.

"A lot of parents would comment, 'My child behaves differently now that they've been attending Good News Club. What's going on?' And so we got to share with them the Gospel, that we believe it's because Jesus comes and transforms people's lives, and we're teaching them that Jesus is to be their leader and they are to follow Him and follow His Word."

As Nigh continued working with CEF to plant more Good News Clubs in local schools, he was eventually appointed chairman for the entire Fort Worth area, which includes Fort Worth, Arlington, North Richland Hills, Hurst, and even Weatherford and Stephenville. From this position, he oversees the strategy and vision of this chapter of CEF.

One specific goal Nigh has is to direct his 12-person staff and 500 volunteers to emphasize discipleship. This means that Nigh and fellow leaders encourage students to read their Bibles during the week, do assigned devotionals, attend a local church, and even share the Gospel with friends and family members.

"We're encouraging that more and more in our training with the leaders," Nigh says, "that we would not just evangelize, but

that we would have this discipleship component. A lot of this is from the schooling here at Southwestern—just the philosophy and what we're to be about as Christians. ... God has called us to make disciples, not just make converts."

The greatest reward of such efforts, Nigh says, is when they see kids "really get it." He explains, "They understand that they're sinners. They understand that sin separates them from God and that Jesus died to pay for their sins and that they need to repent; they need to turn from their sins and accept Jesus as their forgiver and also as the boss of their lives forever. They get it, and they make that decision."

A recent example is a young girl who previously tended to get in trouble often. After attending several Good News Club meetings, she came forward during the invitation and said, "I need Jesus in my heart; I need Him in my life."

Nigh asked her his usual open-ended questions in order to ensure her understanding of the Gospel. She meticulously repeated back to him that which he had taught her in the preceding weeks. "I was impressed with her," Nigh says. "She knows it very well."

Having prayed to receive Christ, this girl now wants to lead out in the group. Anytime they need a volunteer to lead motions during worship, for example, she raises her hand and then confidently leads the other children.

"She has some special gifting on memorization and on leadership," Nigh says. "She's very loud, she projects, and the kids will watch her. She knows the Gospel. I've been very impressed with her."

This girl has also begun attending a local church along with her brother. Seeing that kind of life transformation, especially in a young child, makes Nigh's heart rejoice, he says.

"When the kids get it, and you can tell they've thought it through and they pray to receive Christ, and then especially when you see them living it out—they're doing their devotionals, they're reading their Bible, and some of them are even getting involved in church—that's rewarding."

## DID YOU KNOW?

Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) is honored by a classroom in Mathena Hall on the Southwestern campus. It features a Lego world map that represents CEF's global outreach as well as its use of creative methods—such as Legos—to share the Gospel with children.

REACH THE  
SINNER

TEACH THE  
SAINT





# EQUIPPING THE CHURCH

— TO FULFILL THE —

# GREAT COMMISSION

BY KATIE COLEMAN  
PHOTOS BY SARAH CHELF

**N**estled in a southwest Fort Worth neighborhood is the house of a woman who leases rooms to people in need of a home. Many of her tenants are new to the city, while others have left difficult circumstances and would be homeless if not for the assistance of some generous individual.

On a Saturday in September 2017, all five of her residents happened to be home when they heard a knock at the door. The homeowner answered the door to be greeted by an evangelism team from Great Commission Baptist Church (GCBC), who had partnered with several Southwestern Seminary students in door-to-door evangelism.

The woman immediately recognized one of the church members and requested that they share the Gospel with all five of her tenants. After the residents agreed to a conversation, everyone crowded into the living room to hear from the evangelism team.

The team shared their own testimonies and presented the Gospel, a message that could give hope to these individuals who often felt that hope was lost. That afternoon, all five residents responded to this Good News and prayed to receive Christ.

Dale Allen, minister of evangelism at GCBC, says the team felt as though they had “hit the jackpot” with the opportunity to share with five people at once and to have each respond in faith. Allen says that day proved not only the effectiveness of evangelism but its necessity as well, for those five lost souls now have eternal life in Christ.

“One of the things people want to know about intentional evangelism is whether it is fruitful,” Allen says. “Of course it is! We at Great Commission see it all the time.”

"MY PRAYER IS THAT, IN EVERY OPPORTUNITY THAT IS MADE AVAILABLE, THEY WILL SEIZE EVERY MOMENT; AND I PRAY THAT GOD WILL OPEN THAT DOOR. WE MAY JUST BE PLANTING A SEED FOR SOMEBODY ELSE TO COME ALONG, BUT IT IS GOD WHO ULTIMATELY ADDS THE INCREASE."

— DALE ALLEN

Although the church's evangelism teams do not always see such results in one day, they have witnessed the Gospel change many lives throughout the years. In the previous 18 months alone, GCBC evangelism teams have visited more than 400 homes and led 19 people to make professions of faith.

Allen, a two-time graduate of Southwestern Seminary and current Ph.D. student, says he learned a lot about evangelism and counseling during his studies at the seminary and now implements those approaches in his own ministry. Allen says he has seen tremendous growth in the areas of evangelism, soul care, and outreach at GCBC as he and the church staff equip and mobilize members to engage their families and communities with the truth of Scripture.

Lead Pastor Douglas Brown says the work Allen has done in the areas of evangelism and counseling have upheld the church's vision to "reach the sinner, teach the saint, and strengthen the family." Brown says, "I have seen spiritual growth in the members who have gone out to share. They have become more bold in sharing their faith and the difference that Christ has made in their lives."

Allen leads evangelism teams each month in the church's surrounding neighborhoods, often meeting beforehand to discuss best practices and how to engage people from different religious backgrounds. The team has grown from a handful of participants to a core group of about 25 members.

While evangelizing, the teams sometimes use Gospel tracts, but most often they direct people directly to passages in Scripture. "We have found the most success pointing to Scripture and watching what God does in the life of that person," Allen says. "We have seen people come to Christ that way."

Since joining GCBC about eight years ago, Trent Walters has spent most of that time serving with the church's evangelism teams. Walters says he has found a new confidence for evangelism and has learned how to deal with rejection.

Many of the individuals they meet have a similar story to his own testimony, Walters says. When presented with the Gospel, a common response is, "I don't feel ready." Many believe they need to "get their act together" before attending church.

These concerns are not unfamiliar to Walters. He recalls feeling the same way before professing faith in Jesus, but he explains to people that they do not need to "get their act together" before following Christ.

"I explain to them that God doesn't want you to come as a finished product," Walters says. "He doesn't want you to wait until you clean yourself up, because we can't clean ourselves up without His help. You just have to have a willing heart and have faith in Him."

In order to strengthen its evangelism program, GCBC has partnered with Southwestern Seminary students and other nearby churches including Wedgwood Baptist Church and Hallmark Baptist Church. These partnerships,





Allen says, provide an opportunity to encourage and learn from other believers.

Frances Loftis, another regular evangelism participant, joined in with these partnerships. Her team met one man with a Catholic background, and they were ultimately able to connect him with Wedgwood's Hispanic ministry.

Loftis says that although they welcome anyone and everyone to their own congregation, their priority is to have the Gospel impact lives, to get the Word into their hands, and to connect them with a Bible-believing church. "We just need you in a body of believers where the church is actually teaching the Bible correctly and a place you can grow," she tells those to whom she witnesses.

After a career in social work, Loftis has never shied away from talking with new people and sharing her faith. But she also recognizes that not everyone has that same instinct, and many struggle with fears and reservations regarding evangelism.

During the time she has served with her church, Loftis has noticed many people become more confident in their evangelism, noting that God can use even those who are initially uncomfortable and shy. "If God leads you to that ministry, He is going to give you what you need to be able to witness," Loftis says.

Another way in which GCBC aims to reach people with Scripture is in the area of biblical counseling. Under Allen's lead, the church serves as a "satellite location" for Southwestern Seminary's biblical counseling certification program. The program started in the spring 2017 semester and will begin its third seven-month course in June 2018.

Collectively, 52 people have graduated with certifications from the first two classes, and they are already using what they have learned to minister to those in their church and in their workplaces. In addition, many use the tools they obtained in the certification program to share the Gospel with unbelievers in ways they never had before. "It has been really amazing to see what happens when they start to understand that we do have answers in the Bible," says Allen, who completed his Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling at Southwestern in 2015.

One of the graduates, Kevin Green, serves in the church's new members and marriage ministries. He says that he has been able to utilize his biblical counseling certification in these areas, and that it has given him more confidence in his approach to studying Scripture and how he shares that knowledge with others in his life.

"The biggest thing I learned is that the Bible is sufficient for all things," Green says. "It was meaningful to experience spiritual growth and to be able to apply those things from the class."





Blondie Webb, a social worker, explains that, since graduating from the certification program, she has seen a change in her approach to the care of clients who have a background in the church but are experiencing the hardships of life and sinful choices. “For many of the families that I serve, I know for a fact that if they could get some Jesus in their lives, things would be a little better and a little different,” Webb says.

Webb’s primary focus in her job is to reunite families and give them the help and practical tools they need to succeed. Webb is limited in what she can share with clients, but if they initiate the topic of faith and church, she can engage them with the Gospel and with applicable Scripture passages that she learned in the counseling program. “Scripture is powerful by itself,” Webb explains.

Additionally, Webb has found new opportunities to reach unbelievers in her workplace and in daily life. Colleagues and other professionals, for example, have asked her, “What is it about your passion for children, youth, and families?”

To this, Webb responds, “It is the Jesus in me. I have to forget about me, and I have to do what God would do.

“What would He do? He would find a way to save that soul and bring healing.”

Reflecting on all that God has done through his ministry and the ministry of his church, Allen says he is eager to see how God will work in the future. “My prayer is that, in every opportunity that is made available, they will seize every moment; and I pray that God will open that door,” Allen says. “We may just be planting a seed for somebody else to come along, but it is God who ultimately adds the increase.”

# Fishing for Goals





# PROCLAIMING TO THE LOST

# THE ONE

# WHOM WE LOVE

BY ALEX SIBLEY  
PHOTOS BY KATHLEEN MURRAY

**A**s president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), everywhere Steve Gaines has preached over the past two years, he has encouraged his listeners to do two things: pray and share the Gospel. “If you love someone, you talk with him,” Gaines says. “So, if you love Jesus, you will talk with Him in prayer.”

“Also, if you love someone, you talk *about* him. Thus, if you love Jesus, you will talk about Him to others in soul-winning/evangelism.”

As leader of the SBC as well as senior pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., Gaines bears in mind the wisdom of his former evangelism professor at Southwestern Seminary Roy Fish, who said, “You cannot serve Jesus with a zipped lip.” For Gaines, the application of this teaching is simple: Verbally share the Gospel with lost people to win them to Christ, and train others to do the same.

“We need to constantly ask ourselves and others two questions,” Gaines says. “When is the last time you led someone to Jesus, and when is the last time you tried?” Jesus said, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men’ (Matthew 4:19). If you aren’t fishing for souls, you aren’t following Jesus as closely as you should.”

Gaines received his call to preach during his second year of college; and from that time on, he was filled with “an overwhelming desire” to tell others about Jesus. After completing his undergraduate degree, he and his wife Donna moved to Fort Worth, Texas, so that Gaines could attend Southwestern Seminary and get equipped for ministry.



“I loved every class,” Gaines says of his seminary days. “My preaching classes taught me how to develop and deliver sermons. I loved my classes and professors in church history, Greek, Old and New Testament, evangelism, pastoral care, etc. I loved the singing and the messages we heard in chapels. I loved the relationships we forged by living on campus with the other young couples who were also preparing for ministry.”

Gaines completed his Master of Divinity in 1984 and his Ph.D. in 1991. He proceeded to pastor several churches before succeeding Adrian Rogers as senior pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in 2005. From this position, Gaines has strived to instill in his church members his passion for soul-winning.

“Pastors who do not train their members to share the Gospel with lost people for the purpose of winning them to Christ are erring in a bad way,” Gaines says. “God wants every pastor to be a soul-winner, and He wants every pastor to be training his church members to be soul-winners. That requires teaching and on-the-job training.”

This effort takes several forms. One example is Gaines’ presentation of the Gospel and extension of an invitation in every sermon he preaches. Additionally, the church celebrates baptisms “in a big way,” Gaines says.

“Instead of having them at the beginning or the end of the service, we baptize people in the middle of our services,” he explains. “Everyone stands for the entire time. We briefly share each person’s story of conversion, and after every baptism, we clap hands and shout unto the Lord! It is absolutely glorious.”

The church also teaches classes on how to share the Gospel, using Gaines’ book *Share Jesus Like It Matters* as the curriculum. “We still go out and knock on doors,” Gaines says. “We ask people if we can pray for them, hand them a gift bag, and share the Gospel with them. That method still works. We’ve seen many get saved on their front doorsteps.”

Another key way in which Bellevue labors to reach the lost is through a program called “Bellevue Loves Memphis.” Gaines led the church to begin this ministry in 2007 as a means of showing Jesus’ love to their city by meeting the practical needs of its residents.

“Memphis is a wonderful city, but it has a lot of poverty,” Gaines says. “Our inner city neighborhoods need a lot of help.

“One day, God really spoke to me as I read Jeremiah 29:7—‘Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.’ I figured if the Jews in exile could love Babylon, we could love Memphis.”

The church began to set aside one Saturday every quarter as a workday on which members could participate in service projects across the city. These projects include repairing football fields, redecorating teacher’s lounges, and building playgrounds for inner city schools. The church has also participated in school landscaping projects, reading camps, community block parties, and multiple prayer projects.

In addition, the church serves other inner city churches with church improvement projects, such as painting, landscaping, and cleaning. They offer multiple sports camps, as well.



**"GOD WANTS EVERY PASTOR TO BE A SOUL-WINNER, AND HE WANTS EVERY PASTOR TO BE TRAINING HIS CHURCH MEMBERS TO BE SOUL-WINNERS. THAT REQUIRES TEACHING AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING."**

— STEVE GAINES





“The bottom line is this: God loves all the people in every city,” Gaines says. “If we love Him, we must love them.”

In the 10 years since “Bellevue Loves Memphis” began, the church has completed more than 1,200 projects on 40 workdays, with more than a thousand church members serving on each of these days. Over 600 people have come to faith in Christ as a result.

“We constantly remind our people that we are not doing these service projects just to make Memphis a better place from which to go to hell,” Gaines says. “Rather, every project has as its supreme goal to share the Gospel with lost people and to lead someone to repent of his sins, believe savingly in Jesus, and receive Him as Savior and Lord.

“We constantly remind our people that they are not just in a neighborhood to improve the neighborhood but to expand the Kingdom of God by sharing the Gospel and winning people to Christ. As a result, our people serve, but they also share the Gospel. Service and evangelism are a powerful combination!”

Beyond these specific workdays, the church also participates in disaster relief efforts across the country, mission trips around the world, and other more focused ministries in Memphis. Three years ago, for example, Gaines’ wife Donna began a ministry called “Arise2Read,” which helps inner city elementary students learn how to read. And since 2009, the church has operated a mobile dental clinic, which operates four days a week, 48 weeks a year.

Through this clinic, the church has given away roughly \$4 million of free dental care. Like all the church’s ministries, the dental clinic is ultimately a tool for evangelism, and so each of the clinic’s 16,000+ patients has heard the Gospel, and more than 1,700 of those people have come to know the Lord.

One great benefit of the church’s local ministries in particular, Gaines says, is that the church has increasingly attracted people of different ethnicities. “When we started saying, ‘Bellevue loves Memphis,’ the people in Memphis believed us,” Gaines says. “Many people of various ethnicities started attending and joining. I love the ethnic diversity. Bellevue looks more like Memphis and heaven every Sunday!”

As SBC president over the last two years, Gaines has made great efforts to instill in the entire Southern Baptist Convention this same evangelistic zeal adopted by his church. These efforts include speaking at seminaries, SBC entity board meetings, and state convention and associational meetings on the need for prayer and evangelism. He also appointed an Evangelism Task Force at the SBC annual meeting in 2017 in order to determine how Southern Baptists might reap a greater harvest through personal evangelism and evangelistic preaching.

As Gaines concludes his final term in summer 2018, he reminds all believers of the need to bring the Gospel to the lost. “I want to challenge all Southern Baptists to boldly testify of the saving work that Jesus Christ has accomplished for all of us,” he says.

“I challenge all Southern Baptists to be willing to go wherever God tells you to go; to stand for the truth of the Gospel of Christ, regardless of how counter-cultural it becomes; and to open your mouths and speak the words of the Gospel with lost people in a persuasive manner for the purpose of winning them to faith in Jesus.”

“I anticipate good things to come in the years ahead,” he says, “especially as the pastors, the local churches, the associations, the state conventions, and the national entities genuinely unite to reach the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

# LET REVIVAL COME

ENERGIZING A GENERATION  
TO SEEK THE  
FACE OF GOD

BY KATIE COLEMAN AND ALEX SIBLEY  
PHOTOS BY NEIL WILLIAMS

**T**he term “spiritual awakening” has historically been reserved for moments that change history, regions, and even entire nations. But whenever Christians lament the length of time since an awakening of that kind has occurred, John Avant notes that an awakening is actually happening now, just not in the western world.

Avant and his wife Donna have mentored ministry couples around the globe, including in the Middle East. There, the Avants have met many pastors who refuse to flee from ISIS because they have never had a greater opportunity to share the Gospel.

“They would rather die and risk the lives of their families than miss the chance to share the Gospel in a country where Muslims are, for the first time in history, wide open to the Gospel,” Avant says. “Missiologists tell us that more Muslims have come to Jesus in the last 15 years than in the previous 1,500 years. That is spiritual awakening in the Middle East, and it has led to massive evangelism and massive conversion in the Muslim world.”

A former pastor and former vice president of evangelism and spiritual awakening for the North American Mission Board (NAMB), Avant currently serves as director and president of Life Action Ministries. This organization works with churches and other ministries through conferences, print materials, podcasts, and other online resources to put people back in touch with God so that they can experience revival in their lives, churches, and communities. As evidenced by the inarguable movement of the Holy Spirit in the Middle East, such revival is assuredly possible today.





Whether these revivals will constitute history-defining “awakenings” is irrelevant, Avant says. What matters is whether people return to right standing with the Lord and then tell others about Jesus.

“What we’re talking about are people who become utterly amazed by God and encounter Him in a fresh way,” Avant says. “We don’t really care what we call it; we just want to see it happen.”

Avant was called to ministry at age 16, and he was equipped for his call at Southwestern Seminary, completing a Master of Divinity in 1986 and Ph.D. in 1990. Avant says these years at Southwestern were formative. Studying under evangelism professors Malcolm McDow and Roy Fish, Avant says he learned about evangelism and found a love for revival and spiritual awakening, both of which have defined much of his ministry since.

After graduating from seminary, Avant held several pastorates in Texas, Georgia, and Louisiana. During his time as pastor of Coggin Avenue Baptist Church in Brownwood, Texas, Avant witnessed a powerful spiritual awakening not only among the members of his congregation, but in churches, colleges, and seminaries throughout the nation.

The “Brownwood revival” began on Jan. 22, 1995. It was Sanctity of Life Sunday, and “the Lord showered His life-giving Spirit upon us,” Avant says.

During the invitation in the 8:30 a.m. service, two students from nearby Howard Payne University came forward to publicly confess sins. One of these students, Chris Robeson (who later completed his M.Div. at Southwestern Seminary), read aloud Joel 2:12—“Yet

even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning.’” Robeson then began to weep and cry out to God, confessing his sin of spiritual apathy and sharing his burden that the time for revival had come.

Others followed his example, flooding the altar and tearfully confessing a multitude of sins. Unable to deny the powerful movement of the Holy Spirit, Avant cancelled Sunday School, which was scheduled to take place following the service, and as other church members came for the 11:00 service, they joined in the effort to collectively seek the face of God. The service stretched into the afternoon, and in addition to many confessions and prayers, 22 people were saved or called to ministry.

In response to what God was doing among them, Avant told the people, “Please don’t go out of here and say, ‘We had revival and it was great!’ When you go out of here, say, ‘We are *having* revival, and it is great!’

“Revival is not one event,” he continued. “It is wonderful and magnificent—the power and presence of the Spirit of God. But it is the *beginning* of something, that is all.”

This scene repeated itself several days later at Howard Payne University as students came forward during a special service to confess sins and ask the Lord for restoration. As word of this spread to other churches and college campuses, the same revival spirit accompanied it, and each of these locations experienced a fresh encounter with the Lord as well. Ultimately, 100 individual campuses from Massachusetts to Alabama to Illinois were touched in the early months of 1995.





**“WE WANT TO SHATTER DIVISIONS OF OUR DAY, COME TOGETHER ACROSS RACIAL DIVISIONS, SHATTER INJUSTICE, AND THROUGH THAT, SEE THE GREAT COMMISSION FULFILLED.”**

**— JOHN AVANT**



# REVIVAL!

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**THE STORY OF THE CURRENT  
AWAKENING IN BROWNWOOD,  
FT. WORTH, WHEATON, AND BEYOND**

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In March of that same year, then-president of Southwestern Seminary Ken Hemphill invited Avant to speak in Southwestern's chapel service and share with students and faculty about the Brownwood revival. Many guests from local churches were invited that day, and the 1,200-seat Truett Auditorium was filled to overflowing.

Numerous people responded to Avant's message. Initially, a few came to the front to pray, but then others came in order to publically confess sin. Though the service was intended to be a normal chapel, seven hours after it began, the majority of attendees were still there, crying out to God. "God broke loose on the campus that day," Avant says.

Evangelism professor Roy Fish later said, "I have no questions that what happened was of God. I am hearing about a new freedom on the part of many people who were touched by God." Professor Malcolm McDow added, "Can we have revival today, or is revival something only from the past? The revival at Southwestern has taught us that revivals in the then-and-there are merely affirmations that revival most assuredly is for the here-and-now."

Avant's passion for revival and spiritual awakening reached new heights following the Brownwood revival, and it has persisted ever since. He brought this passion to his subsequent pastorates, to NAMB, and, most recently, to Life Action Ministries in 2017.

Avant's work now takes him all over the country to speak at churches, colleges, and seminaries. Excited for what God can do through his ministry and ultimately in the church, Avant says Life Action's vision is "pretty audacious."

"We want to see the kind of movement of God that comes about when our lives are so astonished by God—like Isaiah in the temple—that we join Him in action," Avant says. "We want to shatter divisions of our day, come together across racial divisions, shatter injustice, and through that, see the Great Commission fulfilled."

Simply put, Avant says, Life Action challenges the people of God to say "yes" to God in every way and in every area of life. When Christians do that, he adds, they begin to see "supernatural change" in their lives, the church, and ultimately in the Kingdom of God. This is when the church begins to see revival, he says.

Reflecting on revival throughout history, Avant says there is certainly a connection between revival and evangelism. However, he adds, many Christians have a faulty view of the connection between the two. He says the attitude is often, "When God revives the church, then we will begin to evangelize again."

"Certainly, a great move of God that we would call 'revival' would result in greater evangelism," Avant says. "But I want to call the church back to intentional spirit-filled evangelism now. ... It may be that we have been waiting around for revival to create evangelism, when it's possible that evangelism will create revival."

Looking to the future of the American church, Avant says it is time for Christians to put an end to their pessimism. Instead of "wringing our hands" over how the culture is against Christians, Avant encourages his fellow believers to remember the history of the church, which has endured and flourished by the power of the Gospel in the midst of immeasurable persecution, and continue striving to obey the Great Commission.

Although he acknowledges the difficulty of ministry in a challenging cultural climate, Avant says he is still optimistic and hopeful for revival for younger and future generations. After all, he knows from personal experience that such revival is possible. In the meantime, he says he will do what he can to say "yes" to God in every area of life, and he will eagerly pray for the movement of the Holy Spirit.

"I don't intend to be a pessimist feeling sorry for myself because I live in this 'horrible day' when the culture is against us," Avant says. "I am going to give the rest of my life in every way I know to see [revival] happen."





# A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY FOR AWAKENING



# ESSENCE OF MISSION WORK

IS TURNING

# BELGIANS' HEARTS TO CHRIST

BY JULIE OWENS

PHOTOS BY ADAM COVINGTON

In the heart of Western Europe, multilingual Belgium blends the historic with the new—from remarkable architecture and ethereal castles to innovative museums and hip cafes. Belgium is a vibrant and cosmopolitan center of commerce and culture that beckons even the most sophisticated traveler. The pearl of the Low Countries sounds like an idyllic society, with a single, troubling void: Many in this largely secular nation remain strangers to the Christian faith.

“The appellation ‘largely secular’ is too generous for Belgium,” says Thomas Sieberhagen, a Master of Divinity graduate of Southwestern Seminary whose first ministry role is church planting in Namur, Belgium, a French-speaking town and industrial center. “We live in a country that is generations removed from even the cultural Catholicism that existed here for hundreds of years.”

Belgium has an eccentric relationship with faith—historically devout yet heavily secular in its present-day practices. Catholicism is largely the country’s *raison d’être*, but Christianity’s role has waned sharply, and today, irreligion and atheism hold sway over a large portion of the population.

The irony is not lost on Sieberhagen. “Overwhelmingly, the response we receive is apathy,” he says. “For the most part, Belgians shrug their shoulders at God and move on.”

“The normal person I meet on the street does not understand the simple Christian vocabulary I am using,” Sieberhagen continues, “even though I am speaking in my second language and they are using their first. Imagine the challenge of having to explain the meaning of the word ‘salvation’ to someone before you can offer it to them.”



The challenge is formidable for anyone preaching the Gospel, but it seems to energize Sieberhagen. In this void of faith, he sees significant opportunity for awakening.

Sieberhagen's personal history is distinctly nontraditional. After his birth in Grahamstown, South Africa, his parents—Sandra and Dean Sieberhagen, who currently serves as associate professor of Islamic studies at Southwestern—immigrated to the United States. They felt a call to missions when Thomas was 4, and they shared Christ for more than a decade with an unreached people group in Central Asia. "I knew that it was only a matter of time before I would be boarding a plane again, headed to the mission field myself," Sieberhagen says.

After receiving a bachelor's degree in theatre from North Greenville University, where he met his wife Holley, Sieberhagen immediately moved to Fort Worth, and he began working on his Master of Divinity degree at Southwestern with a concentration in international church planting. "The goal was to get on the mission field as soon as possible," he says. "We spent a year learning French so that we could begin working with our people group, the French-speaking Belgians."

Sieberhagen's studies at Southwestern equipped him well. "Southwestern Seminary's fidelity to the Bible and its continued emphasis on founding all aspects of ministry on the Word are

the aspects of my studies that have prepared me the most and the aspects that I appreciate the most," he says.

"Ministry in Europe offers a unique challenge to absolute truth, especially when that truth is biblically based," Sieberhagen continues. "So many denominations have died here in Europe because they capitulated to the epistemological relativism of mainstream European culture. In order to plant churches that last, they must have the same devotion to the Word of God that I was taught at Southwestern."

After arriving on the mission field, Sieberhagen and his wife decided that during their first term as missionaries, "Be a learner" would be their mantra. The couple is part of a small evangelical church located on the outskirts of town. Attendance is around 60 people on Sunday mornings, which Sieberhagen says is sizeable there in Belgium.

"So I wanted to learn, 'How did they begin? What outreaches do they do? What strategies have they used in the past?'" Sieberhagen says.

Sieberhagen approached the church's pastor and asked if he could do a yearlong internship with him. "I explained that I wanted to be a learner," Sieberhagen says, "that I wanted to benefit from his experience. And the response I received was fantastic. He told me that in his decades of ministry, no missionary had ever said this to him and that he was more than happy to share his wisdom with me."



**"SO MANY DENOMINATIONS HAVE DIED HERE IN EUROPE.... IN ORDER TO PLANT CHURCHES THAT LAST, THEY MUST HAVE THE SAME DEVOTION TO THE WORD OF GOD THAT I WAS TAUGHT AT SOUTHWESTERN."**

**— THOMAS SIEBERHAGEN**

Since this yearlong effort began, Sieberhagen has taught a Bible study and discipleship group weekly, has organized several evangelistic outreaches, and he recently had the opportunity to preach at the church for the first time. “But this fruitful partnership would not have happened if I hadn’t patiently served the church for many months before proposing this partnership,” Sieberhagen says. “I had to prove my commitment.”

Sieberhagen employs numerous strategies to bring Belgians to Christ. He and Holley worship in French every Sunday with the local church, where Sieberhagen plays the mandolin on the worship team. They also join local social groups, Sieberhagen says.

“For example, Holley and I joined a folk-dance group that performs at local festivals. We were able to share the Gospel there, but we also made many contacts with people of influence. The folklore community here are the gatekeepers of Walloon culture, and so becoming friends with them was strategic in order to gain legitimacy.”

Sieberhagen also plays soccer on a local soccer team as another means of sharing the Gospel. Holley volunteers at a local hospital for the same reason.

“Another strategy we use is an English club,” Sieberhagen says. “There are many people who want to improve their English, and so we invite them into our home every two weeks and talk in English for an hour and a half and share Christ.”

Furthermore, the couple hosts a six-week seeker group in their home, which tries to answer the question, “Why do Christians believe what they believe?” Sieberhagen co-wrote the curriculum, which focuses on having discussions on the great themes of Christianity: creation, fall, law, redemption, and restoration.

A final major strategy is oriented toward getting the Gospel to as many people as possible. “A few times a month,” Sieberhagen explains,

“we offer free coffee on the street to anyone passing by. They will often stop and ask why, and while they drink their coffee, we are able to share the Gospel.”

After a successful initial outreach, Sieberhagen employs three steps to transition newly converted Christians from spectators to participants. The first is to disciple them in the Word. “I teach the Bible every Tuesday night to local believers, and every week, I end with the question, ‘The truth we learned tonight—who can you share it with this week?’”

“Second,” he continues, “we lead by example. The final way is to plan evangelism events ourselves. If we are the planners and organizers, then the only responsibility left is to show up and participate.”

As Sieberhagen strives to accomplish these various ministry tasks, he remains cognizant of his inexperience. “I’m 27 in a culture where most 27-year-olds are still living at home, still in school, still going to the bar every night to party,” he says. “Adulthood starts later here. If I came in and started giving orders to the local church, I would be ignored. It takes time and consistent faithfulness to win the trust and support of the local church.”

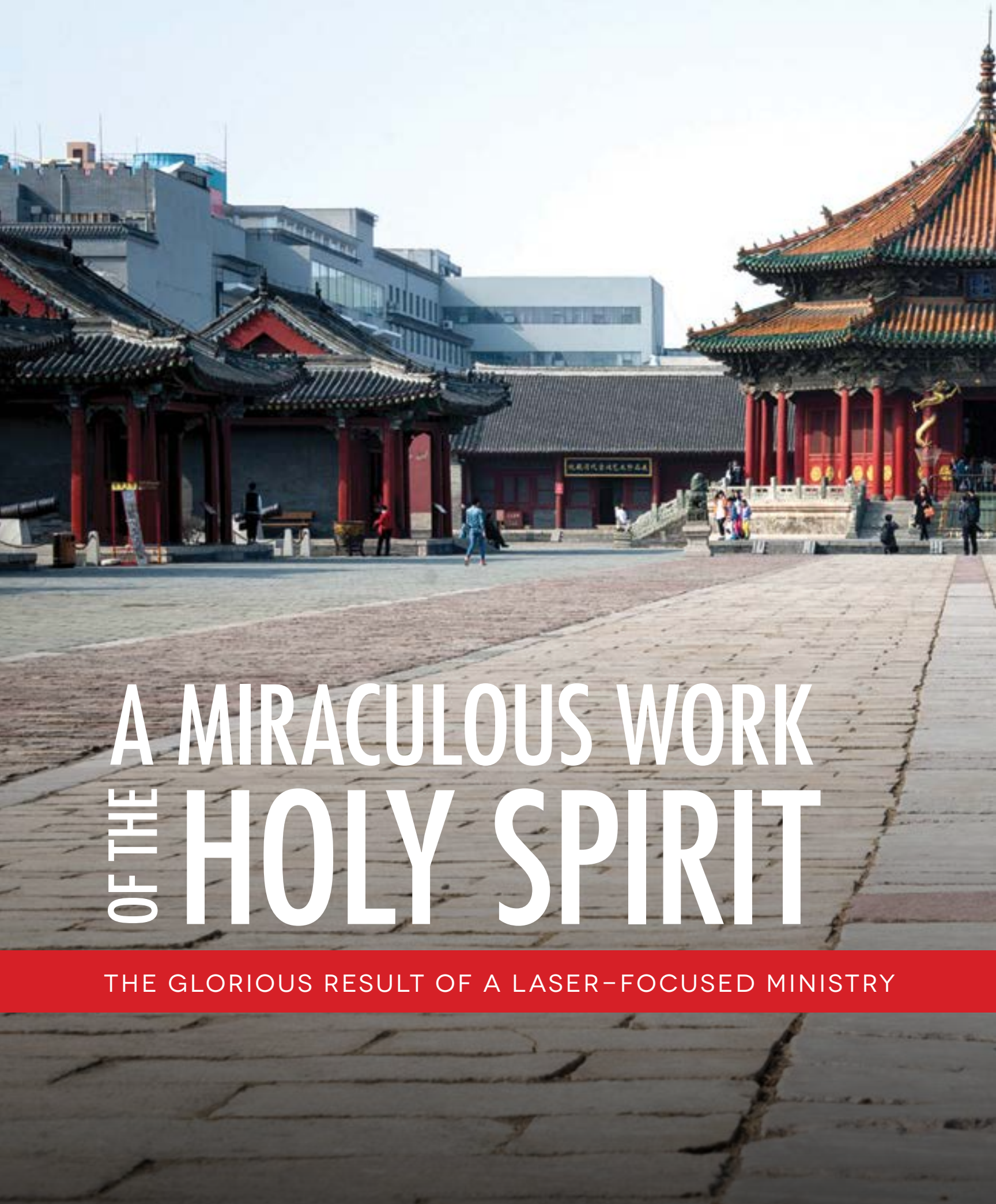
Sieberhagen recalls meeting a Belgian church planter who has worked in Western Europe for more than 40 years. “He told me that I must be willing to dedicate 20 to 30 years to the endeavor. Our strategic leader for all of Europe, Mark Edworthy, repeats this phrase all the time: ‘How do Europeans become Christians? Consistent Gospel witness over a long period of time.’”

Sieberhagen knows that long-term expectations are difficult to entertain as a missionary. “I have learned to hold my plans and expectations with a loose grip. With that caveat said, we hope to be in Belgium for a long time yet.”









# A MIRACULOUS WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE GLORIOUS RESULT OF A LASER-FOCUSED MINISTRY



BY ALEX SIBLEY  
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JEREMIAH FARMER  
& ADAM COVINGTON

Jeremiah Farmer<sup>1</sup> and his wife Joy received a clear call from the Lord to minister in East Asia, but exactly what their ministry should look like was unclear. The couple had been heavily involved in the ministry of their local church, but they had no seminary training nor any plans to pack up their lives and leave for a foreign country. Nevertheless, in obedience to the Lord, they decided to follow their church's advice and apply with the International Mission Board (IMB), which accepted them and then deployed them to a closed part of East Asia where no other missionary work was being done.

Confident in his call to ministry but uncertain of his new vocation, from the beginning, Farmer told fellow believers from the U.S. that he was a “fake missionary” who did not qualify to be on the field. Even so, he and his wife agreed to stay as long as the Lord told them to stay and to maintain a “laser focus” on a specific goal: figuring out how to get the Gospel to their region's 650 million people, 80 percent of whom had never heard the message of Jesus.

Thirteen years later, the Lord has never told the Farmers to stop, and despite their supposed lack of qualifications, they have witnessed the Holy Spirit do miraculous things through their ministry. During their time in East Asia, more than 700 churches have been planted; 2.5 million people have heard the Gospel; 45,000 people have come to faith in Christ; and 2,500 new leaders have been raised up in an environment that is hostile to the Christian faith.

“To get to be a part of that kind of movement; to see millions of people get to hear the Gospel, most of them for the first time in their entire lives; to see tens of thousands come to faith and all these churches started, that's extremely rewarding,” Farmer says. “For us, people coming to faith on a daily basis became normal. Baptisms every Sunday, that was normal. To start new churches every month, that was normal. It's extremely rewarding to be a part of that kind of ministry.”

Before being deployed to the mission field, the Farmers were assigned six core tasks by the IMB: entry, evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, church formation, and missions-sending. Across their three terms in East Asia, the Farmers have been able to accomplish all six of these tasks.

Their first term focused primarily on the first two tasks—entry and evangelism. Eight out of 10 people in their location had never heard the Gospel, so the evangelistic task required the Farmers to break new ground.

In that culture, relationships are everything, Farmer says, so rather than do door-to-door evangelism or hand out Gospel tracts on the street (which likely would have gotten them arrested), the Farmers engaged in relational evangelism. Because the Farmers were the only “foreigners” in that area, many of the local people wanted to get to know them and practice speaking English with them. The Farmers used this to their advantage, inviting people, typically just one person or family at a time, to share a meal with them.

Another aspect of the culture is to reciprocate actions, which means that whenever the Farmers invited a family to share a meal with them, that family was socially obligated to later extend a similar

<sup>1</sup>All names have been changed to protect mission work in secure areas.



invitation. “So we knew that no matter what, if we invited someone to dinner, we got two chances to share with them,” Farmer says. “So we made sure we shared [the Gospel] both times.”

Each time people professed faith in Christ, the Farmers quickly taught them how to share their faith with others. These new believers learned to wake up each morning and ask themselves, “With whom am I going to share the Gospel today?” As more people came to know the Lord, more people shared their faith with lost friends and family members, resulting in yet more people coming to know the Lord. Before long, the Farmers were receiving reports daily of people coming to faith in Jesus.

To keep up with the growing number of believers, the Farmers had to develop leaders who could teach small groups and, ultimately, lead house churches of their own (as each house church could only fit 10-20 people). So, the Farmers wrote small group lessons that these leaders could use that taught them to seek answers to their questions in the Scripture.

“Whatever they asked, instead of referring back to my American traditions, we would say, ‘What does the Bible say?’” Farmer explains. “‘What does it say about prayer? What does it say about worship? What does it say about teaching and preaching?’”

By this time, Farmer was enrolled in Southwestern Seminary, picking and choosing classes based on his needs in each phase of his ministry. He says these classes—including missiology, cultural anthropology, and various courses on evangelism in different contexts—were instrumental in helping him think through the issues he faced in his ever-developing ministry work.

“None of it was theory,” says Farmer, who completed his Master of Divinity in 2018. “I was taking classes, and I was like, ‘Oh, I need that now,’ and we were able to apply it right away.”

As the number of house churches surpassed 700, Farmer took on a supervisory role over these churches, training their leaders in evangelism, discipleship, and missions. This latter task has been a key aspect of the Farmers’ more recent ministry efforts.

“People became excellent evangelists among their own people—very bold, very zealous, very excited for the Gospel; sharing their faith very loudly, proudly, and boldly, and doing a very good job,” Farmer says. “The challenge was when it came to crossing cultures.

“[We had to teach them], when you’re working with another culture and society, you have to learn their worldview, learn how to stand in their shoes, learn their language, and understand their culture and approach [ministry] from their culture. We’re not trying to turn them into [East Asian] Christians; we’re trying to help them understand the truth of the Gospel, which transcends culture.”

Farmer says that these believers’ learning the how and why of missions has produced a “trickle” of effective missions-sending from this region, with more than 50 different volunteer teams sent out in the past year, along with a number of long-term families who have accepted a missionary calling. Based on the number of churches getting involved, Farmer says “a tidal wave” of missions-sending is on the horizon.

Among the most encouraging testimonies the Farmers have seen in East Asia is that of Ben, a “brilliant” but lost man whom they met during their first term. After Ben came to faith in Christ, the Farmers noticed in him “something different that we hadn’t noticed in the other believers,” Farmer says.

“He became other-centered very, very quickly. ... He really wanted to live his life out for a true purpose, a real cause. So when he found Jesus, he really grabbed onto that with both fists.”

The Farmers committed themselves to mentoring Ben, having him over at their house as often as possible to disciple him and develop him as a leader. They gradually gave him more responsibilities within their house church, and eventually, he started leading a house church of his own. Over time, the other house churches in the area came to see Ben as their mentor.

Later on, Ben “graduated,” moving to another province to start more churches. He now leads a network of 40 underground churches, and in fulfillment of the IMB’s sixth core task, they are getting involved in missions.



**"...WHEN YOU'RE WORKING WITH ANOTHER CULTURE AND SOCIETY, YOU HAVE TO LEARN THEIR WORLDVIEW, LEARN HOW TO STAND IN THEIR SHOES, LEARN THEIR LANGUAGE, AND UNDERSTAND THEIR CULTURE AND APPROACH [MINISTRY] FROM THEIR CULTURE."**

**— JEREMIAH FARMER**

“To see the progress of a kid who was lost and just looking for a cause to live for, and seeing him now—he’s married, has two kids, he’s grown so much in his faith, he’s gone through all the different training systems that we have; he’s training himself, and now he’s leading this network of 40 churches in another province—is exactly what we were hoping for,” Farmer says.

Another encouraging testimony is that of Jay. Jay was already a believer when the Farmers met him, but he was immature in his faith. Nevertheless, the Farmers discerned in him a pastoral heart, and so they committed to mentor him just as they had done Ben. Over time, Jay did grow in his faith, but something still prevented him from living wholeheartedly for the Lord.

“The one thing he was lacking when it came down to spiritual maturity was commitment,” Farmer says. “As soon as there was any kind of problem or challenge relationally with anyone, he would leave. And I knew that was a problem in his life, and he was not going to grow until he fixed that issue; until he learned to persevere and stick through relational conflicts.”

As Farmer prayed about how to aid Jay in this area, a local church—one not associated with the Farmers—reached out to Farmer for help in finding a pastor. This church was unique among house churches in East Asia in that they were wealthy but also immature and arrogant, Farmer says. Though Jay’s personality did not match this particular church body, Farmer realized that he would be an ideal pastor for them.

Jay initially said “no.” But Farmer told him, “Honestly, as your mentor, I really think this is something you should do.”

“So he decided to do it, and it worked out perfectly,” Farmer says. “Because he wasn’t in it for their money, and they knew it. He was in it because he actually cared about them. So they thrived.”

Some time later, the church’s elders contacted Farmer and

admitted their selfishness in how they spent their money. Electing to change their ways by investing their resources in missions rather than, for example, in furnishing their own building, the elders presented to Farmer an offering that would cover a missionary family’s first year’s salary in the field. “We have plenty more where that came from,” they told him, affirming their desire to partner with a network of East Asian churches in their mission task.

“I was absolutely floored,” Farmer says. “Because this group was notorious for being ultra-self-centered and stingy, but in a very short period of time, with Jay working with them, they had become extremely mature.”

“While we’re seeing lots of outward fruit—lots of people come to faith—in Jay’s life, we’re seeing lots of inward fruit; lots of perseverance,” Farmer says. “He’s learning to work through the relational struggles and the issues and what it means to stick it out and work through confrontation even when things are very uncomfortable, and not just run the moment there’s any kind of problem. And we’re seeing churches grow as a result of doing that.”

Having begun as the first missionary presence in their region of East Asia, the Farmers now supervise all the missionary work transpiring on the East Asian coast, targeting the 650 million people who live there. They continue to lead training and missions conferences in order to see East Asian Christians bring the Gospel not only to their own nation, but to the whole world.

Though they now play a different role from a different location, the Farmers can look back on their first 13 years in East Asia with awe because of what the Lord has accomplished through them. “We were there to do exactly what God called us to do, and we worked as hard and as fast as we could to get it done in the power of the Holy Spirit,” Farmer says. “We got to see Him work, which was miraculous and amazing, and we left with no regrets.”







# REVIVE THIS NATION

SPRING REVIVAL PROGRAM

EACH YEAR DURING SPRING BREAK,

SOUTHWESTERN SEMINARY DEPLOYS PREACHERS

**ACROSS THE COUNTRY** TO PREACH REVIVALS IN LOCAL CHURCHES

AND IMPACT THEIR SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES **WITH THE GOSPEL**

THROUGH A PROGRAM CALLED **“REVIVE THIS NATION” (RTN).**

THIS YEAR, MARCH 11-14, **87** STUDENTS AND FACULTY

PREACHED FROM NEW YORK TO HAWAII, AND THEY COLLECTIVELY SAW

**90** PROFESSIONS OF FAITH, **31** BAPTISMS, AND **307** OTHER COMMITMENTS.

READ THESE FULL STORIES, AS WELL AS OTHER TESTIMONIES OF THE GOSPEL GOING FORTH TO SAVE THE LOST, AT [SWBTS.EDU/NEWS/EVERYDAY-EVANGELISM](http://SWBTS.EDU/NEWS/EVERYDAY-EVANGELISM).



**HERE ARE SOME SPECIFIC TESTIMONIES OF GOD'S AMAZING WORK DURING THE WEEK:**

**RTN PREACHER'S JOURNEY  
BOOKENDED BY TWO SALVATIONS**

AT THE AIRPORT TERMINAL BEFORE THE REVIVAL AND IN THE HOTEL LOBBY AFTER, JOEY SMITH **LEADS TWO PEOPLE TO FAITH CHRIST.**

**SPIRIT OVERCOMES CULTURAL  
DIFFERENCES TO TOUCH THREE LIVES**

"I THINK I GOT A GLIMPSE OF WHAT **HEAVEN MAY LOOK LIKE** WHEN WE GATHER TOGETHER FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES, DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, DIFFERENT ETHNICITIES, DIFFERENT WAYS OF WORSHIP, AND WE EXPOUND UPON OUR GREAT SAVIOR."

**PREACHER FINDS PERSONAL  
REVIVAL THROUGH GOD'S TRIUMPH  
OVER ADVERSITY**

THE TRIALS OF A ROUGH CAR RIDE, A WRONG GATE, A SLEEPLESS FLIGHT, LOST LUGGAGE, A LOST JOB, AND A SERIOUS ILLNESS FAIL TO OVERCOME **GOD'S HIGHER PURPOSE OF DRAWING PEOPLE TO HIMSELF.**

**GOD BLESSES PRAYERFUL  
PREPARATION OF CHURCH, CALLS  
FOUR PEOPLE TO SALVATION**

ONE YOUNG GIRL'S TESTIMONY: "I'M NOT OF THIS WORLD ANYMORE. **I BELONG TO GOD, AND I CAN DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM.**"

**EFFEL TOWER PIN IGNITES DIVINE  
APPOINTMENT**

A PIN SPARKS A **GOSPEL CONVERSATION** WITH A DYING WOMAN WHO GREW UP NAZI-OCCUPIED FRANCE.

**GOD BRINGS REVIVAL TO CHURCH  
IN TRANSITION**

**TWENTY PEOPLE COMMIT TO BRING THE GOSPEL** TO THEIR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS, SEVEN REDEDICATE THEIR LIVES TO CHRIST, AND FIVE PROFESS FAITH IN JESUS.

**REVIVAL PREACHER OVERCOMES  
NERVES, WITNESSES GREAT  
WORKS OF GOD**

HIS SECOND TIME PREACHING, AND HIS FIRST IN ENGLISH, MARKO JURICEK WITNESSES **TWO PEOPLE COME TO FAITH IN CHRIST** AND TWO ACCEPT THE CALL TO MINISTRY.

**HARVEST NORTH AMERICA  
PARTNERSHIP PROPELS PERSONAL  
EVANGELISM EFFORTS**

TWENTY CHURCHES UNDERGO SPECIAL TRAINING IN INTENTIONAL EVANGELISM, AND **GOD USES IT TO BRING A GREAT HARVEST.**

## TRUSTEES AFFIRM NEW SCHOLARSHIPS, MOVE OF HAVARD CAMPUS

By Alex Sibley

Trustees affirmed the creation of 20 new scholarships; accepted an invitation to move the Havard campus to a more strategic location; approved students for spring and summer graduation; approved a budget of \$35,947,605 for the 2018-19 fiscal year; and conducted other business at their spring meeting, April 10-11.

### New Scholarships

At the recommendation of Southwestern President Paige Patterson, trustees affirmed the creation of 20 scholarships for African-American students to be named after Southwestern graduates S.M. Lockridge and Eugene Florence. Both Lockridge and Florence were early African-American students at Southwestern who went on to serve in the pastorate. Ten scholarships were created last year, and an additional 10 scholarships will be created this year.

### Move of Havard Campus

Also at the president's recommendation, trustees voted to accept the invitation to move the J. Dalton Havard School for Theological Studies in Houston from its present location to nearby Sagemont Church, beginning Aug. 1. Patterson said, "It moves us into a more accessible place. We are very grateful for Sagemont making available their facilities to us. It will be a very commodious area that students can get to easily." In light of this move, trustees also approved the sale of Havard's current facilities.

### Reduction in Bachelor of Arts in humanities and biblical Studies

Trustees approved a reduction in the bachelor's in Humanities and Biblical Studies degree from 129 hours to 125. This includes the elimination of English IV, Speech, Health Science, Math for Financial Management, PE, and Christian Life. Furthermore, the courses Reasoning and Virtues of Godly Character will be changed from 2 hours to 3 hours. Finally, students will be required to take two additional 3-hour electives.

### Officer Elections

Trustees reelected Kevin Ueckert, lead pastor of the First Baptist Church of Georgetown, Texas, as chairman of the board. Connie



Hancock, pastor of Springboro Baptist Church, Ohio, was elected vice chairman; and Philip Levant, pastor of Iglesia Bautista La Vid in Hurst, Texas, as secretary.

### Faculty Promotions

Matthew McKellar, associate professor of preaching, was promoted to professor of preaching.

Terri Stovall, associate professor of women's ministries, was promoted to professor of women's ministries.

Mike Wilkinson, assistant professor of theology, was promoted to associate professor of theology.

John Yeo, assistant professor of Old Testament, was promoted to associate professor of Old Testament.

Furthermore, Michael Crisp, assistant professor of collegiate ministry, was approved to occupy the Edgar "Preacher" Hallock Chair of Baptist Student Work.

All promotions are effective Aug. 1.



## TRUSTEES NAME PATTERSON PRESIDENT EMERITUS

By Staff

Southwestern Seminary's board of trustees named Paige Patterson president emeritus during a specially called meeting, May 22. The decision came after much prayer and a more than 13-hour discussion regarding challenges facing the institution, including those of enrollment, financial considerations, and leadership and institutional identity. The board ultimately decided to move in the direction of new leadership for the benefit of the future mission of the seminary. D. Jeffrey Bingham, dean of Southwestern's School of Theology, will serve as interim president.

# Generations

PSALM 79:13



## YOUTH MINISTRY LAB CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

By Julie Owens

Marking its 50th year of preparing men and women to serve in youth ministry, Southwestern Seminary's Youth Ministry Lab (YML) welcomed renowned speakers, professors, and church leaders for worship and breakout sessions at Southwestern Seminary, April 6-7. The conference theme this year was "Generations," taken from Psalm 79:13: "So we your people and the sheep of your pasture will give thanks to You forever; to all generations we will tell of Your praise."

More than 50 Southwestern students organized and conducted the conference under the leadership of co-chairmen Christian Stringer and Patrick Janson. Justin Buchanan, assistant professor of student ministry and author of the book *Guys and Lies*, took the lead faculty role. "In 1968, Youth Ministry Lab began when a student had the idea and desired to see college students serving as summer youth ministers equipped to serve the local church," Buchanan said. "Fifty years later, the impact of Youth Ministry Lab continues to be seen as evidenced by this year's conference."





## APOLOGETICS CONFERENCE PROVIDES PRINCIPLES FOR ANSWERING ANY WORLDVIEW

By Katie Coleman

With multiple worldviews populating modern society, how do Christians engage the culture? In answer to this question, during Southwestern Seminary’s annual Stand Firm Apologetics Conference, March 23-24, author and apologetics professor Nancy Pearcey outlined some of the principles necessary for answering any worldview.

Speaking during one of the conference’s plenary sessions, Pearcey, who teaches at Houston Baptist University, stated that one of the ways Christians can interact with another worldview is to ask basic questions to test its theory. For example, “Does it fit the facts and fit the world?” and, “Is it logically coherent—that is, does it hold together logically?”

Referencing her book *Finding Truth: 5 Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism, and Other God Substitutes*, Pearcey said that its ideas and apologetic approach allow one to look at where other worldviews get things right. She explains that even when people focus only on “parts of creation,” they are likely to uncover some genuine truths.

“So a biblical worldview enables Christians to approach every other worldview with a free and respectful attitude,” Pearcey said.

Understanding that Christians can glean something of value from differing perspectives, she continued, “We can enjoy the best works of any culture; we can delight in the artistry; and we can glean insight from science and philosophy. All the while, what we need to be doing is making the case that whatever is genuinely good and true finds its home in Christianity.”

Pearcey was one of the Stand Firm conference’s two keynote speakers, the other being Tim McGrew of West Michigan University. In addition to the plenary sessions, the conference featured three series of workshops: “Reasons for God,” “Outreach,” and “Advanced Apologetics.”

Southwestern professors Paul Gould, Ross Inman, Keith Loftin, and Travis Dickinson each presented in these workshops—Gould spoke on “Beauty and Imagination in Apologetics,” Loftin on “Why Christian Physicalism is a Bad Idea,” Inman on “The Evidential Value of a Transformed Life,” and Dickinson on “Is the God of the Old Testament a Moral Monster?” Other breakout speakers included John Depoe, Tawa Anderson, and Allen Hainline.





## GALA PRESENTS 'MUSICAL THANK YOU' TO PRESIDENT, FIRST LADY

By Alex Sibley

Southwestern Seminary's 15th annual Gala served as a "musical thank you" from the School of Church Music to Southwestern President Paige Patterson and First Lady Dorothy Patterson. The April 20 program featured a variety of musical performances along with congregational worship, all based on the Pattersons' favorite songs.

"Dr. Patterson and Mrs. Patterson, you have been very good to the

School of Church Music," said Dean of the School of Church Music Leo Day. He explained, "Because of you, Reynolds Auditorium is renovated amazingly well. ... Because of you, we are an All-Steinway School. ... Because you have hired a world-class music faculty, we have a world-class school of church music. So tonight, we're here to say, 'Thank you, Jesus'; but we're also here to celebrate the Pattersons."



## LAND CALLS FOR A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IN AMERICA

By Julie Owens

Evangelicals risk a degeneration of ethics if the nation is not steered toward biblical principles, Richard Land told students and faculty attending the April 17 Land Center luncheon. The former president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission and current president of Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte, N.C., Land spoke on the topic "Are American Christians Facing a New Dark Age?"

Through no-fault divorce, abortion on demand, and the prevalence of out-of-wedlock births, "we've made it too easy [for people] to walk away from their problems and responsibilities," Land said. "... Unless we have a spiritual awakening, it could lead to the disintegration of the United States."

Land reminded his audience that political adversaries are not the enemy. "The enemy is the prince of darkness," he said. "But we've got the wolf bait. We've got the Holy Spirit."





## LITERATURE AND SCIENCE AFFIRM MAN'S PLACE IN GOD'S UNIVERSE, SCHOLARS AGREE

By Julie Owens

Man looks to both literature and science as he seeks to know his place in the universe, two authorities in their fields agreed at “Astrophysics and Fantasy—Hubble Meets Narnia,” an examination of the universe presented by Southwestern Seminary’s Land Center for Cultural Engagement. The March 20 discussion explored this quest for clarity from theological and scientific standpoints, including the perspectives of *Chronicles of Narnia* author C.S. Lewis, as mankind assesses its role.

Michael Ward, a senior research fellow at the University of Oxford and a professor of apologetics at Houston Baptist University, addressed Lewis’ mission to deepen man’s understanding of the universe. Ward is the author of *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis*.

Ward recalled that while Lewis was best known as an academic and literary historian, he was deeply interested in astronomy, particularly the work of Copernicus, who revolutionized astronomy in the mid-1500s with his model of the Earth and planets revolving around the sun. Medieval cosmology and Copernicus’ findings that “relocated our home planet, Earth” fascinated Lewis throughout his life and inspired

his Narnia series of books. Lewis was aware that Earth is not the center of the universe, and he observed that the planet is surrounded by the heavens and seven planets, with symbolism assigned to each.

“Lewis sees planetary relationships as symbolic of our situation with God, where we are all situated within Him,” Ward said. “He sees the planets as God’s handiwork, where His voice goes out to the ends of the world.”

Anton M. Koekemoer covered the “Hubble” portion of the evening. A research astrophysicist whose work includes maintaining the scientific integrity of the Hubble Space Telescope, Koekemoer’s research focuses on the properties of galaxies and black holes and their growth over cosmic time.

While science is focused on explaining the physical processes observed in the universe, deeper questions such as the meaning of man’s existence must be considered from the standpoint of religion, Koekemoer said, adding that individuals arrive at their own understanding of these questions. He continued that science reveals attributes about God, enriching faith for those who already have faith.

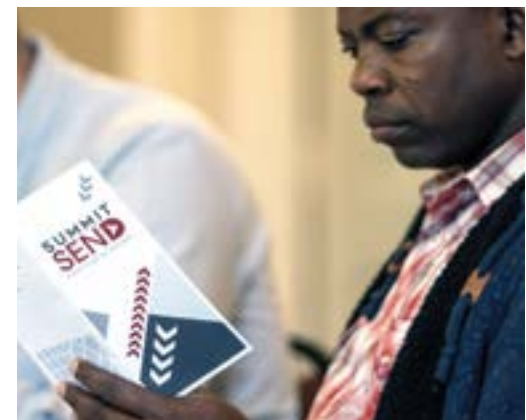
## GOD SEEKS ‘AN ARMY’ TO PLANT CHURCHES WORLDWIDE, MENTOR TELLS STUDENTS

By Julie Owens

“An army of men and women from all walks of life” are needed to plant churches throughout the nation and world, said Ray Woodard, a mentor to church planters in Vancouver, at a Southwestern Seminary luncheon, March 27. Woodard spoke at one of four events co-sponsored by Southwestern and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) during the seminary’s annual North American Church Planting Week.

Woodard said there are four metrics “worth staking your life and the glory of God on” in church planting: Are there new believers in that place? Are new disciple makers being raised up? Are new communities of faith beginning to sprout up? And finally, are communities being transformed?

“That’s why you plant churches—sharing the Gospel,” he said. “You walk with church planters and train them and see new communities of faith.”





## WOMEN'S AUXILIARY CELEBRATES STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, ENCOURAGES WOMEN TO CHOOSE JOY

By Katie Coleman

For many years, Women's Auxiliary ministry partners have supported Southwestern women through prayer, scholarships, and various programs such as Dressed For Service, a ministry that outfits graduating female students and wives of graduating students with a new outfit suitable for interviews, graduations, and other special occasions. Celebrating its 13th year, 39 women from Southwestern's Fort Worth and Houston campuses participated in Dressed for Service this semester, six of whom displayed their new outfits in the Spring Style Show at the Women's Auxiliary Tea, April 11.

The annual Women's Auxiliary Tea is a special time for the women of Southwestern to gather in fellowship, to pray together, and to learn

how they can collectively support Southwestern. After the style show and tea, the more than 400 women in attendance had the opportunity to hear from Ph.D. student Katie Frugé.

Frugé shared her testimony of what it has meant to choose joy in the midst of suffering. Her story, she explained, is not one she would have chosen for herself, but one she "would not change for anything in the world."

"Trials do not determine our joy," Frugé said. "Joy is not determined in our circumstances. Joy is determined on the presence of Christ alone."



## ALLEN MODELS TEXT-DRIVEN PREACHING AT BRAZILIAN SEMINARY'S ANNUAL THEOLOGY CONFERENCE

By Katie Coleman

Dean of the School of Preaching David Allen recently spoke at a theology conference hosted by the Baptist Theological Seminary in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The conference, held March 26-28, celebrated the 110th anniversary of the Brazilian Baptist Convention and emphasized the importance of expository preaching.

"The Brazilian Baptist Convention is doing very well with its vision to reach Brazil for Christ," Allen says, noting the seminary's recent growth. This vision to reach the lost, he adds, is reflected in the seminary's desire to emphasize expository preaching and to equip preachers with the tools to employ this method in their own churches.

Nearly 500 students and pastors attended the conference, all from varying educational backgrounds. Many of these pastors currently serve bivocationally in challenging areas, but all are eager to learn and grow in their preaching.



## MINISTRY PARTNERS RECOGNIZED FOR ETERNAL INVESTMENT

By Katie Coleman

During the 2018 Scholarship Donor Luncheon, April 10, Vice President for Institutional Advancement Travis Trawick noted the gratitude he and Southwestern's faculty and students have for the many ministry partners who are willing to give of their time and resources, particularly through scholarships, which aid students who have been called to ministry. The annual luncheon affords student recipients and donors the opportunity to meet one another, and it allows students a setting to thank ministry partners for their gifts.

Representing the students, Ph.D. student Andre Kirkland stood before attendees to share his testimony of how scholarships have

enabled him to attend Southwestern and be equipped for Kingdom work. He added that when he and other students feel discouraged and are ready to quit, the encouragement of people like Southwestern's ministry partners remind them of their purpose.

"It is because of your scholarships, charitable contributions, and gifts that students like myself are able to get a foundational theological training that will never leave us as we seek to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ," Kirkland said.







## DARRINGTON GRADUATES CHALLENGED TO BE FEARLESS IN MINISTRY

By Adam Covington

“Break every chain, break every chain, break every chain.” These words, sung by 35 men wearing black graduation robes over prison whites, opened the fourth commencement ceremony of Southwestern Seminary’s Darrington extension. Four years ago, these same men constituted the incoming freshman class of the bachelor’s degree in biblical studies taught by Southwestern Seminary professors at the Darrington Unit of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDJC). On May 7, they received their diplomas as friends, family, distinguished guests, underclassmen, and their seminary professors watched them walk across the stage in the chapel at Darrington.

The 35 graduates will now deploy in teams of four or five as “field ministers” to other Texas prisons. When this class is deployed,

Darrington will have sent field ministers to 26 prisons across the state of Texas. These 26 prisons represent 65,000 men whom the ministers will have the unique chance to reach. Because of the Darrington program, 48 percent of the prison population in the state of Texas will now have access to pastoral care through Darrington field ministers.

Southwestern Seminary President Paige Patterson challenged the graduates to be faithful to share the Gospel in even the darkest of places. “As you go out to the assignments God has given you to do, I challenge you: Don’t be afraid of anybody ... the Gospel is for every precious one of those men. You will see unbelievable things happen. God bless you as you share Christ with every man.”



To read expanded versions of these and more articles, visit [swbts.edu/news](http://swbts.edu/news).



SOUTHWESTERN  
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



TheologicalMatters.com provides a range of helpful articles written by Southwestern faculty addressing topics such as preaching, ethics, apologetics, current events, church history, marriage, family, ministry, and more. Below, you will find excerpts from some of our most popular articles. Visit the blog to read the full articles and share them with friends, family, and church members.



### There is only one doctrine with divine power—but is this what you preach and teach?

By Malcolm Yarnell / Research Professor of Systematic Theology

If you do not teach the entirely sufficient doctrine of Scripture, your listeners have no hope at all. This is why doctrine, biblical doctrine, is singularly necessary, and every other human teaching pales into insignificance. This is why we must emphasize the knowledge of Scripture, in its historical and linguistic context and in its Trinitarian and canonical shape, as the *sine qua non* of theological education. This is why we believe that evangelizing with true biblical doctrine is the mission of God, because it is the only way we can bring the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, which so desperately needs to hear this life-giving Word.



### Toward a 'by the book' and 'from the heart' kind of evangelism

By Matt Queen / Associate Professor of Evangelism

Anyone who knows enough of the Gospel to have heard it, believed it, and been saved by it, knows enough of the Gospel to share it. Conversely, anyone who doesn't know enough of the Gospel to share it should ask himself whether he has ever heard and believed enough of the Gospel to have been saved by it in the first place.



### Why ancient people needed God, why modern people don't, and why I still do

By Joshua Williams / Associate Professor of Old Testament

Forgiveness stands at the heart of the Christian message, the Gospel. Paul demonstrates this point when he describes the Gospel to the Romans. The Gospel is God's power to rescue us from the judgment of God to come (see Romans 1:16-20). Our sin convicts, condemns, and controls us. Only God can overcome sin. Only God can forgive. And that is why I still need God. In fact, it is why all people need God.



### Does Elohim foreshadow the Trinity in Genesis 1?

By John Yeo / Assistant Professor of Old Testament

The age-old riddle—"Which came first, the chicken or the egg?"—is no mystery for the Christian. Biblically speaking, the answer is unequivocally: "the chicken" (cf. Genesis 1:24; 2:19). A more difficult question to answer, however, is whether the word for "God" (singular) or "gods" (plural) in the Hebrew Bible, i.e., *Elohim*, may be interpreted as a legitimate foreshadowing of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament.



### God is faithful in the midst of life's fragility

By Charles Patrick / Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Communications

Despite life circumstances and my own shortcomings, God has been faithful through all. He is *El HaNe'eman*, the faithful God (Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 36:5, 119:90; Lamentations 3:22-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:24). He has been my provision and my security through the sleepless nights, uncertainty, anxiety, fear, and grief. I can truly attest that He is "my refuge and my fortress" (Psalm 91:2). I am overwhelmed in praise for my God of unwavering faithfulness in the midst of the fragility of life.

Continue reading these articles and many more at: [TheologicalMatters.com](http://TheologicalMatters.com)

# Everyday Evangelism Stories

Southwestern Seminary students and faculty strive to “Preach the Word, Reach the World,” and this often manifests through everyday evangelism encounters. Below are excerpts from articles about some of these encounters, detailing Southwesterners’ heart for evangelism and God’s sovereign grace in saving sinners.



## Eight profess faith in Christ through evangelistic church partnership

By Julie Owens

Days before Easter, faith in the Gospel was very much alive as eight new believers made professions

of faith through the witness of Inglewood Baptist Church members and Southwestern students in the church’s neighborhood in Grand Prairie. The church partnered with students from professors Matt Queen and Brandon Kiesling’s contemporary evangelism classes for two days of outreach, March 23-24.

More than 80 people participated—some going door to door to share the Gospel in the church neighborhood and inviting people to Easter services, and others praying or serving food in the church’s fellowship hall. The door-to-door teams knocked on 283 doors and made more than 127 contacts.



## Yearlong evangelism effort connects dozens to local church

By Katie Coleman

... On another occasion, Master of Divinity student Jong Lee interacted with a group of teenagers. Lee

asked them if they had a relationship with Jesus Christ, to which they responded that they were occasional church attenders but had never understood the Gospel message. Lee explained this message to them, clarifying the significance of Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross followed by His glorious resurrection. Before parting ways, the teenagers responded to the Gospel for the first time and prayed to receive Christ.



## Head trauma, uncut grass catalyze salvific Gospel encounter

By Alex Sibley

“God is always at work in our lives,” reflects master’s student Mike Rodriguez. “I know that He used my head trauma to cause a

fainting episode, to put me in the hospital, to keep me from mowing my yard, to keep me at home from church, and to answer the front door so that I would be there when He guided this young man to my house. Yes, God used an uncut lawn to attract a lost young man to have church on my porch and to save his soul on a beautiful Sunday morning, all because of His love.”



## Conversation over coffee challenges homeless man’s false beliefs

By Alex Sibley

Master’s student Neil Williams assured Darren that he can be confident in his standing with God. “If you trust in Jesus with all your heart and make Him Lord of your life,” Williams said,

“then He will come in and help you start changing, and you’ll be completely certain.”

Continue reading these articles and many more at: [swbts.edu/news/everyday-evangelism](http://swbts.edu/news/everyday-evangelism)

# FACULTY CLAIMS SECOND STRAIGHT SOFTBALL WIN

By Julie Owens



Consistent hitting helped faculty members claim bragging rights and a second consecutive victory as they won Southwestern Seminary's third annual faculty-student Softball Showdown, April 12. The final score was 18-7.

Professors, students, families, and seminary staff consumed hot dogs and soft drinks at the RAC Intramural Field, cheering on the teams during six innings of play dominated by faculty batters, who took home another win after their 28-4 defeat of the students last year and retained bragging rights for next year, while students again experienced the agony of loss.

Jordan Drake, Student Life coordinator and a Master of Theological Studies student, believes that the annual game is a great way for the students of Southwestern to get to know some of their professors a little better. "There was once a time when we were all children, and playing outside was one of the best ways to get to know new friends," he says. "[The Softball Showdown] is similar to that because students get a chance to build relationships through friendly competition with the men and women who teach them in the classroom."

"This is the heart of Student Life," Drake adds. "We aim to create opportunities for relationships to be built up and discipleship to happen."









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



## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS AWARD

# TERRI STOVALL

By Julie Owens

Through three presidents across three decades at Southwestern Seminary, “a ministry heart and a love for the people” have motivated Terri Stovall, this year’s recipient of Southwestern’s Distinguished Alumnus Award. “This became my model as my ministry journey through the years had me serving as singles minister, children’s minister, education minister, church administrator, and, finally, women’s minister,” she says. “Even during an unusual season when I served as a food service director at a large church, my focus was always to teach and disciple, but to do so from a ministry heart with a love for people.”

Since 2007, Stovall has served as the dean of women’s programs at Southwestern Seminary as well as professor of women’s ministry in the Jack D. Terry School of Church and Family



Ministries, where she teaches in the area of women’s ministry at the graduate and doctoral levels. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Marketing from Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Stovall served as campus evangelism coordinator in Tyler, then earned a Master of Arts in Religious Education, Master of Divinity, and Ph.D. in Administration from Southwestern Seminary.

When Stovall was a doctoral student in the late 1990s, women’s ministries began to take hold in churches, and seminaries responded by offering graduate-level training programs. “Since I was serving as a women’s minister at the time, my dean asked if I would create a curriculum for a master’s concentration,” she says. “Little did I know that the curriculum I wrote would be used to launch Southwestern’s first women’s ministry certificate and concentration in the Master of Arts in Christian Education—and then they needed someone to teach it.”

Stovall is co-author of the book *Women Leading Women: The Biblical Model of the Church*. This book encourages women to reach women for Christ, to train other women, and to involve women in ministry.

Stovall and her husband, Jay, are active members at MacArthur Blvd. Baptist Church in Irving, where she serves as minister to women and special events director. Both are avid rollercoaster fans and enjoy riding motorcycles.

## REACH THE WORLD AWARD

# KEN WHITTEN

By Julie Owens

When Ken Whitten was growing up, he dreamed of playing baseball. At Eastern Illinois University, he considered a coaching career. But he also occasionally preached at Southern Baptist churches.

Ultimately, he chose the pulpit over the mound, and many would applaud that decision. As Southwestern’s first recipient of its “Reach the World” award, he exemplifies passion for service to mankind for God’s glory.

Whitten has served as pastor of Idlewild Baptist Church in the Tampa suburb of Lutz, Fla., for 29 years. It is his first and only pastorate and, in terms of providing help and hope, a resounding success. Whitten has also served in an array of local, state, and national capacities including president of the Florida Baptist Convention and president of the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors’ Conference.



But Whitten’s passion for outreach has left the largest mark on his community. “When it comes to ministries, the light shines brightest at home,” he says.

Whitten knew that his church membership of more than 14,000—under the guidance of 24 pastors and more than 100 deacons—could do more than just fill seats. “I went to the mayor and asked him, ‘If you could release an army in the city, where would you send it? Because we want to be that army.’” The mayor directed Whitten’s sizeable flock

to Sulphur Springs, a low-income sector of Tampa known for its crime statistics and human trafficking. There, Idlewild’s door-to-door teams ask, “How can we pray for you, and what can we do to help you?”

These efforts are a testimony of “reaching the world” through love and determination. Idlewild members care for orphans, mentor at-risk children in inner-city schools, paint houses, and, this past Easter, provided 32,000 meals to those in need.

In 2005, under Whitten’s guidance, the church moved into a 143-acre campus, and Whitten also led the church in establishing campuses in Central and South Tampa. Idlewild conducts Hispanic ministries at the main campus and at a satellite campus in Odessa, Fla. Idlewild missions have reached people in Central and Southeast Asia, Guatemala, Israel, India, Cuba, and Africa.

Whitten acknowledges that not everyone cares for big churches, but he has been known to tell people, “If you don’t like big churches, sit on the fourth row and don’t look back.”



## Alumni Updates

### 1980

Harold Reams (MDIV 1982) to Taylor Baptist Association, Perry, Fla., as director of missions, with wife Patsy Reams.

### 1990

Dondi E. Costin (MDIV 1994) to Charleston Southern University, Charleston, S.C., as president, with wife Vickey Northey Costin.

### 2000

Tony Watson (MACE 2007) to First Baptist Church, Palestine, Texas, as senior pastor, with wife Rhonda (Rhoads) Watson.

### 2010

Blake White (THM 2013) to South Side Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas, as lead pastor, with wife Alicia White.

## Retirement

Ron Etheredge (MRE 1967, BCM 1967) retired with wife, Kay Etheredge, living in North Richland Hills, Texas.

David Glazener (MRE 1968, MAMFC 1994) retired with wife, Eva Jo (Wilson) Glazener, living in Grand Prairie, Texas.

Steven L. Ray (MRE 1973) retired in Clermont, Fla.

Robert Langley (MDIV 1976) retired with wife, Susan, in West Covina, Calif.

David Suddath (MRE 1977) retired with wife, Maye Suddath, living in Marietta, Ga.

Ron Williamson (DIPHTH 1976) retired, living in Fort Smith, Ark.

Jackie Kay (MDIV 1982) retired with wife, Libby Kay, living in Decatur, Ala.

## Anniversaries

David Glazener (MRE 1968, MAMCF 1994) and Eva Jo (Wilson) Glazener, 52nd wedding anniversary (June).

Gary Bowser (MRE 1976) and Joyce (Roberts) Bowser, 50th wedding anniversary (June).

Bruce Crawford (MDIV 1982) and Lynda (Fricke) Crawford (MRE 1981), 38th wedding anniversary (December).

## Memorials

Patricia Boone, former missionary to Africa

### 1940

Gladys Evelyn Browning Best (MRE 1947)

### 1950

Billie Lee Mahler (Stewart) (MRE 1954, MARE 1983)

### 1960

Frances G. Bowen (BDIV 1960)

Jimmie F. Dyer (BDIV 1961, MDIV 1968, DMIN 1975)

William T. Vick (BRE 1961)

Kenneth R. Lyle (BDIV 1963)

Nathan M. McAlister (MCM 1963)

Hal C. Cook (MRE 1966)

Donald E. Evans (MRE 1968)

### 1970

James Melton "Jim" Jenkins (BCM 1970)

Siegfried Schatzmann (MDIV 1976, PHD 1981)

Ted E. Cromer (DMIN 1979)

### 1980

David Michael (Mike) Lee (MDIV 1980, DMIN 1985)

Gary L. Ellis (ACM 1984)

James M. Colwell (MDIV 1985)

## 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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# THE EVANGELISTIC TASK AND OUR GREAT, SAVING GOD

By Alex Sibley

The awe-inspiring testimonies recounted in this magazine result from Christians being obedient to the Great Commission by evangelizing the lost and discipling the saved in service to our great, saving God. Here are some points to consider as you reflect on our calling to evangelize.

## 1. “My sin, not in part but the whole.”

As we consider the evangelistic task of sharing the Gospel with the lost, we are invited to consider the Gospel message itself. After all, as believers, we have already experienced the life-transforming power of the Gospel; we ourselves have been touched by the glorious truth that we proclaim.

Many words could be written about the wonder of the Gospel, but here are just a few thoughts. First, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us because God loves us (Romans 5:8). As an oft-memorized verse, this particular Scripture’s overwhelming significance tends to be lost on us, but let’s consider it again: *while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us because God loves us*. That means, even when we were in active rebellion against the Lord, He loved us. In fact, He loved us so much that He sent His Son to die for us, making Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

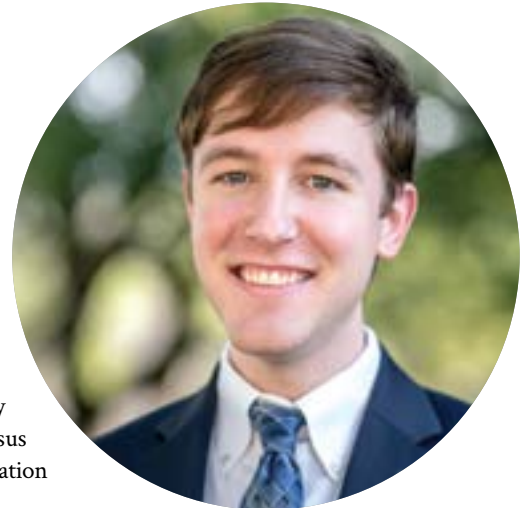
Our sins were forgiven. We were made clean. The gap between us and God was bridged. We can now be in a relationship with Almighty God. As an old hymn states, “My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought—my sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!” Amen. Praise the Lord!

**2. When we share the Gospel, God steps in and does amazing things.** How

can a young troublemaker’s life be totally transformed after a few visits to a Good News Club? How can thousands of atheists in a closed country be transformed into house church leaders and missionary evangelists? The answer is that when God’s people share the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit takes over the situation and accomplishes His higher purposes.

Acts 16 recounts the conversion of Lydia, the first recorded convert to Christianity in all of Europe. In reading of her evangelistic encounter with the Apostle Paul, it is interesting to note what is not included. No word is mentioned of how Paul began the conversation, how he transitioned into a Gospel presentation, how he articulated the Gospel message, or how he extended an invitation to respond. All that is said of the encounter is this: “the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul” (v. 14b). The Scripture clarifies that Paul did speak, but his role in Lydia’s profession of faith is not emphasized by the text; what is emphasized is God’s role in the process—He opened her heart to respond. Paul shared the Gospel, but God is the one who actually saved Lydia. So it is with our evangelism—we share, but God saves.

**3. Not everyone who hears the Gospel will get saved, but the only people who will get saved are those who hear the Gospel.** The parable of the four types of soil (Mark 4) clarifies that not everyone with whom we share the Gospel will profess faith in Christ; only one of the four types of soil yields a crop. That does not mean we should be discouraged from the evangelistic task, however, because the one type of soil that did produce a crop had a seed cast upon it. How would the soil produce a crop otherwise? Scripture itself asks



this question in real-world terms: “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14).

Therefore, we must share the Gospel so that the lost may hear, and though not all will respond, some will. And as indicated by point 2 above, such results are in God’s hands, not ours.

## 4. So ... shout it from the mountaintops!

In light of the beauty of the Gospel message; the fact that God saves people through the sharing/hearing/believing of that message; and the fact that people cannot get saved unless someone shares with them, let us clearly and fearlessly declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ—that all may hear and that as many as possible may get saved. Not only should our love for people drive us to share the Gospel with them, but our love for God should render us incapable of keeping the message of His wonderful saving grace to ourselves. So let us shout from the mountaintops this indescribably awesome message: Jesus saves!

**ALEX SIBLEY** serves as managing editor of Seminary Hill Press and associate director of news and information at Southwestern Seminary. He graduated from Southwestern with his Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling in 2016 and is currently pursuing his Ph.D.



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