



Southwestern

NEWS

ISSUE 02
Answering
the Call



A day in the life of President Adam W. Greenway

A look at how a typical day is filled with family time and business on Seminary Hill.

Jim Denison, other alumni and students engage the culture

Southwesterners make a difference for Christ on the front lines of moral and religious liberty concerns.

The essay

What does Baptist cooperation mean today? Historian and professor of Baptist heritage Gregory A. Wills answers.

Vol. 79
2021



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Greenway



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Graham



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Hawkins



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Matt
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PHOTOS BY CHINSOP CHONG

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Southwestern

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The Bible *is* God's Word



A high view of Scripture is the first non-negotiable pillar of our big-tent vision for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

AS WE ENTER THE CHRISTMAS SEASON, it's a good time to be reminded of the importance of words—and the Word.

Words matter. Without them, we cannot make claims or delineate truths. Sometimes, the claim we want to make or the truth we want to delineate focuses on just a single word. Indeed, a recent article illustrates the importance of the very word, “word.”

On Sept. 16, Baptist News Global published an opinion piece in which columnist Terry Austin argued that “the Bible is not the Word of God”; only “Jesus is the Word of God.” He made some of the same arguments that were a central motivation for the Southern Baptist Convention’s Conservative Resurgence several decades ago. I responded to the article with a tweet, noting the article is a reminder of why a high view of Scripture is the first non-negotiable pillar of our big-tent vision for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The Bible *is* the Word of God written down, and Jesus *is* the Word of God incarnate, I noted.

Mr. Austin later responded to my tweet and essentially said that our tent is not big enough. On that point, we agree. The Southwestern Seminary tent is not big enough for people who deny that the Bible is the Word of God, instead affirming it only as the words of men. The Bible is not merely a record of how ancient men believed they encountered God experientially that somehow God can use today in a neo-orthodox or mystical way. Contra Austin’s assertion, the Bible is a collection of God’s words to us, not just a collection of words about God.

Mark Wingfield, publisher of Baptist News Global, took note of my tweet, writing:

In case you’ve forgotten what the two-decade battle within the Southern Baptist Convention was about, our columnist, Terry Austin, stirred up the old debate with a piece he wrote this week about Jesus being the Word of God, not the Bible. ... You’ll recall that it was this very issue—the 2000 version of the doctrinal statement removed a line about Jesus being the criterion by which the Scripture is interpreted—that caused many of us to finally break away from the SBC and its new devotion to Bible worship.

Obviously, affirming the Bible as the Word of God is not akin to worshiping the Bible. But Mr. Wingfield adds that in the Baptist News Global style guide: “We refer to the Bible as the ‘word’ of God, meaning it is the written word of God, but we refer to Jesus as the ‘Word’ of God, the incarnate spoken presence of God.”

Mr. Wingfield’s statements remind me of two things.

First, the important theological issues at stake in the year 2000, when I had the privilege of being in Orlando as a messenger to the historic SBC annual meeting where the Baptist Faith and Message (BFM) was revised. It was there, of course, where the long-disputed wording about Jesus being the “criterion” by which the Bible is to be interpreted was clarified. I was a student at Southwestern Seminary then, and I remember vividly being in the meeting hall during the BFM debate when a Texas pastor declared that the Bible was “just a book.” It is worth remembering that the original BFM adopted in 1925 did not include the criterion sentence. Indeed, it was added in 1963 specifically to rebut claims about the Bible coming out of the Elliot Controversy—a harbinger of the Broadman Bible Commentary controversy just a few years later. Garth Pybas, a member of the 1963 BFM revision committee, later went on record that the criterion statement was included precisely to refute claims of the Bible being just an error-filled book written by men. Unfortunately, because the criterion language was often used by some leaders and professors in Convention life to drive a wedge between Jesus and the Bible, claiming that the former, but not the latter, is the Word of God, clarification was necessary again in 2000.

The desire behind a broader interpretive understanding in 1963 is made clear in a 2004 doctoral dissertation by A.J. Smith. Through extensive research, Smith discovered that the original draft language of the criterion sentence was more expansive: “the person, work, and teachings of Jesus Christ.” After reviewing that language, Dale Moody, theology

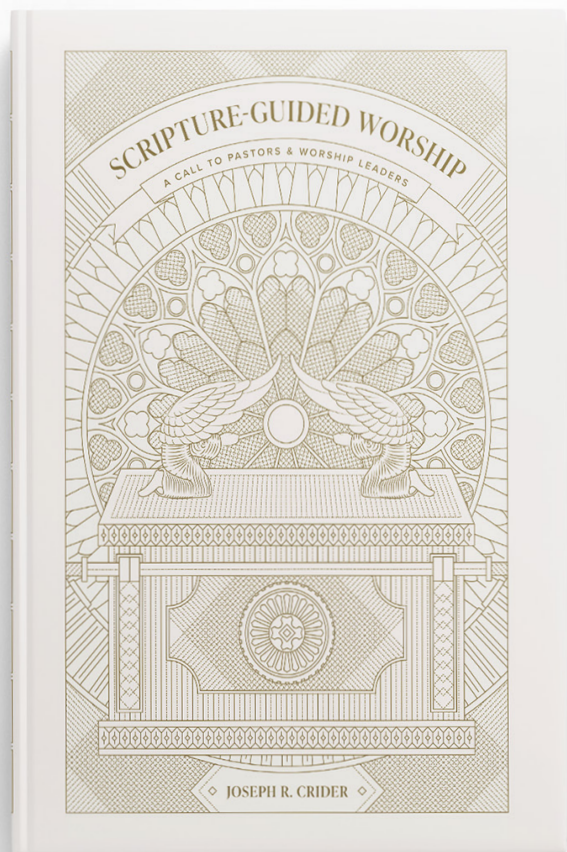
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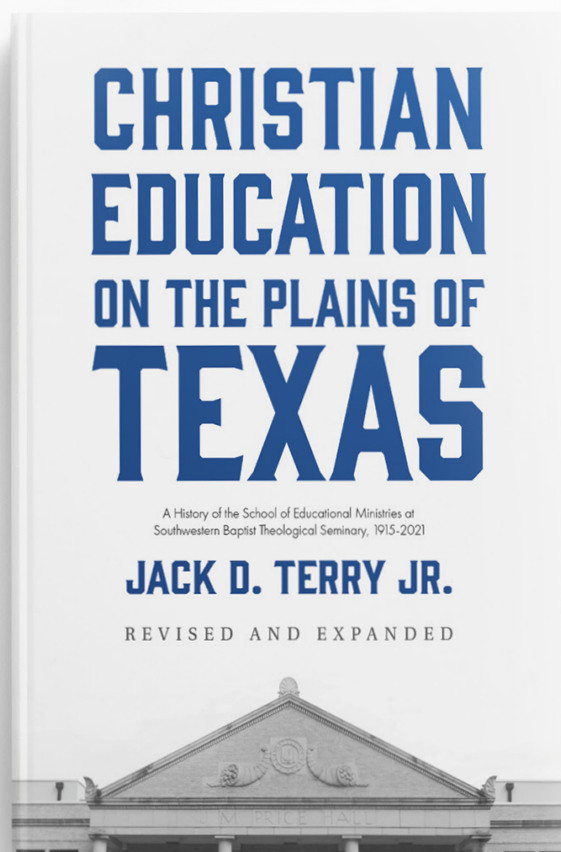


SOUTHWESTERNERS RETURNING “HOME TO THE DOME” will recognize a refreshed main entrance from Seminary Drive welcoming students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the campus with signage that matches the seminary’s logo. The updated sign is part of other improvements made to the campus in recent months.

NEW FROM SEMINARY HILL PRESS



Joseph R. Crider, experienced worship leader and dean of the School of Church Music and Worship at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, provides a guide for church worship leaders to cultivate worship services driven by God's Word. *Scripture-Guided Worship* teaches readers how to plan and prepare worship services that are grounded in and based upon the Bible. Teaching from the Old Testament story of Uzzah and the Ark of God, Crider underscores the importance of congregational worship service in light of the transcendence and immanence of God.



In 1915, Southwestern Seminary established the Department of Religious Education which was elevated to the status of a school of the institution in 1921—the first school of religious education anywhere in the world of academia. *Christian Education on the Plains of Texas, Revised and Expanded*, is a new edition of this work by Jack D. Terry Jr., a former dean of the school and its namesake. This edition includes a new chapter with developments through the spring of 2021 in celebration of the centennial anniversary of the school and includes Terry's personal reflections on the history of the school, much of which he has lived as a student, professor, dean, and seminary statesman.

These and other titles are available at SeminaryHillPress.com.





Trustees establish Charles F. Stanley Chair for the Advancement of Global Christianity

Stanley: “It is a joy to think In Touch is partnering with Southwestern”

DURING ITS FALL MEETING, Oct. 19, the Southwestern Seminary Board of Trustees unanimously approved the Charles F. Stanley Chair for the Advancement of Global Christianity. The new, fully endowed academic chair will be in the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions and honors Stanley ('57), the long-time pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, Georgia, and founder of In Touch Ministries.

Stanley is “one of the most well-known and prolific Southwesterners in our history,” President Adam W. Greenway ('02) told trustees. And the Stanley Chair is the “first fully funded, endowed chair in the history of Southwestern Seminary at the current funding level of \$2 million,” Greenway said.

In a statement to the seminary, Stanley said, “I never could have imagined how God would work this out. I am honored to think of

all the pastors, professors, and even founders of seminaries, who will be trained through the World Christian Studies program at Southwestern Seminary. When I was a young man just starting out, a pastor helped me so I could receive a scholarship and get an education. It is a joy to think In Touch is partnering with Southwestern to do that for young men and women all over the world.”

“[Dr. Stanley] and his ministry want to identify with Southwestern Seminary and to put their resources in an institution that is committed to helping people know Christ, here and around the world.”

- GREENWAY ('02)

In September, the board of directors of In Touch Foundation, the charitable subsidiary of In Touch Ministries, the global broadcasting ministry founded by Stanley in 1977, approved full funding of the chair “as an expression of appreciation for Dr. Stanley’s love for Christ, for Christian education, and for the ministry of the seminary,” according to the agreement establishing the chair.

Greenway said, “[Dr. Stanley] and his ministry want to identify with Southwestern Seminary and to put their resources in an institution that is committed to helping people know Christ, here and around the world.”

Stanley, a 1957 Bachelor of Divinity graduate of Southwestern Seminary, began In Touch during his 49-year tenure as the senior pastor of the First Baptist Church of Atlanta. Upon graduation from Southwestern Seminary, Stanley pastored in North Carolina before joining the staff of First Baptist Atlanta in 1969 and assuming the role of senior pastor in 1971. He remained senior pastor until his retirement from the church in September 2020, when he was named pastor emeritus.

In addition to his degree from Southwestern Seminary, Stanley earned his master of theology and doctor of theology degrees from Luther Rice Seminary. Stanley also served two one-year terms as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1984 to 1986.

The first occupant of the Stanley Chair will be a professor in the Fish School to be recommended at a future date. [#—A.A.](#)



Greenway names historian Gregory A. Wills as dean of School of Theology

GREGORY A. WILLS WAS NAMED DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary by President Adam W. Greenway ('02) during the fall meeting of the school's Board of Trustees, following unanimous board action to promote D. Jeffrey Bingham to research professor of historical theology.

Bingham also was named to the endowed Jesse Hendley Chair of Biblical Theology and granted sabbatical leave for the 2022-2023 academic year. In addition to trustee actions, Greenway announced his appointment of Bingham as director of the seminary's Center for Early Christian Studies.

Greenway said, "We are so blessed to have a man of integrity, a man of capacity, a man of theological acumen, a winsome scholar, who is a part of our faculty at Southwestern Seminary and I cannot think of a more qualified and competent person in the landscape of Baptist and evangelical higher education more ready to assume the post of leadership as dean of the School of Theology than Dr. Greg Wills."

Wills, who previously served as the dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary, makes history as the first person to serve as dean of the School of Theology in that institution and Southwestern Seminary, Greenway said.

"For generations the faculty of the School of Theology has been used of God to equip and prepare pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and other kingdom workers," Wills said in a statement. "Its current faculty teaches in full reliance on the truth of the inerrant Word of God. They model the love, devotion, and service that they long to see growing in their students. I am honored to be their colleague and look forward to serving them in this role. The

school's legacy of faithful deans began with Ray Summers in 1949 and extends to Jeff Bingham in the present."

Wills is the founding director of the B.H. Carroll Center for Baptist Heritage and Mission and is a research professor of church history and Baptist heritage at Southwestern. Bingham, who has served as the dean of the School of Theology and professor of historical theology at Southwestern Seminary since 2016, was interim president of Southwestern Seminary from 2018 to 2019.

"I am truly grateful for all the opportunities for service that I have enjoyed at Southwestern Seminary on the faculty, as dean, as interim president, and now in the new faculty roles I will assume," Bingham said. "I see God's gracious work in my

"[Wills] is one of the foremost experts in the field of Baptist studies alive and working today."

- GREENWAY ('02)

life through these opportunities and look forward to how the Lord will use me in the coming years at Southwestern Seminary. I want to express my deep appreciation to the trustees, President Greenway, and Provost Dockery for the honor of serving this wonderful institution."

Said Greenway: "Dr. Bingham is a world-renowned Patristics scholar. He may be the foremost expert on the early church alive today working in Baptist and evangelical contexts and we need Jeff Bingham writing and researching and helping us glean every bit of wisdom we can ... from the early church to help find ourselves more faithful as the 21st century church." —A.A.

Bingham promoted to research professor



Center for Church Revitalization renamed to honor Southwestern Seminary's seventh president

Hemphill Center approved by Board of Trustees

THE CENTER FOR CHURCH REVITALIZATION was named in honor of Kenneth S. Hemphill by unanimous vote of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Board of Trustees during its fall meeting, Oct. 19.

The Hemphill Center for Church Revitalization honors the seventh president of Southwestern Seminary and acknowledges the role he has played in assisting the center since its founding in 2019.

"I can't think of anybody more synonymous with healthy churches, and somebody who embodies more of what we want to see happen through our Center for Church Revitalization than Dr. Ken Hemphill," President Adam W. Greenway ('02) told trustees. He called the center an "institutional priority" and said the seminary will do "everything we can, not just in terms of training students while they are in seminary, but also helping churches across our convention to experience renewal and revitalization."

Hemphill, who served as president of Southwestern Seminary from 1994-2003, was the national strategist for the Southern Baptist

Convention's Empowering Kingdom Growth emphasis from 2003-2011. He also served as the founding director of the Center for Church Planting and Revitalization at North Greenville University in Tigerville, South Carolina.

Hemphill said he is "humbled and honored" that the center now bears his name.

"The spiritual renewal and functional revitalization of the local church has been a focus of my life and ministry," he said. "Southwestern, since its inception, has been a leader in preparing ministers with the biblical and practical skills for local church ministry. The revitalization of the local church begins with spiritual renewal followed by the transformation of the mind which may lead to strategic structural change and greater Great Commission effectiveness."

Hemphill said Southwestern Seminary's "world-class faculty" will "help churches move through all three phases of the revitalization process. This visionary focus on church revitalization in the seminary setting will enable

Southwestern to partner with local churches, associations, and state conventions in a kingdom-focused strategy that will 'Touch the World and Impact Eternity,'" citing a slogan associated with the seminary during his presidential tenure.

Established in August 2019, the Hemphill Center provides academic programs, resources, training and equipping events, consulting services, and ministry opportunities to help meet the needs of pastors, church leaders, and the local church. Additionally, the center works in partnership with the national fellowship of state revitalization leaders and the church replanting team for the North American Mission Board.

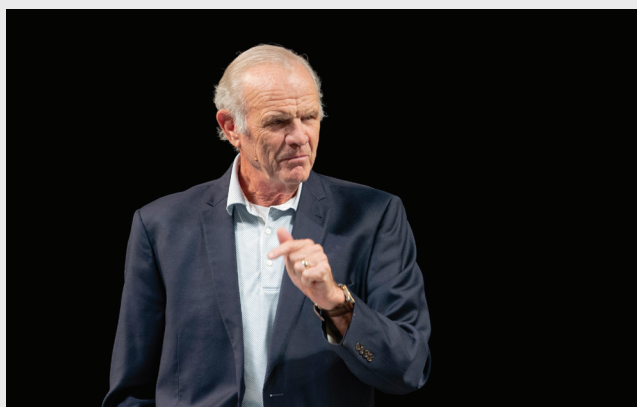
"I can't think of anybody more synonymous with healthy churches, and somebody who embodies more of what we want to see happen through our Center for Church Revitalization than Dr. Ken Hemphill."

- GREENWAY ('02)

The Hemphill Center is led by Kenneth Priest ('97, '99), who was named permanent director in August after serving as interim director since its founding.

"I could not be more excited about the naming of the Center for Church Revitalization after Dr. Ken Hemphill," Priest said. "Dr. Hemphill has been on the front end of the need for church revitalization since he first noticed the baptism decline in SBC life in 1995, prompting the release of his work, *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur* in 1996."

Priest, who also serves an adjunct professor in church revitalization at Southwestern Seminary, previously served the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention for more than a decade as the director of convention strategies. Priest has served churches in Texas, North Carolina, and Hawaii. He is a 1999 Master of Arts in Christian Education graduate of Southwestern Seminary and is currently working on a Doctor of Education at the school. —A.A.



More information about the resources of the Hemphill Center for Church Revitalization can be found at swbts.edu/academics/centers/center-for-church-revitalization/ or by emailing revitalization@swbts.edu.

Fall Trustee meeting: Upton named VP for institutional advancement



● The board also celebrated two schools' centennial anniversaries

THE SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES elected a vice president of institutional advancement and celebrated the centennial anniversaries of the School of Church Music and Worship and the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries during its Oct. 18-19 fall meetings.

These actions were in addition to naming a new academic chair in honor of longtime pastor and Southern Baptist leader Charles F. Stanley ('57), announcing the appointment of Gregory A. Wills as the new dean of the School of Theology, and naming an academic center for former president Kenneth S. Hemphill.

"As the ninth president of the seminary, it is my joy to report to you that the state of the seminary is strong," President Adam W. Greenway ('02) told the board of trustees, noting an increase in new student enrollment for the current academic year. Despite the "unknown unknowns" due to uncertainties related to the COVID-19 global pandemic, he said, "God is still calling men and women to ministry and mission,

and these men and women know that a call to ministry is a call to preparation. And hundreds of them are making the incredibly wise and strategic decision that the best place they can receive that training is at Southwestern Seminary."

Greenway reported, "By God's grace, we saw an incredible year of the Lord's favor and blessing financially." The more than \$65 million in revenues during the fiscal year 2021 from all funding streams, \$50 million of which was in unrestricted revenues, is an "unprecedented display of God's favor and blessing. ... The Lord truly has showered financial blessings, even in the midst of disruption and pandemic in ways that only He can receive the glory."

Calling Ed Upton, who was elected vice president for institutional advancement, "one of the most strategic leaders working in the Southern Baptist Convention today," Greenway praised Upton's leadership in helping to "make history" with the Stanley Chair.

"I do believe that in God's economy, under the leadership of Dr. Ed Upton for many years to come, we're going to see some of the greatest days in the history of development and advancement and institutional relations and campus operations that we've ever seen here on Seminary Hill," Greenway said.

"I am grateful that God has called me to Southwestern Seminary to work alongside Dr.

Greenway and the staff to continue to build this great institution," Upton said in a statement. "My prayer is that I can be as much of a blessing to Southwestern as it has been to me."

Upton earned the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Southern Seminary and the Bachelor of Ministry degree from Freedom Bible College.

Trustees also elected three faculty members who had been serving under presidential appointment:

- **M. Todd Bates**, professor of philosophy in Texas Baptist College;
- **Ian B. Buntain**, associate professor of missions in the Fish School; and
- **Mark R. McClellan** ('83, '00), professor of missions in the Fish School.

Trustees also heard reports from board committees, including the business administration committee, chaired by John Rayburn, who reported the seminary received a "very clean audit and no problems, big or small to report," before the board approved the fiscal year 2021 financial statements.

In other actions, the board approved the candidates for graduation during fall commencement, Dec. 3, and revisions to the seminary's investment policy statement.—*Staff*

FAITHFULNESS OF THE TERRY SCHOOL AND THE SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC AND WORSHIP MARKED DURING CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

LEADERS OF SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY remembered the faithfulness of God and His servants in the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries and School of Church Music and Worship (SCMW) during a centennial anniversary celebration dinner for both schools, Oct. 18.

In attendance were retired “legacy” faculty of both schools, current faculty and staff, and trustees who were on campus for their annual board meeting.

President Adam W. Greenway ('02) recognized the distinct traits of each school at Southwestern Seminary and reflected the commitment to a “strong and vibrant renewal” of each.

“Each and every school of this seminary has a unique and important contribution in the holistic training of God-called men and women preparing for the various kinds of Christian service into which God deploys people. Every school matters, and it matters to me,” said Greenway.

Greenway also noted the pacesetting status of both schools, which were the first of their kind.

“I can assure you there will be a School of Church Music and Worship here at Southwestern Seminary, and there will be a School of Educational Ministries here at Southwestern Seminary,” Greenway told the gathering.

The celebration reflected on each school’s heritage, both founded in 1915 as departments and elevated to school status in 1921 with J.M. Price leading what was then known as the School of Religious Education and I.E. Reynolds leading what was then known as the School of Gospel Music.

David S. Dockery ('81), interim provost and vice president for academic administration, delivered opening remarks on both schools’ legacies of pioneers in educational ministries

and church music. Dockery noted the changes that took place in the early 20th century with a new focus on age-specific education ministries and Sunday school programs. At the same time, changes were taking place in church music and worship practices.

As these changes took place, Dockery said Price and Reynolds led a new era of Christian educational training and church music at Southwestern Seminary, with dozens of faithful faculty members serving in the 100 years since.

“The rest, they say, is history,” Dockery said. “Southwestern Seminary boldly led the world of theological education in these two areas of study and continues to do so today under the capable visionary leadership of deans Michael Wilder and Joe Crider.”

Before Jack D. Terry ('62, '67) closed with a benediction, Greenway offered a special word of recognition for his 53 years of service to the seminary. Terry has had uninterrupted service on the faculty of the school since 1969, and has served in other capacities at the seminary, including vice president for institutional advancement and now as special assistant to the president.

“B.H. Carroll had faith and hoped. L.R. Scarborough had faith and hoped. J.M. Price had faith and hoped. I.E. Reynolds had faith and hoped. What they had hoped is here. By their faithfulness, we stand in the shadow of great men and women of faith,” Terry said.

“Each and every school of this seminary has a unique and important contribution in the holistic training of God-called men and women preparing for the various kinds of Christian service into which God deploys people. Every school matters, and it matters to me.”

- GREENWAY ('02)

The evening program also featured musical presentations from Southwestern A Capella and Professor of Voice Ben C. Caston, with R. Allen Lott, professor of music history, on piano. Participants at the centennial celebration received commemorative booklets for each school with a historical timeline of major developments and vignettes of particularly notable faculty for each school. —K.C.



Darling named director of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement, appointed to TBC faculty

SOUTHERN BAPTIST THOUGHT LEADER DANIEL M. DARLING has been named director of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, President Adam W. Greenway ('02) announced. He will also serve under presidential appointment as assistant professor of faith and culture at Texas Baptist College, Southwestern Seminary's undergraduate school.

"The appointment of Dan Darling to lead the Land Center underscores our commitment to provide the very best theological education for men and women preparing to serve the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention," Greenway said.

"In a day of moral upheaval and widespread rejection of God's design for human flourishing, it is our unwavering commitment that the Land Center be a trusted partner in helping Southern Baptist churches and the broader evangelical world to understand the times and to apply effectively Gospel truth in this day," Greenway added. "Dan is the right person to elevate Southwestern Seminary's work in cultural engagement, and in God's providence now is the time. It is my joy to welcome the Darling family to Seminary Hill. I look forward to how they will enrich this community, especially the lives of our students."

Darling, who most recently served as the senior vice president for communications of the National Religious Broadcasters, is a best-selling author of *The Original Jesus*, *The Dignity Revolution*, *The Characters of Christmas*, *The Characters of Easter*, and *A Way With Words*. He is also the host of a popular weekly podcast, "The Way Home."



Previously, Darling served as vice president for communications of the SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), as well as in pastoral roles.

"I'm honored to join the wonderful team at Southwestern Seminary and assist President Greenway and the faculty in equipping future Southern Baptist church leaders," Darling said. "We live in complex and confusing times—but times that are not a surprise to God. Our desire is to build at the Land Center for Cultural Engagement a place where Southern Baptists and the broader evangelical movement can both engage in substantive and thoughtful conversations that help equip Christian leaders and to train a new generation of robustly Gospel-centered men and women to engage the world. I'm thankful to President Greenway for this strategic opportunity to serve the Kingdom."

An award-winning writer, Darling is a columnist for *WORLD Opinions* and regular contributor to *USA Today*. His articles also have appeared in *Christianity Today*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *TIME*, *The Huffington Post*, *National Review*, and *First Things*.

David S. Dockery ('81), interim provost, expressed gratitude for the leadership Darling will bring to his new roles.

"I am genuinely excited about the appointment of Dan Darling as the new director of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement," Dockery said. "Dan will add much to the overall work of the Southwestern community as he gives leadership to this important Center and as he invests in the lives of students through his work as assistant professor of faith and culture in the college. It is a delight to welcome Dan Darling to the Southwestern community."

"The appointment of Dan Darling to lead the Land Center underscores our commitment to provide the very best theological education for men and women preparing to serve the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention."

- GREENWAY ('02)

The Land Center was established in 2007 in honor of Richard D. Land, who led the ERLC for 25 years until his retirement in 2013 when he was named president emeritus. The center focuses on the study and research of ethics, public policy, and other cultural and philosophical issues.

"I am delighted that President Greenway has appointed Dan Darling to be the next director of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement," Land said. "Never has America been in greater need for Christians be the salt and light in culture that our Savior commanded us to be as part of being His ambassadors of reconciliation. Dan is well-equipped by calling and experience to carry on the mission of challenging Southern Baptists and other believers to engage the culture, preserving against decay and dispelling spiritual darkness."

Since 2015, Darling has served on the pastoral staff of Green Hill Church in Mount Juliet, Tennessee, leading in the areas of discipleship and leadership development, in addition to serving on the preaching team. Darling earned a bachelor's degree in pastoral studies from Dayspring Bible College and has studied at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and earned a Master of Arts degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Darling and his wife, Angela, have four children. —A.A.

'Truth fears no light,' Greenway preaches during fall convocation sermon



SOUTHWESTERNERS MUST REMAIN FAITHFUL in a time when the integrity of Christian ministries is increasingly questioned, preached President Adam W. Greenway ('02) during Southwestern Seminary's convocation service in MacGorman Chapel, August 24. The service was the first fall convocation since 2019 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

In welcoming new students to the seminary community, Greenway renewed the tradition begun by Robert E. Naylor, fifth president, in pronouncing them "Southwesterners" and reading from Naylor's final charge to new students given in 1998, a year before his death.

In reference to the title, "Southwesterners," Naylor said, "It is an honorable and a wonder-

ful word about which you had nothing to do. ... It speaks to why you are here. God brought you. If that is not true, you need not be here. This is a special congregation."

In his message to the seminary community, Greenway took as his text, 2 Corinthians 4:1-6, focusing on Paul's exhortation to the church at Corinth to preach Christ and not themselves.

"I come with a particular burden," Greenway said, "not just for my stewardship as president of Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College, but a broader concern about the witness and work of Southern Baptists, of evangelical Christians, and of a watching world who is looking at us."

As unbelievers view churches and ministries with suspicion and distrust, Greenway called on students to be men and women who pursue integrity in their theological education and ministries. He emphasized the importance of remaining true to Scripture and to resist the temptation to use and manipulate Scripture for one's own benefit.

"Truth fears no light," Greenway said, regarding the tendency to cover up sin. Greenway, who also is a professor of evangelism and apologetics, noted he is often grieved by his conversations with unbelievers who share that it is their observations of the sinful actions of Christian leaders, churches, and ministries that keep them from believing in Christ. This lack of integrity, he explained, has "veiled" the Gospel, and become a hindrance for people to be able to see and hear the Word of God.

"I've said since the earliest days of my presidency that my prayer for our seminary is that we would be the kind of institution that the Lord uses to train God-called men and women who will leave here and go out and neither become a casualty yourself, nor create casualties in your wake," Greenway said.

"There is a world that is perishing, and it may be through you that either the veil will remain, or the veil will be removed that they might be able to see and to comprehend the richness of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." —*K.C.*

CONFERENCE MODELS PREACHING AND TEACHING FROM THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

THE CENTER FOR CHURCH REVITALIZATION at Southwestern Seminary hosted its first Preaching & Teaching Conference on campus, September 27-28, providing church leaders a model for developing a church-wide sermon series through the book of Galatians.

In addition to faculty-led workshops, plenary sessions were led by Kenneth S. Hemphill, the seventh president of Southwestern Seminary. In October, the Board of Trustees renamed the center in honor of Hemphill.

In his opening remarks, Hemphill reflected on the COVID-19 impact on churches: "Every church is going to need revitalization."

In addition to Hemphill's four sessions, attendees participated in five workshops. These were led by Matthew McKellar ('85, '91), professor of preaching; Chris Shirley ('94, '02), professor of educational ministries and associate dean of the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries; Richard Ross ('74, '80), professor of student ministry and J.M. Price Chair of Religious

Education; and Karen Kennemur ('03, '08), professor of children's ministry and Bessie Fleming Chair of Childhood Education.

Kenneth Priest ('97, '99), director of the Center for Church Revitalization, says the center plans to host a Preaching & Teaching Conference every fall, offering a model for preaching and teaching through a book of the Bible across all generations in the church. In the spring, they will offer the Church Revitalization Conference, focused on church renewal. —*K.C.*



GLOBAL MISSIONS WEEK HELPS STUDENTS FIND THEIR ROLE IN THE GREAT COMMISSION

THE WORLD MISSIONS CENTER at Southwestern Seminary hosted its fall Global Missions Week on campus, Sept. 14-16, with an emphasis on Central Asia.

The weeklong emphasis provided students from all degree programs an opportunity to learn about global missions, connect with Central Asian teams from the International Mission Board (IMB), and learn about opportunities to serve with the IMB, ranging from short-term to career missions service.

“This week students were exposed to life and service among people who are living in deep Gospel poverty,” said Ian Buntain, director of the WMC and associate professor of missions. “They had the opportunity to question those who are serving, to hear about the joys and challenges of everyday life, and to imagine ways in which God might be preparing them for the privilege of serving in a context in which every believer they meet has joyfully embraced the Gospel despite the significant cost of consistent suffering for the name of Jesus.”

The WMC hosted events throughout the week including informational lunches and prayer gatherings. On Wednesday morning Southwestern Seminary’s female students gathered for a Women’s Tea to hear from both single and married women serving in the field and learn how women have their own unique role to play in the mission field.

Students also heard from Zane Pratt, vice president for global training for the IMB, during the Sept. 16 chapel service. Pratt previously served 20 years as a missionary in Central Asia, which is home to 360 million people with only an estimated 120,000 evangelical believers. In his message, Pratt challenged students to consider how God wants to use them for the Great Commission.

Following the chapel service, the WMC hosted the Going Global Lunch, during which IMB personnel shared their experiences serving in Central Asia. They also answered student questions about life on the mission field and what opportunities are available to them.

Students from Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College were invited to participate in Global Missions Week. —K.C.

“[S]tudents were exposed to life and service among people who are living in deep Gospel poverty.”

— BUNTAIN



Southwestern Seminary alumni mobilize virtually to reach Japan

BEFORE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, four Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary alumni—Brit Redfield ('21), Vanessa Lim ('19), Ines Chien ('20), and Ariel Lee ('18)—had plans to travel to Tokyo, Japan, during the 2020 Summer Olympics to participate in short-term mission trips. However, as the country’s borders closed to international tourists,



‘Welcome Week’ connects new students to community on Seminary Hill

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Texas Baptist College (TBC) welcomed new students to Seminary Hill during “Welcome Week,” August 11-13. Daily activities and events provided new students opportunities to connect with their professors and fellow students, learn about the campus and its departments, and prepare for a successful start in their preparation for their ministry callings.

At a jointly held college and seminary dinner during Welcome Week, students and parents heard a message from President Adam W. Greenway ('02), who welcomed students to an “extraordinary institution” and

into a “line of faithfulness” that goes back to the seminary’s founder and first president, B.H. Carroll.

“We have a comprehensive institution, a full-service institution from our beginning,” Greenway said. “You are entering into a line of faithfulness that now includes over 41,000 living alumni, the largest living alumni network of a Southern Baptist Convention-affiliated seminary.”

Greenway encouraged students to make the most of every opportunity to fully prepare for faithful Christian service and Gospel impact.

Sarah Wester from Princeton, Indiana, is pursuing a Master of Theological Studies with an emphasis in cross-cultural missions. She spent the week visiting with student organization and student services, including the World Missions Center. She said Southwestern Seminary was the best choice for preparing for her calling in missions and to put her faith into practice.

“I’m excited to be a part of a school that doesn’t just talk about missions, but does missions,” Wester said, adding that she looked forward to the Christian community on campus. “It’s amazing to be able to be a part of having that life together—that same mission and same mindset.”

Kyle Canady from Columbus, Georgia, is a new student pursuing the Master of Divinity degree.

“I thought Southwestern would do the best job of equipping me for ministry,” Canady said. “I decided that the ‘dome’ was going to be home.” —*K.C.*

these four Southwesterners had to get creative, turning their attention and efforts to virtual mission trips.

Having first connected through Southwestern Seminary’s missions programs and efforts, Redfield, Lim, Chien, and Lee were unified by their heart for Japan and gathered regularly for prayer. From those prayer meetings was born Mobilize Japan, a ministry founded in 2021 that is devoted to mobilizing and equipping laborers to reach the lost in Japan.

Eager to still do something while Japan’s borders remained closed, they planned a two-month virtual mission trip. Beginning June 1, they worked with ministry partners from the International Mission Board (IMB), OMF International (formerly Overseas Missionary Fellowship), and the Mustard Seed Network to train participants and

facilitate outreach. Each week featured a different ministry partner and was structured to include three events: Training Tuesday, Mission Prayer Friday, and Outreach Saturday.

People of all levels of missions experience were invited to attend the free virtual events. In total, 185 people registered, with about 30-40 participants attending individual events as their schedules allowed.

Training Tuesdays allowed that week’s ministry leader to share an aspect of their ministry and life on the mission field. Prayer Fridays consisted of a guided prayer time for ministry to Japan, and information about future partnership opportunities, ranging from short-term to career. Each week then concluded with an outreach component guided by the ministry partner during Outreach Saturday. —*K.C.*

HEALTH CARE WORKERS ENCOURAGED TO GO TO THE NATIONS DURING MEDADVANCE CONFERENCE

OVER 300 HEALTH CARE WORKERS, students, and International Mission Board staff were challenged to use their medical skills to take the Gospel to the nations by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Adam W. Greenway ('02) during the IMB's MedAdvance Conference, August 5-7.

During the three-day conference at Southwestern Seminary, Greenway told the attendees, who represented 32 states and eight IMB affinity groups, "For many of us, circumstances can affect our willingness to follow God's call [and] to discern God's call."

In the first of three messages, Greenway focused on Acts 8:1 and the martyrdom of Stephen after the beginning of the early church. Greenway said as persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem everyone scattered from the city, except the apostles.

"Church history says [the scattering was] in such a way to where that church never gathers again in the exact same form after Acts 8 as it had before Acts 8," Greenway said.

While noting the changes brought about by the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, Greenway said the early church believers were "unfazed" about their circumstances and their commitment to advance the Gospel even though "in one moment it was as if everything had changed, but nothing had changed."

Medical missions has been part of the IMB's strategy in reaching the nations since 1846, a year after the Southern Baptist missions organization was founded. The goal of the conference was to encourage attendees to take the Gospel to the nations while simultaneously using their professional medical skills.

Rebekah Naylor, distinguished professor of missions and missionary in residence at Southwestern Seminary, who served as an IMB medical missionary for over three decades, said medical missionaries "are used by the Lord in entering communities and people groups, in evangelism, in discipling, in forming healthy churches, and in developing leaders."

Conference attendees were led in Bible study and heard mission field updates from Todd Lafferty ('90), executive vice president of the IMB; were led in prayer by Eleanor Witcher ('07), director of the IMB's prayer office; and listened to current field personnel share testimonies of God's work through medical missionaries during the COVID-19 pandemic. —A.A.

Rebekah Naylor, distinguished professor of missions, spent more than three decades serving as a medical missionary.



'Supply Day' provides Southwestern Baptist College students with items to settle into 'home'

SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AND TEXAS BAPTIST COLLEGE STUDENTS were offered a variety of supplies and home goods by Fort Worth-area churches on August 16 during "Supply Day."

Organized by the seminary's International Student Services Office, and co-sponsored by the Women's Missionary Union (WMU) of Texas, local churches donated gently used furniture, kitchen appliances, bedding, home décor, kitchen wares, books, and children's toys to students as they settled into the community on the first day of classes at both the seminary and the college. WMU of Texas facilitated the collection of supplies.

Due to the generosity and kindness of local churches, Supply Day, which had to be paused in the fall of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, found the seminary's Recreation and Aerobics Center (RAC) teeming with many needed items. The event serviced over 240 students, of which 76 were families. —A.A.



The Carroll and Scarborough Awards are the highest awards given at Southwestern Seminary.



Faithful supporters receive awards named for Carroll, Scarborough

Jon L. Parnell received the B.H. Carroll Award and Harold O'Chester received the L.R. Scarborough Award.

SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY HONORED TWO DISTINGUISHED MINISTRY PARTNERS for their generosity and support during the annual B.H. Carroll and L.R. Scarborough Awards Luncheon, Sept. 14. Jon L. Parnell received the B.H. Carroll Award, and Harold "Preacher" O'Chester received the L.R. Scarborough Award.

Attendees included the award recipients' family and friends, former church members, seminary faculty and staff, trustees, and Southern Baptist Convention President Ed Litton ('86), who spoke during a Q&A with President Adam W. Greenway ('02) in chapel earlier that morning. "Southwestern Seminary has been nourished and sustained, built and expanded since our chartering on March 14, 1908, by friends and people who the Lord has raised up," Greenway said.

The awards are named in honor of the seminary's first and second presidents.

Parnell, the B.H. Carroll Award recipient, originally from Shreveport, Louisiana, now resides in Georgetown, Texas, where he is a member of Crestview Baptist Church. He opened his first Arby's restaurant franchise in 1969 and continued to grow the business over the years, still owning several locations today.

Known for his generosity to Christian ministries and Southwestern Seminary, Parnell funded the M.E. Dodd Classroom in Mathena Hall as well as the Ina Crosby Parnell Chair for the Dean of Women.

Greenway recognized how the Lord has used Parnell's success in business to bless the ministry and work of faculty, staff, and stu-

dents at Southwestern Seminary.

"The Lord has been very kind to Southwestern Seminary because of the philanthropic generosity of Jon Parnell," Greenway said.

O'Chester, the L.R. Scarborough Award recipient and a former pastor of Parnell, has devoted 70 years to ministry and preaching, with more than 15 years as senior pastor of the Great Hills Baptist Church in Austin, Texas.

In a brief message, O'Chester reflected on the three primary ways God has blessed his years of ministry.

First, O'Chester said, "I was blessed to have a man like John Parnell as a member of my church. Every pastor needs a man or a woman with the gift of giving because when the rough times come and you need some help, you make an announcement from the pulpit, and then a fella like John Parnell stands up and sees me after a while and says, 'I got that.'"

The second blessing, O'Chester said, was his wife of 64 years, Barbara.

"Very few people in the Southern Baptist Convention understand what this woman has done over the last 40 years," he said, describing her role as a Bible teacher to women and facilitator of women's conferences and retreats attended by thousands of Southern Baptist women over the years.

"And so, I want you to understand Southern Baptists owe a debt of gratitude" to her, O'Chester said.

The third blessing, O'Chester reflected, "refers to me and how I owe everything to Southern Baptists."

O'Chester said Southern Baptists had a profound impact on his life, compelling him to financially give to SBC institutions over the years, including Southwestern Seminary.

"Why in the world would we do that? First of all, I didn't have any inheritance," O'Chester said. "I took it out of whatever savings I had. We did it because we love Southern Baptists."

"So, I owe everything, we owe everything to Southern Baptists for what they did for us," O'Chester concluded. "I just want you to know that doing what little bit I feel like I've done, I don't deserve this honor."

Since 1982, Southwestern Seminary has recognized through the awards ministry partners who have made significant contributions to the seminary. They are the highest awards given at Southwestern Seminary. —K.C.



SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY ANNOUNCES

TEXAS BAPTIST COLLEGE

Texas Baptist College exists to glorify God by providing trustworthy Christian higher education for more faithful Kingdom service.

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Students will leave Texas Baptist College with the skills not only to earn a living, but also to make a difference—to be used as Christ's hands and feet wherever they may serve.

► **Adam W. Greenway**

President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary &
Texas Baptist College

FW ————— TX

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

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

Laura Pepper

M.Div. Student

"MY FAVORITE THING about Southwestern so far is having the opportunity to learn about Scripture in the classroom setting. I have grown up in a family that loves the Lord and has always encouraged me to pursue Him, and it is so unique to have the blessings of attending classes centered around knowing God better. I grew up with public school as my mission field for my entire life, but this is the first time I have been able to study about God in this way. It is a humbling honor. The most important thing I have learned at Southwestern so far is that the Lord is worthy of worshipping Him with our minds. I remember desiring to do so deeper for so long that finally having the opportunity to do so in this way is such a gift."



STUDENT



FACULTY

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

M. TODD BATES

Associate Dean and Professor of Philosophy, Texas Baptist College

"GOD SO CLEARLY ORCHESTRATED EVERY STEP in the process with Texas Baptist College that it was no longer a matter of discerning God's leadership, but a matter of obeying God's leadership. Dean Ben Skaug's vision for TBC joins together so many things that are important to me. Students are challenged to love God with all their minds in TBC's Christ-centered academics. A high view of Scripture drives everything in the curriculum, which is designed to cultivate a well-formed life in all our students for faithful Kingdom service."

DONOR



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

Tom Vann

Director, Chaplaincy Program, Dallas Baptist University; Th.M., 2010

AS A FORMER SOUTHWESTERN SEMINARY FACULTY MEMBER (associate professor of pastoral ministry from 2004 to 2010), Tom Vann continues to support the seminary through his financial support through scholarships for students preparing for military chaplaincy and students pursuing a Ph.D. in pastoral studies.

"I loved every moment of my time at the seminary. I still communicate with former students serving as pastors, associate ministers, missionaries, professors, and military chaplains," Vann says. "David Allen was my dean and he was such a blessing to serve with on the faculty and under his supervision. I was further blessed by associations with all of the professors I knew and worked with at Southwestern Seminary."

FACULTY



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

IAN BUNTAIN

Associate Professor of Missions and Director of the World Missions Center

"I'M NOT SURE I EVER chose to come to Southwestern Seminary (it certainly was never a part of my ministry master plan). I think God just providentially arranged people and calendars in ways that caused me to consider something that never would have naturally entered into my heart. Additionally, the more I heard about the recent changes at the seminary, the more I began to believe that God was doing something unusual that was in the very least, worthy of attention.

"Canadian Southern Baptists owe a great gospel debt to Texas Baptists. The first missionaries I met in Canada were young Texan college students on a short-term mission trip. Texas students came North every year to give themselves away. Retired SWBTS professor Dr. Dan Crawford is remembered as a man who was deeply invested in Canada. And the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary, from which I directed the Nehemiah Church Planting Center, was built by the sacrificial giving and sweat equity of Texas Baptists. Though I have never studied at SWBTS, SWBTS has been investing in me for decades, ... and eventually an inconvenient text message from Dr. John Massey interrupted my plans and provided unexpected opportunity for me to give back to a place and people who have given me so much."

Laura Taylor

Women's Ministry Associate, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention; M.Div., 1988

ALUM



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

"WHEN I CAME TO SOUTHWESTERN as a single woman hot out of college, I knew God had a call on my life, but I thought the only thing a woman could do was children's ministry so I started in religious education. After an internship in children's work, a sabbatical from school, and teaching a women's weekly Bible study, God began to give me direction for ministry. I came back to Southwestern Seminary and entered the Master of Divinity program to have a better understanding of the Word of God and to

learn skills in imparting God's message to others. My education proved to be very helpful in understanding and teaching the Bible, as well as assisting my pastor husband in ministry. Today I am the Women's Ministry Associate at the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention where I have the opportunity to train others in teaching and ministering to women through conferences, retreats, and writing useful materials. My time at Southwestern Seminary has proved to be a tremendous blessing through my life journey."



STUDENT

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

Graham Griffin

Current M.Div. Student

“I CHOSE SOUTHWESTERN SEMINARY for three reasons. First, there are so many exciting things happening here. The vision our president is casting is amazing and I wanted to be a part of it. Second, it is so special that there are so many different nations represented on campus through the students. I came because I wanted to be where the nations already were. Lastly, I have a history of family members who attended Southwestern Seminary to prepare for ministry and heard excellent things.”

CLINT ELLIS

Pastor, Fellowship Baptist Church; M.Div., 2006; D.Min. in Preaching, 2015

“ATTENDING SOUTHWESTERN SEMINARY was one of the greatest decisions of my life. I grew up in rural Alabama and was pastored by many faithful men who were unable to attend seminary, but to a man they all encouraged me to make seminary a part of my ministry journey. I couldn’t be more thankful. Not a day goes by that I don’t use the tools and skill gleaned

from my two degrees at Southwestern Seminary, particularly in the areas of preaching and pastoral ministry. My mind was shaped by the many professors who challenged us to become biblical, critical thinkers, which helps as I seek to engage a rapidly changing culture. I am so thankful that God led my wife and me to ‘Make the Dome our home.’”

AARON MERAZ

Director of Mission: Dignity, GuideStone, M.Div., 1996



DONOR

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

“NO SEMINARY IN THE WORLD has a greater impact for Gospel advancement than Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The world is moving to Dallas/ Fort Worth and students can evangelize the nations here, then have ‘persons of peace’ when they take the Gospel internationally. Home missions spurs international missions. Giving is obedience to God. Someone obeyed the Lord in giving so that I could go to Southwestern Seminary. I want to do the same for current and future students.

“Under Dr. Greenway’s leadership, I believe the best days for Southwestern Seminary are ahead. More students mean more trained ministers sent into all nations so that the Gospel will be preached to ‘every creature.’ I want to be a part of that.”

“The world is moving to Dallas/ Fort Worth and students can evangelize the nations here, then have ‘persons of peace’ when they take the Gospel internationally.”



ALUM

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



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SEMINARYHILLBOOKSTORE.COM



Share the Gospel with a child



KAREN KENNEMUR ('03, '08) serves as professor of children's ministry and occupies the Bessie M. Fleming Chair of Childhood Education at Southwestern Seminary.

OVERWHELMED, UNSURE HOW, AND TOO MUCH RESPONSIBILITY? Do these terms cross your mind when thinking of sharing the Gospel with a child? Many of us feel ill-equipped to share the Gospel with an adult, much less with a child. But, what an honor to share God's plan for salvation with a child.

When a child begins asking questions about becoming a Christian, you should stop, pray, listen, and then engage in a conversation.

What should a child understand before becoming a Christian? It is important for a child to understand the concept of sin. Often children understand the concept of sin, but they do not think they are sinners. Another important concept for children to understand is they are sinners. Not only are they sinners, but their sin is against God and this sin separates them from Him. Do they understand who Jesus is and that He died for our sins? How does one know what a child understands? By asking open-ended questions. Questions requiring a yes or no answer do not require much thought. Open-ended questions require thought and a correct answer.

When the child is ready to hear the Gospel, share the plan of salvation in simple terms. Use wording the child

will understand. Refrain from using abstract phrases or illustrations. For example, say "Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins" instead of "we are covered in the blood of Jesus." While we are covered in the blood of Jesus, most children will not fully understand the symbolism of this phrase.

Consider a method of sharing the Gospel written for children. *The Gospel, God's Plan for Us* published by Lifeway is an excellent tool when talking with a child. This method incorporates the ABCs of salvation: admitting sin, believing in Jesus, and confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Remember to allow the child to say his/her own prayer. When the child is ready to become a Christian, explain the prayer includes the admission of sin, asking for forgiveness, and asking Jesus to be his or her Lord and Savior. The hope is by the child stating the prayer in his or her own words instead of repeating an adult's words, confidence in their decision will prevail over times of doubt. After the prayer, remind the child that God is always with him or her and He will never leave (Hebrews 13:5).

After leading a child to a profession faith in Christ, every effort should be made to talk with the child's parents about this life-changing decision. [📖](#)

NUEVO DE SEMINARY HILL PRESS



Cómo crear una cultura de evangelismo diario en tu iglesia.

¿Qué ocurriría si cada miembro de tu iglesia hiciera del evangelismo una práctica regular en su rutina diaria? ¡Imagina el impacto que tendría en tu iglesia y tu comunidad! Lamentablemente, esto que debería ser parte natural de la vida cristiana suele descuidarse o dejarse “a los expertos”.

En Evangelismo Diario, el profesor de evangelismo Matt Queen desenmascara los mitos del evangelismo personal, trayendo aliento, perspectiva y pasos prácticos para crear una cultura de evangelismo diario en tu iglesia.



Oswald J. Smith solía advertir con frecuencia a los pastores que: “La iglesia que no evangeliza, se fosiliza”. Cargar con la responsabilidad de guiar al pueblo de Dios a ser intencional y consistentemente evangelístico puede ser una tarea pesada. A menudo, los pastores se sienten demasiado exhaustos y abrumados para darle al evangelismo la atención central que se merece.

Basado en su propia experiencia pastoral en la iglesia local, Matt Queen, profesor de evangelismo del Southwestern Seminary, ha escrito una guía práctica para pastores que quieran fomentar el evangelismo en sus congregaciones. Mobilizar Para Evangelizar le brinda a los pastores herramientas necesarias para diagnosticar cómo sus congregaciones conciben, practican y perciben el evangelismo. Esta obra ofrece ideas realistas que podrán implementar para movilizar a sus congregaciones a evangelizar.

Estos y otros títulos están disponibles en SeminaryHillPress.com





Preach an effective Christmas message

PREACHING AN EFFECTIVE CHRISTMAS

MESSAGE is a challenging assignment. How do we begin to do justice to the mysterious wonder of God becoming flesh as a baby born in Bethlehem? Consider the following suggestions in anticipation of this Christmas:

1. **Capture the true wonder of Christmas.** Set it in the total context of the drama of redemption. In her children's book, *One Wintry Night*, Ruth Bell Graham did this admirably, noting that the story of the first Christmas in Bethlehem was part of a larger story that spanned back before time was and that would extend to when time was no more. Treat the snapshot (birth in Bethlehem) in light of the total album (drama of redemption in the Bible).
2. **Avoid allegorical and sentimental approaches.** Christmas messages that focus exclusively on the "sweet, precious baby in the manger" are inadequate and irresponsible. Like
3. **Explore less familiar texts.** Tackle texts like Micah 5:2-5, which contains the prophecy related to Bethlehem and asserts the coming of the One who will be great to the "ends of the earth." Consider also Zechariah's Benedictus in Luke 1:67-79. In this passage, Zechariah refers to Jesus as the "Horn of Salvation," and in doing so refers not to a musical instrument, but to an animal's appendages that are offensive weapons.
4. **Connect the cradle and the cross.** While Jesus entered this world as an infant in Bethlehem, grew up in Nazareth, called disciples to follow Him, healed the sick and fed the poor, the author of Hebrews asserts that He was born in order to die (2:14-15).
5. **Intensify exposition of the wonder of the incarnation.** Remind hearers that the Word did indeed become flesh. Help them grasp in some measure the reality of the Almighty as an infant of inches. Don't allow them to think of the infancy of Jesus without pressing on their minds and hearts the deity of Jesus.

Merry Christmas and preach the Word. 📖



MATTHEW MCKELLAR ('85, '91) serves as a professor of preaching at Southwestern Seminary.



A Day In the Life of President Greenway

Southwestern News shadowed Adam W. Greenway to learn what a typical day looks like in the life of the seminary's ninth president.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHINSOP CHONG



Each day Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College President Adam W. Greenway ('02), serves Southern Baptists by leading the faculty, staff, and students on Seminary Hill. His day is bookended by family time as a husband to Carla ('02), and their two children, Wade and Caroline, while the remainder of the day is filled with meetings with seminary faculty and administrative staff, chapel, preparing for upcoming meetings and speaking engagements, and decision making. As a husband and father his day also includes investing in the life of his family.

Though every day is different, the following photo essay, taken on Sept. 9 on the Fort Worth campus, shows a glimpse into a typical day for Greenway as he serves.



Each morning, Greenway spends time with his children before they depart for sixth and first grades. Some days, Caroline helps dad choose his tie.

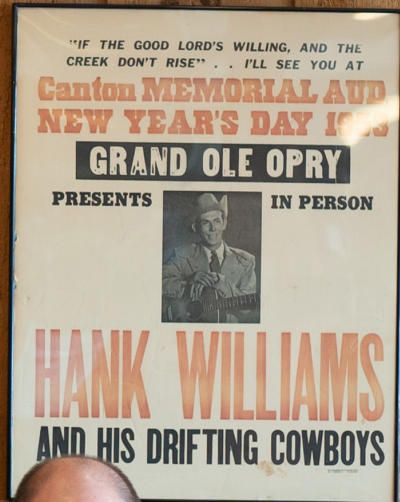


Greenway, who enjoys espresso, makes the coffee early in the morning. Greenway's day typically begins at 5:30 a.m.



Chapel has been an integral part in the history of Southwestern Seminary and it continues to be in Greenway's administration and his family.

12:30 pm



Following chapel, Greenway, Colby Adams, vice president for strategic initiatives and chief of staff, and Ed Upton, vice president for institutional advancement, take the chapel speaker, Todd Gray, executive director-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, to lunch at Cousin's BBQ near the seminary campus. Cousin's is a longtime favorite of Greenway, dating back to his days as a student on Seminary Hill.



Greenway's afternoon is spent meeting with members of his cabinet and Benjamin M. Skaug, dean of Texas Baptist College.

5:30 pm



Family time is important in Greenway's life and household. For Greenway this includes taking his son, Wade, to karate lessons and enjoying the family meal around the dinner table. The night also includes time in his home study reading and preparing for the following day.



7:30 pm

As part of their nightly routine, Caroline spends time reading through Scripture with her dad before she goes to bed.



9:30 pm



After helping Wade with his homework, Greenway ends his day with a walk around the seminary campus under the lights of the iconic dome of the B.H. Carroll Memorial Building. Greenway's day typically concludes at 11 p.m.



FROM SEMINARY HILL

BY JAMES A. SMITH SR.

America's growing hostility to the Gospel requires pastoral cultural engagement, says Jim Denison

TO THE PUBLIC SQUARE



JIM DENISON SAYS A COUNSELOR MAY SAY HIS cultural apologetics ministry, the Denison Forum, is his way of still trying to reach his father and those like him.

Lester I. Denison was so active in church that many friends believed he would end up in vocational ministry before he went off to war in the South Pacific. The elder Denison was one of only 17 men out of 300 in his unit to survive the horrors of World War II. Coupled with significant post-war health chal-

lenges that would ultimately result in his death when Denison was in college, the senior Denison never again went back to church.

"I think it was a lot of things for dad that caused him like so many people I have known over the years just not ever to be able to make those dots connect again," Denison told *Southwestern News* in an interview at his office in Dallas. Although he never again went to church, Denison's father was not hostile to the faith, nor did he ever deny the Lord.

Indeed, Denison would hear the Gospel, come to faith in Christ, and experience the call to the ministry because his father put himself and his brother on a Houston-area Baptist church bus. And yet, even as a church attendee as a youth, "I still had my dad's questions" about God and faith.

"C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* was life-changing for me. It was the first time I'd ever seen anyone deal with the faith intellectually," Denison says of the seminal work that he read a year or so after his conversion at age 15, noting the tattered copy of the book remains in his library. "If we have a fire, that's the first book I'm going to save."

Now, many years later following his time as a faculty member at Southwestern Seminary and several pastorates, the "same trajectory" resulted in the creation of Denison Forum in 2009 to "help people respond biblically and redemptively to the issues of the day" by providing resources that "exegete the culture."

"Our belief is that changed people change the world," he says.

Denison Forum began modestly with just Denison, his longtime ministry associate, Jeff Byrd, and three employees. Denison began working as theologian-in-residence for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Starting with 7,000 subscribers, what is now known as *The Daily Article* boasts nearly 360,000 subscribers, with a total audience of 2.5 million each month. The email newsletter—"the front door" of the ministry—that is also available via podcast "curates the news" by helping Christians understand why it's news and how to respond biblically.

But Denison Forum is one part of the larger Denison Ministries, which includes devotional, parenting, and pastoral resources, as well as his wife's Bible-teaching ministry, Foundation's with Janet Denison. Employing about 45 full-time staff members, the ministry's total audience is more than 5.5 million and is expected to top six million by the end of 2021, he says.



Jim Denison in his Dallas, Texas, studio, where he records content for Denison Forum platforms.





His pastoral writing ministry began during the Christmas break of 1999 when he was pastoring Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas and offered a weekly email devotional for interested members and found 700 interested readers. The newsletter took a cultural turn several years later when Gene Robinson was ordained as the first openly homosexual bishop in the Episcopal Church and Denison was asked how Christians should understand the issue.

The author of several books in cultural apologetics, Denison credits his Master of Divinity ('83) and Doctor of Philosophy ('89) education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary as pivotal to his ministry.

"I experienced what the blend of excellent academic passion and practical ministry outcomes really could look like," he says, pointing, in particular, to his mentor, John Newport, whose scholarly accomplishments and weighty duties as the seminary's provost did not keep him from accepting an invitation to preach a week of revival services for Denison's small congregation in Mansfield, Texas, during his doctoral studies.

"Out of that revival started a prayer movement that continued all through my pastorate there" and for many years beyond, Denison says. "That combination of academic brilliance and practical passion was, I think, the genius of Southwestern."

Denison finds in Southwestern Seminary today the same genius.

"I am extremely grateful for Dr. Greenway's leadership and for his passion as I understand it and for the direction that the seminary is taking" that is consistent with what he saw as a student, he says. As an example, Denison lauded Greenway's naming of Ted Cabal ('90, '95) to the Southwestern faculty in 2020 as a "coup for the seminary." A former student of his, Denison says Cabal is "absolutely brilliant" who "not only loves the Lord with all his mind, but also with all his heart and [is] somebody who wants his students to be actively engaged in the Kingdom."

Denison adds, "And so where we're headed now, in so many ways, feels to me very consistent with the Southwestern I experienced."

He has used his Southwestern education throughout his ministry, Denison says, to help Christians engage the culture. Rather than as one kind of ministry among others, pastors should see cultural engagement as "how we equip our members to live their lives in a way that follows Jesus."

Denison believes the abortion issue for



American Christians is “definitional across the board. A country, a nation, a culture that decides, as is being said these days in light of the Texas Heartbeat bill, ‘My body, my choice,’ is going to say that not just about abortion. It’s going to say that about euthanasia, it’s going to say that about sexual orientation [and] gender identity. It’s going to say that across the spectrum.”

Christians in America today “more than ever before” are “facing a level of rising cultural animosity, cultural opposition to the Gospel, for which Christians need to be equipped and prepared on a more intentional level than ever before,” he says. It’s the duty of pastors to “make cultural engagement central” to their ministries to prepare their members for what they face outside the church.

If pastors “thought of ourselves in a missions context and understood that on Sunday, I’m speaking English and the rest of the week my members are speaking Mandarin, and I can equip them as they speak Mandarin to do so in the context of the faith that we’re learning in English, I think that’s an effective metaphor for where we find ourselves,” he says.

Pastors should avoid the ditches of partisan politics on one side and unwillingness to confront cultural issues on the other side as they lead their members in cultural engagement, Denison believes.

To help pastors and other American Christians understand the challenges of the current cultural moment, Denison has written a new book, *The Coming Tsunami: Why Christians Are Labeled Intolerant, Irrelevant, Oppressive, and Dangerous—and How We Can Turn the Tide*, to be released in January.

“I often say that God redeems all that He allows,” he says. “And we can redeem this tsunami, we can turn this tide and have this be a catalyst for a fifth Great Awakening, I believe, and that’s ultimately the purpose of the book.”

Denison seeks to bless his two sons in whatever God is calling them to do—something he never received from his father.

“One of the things I’ve learned over the years on my good days is that I have a heavenly Father’s blessing, even if I didn’t really have my earthly father’s blessing.”

James A. Smith Sr. is executive editor of Southwestern News.



“I often say that God redeems all that He allows. And we can redeem this tsunami, we can turn this tide and have this be a catalyst for a fifth Great Awakening, I believe.”

Two alumni and two students who are engaging the culture

RYAN JOHNSON



Embracing the call to defend freedom

For Ryan Johnson, a current Southwestern Seminary Master of Theological Studies student from Houston, Texas, defending religious liberty is not only about its implications in the public sphere, but also about allowing the church to mobilize for the sake of the Gospel.

Although his background is in federal law enforcement, Johnson now serves as the vice president of ambassador and alliance relations for the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a faith-based legal and advocacy firm. Through the ADF Ambassador Program, Johnson is leading efforts to mobilize like-minded Christians to make an impact on the culture through a partnership with the organization.

After recently returning to Southwestern Seminary to complete the educational pursuit he began in 1994, Johnson says a degree will provide a necessary foundation for a biblical approach to cultural engagement.

"I just wanted to be the best-equipped theologian I possibly can so that I can help equip other Christians to know the truth, and that's what I'm really trying to come back to," Johnson says.

Johnson first joined the ADF Ambassador program in 2010 (while it was known as Alliance Defense Fund). He had become increasingly troubled with what he believed to be a threat to religious liberty in the United States, and wanted to do his part in "defending freedom."

"[ADF] really captured my heart because I was really concerned about the things that

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I want the church to be able to mobilize, galvanize, and mobilize around this effort of religious freedom because I understand that this is a freedom that we can't afford to lose.”

were taking place in our country today as it relates to religious liberty, the sanctity of life, freedom of speech, parental rights, and marriage and family,” Johnson says. “This organization was really on the frontlines of protecting your constitutional God-given inalienable rights as it relates to those issues.”

After assuming his new role, Johnson implemented a new vision and strategy to grow the Ambassador program, and has done so successfully, growing the program from 449 Ambassadors in 2019 to approximately 975 in 2021—and it's continuing to grow.

Johnson says his primary vision for the program was to cultivate an alliance of people who wanted to engage the culture from a perspective that was “rooted and grounded in Scripture and encapsulated in the cross.”

“Ambassadors are the special envoy that helps to do that,” Johnson adds. “Ambassadors are the bridge builders connecting their church, communities, and spheres of influence to the mission of advancing the Gospel.”

Ambassadors serve on a volunteer basis and support ADF through four main areas: connection, prayer, giving and service. They help raise awareness for the organization, pray, and offer financial giving to support the firm's pro bono work. Additionally, Ambassadors also work with legislative and advocacy teams to advocate for legislation that reflects biblical values, recognizing that the implications of what happens in local, state, and national government will have a significant impact on Christians' ability to live out their faith and to preach the Gospel.

“I want the church to be able to mobilize, galvanize, and mobilize around this effort of religious freedom because I understand that this is a freedom that we can't afford to lose,” says Johnson. —K.C.

KAT SHANKS



Encouraging caring for souls while speaking for sanctity of human life

As a 20-year-old college student at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida, Kathleen “Kat” Hiers Shanks ('94) was volunteering at the local crisis pregnancy center when she met her first client. Michelle, also a 20-year-old, had two little kids in tow and was pregnant with her third child. Shanks could hear Michelle's stomach growling “because she hadn't eaten for several days” due to feeding her children and not herself. Shanks found food for Michelle and her children and walked with her for the next several months until she had her son, a month before Shanks graduated from college.

Shanks says, “I had no idea that ... would become the work of my life,” but it has. With the encouragement of her then-pastor, Jack Graham ('76, '80), Shanks enrolled at Southwestern Seminary. Tearfully, she explains her time on the Fort Worth campus shaped her “in a thousand ways.” As professors, including Tommy Lea, Jack MacGorman, Bill Tolar, Bert Dominy, and others taught her the lessons of Greek and Hebrew, they also taught her how to handle the Word of God in order to care for souls. These are lessons Shanks uses daily as she serves as the executive director of the New Path Pregnancy Centers based in Marysville, Ohio.

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People coming alongside you to help you can change everything, but infinitely more than that, the God of heaven can change everything.”

Shanks, who previously served for eight years as the director of sanctity of human life for the Florida Baptist Convention, began her current ministry assignment in September 2009. In her role, Shanks meets practical needs while pointing women to Christ. She says, “People coming alongside you to help you can change everything, but infinitely more than that, the God of heaven can change everything.”

The opportunities to come alongside women and share the Gospel are vast because “there is an entire mission field of broken people who have blood guilt on their hands because they chose abortion,” says Shanks. “Some of them chose it in ignorance. They had no idea what they were doing. They genuinely didn't. They believed the lie it was just a clump of cells.”

Shanks says Christians should “talk about [abortion] with broken hearts...and gentleness and such mercy,” while also proactively teaching teenagers a “sanctity of human life apologetic” that helps them to think biblically about life.

Shanks encourages believers who want to get involved in pregnancy resource ministry to first pray because “this is a spiritual battle.” Pastors, women's ministry directors, and others can call local their local pregnancy resource center and learn how they can be praying. Second, she encourages local churches to invite pregnancy resource center directors to speak at churches to hear the needs in the local community.

“It is absolutely, vitally important that the church maintain a Christ-exalting approach to defending the sanctity of human life,” Shanks concludes. —A.A.

DAVID CLOSSON



Seeking to equip believers with a biblical worldview

When the Family Research Council (FRC) launched the Center for Biblical Worldview in May 2021, the aim and mission was to equip “pastors, Christian leaders and just regular Christians to think through things through the perspective of a biblical worldview,” says David Closson, director of the center and current Ph.D. student in Christian ethics at Southwestern Seminary.

Closson, an Orlando, Florida, native said the need for the center was validated by a 2021 survey among Americans by nationally recognized pollster, George Barna. Measuring for belief and behavior, rather than allowing participants to self-identify, Barna’s research found that 51 percent of Americans think they have a biblical worldview while only 6 percent actually do. Even among evangelical Christians, while 81 percent believe they have a biblical worldview, only 22 percent do, according to Barna.

As culture drifts further away from truth, the center seeks to help equip pastors and church leaders with resources to “come alongside people to think faithfully about these issues,” Closson says. The free resources the center provides include video interviews, articles, and booklets that address life, religious liberty, sexuality, and political engagement.

Recognizing that pastors and other church leaders have members of their

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I think the Bible does have a clear word and as our culture has become increasingly [biblically] illiterate ... I just see a massive need amongst the church at large for sound biblical teaching on the issues our culture is dealing with.”

congregations “asking them about these hot button social issues” like sexuality, religious liberty and politics. Closson says he hopes the center can “save pastors and ministry leaders a lot of time and help them get equipped and brushed up on all these issues so they can be more faithful in the work that God’s called them to without having to become an expert on every issue in the political and cultural world.”

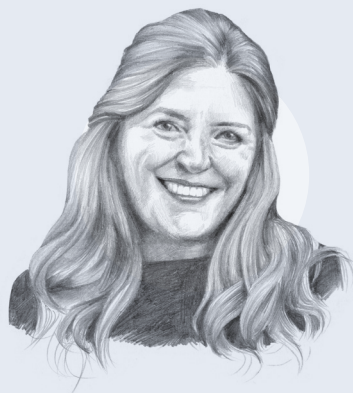
Equipping believers with a biblical worldview is important to him because “I care about truth and care about God’s Word,” Closson says.

“The Bible speaks to every issue that we face; it gives us principles,” Closson continues. “One of the reasons I get so passionate about these issues is because I think the Bible does have a clear word and as our culture has become increasingly [biblically] illiterate, and as churches are becoming less biblically focused, I just see a massive need amongst the church at large for sound biblical teaching on the issues that our culture is dealing with.”

Closson says the “high view of Scripture” his professors at Southwestern Seminary have is what he wants to share with others. He adds he is grateful to be “a student at Southwestern because all of us are in need to be able to be thinking more faithfully and accurate about these things.”

“The encouragement and support that I’ve already received from Southwestern has reminded me that the work I’m doing is important; it’s needed,” Closson adds. —A.A.

GAYLA PARKER



Supporting women in crisis

In her years of ministry experience to women, 2017 Master of Divinity graduate and current Ph.D. student, Gayla Parker, says the words of one woman stand out to her.

"If there had been just one person to stand with me, maybe I could have found the courage to have done something different," the woman said with tears streaming down her face, remembering the abortion she had 22 years prior.

Parker serves as the executive director of the Pregnancy Resource Center for Southwest Arkansas, where they stand with women through unplanned pregnancies.

Prior to her current ministry role, Parker and her husband served as International Mission Board missionaries to the Philippines for 14 years before returning to the United States in 2002. She then served as a student consultant for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention from 2002-2006, and then as the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Executive Director for the Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware from 2006-2013. After the Lord called Parker and her husband back to Little Rock, Arkansas, she served for a time as a hospice chaplain before stepping into her current ministry assignment in 2019. Parker has also served as an adjunct professor at Ouachita Baptist University since 2017.

Through her connection with a network of seminary women, including Dean of Women Terri Stovall ('91, '01, '12), Parker says God led her to strengthen her ministry to women

through theological education at Southwestern Seminary, where she first enrolled in 2014.

Parker says the impact of the education she has received from Southwestern Seminary is most evident in how she approaches conversations with clients and in decisions for the pregnancy center.

"To rightly handle the Word is not just our interpretation of that Word, but the way in which it influences every area of our life including our actions," says Parker.

Parker says the pregnancy center welcomes women from all walks of life and circumstances. Counselors meet with each woman to find solutions to their concerns, and counsel them to forgo an abortion if that was their original plan. Through the parenting classes, Parker says they believe that the best way to parent is to first "have a vibrant relationship with the Lord."

"We are there to share the Word of God. We do that by reading His Word, praying for them, and by having a devotional time with them, discipling them, or whatever is appropriate for the client that's coming."

While they seek to address many practical needs including pregnancy tests, infant and child supplies, and parenting classes, Parker says they also aim to show care and compassion for women who are often facing a challenging situation.

"We're not just fighting for the baby; we're fighting for the mom because we know that the impact on women is huge and will often make them suicidal, nonfunctional, all of those things," Parker notes. "We're fighting for two lives when we're in the counseling room trying to talk someone off the cliff of abortion."

The pregnancy center also offers after-abortion care, recognizing that many women experience loneliness, depression, and guilt. Parker explains that, although they talk about the horror of abortion, they must also show women compassion and that they are still loved and can be used by God.

Just as the woman who expressed regret for abortion desired support, Parker says she and the pregnancy center aim to be the people who say to each woman who enters their facilities, "I will be that one person that will stand with you through this pregnancy to give you the courage to do this." —K.C.

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We're not just fighting for the baby; we're fighting for the mom because we know that the impact on women is huge.”



Answering the Call

Alumnus Matt Carter follows
God wherever He leads

BY ADAM COVINGTON

“God, wherever You want me to go, whatever You want me to do, I’m Yours.”

These are the words Matt Carter ('06) recalls praying in the cab of his truck somewhere on the side of the road between Texarkana and Dallas, Texas. The words may seem simple, but for Carter, who had been wrestling with God and resisting a call to ministry, they represented a future and a direction in his life for which he would never be able to take credit.

“I didn’t know what it was going to look like,” he said. “But I surrendered.”

A college sophomore at Texas A&M at the time, Carter, originally from Athens, Texas, was working a summer job for a construction company and trying desperately to run from a call to ministry. Spending time in prayer while he was driving, Carter remembers specifically telling the Lord, “I don’t want to answer this call.” A moment later, he turned on the radio in his truck and the song playing on the local station was one by Christian artist, Al Denson, titled, “Be the One.”

He heard these words:

Will you be the one
To answer to His call
And will you stand
When those around you fall
Will you be the one
To take His light
Into a darkened world
Tell me will you be the one

Carter didn’t know what his ministry would look like, but he knew, in that moment, he needed to answer the call. “Wherever You want me to go, whatever You want me to do, I’m Yours.”

THE POWER OF THE WORD

While he continued working on a Bachelor of Arts in history at Texas A&M, Carter saw firsthand the power of the Word of God faithfully preached from the pulpit by his pastor, Chris Osborne ('77, '19). Osborne, who now serves as professor

of preaching and pastoral ministry at Southwestern Seminary, spent 33 years as the pastor of Central Baptist Church in Bryan-College Station, Texas, and throughout his ministry he has mentored many who now stand in pulpits around the state and the nation, weekly walking their flock verse-by-verse through the Word of God. Osborne would also be instrumental in pointing Carter toward Southwestern Seminary for his theological training.

“I had never heard really anointed, biblically-based expositional preaching,” Carter said, reflecting on his four years at Central Baptist. “[It] profoundly changed me. So, when I’m thinking about moving to Austin, going near a university, how am I going to preach? I’m going to do it. I’m going to do the same thing.”

THE AUSTIN STONE

Carter planted The Austin Stone Community Church with his wife, Jen, in Austin, Texas, in 2002. They recognized the strategic value of planting a church in the artistic, cultural, and capital of Texas and had a deliberate focus on what Carter called a built in “mission sending agency” represented by the college students coming into Austin to study at the University of Texas.

“Every four to five years, you’ve literally got 60,000 people that are coming in, some of the best and brightest. And then they’re going out.”

He remembers being a young church planter, “scared to death and poor,” who would often pray, “God, would You do something so significant that when we look back on it, years from now, that the only explanation for how it happened is that You did it?”

The Lord answered that prayer.

The Austin Stone, which began in the Carters’ apartment in south Austin, now meets in six locations around the city. In its nineteen-year history, the church has sent more than 300 full time missionaries out to unreached people groups, baptized thousands of new believers, launched a training institute



Matt Carter, an Athens, Texas, native and 2006 Southwestern Seminary graduate, planted The Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas, with the objective of faithfully expositing the Word of God.

for church leaders, and faithfully expositing the Word of God to an average weekly gathering of nearly 8,000 people.

“People told me I was nuts,” Carter remembers when he launched “The Stone” with a plan of preaching expositional sermons and simply explaining the texts of Scripture. “[They] said, ‘There’s no way you can go into a city like Austin and just preach verse-by-verse through the Bible and reach the culture.’ And they’re wrong.”

Impacted by the model of expositional preaching at Central Baptist, and undergirded by the preparation for ministry he received while he was earning his Master of Divinity degree at Southwestern Seminary, Carter saw no better thing to bring with him to reach the city of Austin than the truths of Scripture.

“There was actually a lot of movement in that time of people saying, ‘Hey, you don’t need to go to seminary,’” Carter recalls. “But somebody told me that they thought the best of both worlds was not to go to seminary alone, or not to just

have a job and never go seminary, but to go to seminary while you have a job.”

Carter grew up a Southern Baptist and admits that many of the men who influenced him over the years helped him narrow down the choice of where he would pursue his theological training. “A lot of the guys that were the previous generation that I respected and loved went to Southwestern and Chris Osborne went to Southwestern, so that just was the natural choice for me. If you’re going to go, you’re going to Southwestern.”

A strong emphasis on expositional preaching at Southwestern Seminary made the choice a natural fit for the preaching style he wanted to cultivate at The Austin Stone.

“I’m convinced that the Bible is the most relevant book that’s ever been written. If it’s true, that it is living and active, and it is, then it’s living and active for every culture, and for every generation,” Carter said. “I really believe that the only guarantee that our preaching possesses the power of God



Carter was called to serve Sagemont Church in Houston, Texas, and continues to faithfully preach the Word of God expositionally since beginning as senior pastor in March 2020.

is when we're preaching the Holy Spirit inspired Word of God and I don't care what culture you're in, or what city, I'm convinced that that's the way to go."

Carter served as lead pastor of The Austin Stone for 18 years, but one night after a worship service, he sensed a stirring in his heart and the Lord asking the question, "Matt, are you ready if I ask you to do a fresh work somewhere else?"

His answer was the same as the day he surrendered to ministry, "Wherever You want me to go, whatever You want me to do, I'm Yours."

ONE CHURCH, TWO PASTORS, ONE DIRECTION

On November 24, 2019, John D. Morgan ('66) addressed Sagemont Church in Houston, Texas, for the last time as the senior pastor. His message to those in attendance, watching online, or listening by radio was the same message he had preached for more than 53 years in the church he helped found: follow Jesus.

"I learned a long time ago," Morgan said, "if Sagemont is going to be in the future what it needs to be, all of us have to get on board to the fact that we will follow Jesus."

The stately pastor stood behind an ornately carved wooden pulpit with the words "Jesus is Here" adorning it, and, with his soothing, unhurried south Texas accent, implored men and women within the sound of his voice to give their lives to Christ. It seemed the most appropriate way to book-end his ministry at the church that had grown from a few dozen people when he was called there fresh out of Southwestern Seminary in 1966, to more than 21,000 members in

2019. He also reassured his flock that God had a great future for Sagemont Church if they continue to follow Jesus.

"God is up to something right now. I wish I could get up here with boldness and tell you what's going to happen. I don't have a clue. I don't know what another day is going to bring," Morgan shared. "But I know this: God has a plan."

God's plan would ultimately lead the pastor search committee at Sagemont Church to call Matt Carter as the church's second pastor in March 2020.

CONFIRMATION IN 'GOD MOMENTS'

Denny Autrey ('84, '87, '13), a retired dean and professor of Southwestern Seminary, chaired the pastor search team at Sagemont Church where he has served as a faithful member for 17 years. Speaking to the church when the announcement was made that Carter was the pastoral candidate for Sagemont, Autrey referenced countless "God moments" that occurred between the search team and Carter.

One such moment was in relation to the search team's first meeting with Carter in Austin. They selected a hotel for the interview and booked a conference room for Tuesday, March 17, 2020. Restrictions and shut-downs related to the COVID-19 pandemic began to take place on that same day in the state of Texas. But, the search team and Carter had the exact number of people in it to still be eligible for their meeting in the conference room under mandated COVID-protocols.

Another notable "God moment" Autrey relayed to the church came when the search committee heard Carter share the story about his call to ministry and the Al Denson song



that played on the radio in his truck. While he was telling the story, Autrey reached over and calmly placed his hand on Carter's shoulder. When he had finished telling the story, Autrey asked him a question: "Matt, do you realize that Al Denson grew up in Sagemont Church?"

Denson came to faith as a sixth-grader in the youth service at Sagemont and was one of many called to ministry under the guidance and leadership of Morgan and others on staff at Sagemont.

"Sagemont had a part in your story before you ever had a part in our story," Autrey told him.

SAGEMONT CHURCH

When he accepted the call to pastor at Sagemont Church in March 2020, Carter told the church that his entire philosophy of ministry could be summed up in this: "I live my life to exalt Jesus Christ. I want the name of Jesus to be exalted above my name, above the name of our church. I want Him to be the star of Sagemont."

Carter points to Ephesians 3:20-21 as a life verse that he has kept at the forefront of his ministry all the years he has served. His hope and prayer for Sagemont in the years to come is that God will continue to do "far more abundantly" than all they ask.

One of the many core values of Sagemont Church that resonated with Carter as he was seeking the Lord and praying about accepting the invitation as senior pastor was their commitment to being debt-free as a church. As Sagemont Church grew in its early years, the church initially took on debt to build new buildings. Ten years into their existence as a church, Morgan was convicted by the Lord that they should cease all borrowing and work to get out of any debt. The church paid off all its debts in 14 months and moved forward using a cash-only method for all future construction projects.

Sagemont Church is one of the top contributors to the

Cooperative Program and the top-giving church in the state of Texas. Carter sees the correlation between their commitment to be wise financial stewards and their gracious generosity to local, national, and global missions.

"There's a direct connection between being debt-free, not having to spend an enormous amount of money paying down building debt, and your ability to be Spirit-led in how you direct your finances," Carter explained. "When we're debt-free as a church that really creates a very clear pathway from the giving of the dollar into the offering plate into the Kingdom of God."

Giving through the Cooperative Program, Carter recognizes the distinctive nature of the Southern Baptist Convention and notes that it has the "greatest seminaries in the world. You've got the greatest missions structure and organization in the world. You've got, in my opinion, the best national missions organization in the world. And you've got a theological document that is precise enough to keep us together, but broad enough to let us have some freedom there."

Looking forward to the future Carter recognizes Sagemont Church's location in Houston as one that God has uniquely positioned and prepared as the population booms all around them. The Houston Metropolitan area is projected to overtake Chicago as the third largest U.S. city in the next 8-10 years. According to recent census data, 1 in 4 Houstonians were born outside the U.S. and it reflects greater ethnic and racial diversity than the nation as a whole.

Sagemont Church and its leadership are already making an impact in their city and around the world for Jesus. "The world is here," Carter said. "And it needs churches that preach the Bible and live on mission."

Carter is poised to see God do "far more abundantly" than they can ever imagine at Sagemont Church as they continue to follow Jesus.

Adam Covington is senior editor of Southwestern News.



Church Practices, Church Polity, and Cooperation

How Baptist distinctives in theology
and at church form the basis for
healthy multi-church cooperation

BY GREGORY A. WILLS

The practices and polity of the church are fundamental to Christianity. Specifically, they are fundamental to faithful discipleship, to cooperation with likeminded churches, and to denominational integrity.

Ecclesiology is the name given to the area of theology that includes the practices and polity of the church. Interest in ecclesiology has been growing in recent years.

Our Baptist forebears championed these distinctives, not just in their own churches, but also in their associations, even at the cost of criticism and ridicule from other Christians who did not agree. We would do well today to learn from their examples.

Ecclesiology Is Fundamental to Discipleship

God purposed to establish His church from the beginning. The church was not a parenthesis in the plan of redemption. It had a central role in God's eternal purposes.

Paul directed most of his epistles to churches. Those written to Timothy and Titus chiefly concern church affairs. Christ addressed the responsibilities of His churches in the seven letters of Revelation 2-3. Christ commissioned the apostles to establish churches in accordance with His plan for their government, officers, worship, ordinances, membership, discipline, and work. The church is "God's household," Paul told Timothy, "the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Christ established a certain polity and certain practices in His churches. Obedience to Christ required Christians to join with other believers in forming churches with scriptural polity and practices. Every Christian had a duty to the church and a duty to act as part of the church. Baptist churches have generally expressed these duties in a "church covenant."

The Atlanta First Baptist Church adopted its covenant in 1848. Like those of other Baptist churches, the covenant expressed their members' acceptance of Christ's authority over them individually and corporately—"to do all things whatsoever the Lord hath commanded us to do." Members pledged to support the doctrines of the Bible and the practices that Christ required of His churches. They pledged to support the worship, not neglecting to gather together, as well as supporting the ministry of the Gospel, upholding the ordinances according to Scripture, and practicing church discipline. They promised to submit to Christ and to His church. "Holding ourselves henceforth to be [H]is and no longer our own," they pledged to separate from the world and be a church, "each esteeming himself henceforth as a member of a spiritual body, accountable to it and subject to its control." Following Christ faithfully included obeying His commands to the churches.

Ecclesiology Is Fundamental to Cooperation

Christ's commands to the churches required them to cooperate and New Testament churches cooperated. Cooperation was practically necessary to attend to an array of duties since churches need one another's aid effectively to defend truth, oppose error, address difficulties, resolve differences, and above all, to obey the command to make disciples of all nations. Cooperation, however, was difficult unless churches had wide agreement regarding theology and ecclesiology. Matters of minor difference called for charity and generosity. But, disagreement on fundamental matters of theology and ecclesiology hindered cooperation because it would require some to endorse beliefs or practices that they could not in good conscience endorse.

Agreement in theology and ecclesiology was, therefore, necessary to sustain cooperation. Baptists called this area of fundamental agreement our "faith and practice." "Faith" referred to the doctrines that Christ required the churches to believe and teach. "Practice" referred to the polity and practices that Christ required the churches to observe.

Agreement in theology and ecclesiology, therefore, has been a condition of cooperation throughout our history. When Baptist churches in Georgia organized the Sarepta Baptist Association in 1799, they adopted a statement of doctrine and of church practices as the basis of their union. Since some Baptist churches existed "who differ from us in faith and practice, and it is impossible to have communion where there is no union, we think it our duty to set forth a concise declaration of the faith and order upon which we intend to associate."

Associations, therefore, refused to admit churches into

their union unless they could affirm their agreement with doctrine and ecclesiology of the member churches. They examined every church that applied for membership. They followed the pattern of the Charleston Baptist Association in 1785 when the Stephen's Creek Church applied for admission: "Upon a satisfactory account of their faith and practice, resolved, [w]e are willing to receive them into union with us."

Baptists viewed ecclesiology as an essential basis of our cooperation with one another.

Ecclesiology Is Fundamental to Denominational Faithfulness

Baptists often faced pressure to relax or ignore elements of our faith and practice since some persons have viewed our doctrines and church practices as offensive. We taught that those only who were born again, having confessed their sin and sought Christ's mercy, may be baptized. We also taught that baptism was immersion by definition. Hence persons baptized as infants or by sprinkling were in fact unbaptized.

We affirmed that baptism was prerequisite to participation in the Lord's Supper. Non-Baptist denominations affirmed the same requirement. However, since we did not recognize infant baptism or any non-immersion as valid baptism, we could not in good conscience invite such persons to the Lord's Supper, since they lacked an essential qualification.

We affirmed that the entire membership of each local church had joint responsibility for obedience to Christ's commands to the churches. The congregation, therefore, had ultimate authority under Christ in the administration of all His laws in the church. We held that Christ required His churches, by an exercise of this congregational responsibility, to expel from the church body any members who disobeyed Christ's commands and refused to repent. Such church discipline offended many people. Baptist churches practiced faithful church discipline for nearly three hundred years.

Baptists recognized that many of their fellow citizens found their views and practices objectionable. Even some Baptists took offense. Rufus C. Burleson, whose ministry shaped early Texas Baptists, urged his fellow Baptist pastors in 1849 to teach the broad set of truths and practices which Christ required His churches to believe and observe.

Some preachers refrained from insisting on the fundamental convictions reflected in our confessions because to do so would hinder church growth. Burleson acknowledged that "it will repel from our church those persons who hold loose and erroneous views of doctrine, and our numbers,

and sometimes our wealth, will thereby be decreased." But, large numbers did not mean great strength. "We grant that our numbers for a while will be lessened by adhering rigidly to the old landmarks, but we are fully assured that our real strength will be greatly increased."

Burleson argued that some preachers retreated due to fear of criticism, ridicule, and rejection. They refrained from advocating our fundamental convictions because "contending for our doctrines will diminish our popularity, and expose us to persecution. This, we fear, has more influence, even upon Baptists, than we suppose. But could our venerable fathers arise from the dead, or speak to us 'from under the altar' (Rev. 6:9), what would be their language? What would be the words of the Waldenses, of a Roger Williams, an [Obadiah] Holmes, a [John] Bunyan? Should we not hear them exclaiming: 'For these principles, we suffered exile, the lash, the stake, the dungeon—and will you desert them for a little breath of popular applause?'"

Our teachings and practices can give offense. If we teach and observe them, we may drive some people away. We will unavoidably invite ridicule and scorn upon the church. We must be charitable, generous, and loving to those who differ from us. If, however, Christ has revealed what beliefs the churches must teach and what practices the churches must observe, then we have no alternative but to seek to lead our churches to teach and practice these things. If obeying Christ's commands gives offense, we prefer faithfulness to the Lord over popularity.

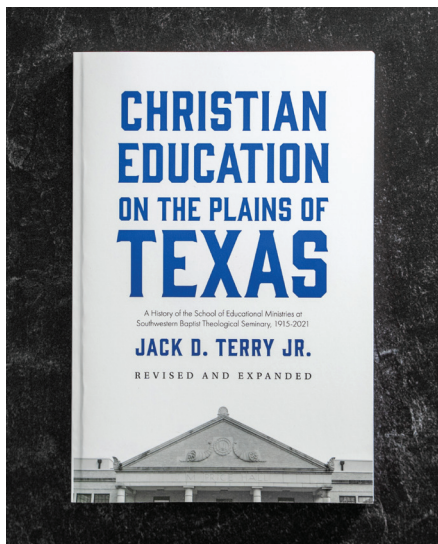
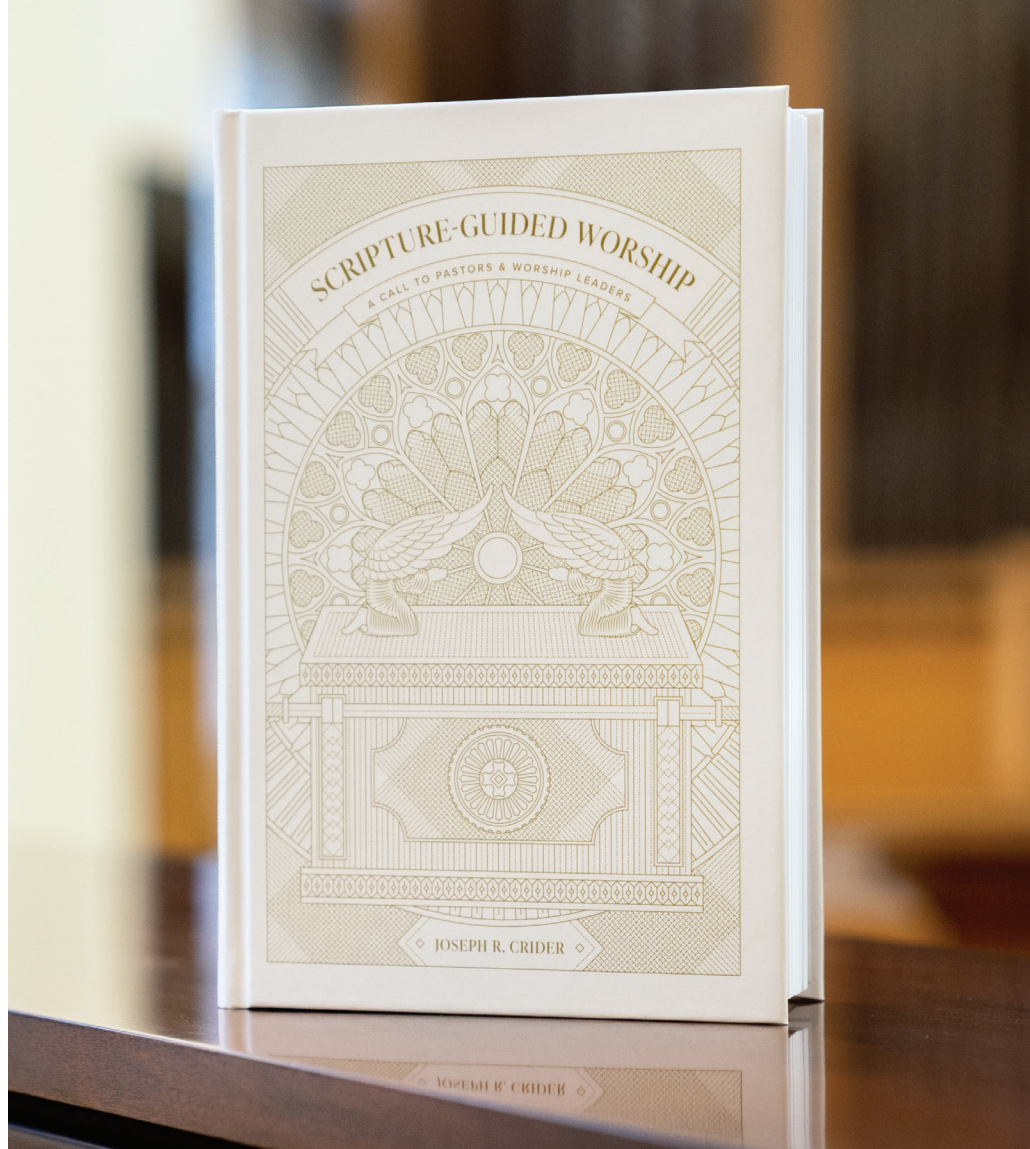
Unity and cooperation in fulfilling Christ's commission cannot long endure on any other basis than agreement to teach and practice what Christ requires of us. The faith and practice revealed in Scripture form the true basis of our denominational union. Biblical church practices and polity are fundamental to our union because they are fundamental to our faith.



GREGORY A. WILLS is research professor of church history and Baptist heritage and incoming dean of the School of Theology (effective Jan. 1, 2022) at Southwestern Seminary.

Seminary Hill Press releases books honoring schools' ministries

Crider book aids worship leaders, while Terry book notes a century of faithfulness.



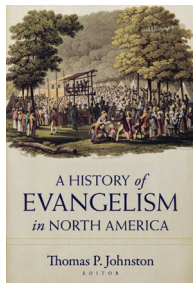
Seminary Hill Press, the publishing arm of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has released two new books titled *Scripture-Guided Worship: A Call to Pastors and Worship Leaders*, written by Joseph R. Crider, dean of the School of Church Music and Worship (SCMW), and *Christian Education on the Plains of Texas: Revised and Expanded*, written by Jack D. Terry Jr. ('62, '67), the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries' namesake. The release of both books coincides with this year's centennial anniversaries of the SCMW and the Terry School.

Scripture-Guided Worship calls ministers to lead their congregations in biblically-based worship. Crider says the book is written to guide pastors and worship leaders of all experience levels to assess their knowledge of worship, recognize the biblical essentials for worship, and offers a practical approach to weekly worship gatherings that relies on the Bible for both content and structure.

Christian Education on the Plains of Texas is an account of the history of the first school of religious education anywhere in the world of academia. Originally released in 2018, this edition includes a new chapter with developments through the spring of 2021 and includes Terry's personal reflections on the history of the school, much of which he has lived as a student, professor, dean, and seminary statesman.

“If you want a primer on how to think well and live well as a follower of the Crucified and Resurrected King, *What Does It Mean to Be a Thoughtful Christian?* is the place to start. It is a wonderful gift to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

—DANIEL L. AKIN ('83),
PRESIDENT, SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

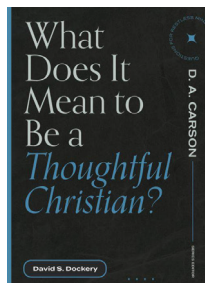


A HISTORY OF EVANGELISM IN NORTH AMERICA

Kregel (2021)

MATT QUEEN AND
CARL BRADFORD ('11, '18),
CONTRIBUTORS

This book provides an academic overview of the history of evangelism in North America beginning with the work and ministry of circuit riders to the modern-day concept of online ministries. Southwestern Seminary evangelism professors, Matt Queen and Carl Bradford, contribute the chapters that focus on the personal evangelism methodologies of Southern Baptists since 1970 and the life and ministry of S.M. Lockridge, respectively.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A THOUGHTFUL CHRISTIAN? (QUESTIONS FOR RESTLESS MINDS)

Lexham Press (2021)

DAVID S. DOCKERY ('81)

In his new work, Dockery provides the reader with nine characteristics of a thoughtful Christian, beginning with loving God with their heart, soul, and mind. Dockery makes the case that the believer must be intentional with their thought life as they focus on biblical truth.



MOVILIZAR PARA EVANGELIZAR AND EVANGELISMO DIARIO

Seminary Hill Press (2021)

MATT QUEEN

In the Spanish translation of *Mobilize to Evangelize (Movilizar Para Evangelizar)*, pastors are provided with the tools they need to understand and to assess how evangelism is conceived, practiced, and perceived in their congregations. It offers realistic ideas they can implement to mobilize their congregations to evangelize. The Spanish translation of *Everyday Evangelism (Evangelismo Diario)*, challenges pastors and church members to take personal ownership of sharing the Gospel while practical steps for creating a culture of everyday evangelism are provided.

BYLINES

Defending the Faith without a PhD

Travis S. Kerns

associate professor of
apologetics and world
religions

“Defending the faith is not only possible without a Ph.D. — it is completely expected. ... All the tools you need for defending the faith are sitting on your desk, on your nightstand, or in your phone. Your toolbox is nothing more or less than the Bible itself and it overflows with defensive capabilities.”

(on churchleaders.com)

Anglicans & Episcopals: A Middle Way between Catholicism and Protestantism?

Robert W. Caldwell III

professor of church history

“In order to understand the complexity of today’s American denominations, we must dig deep into the roots of history in search of a sound starting point. Long before the American Revolution, the Great Awakening, and even the Pilgrims, the *Church of England*, otherwise known as the *Anglican Church*, emerged in the wake of the English Reformation.”

(on mbcpathway.com)

Grandparents as Discipemakers

Chris Shirley ('94, '02)

associate dean of the
Jack D. Terry School of
Educational Ministries

“Anytime that we can pull together members of the family onto the discipleship team ... we’re expanding our influence, and we’re expanding the possibilities and the relationships a child has in their lives, people with different gifts and different personalities ... to connect with children in different ways.”

(podcast on D6)

There is no true knowledge of Jesus apart from that which we find in the pages of the Bible.



Text continued from page 5

professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, replied that the phrase “teachings of Jesus” should be struck as it was “already being used by fundamentalists to prove that Moses wrote all five books of the Pentateuch ... the unity of the book of Isaiah ... and the Exile date for Daniel.” He knew the original draft language would undermine what many of his faculty colleagues were already teaching, and argued (successfully) that it should be reduced simply to “is Jesus Christ,” thereby allowing interpretive latitude for those whose trajectory was ultimately to separate Jesus from the Bible as “the Word of God.”

Second, I am reminded of the claims made after the 2000 SBC annual meeting by some dissenters to the updated confessional language removing the criterion sentence and replacing it with the affirmation, “All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.” Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler, former Woman’s Missionary Union executive secretary and early leader with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, was

quoted at the 2000 CBF general assembly saying that “Southern Baptists have the Bible as their authority while the CBF has Jesus as theirs.” Such a sentiment is utter nonsense. What Jesus is she referencing? The Jesus of Scripture. There is no true knowledge of Jesus apart from that which we find in the pages of the Bible. It is a fool’s errand to pit Jesus and the Bible against each other. Her sentiment, however, demonstrated the deep divide between conservatives and moderates at the time.

The 2000 debate about the Bible was the crescendo of the Conservative Resurgence, which worked to clarify unambiguously where Southern Baptists stood on this critical issue. The Bible is the Word of God, and here we stand with clarity and conviction. Not a single person on the faculty of Southwestern Seminary today believes otherwise, and I am confident the same is true of our five sister SBC seminaries. All Southern Baptists can and should have confidence that the same convictions fought for in the Conservative Resurgence are maintained today. There is not and should never be any liberal drift related to the inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the Bible as the written Word of God. Because,

after all, words do indeed matter.

The Son of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us as the incarnate Word of God is the central truth of all human existence, which we first come to know because God has communicated that truth to us in His written Word (John 1:1-18) and then we experience by faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Incarnation is the focus of all true Christians during the Christmas season, with gift-giving based upon God’s indescribable gift of His Son to provide reconciliation to sinners.

As you prayerfully consider your end-of-year giving plans, I’m grateful for all those who will include Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College. Each gift makes an investment in more faithful ministers who offer the hope of the Gospel. God bless you for sharing in this ministry with us through your generous gifts. [📧](#)

ADAM W. GREENWAY
President

ALUMNI UPDATES**1980**

Jerry Aldin Fleming (*MARE 1987*) to Ridglea Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX as Interim Minister of Music.

1990

Matthew Dean Kearns (*MDIV 1995*) to Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, OK as Director of Student Ministry.

2000

Brian Duane Mattson (*MDIV 2007*) to Lee University in Cleveland, TN as Assistant Professor of Communication.

2010

Jonathan W. Jarboe (*DEDMin 2013*) to The Baptist Foundation of California as President & CEO.

Truman Timothy Chatman (*MDIV 2018*) to Williams Baptist University in Walnut Ridge, AR as Dean of Students.

MEMORIALS**1950**

Homer R. Martinez

Virginia Belle Hughes (*BSM 1950*)

Helen Jean Parks (*MARE 1951*)

Jimmie D. Burton (*BDIV 1953*)

David Lee Fletcher (*BDIV 1954, ThD 1961*)

J. Wesley Pierce (*MARE 1956*)

1960

Mary Lou Humphries

Lettie B. Perry

Robert Maurice Tenery (*BDIV 1960*)

Thomas Randolph Parsons (*MRE 1962*)

Judith Anne Hackler (*MARE 1967*)

James Arvin Kinsey (*DipTh 1969*)

1970

Randall Tobin McBee

John Robert Anderson (*MDIV 1971*)

Billy Rayford Williams (*MDIV 1973*)

David Daniel Taylor (*MACM 1976*)

Nathan Vince Whittington (*MDIV 1976*)

Harry Raymond Burns (*MARE 1978, ADIV 1989*)

1980

David Mitchel Poor (*DipTh 1981*)

Pressley Cavin Stutts, Jr. (*MDIV 1981*)

Deyrl Gene Kastner (*DipCM 1986*)

Anita Mae Westmoreland (*MARE 1989*)

2000

Andrew Clayton Pearle (*BAH 2007, MACE 2011*)

2010

Timothy Ray Struble

Alan Wayne Meadows (*MM 2011*)

Sterling Sellman (*MABC 2019*)

**KEEP IN TOUCH**

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

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Phone (local)

817.921.8830

Email

alumni@swbts.edu

Jewells experience ‘great joy in giving’ to Southwestern Seminary



The Southwestern story
of Mike and Estelle Jewell

BY
ASHLEY ALLEN



WHEN THE NEW OCCUPANT OF THEIR OLD HOUSE on Felix Street walked across the street with a misdelivered envelope, Mike ('92) and Estelle Jewell were blessed by God's timing. The envelope was from their home church in South Texas and, almost to a penny, met the need for a bill the financially struggling seminary couple received the same day.

"That is a lesson that [is] so ingrained my memory," Mike says. "I was so grateful for someone else's obedience to give ... obviously there's a great joy in giving."

In 1985, Mike and Estelle, both of whom are from San Juan, Texas, closed their business,



"It is very humbling to see where we were and where God has brought us," Estelle Jewell says.

night the study group met, the student learned Mike had been an auto mechanic before moving to Fort Worth.

The following day, after attending classes and picking up their daughters from school, Mike arrived home to find the student sitting on his porch. He explained to Mike he had a car at the seminary he was working on and could not determine what was wrong.

"He said, 'Mike, could you come look at it with me?'" Mike remembers. "So, I went over to the seminary campus, crawled under it, showed him what it was [and] had him bring me home. And I thought all was well with the world."

However, for the next two afternoons, when Mike returned home with the couple's daughters, he found the student sitting on his front porch with more auto issues on cars around campus. When the student neared his time of graduation, he told Mike, "You know, you

liant, brilliant, godly caring men."

Mike explains when he was a student, the classes in his degree program were taught by Ph.D. students. He petitioned the dean of the School of Theology, the late Bill Tolar, to take his coursework with master's level students so he could study with some of the professors. This has led to "lifelong friendships with faculty," he says.

One of the semesters Mike was a student Estelle had to have three surgeries. Mike remembers, "A number of [the faculty] brought food, came and prayed with us [and] ministered to us in such an incredible way."

Estelle, though, explains the primary reason the couple gives to Southwestern is because "God calls us to do that."

"There [were] so many times during our life at seminary that we were without and had needs, and people met those needs mone-

"I believe the seminary played a huge part in our lives, spiritually. I felt like the Lord allowed me to sit at the feet of some brilliant, brilliant, godly caring men."

— MIKE JEWELL

really should take my place and start doing this around campus."

"As grateful as I was for the ability to work for the seminary and be a 'blue shirt,' I figured out quickly I could financially take better care of my family doing this than I could being a blue shirt," Mike says. "So, I began to work out of a little three car carport behind the house I lived in, and [the business] continued to grow."

The Jewells moved what is now known as Jewell Auto to its current location on James Avenue, a few blocks south of the seminary campus, in 1989.

Estelle explains when the business first moved to the James Avenue site, Mike had a couple of seminary students work for him, who even painted a sign for the original building.

"It's very humbling to see where we were and where God has brought us," Estelle adds.

The role the seminary has played in their lives is part of the reason the Jewells invest in Southwestern Seminary.

"I believe the seminary played a huge part in our lives, spiritually," Mike says. "I felt like the Lord allowed me to sit at the feet of some bril-

lantly," Estelle says. The couple now does the same for others, anonymously, which allows them to experience "the joy that you see on somebody's face ... because a lot of times they don't know that it was you. ... You see how God uses that to meet their needs and it's just a quiet way to see how God works."

The Jewells have a particular interest in the seminary police department.

"We've ... developed a great love for the police department and those who keep the seminary safe, and take care of safety," Mike says on the couple's behalf. "I think the rule of law is very important in our society today and believe so strongly in what the seminary has decided to do in developing their own police department."

As a result, the Jewells have contributed to the police's equipment and maintenance and care of their vehicles.

The Jewells continue to invest in Southwestern Seminary because they believe in the seminary's common bond, goal, and service to "help prepare people for ministry," Mike says.

—A.A. 

packed up their three little girls, and moved to Fort Worth so Mike could attend Southwestern Seminary to work on an advanced graduate diploma in theology.

Estelle worked as a dental hygienist in Granbury while Mike attended classes during the day and served as the maintenance supervisor at the Recreation and Aerobics Center on campus at night.

After a year and a half of attending classes, Mike was involved in the project for one of the seminary's Doctor of Ministry students. The student, whose name has been forgotten, was the "seminary mechanic." The first Sunday

Your giving and the life of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Give people Jesus, not Cheez-its

BY
GEORGE SCHROEDER



A FEW YEARS AGO, while volunteering in our son's first-grade class, my wife was alarmed when Christopher's friend, Anna, greeted her and said: "Christopher says you took his Jesus."

Startled, Shannon stammered — "What?" — and Anna repeated: "He says you took his Jesus." But then, as Shannon considered how best to begin teaching basic theology in a public school, another little friend chimed in: "I think Christopher said you took his Cheez-its."

It was important information in its own right; you do not get between Christopher and his Cheez-its. But the clarification produced relief. And all these years later, the underlying message resonates.

Have you been on Facebook lately? Or had conversations in the church lobby? It isn't just first-graders who get things garbled.

It's no secret that we've never had more immediate access to information, or to misinformation. Or that we are polarized by politics, the pandemic response, and so much else. Or that those are interrelated. Though much of the division is attributable to inevitably clashing worldviews, it's exacerbated by the cacophony of news (real or fake) and entertainment — or usually some combination of both. The result is confusion and sometimes chaos. Clarity is increasingly difficult to achieve. And it isn't so much what's happening "out there" that should be so concerning, but instead its effects on the church's mission and message.

Amid a rapidly secularizing culture, the mission of Christ-followers remains unchanged. We're commanded to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mat 22:35-40). We're to carry out the Great Commission as ambassadors for Christ, carrying the message of reconciliation, compelled by Christ's love and the knowledge that He died for us, imploring others to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:14-20).

Southwestern Seminary's mission hasn't changed, either; it remains steadfastly committed to equipping the called, teaching them to rightly handle the Word of truth and to clearly proclaim the Gospel message. The urgency may never have been greater. When we say "Jesus," those drowning in a sea of noise must not hear "Cheez-its."

Compounding the problem, many Christians are flailing in that same sea. It has been said that while pastors equip Christians for two hours on Sunday mornings, they are being disciplined by cable news and social media the rest of the week. That's troubling enough — but what of those in ministry?

Let's try some self-assessment: How much time do we spend scrolling on our phones? OK, now do Scripture and prayer. When I'm honest — when I put down the phone long enough to think — I don't like either answer.

If pastors and others in ministry struggle to control our screen time and to make time for God, consider the average churchgoer. It's no wonder, then, that so many Christians are at best distracted by the empty calories they're consuming; at worst deceived by the misinformation they're receiving. It's not surprising that Southern Baptists find themselves mimicking the external culture, arguing over masks or vaccines or elections and so many other things. And when we're distracted or divided, we're diverted from the mission and message we've

Let's lead others to God's Word, and together sing with the psalmist, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Ps 119:103).

been given. If our focus is anything but Christ and the Gospel, we're not cutting through the clutter but contributing to the confusion.

The solution is as simple as putting down the phone and picking up the Word (or, yes, we know, opening the Bible app). Instead of wasting our time nibbling on nothingness, let's walk wisely, making the best use of the time—would anyone argue these days are not evil (Eph 5:16-17)?

Let's lead others to God's Word, and together sing with the psalmist, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Ps 119:103). When that truth becomes our reality, confusion dissolves into the sweet clarity of the simple, yet powerful Gospel message: We take people Jesus, not Cheez-its. 📖

To support Southwestern Seminary and help us impact the world for Christ, visit swbts.edu/give.

GEORGE SCHROEDER is the associate vice president for institutional relations at Southwestern Seminary.



Your Gift Helps Every Student

God has called nearly 4,000 students to Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College to receive the training they need for a life of faithful ministry. This kind of world-class theological education is not possible without the generous support of our friends and ministry partners.

A year-end gift to Southwestern Seminary is an investment in the next generation of pastors, missionaries, and Christian leaders. Every dollar you invest is one less dollar our students have to pay in tuition—and one less obstacle to reaching our world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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