



Southwestern

NEWS

ISSUE 01
Ministry in
Paradise



Ministry in paradise

Southwesterner Chris Martin leads Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention to greater missional engagement.

In a class of her own

Alumna Norma Hedin's life bears the fruit of God's good work.

Running on empty

Michael Criner leads his rural East Texas church to reach the 33,000 lost in Henderson County.

Vol. 80
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BY JAMES A. SMITH SR.
PHOTOS BY CHINSOP CHONG

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Convictional Cooperation and Confessional Commitments



Is emphasizing our cooperative work tantamount to downplaying our doctrinal commitments as Southern Baptists? Such a question poses an unappealing choice to be sure. These twin objectives are not mutually exclusive, of course, as is well attested by our own history and heritage.

In the Baptist tradition in general, and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in particular, confessions of faith historically have been promulgated for the purpose of articulating the essentials of biblical orthodoxy and denominational distinctives, but with the intention to bring as many as possible together under the tent of cooperation and mission, rather than the goal to exclude as many as possible. At our best, we are marked by a steadfastness to uphold our confessional nature as well as a spirit that desires to include as many brothers and sisters as possible in our cooperative mission to reach the world with the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, recent events may appear to call into question this longstanding approach. Southern Baptists face a critical choice at this juncture in our history: do we want to spend endless energy finding new ways to divide ourselves by seeking to disfellowship every local congregation that does not march in lockstep with every jot and tittle of the Baptist Faith and Message (BFM), or will we channel our best efforts into bringing together every church

whose faith and practice closely identifies with the BFM for the purpose of reaching our world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

During the 2022 SBC annual meeting, the Credentials Committee recommended the creation of a presidential task force for the purpose of reporting back “a recommendation providing clarity regarding the ‘office of pastor’ language in Article VI of the BFM. The committee proposal came in response to a motion referral calling into question Saddleback Church’s status as a cooperating SBC church around issues regarding female ministry staff members who had been given the title of “pastor.”

Some messengers appeared scandalized by the very notion of a task force to help clarify our doctrinal commitments, as if the mere recommendation spelled disaster for Southern Baptists. But recent precedent indicates otherwise. The 1994 SBC Annual contains the report of the Presidential Theological Study Committee, appointed by SBC President H. Edwin Young in 1992, and commended at the time by a cross-section of Southern Baptists. This group reported that it had sought “to clarify our historic Baptist commitment to Holy Scripture, the doctrine of God, the person and work of Jesus Christ, the nature and mission of the church, and biblical teaching on last things.” The committee’s report reaffirmed the 1963 BFM statement rather than recommending any revision or a new confession.

This June in Anaheim, however, arguments were made against the Credentials Committee task force recommendation by those of the opinion that the BFM language is clear enough: “pastor” (as used in the BFM) means “pastor” (as used by any local church), period. While I affirm the value of originalism and authorial intent when it comes to matters of interpretation regarding the meaning of particular words and phrases contained in our denominational doctrinal statement, a brief look back in time, courtesy of the Baptist Press (BP) archives, illustrates why some might have questions when applying that principle to our present dilemma.

In a May 23, 2000, BP article, various members of the BFM Study Committee that

authored the revisions referred to the proposed change to Article VI as relating only to the office of senior pastor. Interestingly, even the headline of this article explicitly references “senior pastor roles.” A subsequent June 14, 2000, BP article reported on a news conference held following the adoption of the revised BFM where “committee members cautioned the press against misunderstanding Baptist polity, noting that the convention’s vote is not binding upon local churches.” This article quoted the late Adrian P. Rogers, chair of the committee, who stated that the BFM “is not a creed” but “is a statement of what most of us believe,” including regarding what the BP article identified as “the new BFM’s stance against women serving as senior pastors.”

In fairness, the number of SBC congregations who in the year 2000 used the title of “pastor” for ministry staff members besides the primary leader of the church pales in comparison to that statistic today. For most of the 20th century, the typical Southern Baptist church had an ordained pastor who preached—who was “the pastor”—and any other staff were titled something other than “pastor”: e.g., “minister of education,” “song leader,” “children’s director.” Today, those same staff positions are more frequently titled “discipleship pastor,” “worship and arts pastor,” “next generation pastor”—sometimes without regard either to gender or ordination status.

Related, the expansion of plural elder leadership models in SBC church life, where some, but not necessarily all, of the “elders” are “pastors,” is a further complicating element. Most Southern Baptists have believed that pastor/elder/overseer are three scriptural functions, but only one biblical office. Dividing church leadership into categories of unpaid “lay elders” and paid “staff pastors” raises additional questions. In short, when it comes to church practice across the SBC landscape, the word “pastor” does not necessarily mean today what it meant in the year 2000. Just because a local church uses “pastor” in its vocabulary does not necessarily mean said

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NIRINTSOA MAMITIANA ('18, '22), WHO WAS AWARDED HIS DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY degree during the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Texas Baptist College May 6 commencement ceremony, first came to Fort Worth to live and refine his calling to plant a seminary in his native Madagascar. In September 2022, Mamitiana will launch and lead the Baptist Seminary of Fort Dauphin, Madagascar, to train pastors and church leaders. He is one of 245 graduates representing 26 states and 19 countries who made up the Spring 2022 graduating class.

Greenway highlights 'new day' on Seminary Hill in SBC report



ANAHEIM, CALIF.—HIGHLIGHTING GROWING ENROLLMENT IN THE SPANISH LANGUAGE DEGREE PROGRAMS, THE RELAUNCHED ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, PRIMACY OF THE MASTER OF DIVINITY DEGREE, and the recently released *The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture*, President Adam W. Greenway ('02) told messengers to the 2022 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting it is a "new day" at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary during his June 15 report.

"The primary purpose of Southwestern Seminary has always been and remains to provide theological education for men and women preparing for Christian ministry," Greenway said. "So whatever theological education you need, we'll help you find it. Whatever ministry experience it takes, we'll help you build it. And wherever God calls, we'll help you get there.

He added, "Whether you are just beginning your journey or have decades of experience, I promise you, we will do whatever it takes to help you live your calling for the glory of God and for the advancement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Completing the 2021-2022 academic year with over 600 students enrolled in the Spanish language degree programs, Greenway said this is a 30 percent "year over year" increase.

Noting the 41,000 living alumni, the largest alumni network of the six Southern Baptist seminaries, Greenway said the "revamped" Southwestern Alumni Association offers "pathways" for continuing education and opportunities for "connection" between the seminary and alumni.

Greenway said over the last three years there has been a "renewed commitment" to the Master of Divinity degree program as the primary degree program at the institution. He said the degree is the "gold standard for training pastors for a lifetime of faithful ministry service."

Referring to a "promise" made at the 2021 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Nashville, Greenway said, "we have a book about the Book," referring to the recently released *The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture*, which was published by Seminary Hill Press and edited by Greenway and David S. Dockery ('81), distinguished professor of theology and special consultant to the president.

Greenway noted the "refreshed spirit of service" from faculty and students through a "redoubled effort of life-on-life discipleship" throughout the campus. He observed this "spirit of Southwestern" is

not "new to Seminary Hill," but is built upon the "same commitment" that has characterized the institution since the seminary was chartered on March 14, 1908, under the "courageous and visionary leadership" of the founder and first president, B.H. Carroll.

Answering a question from a messenger who did not identify himself regarding his view on "balanced soteriological instruction covering the unity between Philippians 2:12-13," Greenway noted the "conversation" and "controversy" around Calvinism and Arminianism.

Observing that Southern Baptists have had individuals "who are very Calvinistic" and those "who would not identify as Calvinistic," Greenway said since Baptists first adopted the Baptist Faith and Message in 1925, "leadership has strived to be able to articulate a convention confessional consensus that does not attempt to take a hard and definite position on every issue that may be a contested and debatable issue amongst Southern Baptists."

He added the Baptist Faith and Message "does not take a definite position on the question of the extent of the atonement," observing he believes it is "intentional" that the confessional statement "does not take a hard and definite position on the question of the resistibility of grace and on other matters."

Greenway said Southwestern Seminary "must never become a Calvinist seminary, but we must never become an anti-Calvinist seminary either, and the reason for that is because we are a Southern Baptist seminary."

Since becoming president of Southwestern Seminary, Greenway said he has tried to "deliberately and intentionally" communicate "we are for you as Southern Baptists" noting that the seminary would have a "diversity" on the faculty, particularly in the School of Theology "that represents the big tent vision of the Baptist Faith and Message."

However, on "every area where the Baptist Faith and Message speaks with conviction and clarity, we will stand there unapologetically," Greenway said, while noting there would be "charity" given "where the confession of faith allows for liberty and latitude."

Greenway said the institution remains "faithful" to Carroll's original vision of confessional fidelity, the Great Commission, denominational cooperation, and "unwavering in our commitment to a high view of Scripture."—A.A.

Southwestern, TBC students see conversions during Crossover

RIVERSIDE, CALIF.— WITH A HUGE SMILE, JOY MATHIS* EXPLAINED, “I AM REALLY HAPPY THAT GOD ANSWERED MY PRAYER THAT KNOCKING [ON] THE DOOR REALLY WORKS.”

Mathis, a Master of Arts in Christian Education student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary who is from East Asia, was one of 34 Southwestern and Texas Baptist College students who participated in Crossover the week before the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Anaheim. During the June 6-10 week, Southwestern Seminary and TBC students knocked on 537 doors of homes, had 322 conversations, engaged in 237 Gospel conversations, and led 18 people to salvation in Christ, said Carl J. Bradford ('11, '18), assistant professor of evangelism at Southwestern Seminary and faculty leader of Southwestern and TBC's Crossover team.

During the week, Southwestern Seminary, Gateway Seminary, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary students gathered at California Baptist University in Riverside to learn how to share the Gospel and methods for beginning Gospel conversations from the evangelism professors from each of the seminaries. Each afternoon, following a large group teaching time in the mornings that included the students from all the seminaries, the students divided into groups by seminary to spend the afternoon partnering with local churches to canvas the community going door-to-door to share the Gospel and about events at the partner church. On Friday afternoon, the Southwestern students partnered with a church in nearby Huntington Beach to share the Gospel with beachgoers who were enjoying the sun and sand.

As he taught the students how to share the Gospel by going from house to house, Bradford told them to ask questions to connect with the people inside the homes. He showed them how to use the 3 Circles Gospel presentation, and how to phrase the Gospel into two sentences. Bradford also taught the details and courtesies of door-to-door evangelism, including the strength of the actual door knock, the sensitivity of infringing on personal space, and how to begin the conversation if the door was answered.

Though she had heard of the “method” of knocking on doors, Mathis was hesitant because she “didn't believe in knocking [on] the door.” As an international student, English is Mathis's second language, and, coupled with safety concerns that emerge from the “uncertainty and unknown” elements of door-to-door evangelism, she explained she began to focus on herself.

Nightly, the students debriefed with Bradford for a time of prayer and encouragement and to recount what they learned throughout the afternoon of knocking on doors. One evening, Mathis shared her “concerns” and “weaknesses” with her classmates and professor. They prayed for her, shared Scripture, gave their personal testimonies, and provided practical ideas and suggestions for how they “overcome their weakness.”

That evening Mathis prayed and told the Lord, “I'm willing to do this and I am here. I'm certain this is Your will. I want to do it, but I don't know if I'm able to do it. I know other students can do it, but I'm not sure



if it's me. I'm not sure if it's my method.” She asked God to show her if knocking on doors “really works” and asked for His help.

The following afternoon, along with her fellow Southwestern students, Geur Chang, a Master of Divinity in evangelism and missions student, and Maranda Brown, a Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling student, a “very excited” Mathis set out to knock on doors.

At the first house, Mathis knocked on the door with no response. After knocking a second time, a man named Eddie answered the door. Brown shared information about an upcoming event at the local church and the trio asked if they could pray for him about anything. He explained his dad had passed away a few days prior to their visit.

Mathis said “in that moment” she felt as though “God prepared us for him and also prepared him for us.” Each of the students shared how they had experienced the loss of a loved one, which Mathis said “built up a connection” with Eddie.


Chang explained Eddie indicated he had been reading Scripture and “praying to God about decisions in life.” In a “new conversation,” Mathis said they began to ask Eddie questions to learn if he knew “who God really is” and if he had ever been to church, which led to an opportunity to share the Gospel. Brown began sharing the 3 Circles evangelism presentation with him and, by observing his behavior, Mathis said they could tell Eddie wanted to know more. After talking with him more, Brown asked if Eddie wanted “to accept Jesus as his Lord” to which he answered “yes.”

Chang pulled out his Bible to begin showing Eddie passages of Scripture and to confirm he truly understood the Gospel before praying to receive Christ. After sensing Eddie understood the decision he was about to make, the group led him in praying to ask Jesus to be his Lord and Savior.

Mathis said the entire week of Crossover “refreshed” her understanding of the Gospel and allowed her “to see the lostness” of people around her.

“When we open the door, it's real people standing there,” Mathis explained. “That just really touched my heart because it's not numbers, it's actual people and it's a soul that we need to save.”

**Name changed for security reasons. —A.A.*



Greenway challenges Pastors' Conference attendees to 'speak truth in love' based on authority, sufficiency of Scripture

ANAHEIM, CALIF.—THE AUTHORITY AND SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE CHALLENGE BELIEVERS TO SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE EVEN WHEN IT IS PAINFUL, Adam W. Greenway ('02), president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Texas Baptist College, told attendees of the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference in Anaheim, California, during a June 13 address.

"If we really are committed to the authority and the sufficiency of the Bible as the Word of God, then we must be a people who are willing to confront not just the truth we want to believe, but the truth as it actually is," Greenway said, with his comments greeted by applause. "And that can be a disconcerting reality, especially in a moment where we have tended to mythologize elements of our past, where we have tended to aggrandize certain individuals. We have these confrontations with the truth."

Under the theme, "We Proclaim Him," the 2022 SBC Pastors' Conference was held June 12-13 as a pre-conference to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 14-15. Organized by Pastors' Conference President Matt Henslee ('17, '21), executive director of the Collin Baptist Association in Collin County, Texas, the Fort Worth institution was the platinum premier sponsor of the conference. Attendees were led in worship by Matt Boswell, a hymn writer and found pastor of The Trails Church in Celina, Texas, and the Cowden Hall Band, the graduate house band of the School of Church Music and Worship of Southwestern Seminary and TBC.

Recognizing the historical importance of the Bible to the Pastors' Conference, Greenway introduced the most recent release of Seminary Hill Press, *The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture*. Edited by Green-

way and David S. Dockery ('81), distinguished professor of theology and special consultant to the president at Southwestern Seminary, the book is a collection of essays by 15 faculty members from Southwestern Seminary and TBC. A high view of Scripture is part of Greenway's "big tent" vision for Southwestern Seminary

"We stand boldly upon where Southern Baptists have stood concerning the inspiration, infallibility, inerrancy, authority, sufficiency, and total trustworthiness of the Bible as the written Word of God that testifies infallibly and inerrantly to the living Word of God Jesus the Christ, who is always the hero of all that we do as the people of God," Greenway said.

Speaking the "truth in love," Greenway explained, is because of a "commitment" to the Word of God.

Greenway noted the "painful" and "disconcerting reality" of speaking the truth in love "when the spotlight and the searchlight of the truth gets turned back on us" and because of taking "great solace and comfort" in the "things of this world," including individuals, personalities, platforms, and programs.

Reading from Paul's admonishment to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 to love, Greenway noted in verse 6 Paul wrote he "rejoiced in the truth," but did not "qualify" the type of truth in which he rejoiced.

Greenway encouraged attendees to "do what Paul calls us to do: we can rejoice even in the painful truth" noting that Scripture records "before revival comes, judgment has to come" and "it has to come with the people of God." —A.A.

Southwestern Seminary alumni hear from newly elected SBC president, honor Iorg, Lee

ANAHEIM, CALIF.— FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR, THE NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION, who is an alumnus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, addressed the gathering of the seminary's Alumni and Friends Luncheon in Anaheim, June 15.

Bart Barber ('96, '06), pastor of First Baptist Church of Farmersville, Texas, challenged his fellow Southwesterners to proudly proclaim their Southwestern Seminary heritage by joining the recently relaunched Southwestern Alumni Association. Barber served as trustee of the seminary from 2009 to 2019.

Following Barber's comments, President Adam W. Greenway ('02) called on Jared Wellman, newly elected chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, a Doctor of Philosophy student at Southwestern and pastor of Tate Springs Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, to pray over Barber and his upcoming term.

Greenway also recognized Daniel Dickard ('14), the newly elected president of the SBC Pastors' Conference and senior pastor of Friendly Avenue Baptist Church in Greensboro, North Carolina, among other leaders present for the gathering.

Announced in May as the 2022 Southwestern Seminary Distinguished Alumni, Gateway Seminary President Jeff P. Iorg and retired Rear Admiral Phillip "Endel" Lee Jr., received their awards at the luncheon.

Jeff P. Iorg

Iorg, a 1990 Doctor of Ministry graduate from Southwestern, has served as president of Gateway Seminary in Ontario, California, since 2004. From 1995 to 2004, he was executive director-treasurer of the Northwest Baptist Convention and was the founding pastor of Greater Gresham Baptist Church in Gresham, Oregon. In 1990, he began teaching at the Pacific Northwest campus of what was then known as Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.



Photo by Doug Rogers/The Alabama Baptist

Born in Forsyth, Georgia, Iorg was raised in Abilene, Texas, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hardin-Simmons University in 1980, and a Master of Divinity degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (1984). The author of *The Character of Leadership*, *The Painful Side of Leadership*, *Seasons of a Leader's Life*, and *Shadow Christians*, Iorg teaches courses in leadership, preaching, and church ministry at Gateway Seminary.

Phillip "Endel" Lee Jr.

Lee ('90, '98, '00), a native of Tanner Williams, Alabama, served as the deputy chief of chaplains for reserve matters in the United States Navy until his retirement in September 2020.

After serving 11 years in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve in both enlisted and officer capacities, Lee was commissioned as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy Reserve in 1993.

Following the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, Lee was deployed to New York City and served in Iraq. When he returned to the U.S. in 2005, Lee worked for a year and a half with the U.S. Coast Guard following Hurricane Katrina. He also served as a professor of preach-



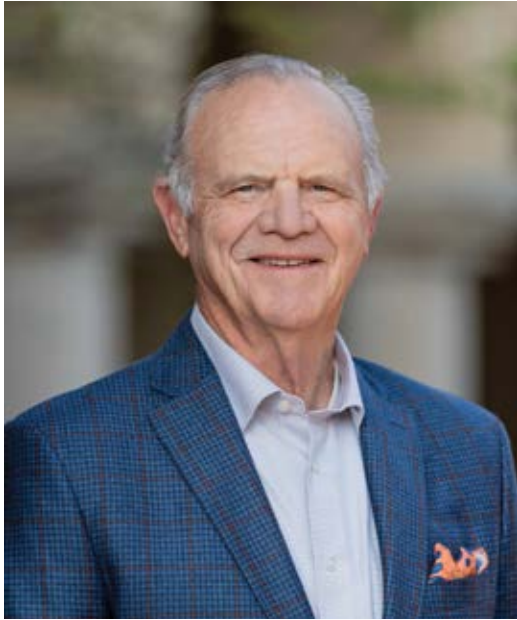
ing and pastoral work at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary during his time of military service.

In his remarks to the luncheon attendees, Greenway encouraged the alumni present to reconnect to their alma mater through the Southwestern Alumni Association.

"I want you to know Southwestern Seminary is for you and Southwestern Seminary is for our convention," Greenway said. "Southwestern Seminary wants to be a place where we can come together around the essentials" and "where Southern Baptists have said that we will stand with clarity and conviction, but also a place where on the issues where Southern Baptists have said that there is a liberty and a latitude that we grant that freedom and grace."

Greenway said he prays daily "the Lord would find me faithful in the charge that has been given to me," noting he prays the same for Southwestern Seminary.

"Our assignment has been clear since the beginning: to provide theological education for God called men and women preparing for Christian ministry, a more faithful ministry that fulfills the Great Commandment and the Great Commission that glorifies God and advances the kingdom," Greenway said. "That's who we are. That's what we're about. And it is my prayer and our prayer that our King will lead us on, all the way until Christ comes again."—*T.M.*



Hemphill rejoins Southwestern Seminary faculty, leads center

KENNETH S. HEMPHILL, SEVENTH PRESIDENT OF SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, has been appointed distinguished fellow of the Hemphill Center for Church Revitalization and senior professor of church revitalization in the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions, President Adam W. Greenway ('02) announced April 14.

"It is very special to me to be able to bring my president, Dr. Hemphill, back home to the Dome to serve in strategic roles that will significantly contribute to Southwestern Seminary," said Greenway. "Dr. Hemphill has few peers in the Southern Baptist Convention in the areas of church revitalization and growth. I am delighted that he has agreed to give leadership to the vital work of the center that bears his name and will also bring his lifetime of experience and knowledge to our Fish School classrooms. This is a great day for Southwestern Seminary."

Hemphill said he is "humbled and honored" by the invitation to serve again at the seminary that he led previously as president, 1994-2003.

"The Lord has used my varied life experiences to prepare me for this unique opportunity," he said. "My passion for the local church was birthed in me by my pastor/father. The privilege of serving my Southern Baptist family in numerous capacities has provided a wealth of information that I long to share with the next generation."

Hemphill praised Southwestern's "world-class faculty," known both for academic excellence and practical ministry experience in churches. "Southwestern is uniquely prepared to assist pastors and churches with the process of revitalization. The Book of Acts makes it clear that the local church is at the heart of God's plan to expand His kingdom until His return. This appointment will allow me to play a small part in assisting churches to effectively fulfill the Great Commission," he said.

He requested prayer "as I begin this new venture in ministry."

Established in 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 of the North American Mission Board.

During its October 2021 meeting, the board of trustees named the center in honor of Hemphill. —*Staff*

Southwestern students place first in National Association of Teachers of Singing spring competition

FOUR SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC AND WORSHIP STUDENTS were announced April 9 as the top winners in five categories of the National Association of Teachers of Singing Student Auditions for the organization's Dallas-Fort Worth chapter.

"To see four of our students earn first place honors in this very competitive region of the National Association of Teachers of Singing is a testimony to the quality of voice instruction offered by our SCMW faculty and the wonderful dedication of our student singers," said Joseph R. Crider, dean of the school. "In a day when churches are desperate for well-trained, theologically-minded artists and musicians, we are grateful and humbled that pastors and search committees are again looking to Southwestern's School of Church Music and Worship to find God-called men and women who can faithfully serve in the area of music and worship ministry."

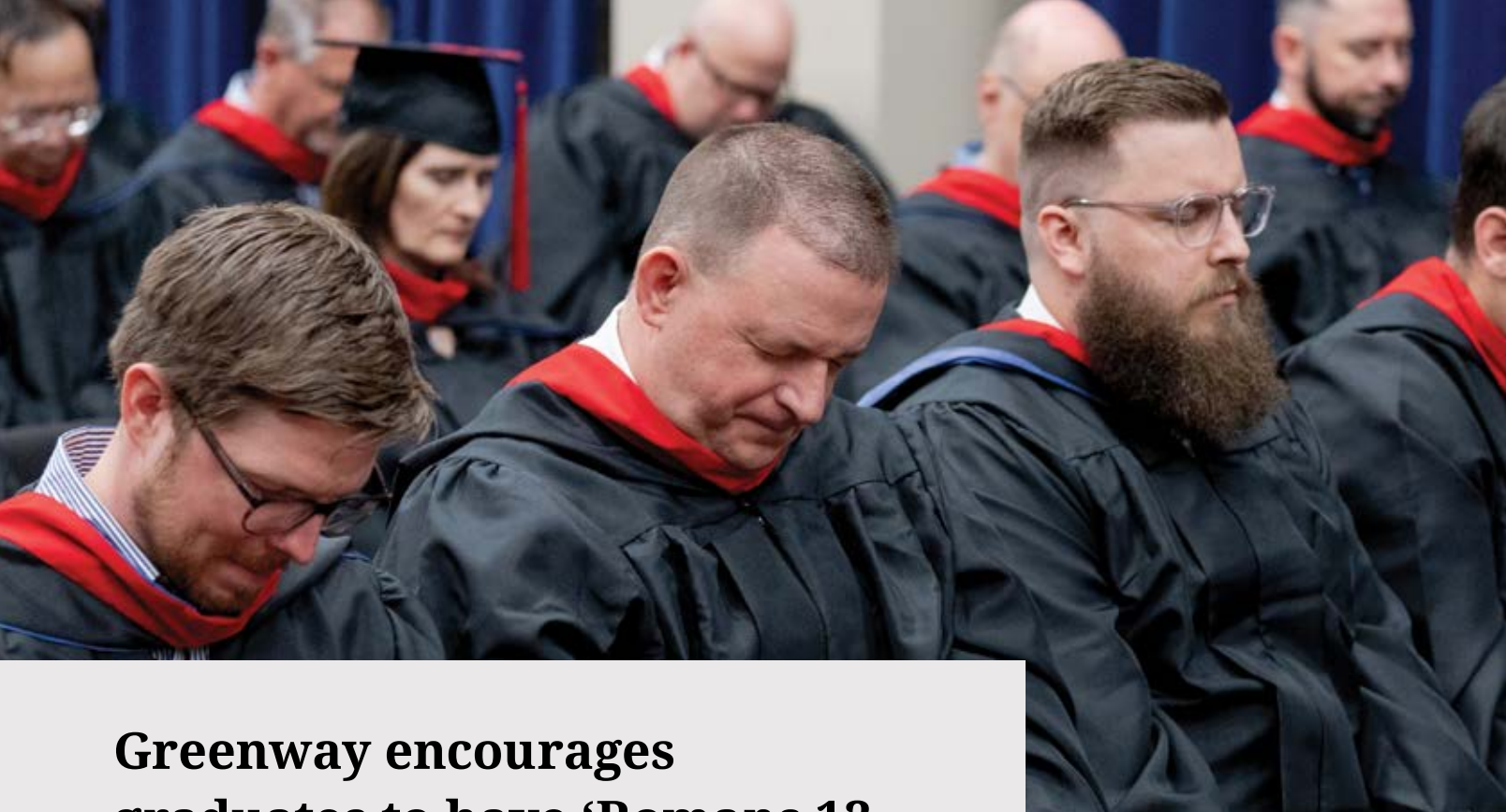
The NATS Student Auditions are a performance opportunity for middle school, high school, and college students, as well as adults, to compete in three categories while receiving feedback from adjudicated voice teachers who are members of the organization. The classical division is open for competition for all participants, while the musical theatre and commercial music divisions are limited to high school and college students, and adults. Within each of the divisions, participants are divided by voice type and length of study.

Sunny Kyeongseon Choi, a soprano Doctor of Musical Arts performance and pedagogy student, placed first in the adult treble voice classical division 11.

Lachuné Boyd, a soprano Master of Music in Church Music voice performance student, placed first in the adult treble voice category in the musical theatre division 11 and commercial division 11.

Austin "Luke" Hannah, a tenor Master of Music in Church Music voice performance and pedagogy student, placed first in the lower advanced tenor, baritone, bass (TBB) voice classical division.

Jordan Locke, a tenor in the Master of Music in Worship Leadership degree program, placed first in the adult TBB voice category in the musical theater division 12. Locke was also awarded the Anne Weeks Jackson Outstanding Vocalist, the DFW area chapter award in musical theater.—*A.A.*



Greenway encourages graduates to have ‘Romans 12 ministry’ for ‘Romans 1 world’

AMERICA'S CULTURAL SITUATION THAT IS WELL SUMMARIZED IN ROMANS 1 SHOULD BE ANSWERED BY MINISTERS WITH A ROMANS 12 MINISTRY, President Adam W. Greenway ('02) said in his address to graduates of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Texas Baptist College during its May 6 commencement ceremony.

"You are being sent out into what many have regarded, and rightfully I think, as a Romans 1 world," Greenway said to the spring 2022 graduates. "Where everything that is wrong is being declared to be right and what is right is declared to be wrong. ...You look at what's happening in terms of our broader socio, cultural, political agenda—it is a Romans 1 agenda."

"May I submit to you, the only answer to meet a Romans 1 agenda is a Romans 12 ministry?" Greenway continued, noting a Romans 12 ministry includes living faithfully and fruitfully as followers of Christ and stewards of what has been entrusted.

The spring 2022 certificate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral graduates included 245 men and women from Southwestern Seminary's four graduate schools and TBC who represent 26 states and 19 countries, including the United States.

Before addressing the graduates, Greenway presented Mark E. Taylor ('01), associate dean of the School of Theology and professor of New Testament, with the inaugural David S. and Lanese Dockery Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence. The award, established by Distinguished Professor of Theology David S. Dockery ('81) and his wife, honors the faculty member who exhibits faithful and effective teaching in the classroom and shows genuine demonstration of personal care

and concern for spiritual development of students in and outside of the classroom.

In a "pastoral exhortation" from Romans 12, Greenway noted theological education has been made accessible and affordable for many due to online availability, but he warned graduates to guard against the "natural temptations that come from the pursuit of higher education."

Recognizing obtaining higher education can lead to success by the world's standards, Greenway noted in Romans 12 Paul gave "more attention to matters related to character than matters related to competency, capability, or any other kind of human achievement."

Greenway drew the attention of the audience to verse 3, where Paul told the believers in Rome not to think more highly of themselves than they ought.

Greenway observed the "imagery" of the body used in Romans 12, recognizing Paul challenged against thinking some gifts were better than others.

"God in His economy gives each of us gifts, talents, and what He expects from us," Greenway said. "How dare I put the standard that God has placed upon my life in terms of the calling and the way He wants me to use my gifts and to say, 'If you don't do it exactly the way I do, then there's something deficient or wrong in you.'"

Greenway reminded the graduates that as stewards of what God has "entrusted" to them, one day they will stand before God and give an account of themselves for what they did based upon God's standards.

"You are those to whom much has been given," Greenway reminded the graduates. "You are those to whom much is required." —A.A.

Dockery Center to focus on global evangelical theology amid a changing culture

THE NEWLY RENAMED DOCKERY CENTER FOR GLOBAL EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY AT SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY seeks to recover the “best of evangelical theology, a renewed commitment to historic orthodoxy, and a reclaiming of the best of Christian tradition,” President Adam W. Greenway ('02) told the seminary's board of trustees during its April 4-5 spring meeting.

“Southwestern Seminary has become a majority non-Anglo institution with more than half of our student body something other than people who look like me,” Greenway told trustees, who voted unanimously to rename the center in honor of David S. Dockery ('81). “We truly are one step closer to becoming a Revelation 7:9 seminary – a seminary that looks like what eternity is going to look like with leaders from every tribe, every tongue, every nation, every people group who are worshipping before the throne of the one true and living God. Southwestern Seminary is truly becoming a global evangelical seminary.”

Dockery, distinguished professor of theology and special consultant to the president at Southwestern Seminary, served as the interim provost of the Fort Worth institution from December 2020 to February 2022. Editor of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, the oldest theological journal continuously published by a Southern Baptist seminary, Dockery will serve as the Dockery Center's inaugural director.

“When I heard the news that the Center for Global Evangelical Theology, which had been announced this past November, would be named in my honor, I was incredibly surprised,” Dockery said. “I am genuinely humbled by the decision. Moreover, I am truly thankful to the board of trustees, to President Greenway, and to all who were involved in the naming of the center.”



The Dockery Center's work will be formed by “convictional commitments to the life of the church and great tradition of historic Christian orthodoxy,” Dockery explained. “In an age of rising secularism and advancing pluralism, the center will not be satisfied to declare theological neutrality” and will follow “paths proposed by James Leo Garrett Jr.” and “emphasize commitments to denominational evangelicalism, stressing the importance of being Baptist evangelicals and evangelical Baptists.” Garrett, a longtime distinguished professor of theology at Southwestern Seminary who also taught at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Baylor University, was widely influential, especially in the areas of Baptist theology and engagement with other Christian denominations.

The Dockery Center seeks to recover “the best of evangelical theology, a renewed commitment to historic orthodoxy, and a reclaiming of the best of Christian tradition.”

— GREENWAY ('02)

Greenway named among top 400 Fort Worth influencers

For the third consecutive year, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Adam W. Greenway ('02) has been named one of the 400 most influential people in Fort Worth by *Fort Worth, Inc. Magazine*.

Greenway joins 11 other religious leaders who were named among the 400 high influencers in the Fort Worth region. The list, in its fifth year of publication, was released in the summer 2022 issue of the magazine.

The increase in secularization, a “growing interest in a vast and amorphous spirituality,” a new atheism, and the rise of the “nones,” are being “shaped by and within a postmodern culture” within the 21st century, Dockery said. This “rapid culture change” has produced “alternative trajectories” to the church that are “not unlike those offered in the early decades of the early 20th century” which necessitates a trajectory “that is faithful to Scripture and respectful to the best of our history, and that at the same time is applicable for the global future of the evangelical movement.” —A.A.



'Southwestern Nights' brings the 'Dome' to alumni in Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma

IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGHTS EVENTS "BRINGING THE DOME" TO HOUSTON, LITTLE ROCK, OKLAHOMA CITY, AND DALLAS IN APRIL AND MAY, Southwestern Seminary alumni, friends, and supporters heard from President Adam W. Greenway ('02), seminary professors, and local church pastors who graduated from the Fort Worth institution about how God is using what is learned on Seminary Hill to reach Texas and the nations with the Gospel of Christ.

The first event, held April 8 at Houston's First Baptist Church, featured a panel discussion with two Southwestern Seminary alumni, Chris Osborne ('77, '19), professor of preaching and pastoral ministry, and Matt Carter ('06), pastor of Sagemont Church in Houston.

"What we have done since 1908 is to provide theological education for men and women preparing for Christian ministry," Greenway said. No institution "has seen more people called out for more diverse kinds of Gospel ministry and mission across Texas and around the world than Southwestern Seminary."

To the gathering that included Southwestern Seminary alumni from across the Greater Houston Metro-area, Greenway noted the Fort

Worth-based seminary has "more living alumni than any other SBC seminary."

"Most of us alumni are going to do tours of duties here in Texas," Greenway said. "If we can reach Texas, we can reach America and the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And at the end of the day, we exist to push back the darkness of lostness that the light of the Gospel of Jesus might shine for all people everywhere. That's the heartbeat and burden."

Noting that seminary graduates need a theological education that will sustain them "for the long haul," Greenway said his "prayer" and "desire at Southwestern Seminary is that we will again be that kind of seminary that is more holistically and comprehensively training as many as the Lord our God will call as many as the churches will deploy in Kingdom service."

- GREENWAY ('02)

"I want you to know that there's a home for you under that iconic, majestic 'Dome' of Southwestern Seminary," Greenway said. "We want you to know Southwestern Seminary is for you, and for your churches and for your ministries." —A.A.

"... we will again be that kind of seminary that is more holistically and comprehensively training as many as the Lord our God will call as many as the churches will deploy in Kingdom service."

Southwestern Seminary releases list of 14 individuals connected to sexual abuse allegations

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND PRESIDENT OF SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY JOINTLY PUBLISHED ON JUNE 1 AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SEMINARY COMMUNITY that includes a list of 14 individuals who were previously students and/or staff of the institution and who appear on a larger list of persons arrested or credibly charged with sexual abuse or sexual assault maintained by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, which was previously unknown until its release on May 26 following an independent investigation.

All the individuals on the list released June 1 were students and/or employees before 2018.

"Immediately after" the SBC Executive Committee list with more than 700 names was released, seminary leadership reviewed the information to "determine whether there were individuals on the list who have any current or past relationship with the institution," wrote Board Chair Danny Roberts and President Adam W. Greenway in the open letter, which has been emailed to all members of the seminary community and posted on the seminary's website.

"No current students or employees appear on the list," they noted.

"The reason Southwestern Seminary leadership felt it was important to provide this information to our institutional community is because we want to make sure you have the resources available to report any incident of sexual abuse or sexual assault," said Roberts and Greenway.

"We want to assure you that we are committed to doing everything within our power to ensure the safety of all members, past and present, of the Southwestern Seminary community," they said.

The open letter and list are available at swbts.edu/abuseletter.

Land Center announces inaugural advisory board

NINETEEN THOUGHT LEADERS AND CULTURAL INFLUENCERS WERE NAMED TO THE INAUGURAL ADVISORY BOARD of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, President Adam W. Greenway ('02) announced April 21.

"We are grateful that these leaders who are engaging the culture in so many important ways have agreed to work with us as the founding members of the Land Center advisory board," Greenway said. "We look forward to the insights they will bring to the table as the Land Center helps shape the conversation about significant ethical issues among Southern Baptists, other evangelicals, and the wider culture and educates our students how they can make a difference for our Lord."

The Land Center advisory board members who serve in pastoral ministry, academia, public policy advocacy, missions, journalism, and other fields will lend their voices to the work of the center and help



Barbara Walker reflects on 40 years of service at Southwestern

AFTER FOUR DECADES OF SERVICE ON SEMINARY HILL, BARBARA WALKER OFFICIALLY RETIRED AT THE END OF JULY. In 1982, Walker and her husband, Kevin ('86), came to Southwestern Seminary from New Mexico, as she says, "a team." Walker applied for a campus job but had no idea that she would still be on staff 40 years later.

Walker served in the business office and as assistant to three faculty members until 1988, when Southwestern Seminary's sixth president, Russell Dilday ('55, '60, '73, '76) hired her in the president's office as a secretary. Within a couple of years, she was promoted to executive assistant to Dilday. She stayed in her position during the nine years Kenneth S. Hemphill served as the seminary's seventh president. After serving with Hemphill from 1994 to 2003, Walker transitioned to working in the library from 2003 to 2019, loving her time there as well.

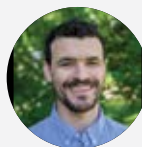
When the ninth Southwestern president, Adam W. Greenway ('02), came, "he brought me back [to the president's office]. I'm now thrilled to say that I spent the majority of my time in the president's office."

Walker said Greenway's arrival was not only a blessing for the seminary, but also for her personally as she was able to make a full circle and come back to work in the president's office.

"Barbara Walker is one of the real gems in Southern Baptists' 'Crown Jewel' seminary," Greenway said. "She is the epitome of the many servants of this institution whose labors are often unnoticed by most but without whom our seminary would function far less well." —*T.M.*

equip the next generation of Christians engage in the public square. "We are honored to have the support of such an impressive and diverse group of Christian leaders for the vital work of the Land Center," said Daniel M. Darling, director of the Land Center and assistant professor of faith and culture at Texas Baptist College. "As we work to engage in important conversations, equip the church, and educate the next generation, their voices will offer valuable counsel and ideas in helping us shape the future of our work." —*A.A.*

New faculty and staff welcomed to Seminary Hill



ATKINSON



BROWN



COPELAND



SEARS

PRESIDENT ADAM W. GREENWAY ('02) announced in June his appointment of four new faculty members at Texas Baptist College, the School of Church Music and Worship, and the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions. He also announced the appointments of an associate provost for innovative learning, an interim dean for the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries, and administrators for student services, the writing center, library services, and enrollment services.

MICHAEL S. WILDER

Associate Provost for Innovative Learning

Wilder has served as the dean of the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries and professor of educational ministries at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary since 2019. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Christian education and leadership studies from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

N. CHRIS SHIRLEY

Interim Dean of the Terry School of Educational Ministries

Shirley has served as associate dean of the Terry School and professor of educational ministries since 2019, and was named to the Jack D. and Barbara Terry Chair of Religious Education upon action of Southwestern Seminary's Board of Trustees at their spring meeting. He earned a Doctor of Philosophy in foundations of education (2002) and Master of Arts in Religious Education (1994) from Southwestern Seminary.

CHANDLER M. SNYDER

Associate Vice President for Student Services

Snyder has served with the International Mission Board since 2012 and has been the affinity trainer for Sub-Saharan Africa since 2020. Snyder is currently a Doctor of Philosophy student at Southwestern Seminary.

AMY L. CRIDER

Director of the Center for Writing Excellence

Crider has served as associate professor of foundations of education at Southwestern Seminary since 2020. Crider earned a Bachelor of Arts in professional writing and a Master of Arts in English with a concentration in composition and rhetoric, both from Miami University in Ohio. She also earned a Doctor of Education from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Crider has served on the faculty of Boyce College and as the Writing Center Coordinator at Southern Seminary.

ANDREW D. STREETT

Director of Libraries and Information Services

Streett has served as associate professor of biblical studies at Southwestern Seminary since 2017. He has served as director of library services at Criswell College in Dallas (2004-2010) and library director at Redeemer Seminary in Austin, Texas (2012-2016) and holds a Doctor of Philosophy in theology and religious studies from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

J. CRAIG KUBIC

Senior Digital Resources Librarian

Kubic has served as dean of libraries at Southwestern Seminary and TBC since 2015. He has previously served as the director of libraries at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (1988-2014) and acting library director at what is now known as Gateway Seminary (1987-1988). Kubic earned a Doctor of Educational Ministries from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2006.

ARMANDO HERNANDEZ

Director of Enrollment Services

Hernandez has served as a student success specialist at Southwestern Seminary since May 2021. He is currently a Doctor of Philosophy student at Southwestern.

JONATHAN ATKINSON

Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, Texas Baptist College

Atkinson most recently served as an adjunct lecturer in Old Testament at Union School of Theology in Bridgend, Wales. Since 2016, he has served as the pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Old Testament (2022) from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

MARC W. BROWN

Assistant Professor of Church Music and Worship

Brown most recently served as an adjunct professor in the Department of Biblical Worship and as director of the Doxology vocal ensemble at Southern Seminary, where since 2015 he has taught courses in conducting, vocal health, vocal skills, and worship band techniques. In 2014 he earned a Doctor of Worship Studies degree from Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies. He is a current Doctor of Philosophy candidate at Southern Seminary.

MICHAEL L. COPELAND

Assistant Professor of Missions and

Associate Director of the World Missions Center

Copeland has served a cumulative 12 years with the International Mission Board in Central and East Asian contexts. Copeland earned a Doctor of Philosophy in World Christian Studies from Southwestern Seminary in 2018.

P. CHASE SEARS

Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, Texas Baptist College

Since 2015, Sears has served as the lead pastor of Oak Park Baptist Church in Jeffersonville, Indiana. He has also previously served on church staffs in Kentucky and California. Sears earned a Doctor of Philosophy in New Testament from Southern Seminary in 2019.

—A.A.

Seminary Hill Bookstore

Your source for books, shirts, collectibles, and other merchandise
from Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College.

 SEMINARYHILLBOOKSTORE.COM



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

Sunmin Song

Bachelor of Music in Worship Studies student
Texas Baptist College

"I CHOSE TBC BECAUSE OF ITS BIBLICAL TEACHING IN ALL DEGREES.

Particularly in a musical background, emotions can get the better of us in worship. But all the courses I have been through have yet to put an emphasis on any emotional aspect. Instead, I have learned that every part of worship should point back to Scripture. The most important thing I have learned at TBC so far is Scripture-guided worship. Our worship should always be framed by God's Word first because once we see and understand God, we are then able to correctly respond to Him in worship."



STUDENT



FACULTY

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

J. STEPHEN YUILLE

Professor of Pastoral Theology and Spiritual Formation

"I WAS RECENTLY ASKED WHY I'M EXCITED ABOUT TEACHING AT SWBTS. Many reasons come to mind, but perhaps the most important is that it affords me the opportunity to teach, research, and write on subjects that have been so foundational to my own spiritual growth. I'm looking forward to delving into God's Word with students and seeing how the Lord uses it to equip men and women for life and ministry across the United States and around the world."



ALUM

Del Traffanstedt

Pastor/Church planter, Cross Community Church, Houston, Texas; Master of Divinity, 2019

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

“MY TIME AT SOUTHWESTERN WAS FORMATIVE FOR MY MINISTRY, and it continues to be. During my student years, I sat under professors who were not just

academics but practitioners. Men like Dr. Matt Queen gave me a biblical foundation for preaching and evangelism and then personally showed me how to put what I learned into practice. So many other schools are strong on theory but watching my SWBTS professors go door-to-door to share the Gospel and serve local churches was inspiring. The instructors at Southwestern don't just teach it; they live it. With the addition of men like Dr. Chris Osborne, a Texas legend, the field, and the academy will stay closely connected. I am so thankful for my time on the hill!”

“I look forward to being amazed by Southwestern’s future contributions in spreading God’s Word around the world.”



FACULTY

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

SHANE W. PARKER

Director of the Doctor of Educational Ministry Program, Associate Professor of Leadership and Educational Ministries

“WHAT A DISTINCT HONOR IT IS TO TEACH AT SOUTHWESTERN. With a resolute commitment to premier academic standards, tethered to sound doctrine and practice in ministry, our shared sense of institutional mission is supporting the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Both inside and outside the classroom, it is a joy to teach and mentor students toward godly character and demonstrated competency, for God’s glory in the church and in Christ.”

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

J.C. Humphrey

Donor

DONOR

“MY WIFE, KAY, AND I FOUND GREAT PLEASURE IN SUPPORTING SOUTHWESTERN. Where else could you find an institution dedicated to training men and women in the greatest of all activities – winning the lost to Christ around the world? We attended our first Advisory Council meeting in Houston in 2007. Dr. Jack Terry talked about the seminary’s mission. We discovered how we could make an impact around the world for Christ, and we made our first gift that day. Dr. Terry shared with us the activities at the Houston (Harvard) campus, and we decided to be actively involved. We both enjoyed the opportunities to contribute to projects on the Ft. Worth and Houston campuses. And Kay found great pleasure in working with the women’s ministries. I look forward to being amazed by Southwestern’s future contributions in spreading God’s Word around the world.”





ALUM

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

C. Ben Mitchell

Retired Graves Chair of Moral Philosophy, Union University, Master of Divinity, 1983

“NOTHING COULD COMPARE WITH MY THREE YEARS AT SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY. The faculty I had were second to none and spent as much or more time with students outside of class as they did inside the classroom. It wouldn’t have been unusual for Dr. Russ Bush to stay after class to answer questions for an hour or for Dr. James Leo Garrett to invite you to his office to talk about Baptist historical theology. Dr. Curtis Vaughan often taught Romans and 1 Corinthians in tears because he was so affected by the theology of St. Paul. And so were we students through him. Preaching and serving in churches gave us an outlet for what we were learning in the classroom and we learned ministry skills in the crucible of the local church.”

EMMANUEL ESCARENO

Current Ph.D. student, Master of Theology, 2019

“I AM IN THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN THE ROY J. FISH SCHOOL OF EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS. My major is evangelism and my minor is in missions. I was born and raised in San Jose, California, to Mexican parents. I was born into a Christian family and gave my life to the Lord and was called to the ministry at 15. I am number four of six siblings. The most important thing that I have learned at SWBTS is in being

obedient to the Great Commission. In my first semester, I was challenged by a colleague asking if I shared my faith—when I first arrived at seminary I was not active in regularly sharing my faith with others. We went to a local university campus and started evangelizing. I realized that I need to memorize Scripture, organize a concise full Gospel message, and be intentional in sharing about Jesus.”



DONOR

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

WAYNE MCDONALD

Donor

WAYNE AND HIS LATE WIFE, MARY LOUISE, HAVE FAITHFULLY GIVEN to Southwestern Seminary for many decades.

“One of the greatest joys in our lives has been to honor Jesus by investing in the education and training of young evangelical oriented Christians. Our goal has been to honor Jesus’s commandment in fulfilling the Great Commission. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few!”

“The most important thing that I have learned at SWBTS is in being obedient to the Great Commission.”



STUDENT

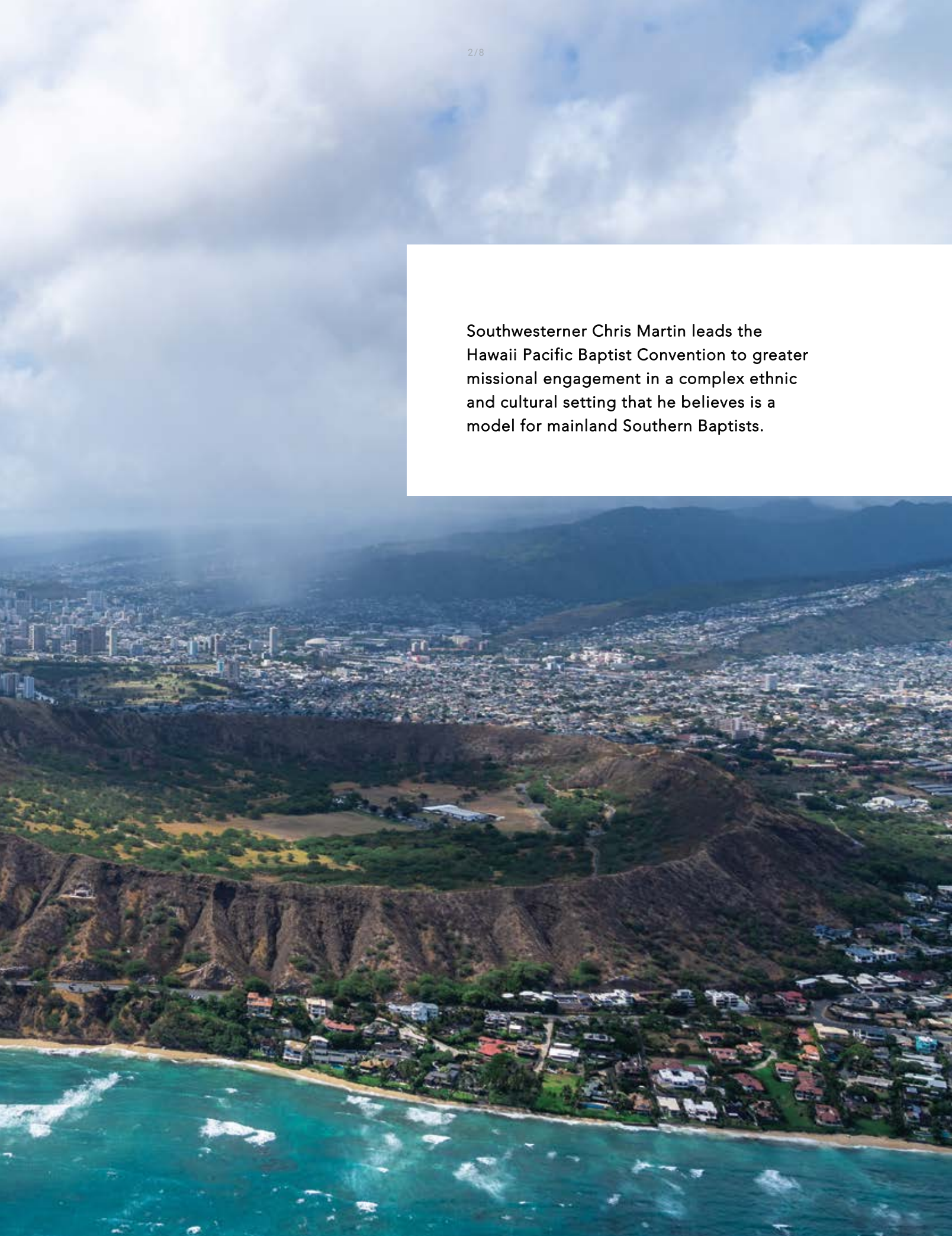
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Ministry in **Paradise**

**STORY BY JAMES A. SMITH SR.
PHOTOS BY CHINSOP CHONG**



Southwesterner Chris Martin leads the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention to greater missional engagement in a complex ethnic and cultural setting that he believes is a model for mainland Southern Baptists.





Sitting on a surfboard in the Pacific Ocean having a Gospel conversation with a new friend, talking theology with a fellow pastor, or praying while waiting for the next wave were common experiences for Chris Martin ('20) while he pastored on the Hawaiian island of Maui.

"I can't tell you how many times sitting out on the board I thought to myself, 'You know, this is probably one of the most unbelievable prayer meetings I've ever had in my life.' It was one of the most awesome disciple-making settings," says Martin.

"You sit out there and talk. Sure enough, here comes the wave. You know the rule: stop the conversation and you pick it up after you paddle back out."

"Yeah, surfing is good."

It's easy to see why many pastors considering it from afar may long for ministry on the Hawaiian Islands.

"Sometimes people think, 'Yeah, I could do that.' And I know they mean well. 'Surfing for Jesus.' I've heard that many times, as well, and that's okay."

For Martin, who has ministered in Hawaii since 2005, first as a pastor on Maui, and since 2014 as executive director of the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention, ministry in paradise is much more than a tropical climate, outdoor activities, and vacation setting every day of the year. The "ugly side of paradise" is fraught with homelessness, the high cost of living, human trafficking, and other social, moral, and economic effects of a vacation destination visited by millions every year.

And the varied cultural and ethnic settings on the eight islands of Hawaii are multiplied by the diversity found throughout the rest of the territories crossing the great expanses of the Pacific Ocean that are represented by the churches cooperating through the



Homelessness on the Hawaiian Islands spawning “tent cities” like this one is one of the many ministry challenges.



Hawaii has rich cultural diversity that reflects Asia and the South Pacific.

Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention.

Martin explains the congregations in Hawaii, plus those in the South Pacific and parts of Asia, encompass nearly 12 million square miles. “Although 99 percent of it is water, we still cover a huge territory,” he says. By comparison, the continental United States covers 3.8 million square miles. Also vast is the population of the region—125 million people, just in the metropolitan areas served by the HPBC churches.

“The number of people we have around our churches is incredible,” says Martin, noting that less than one percent are evangelical Christians. “I think our churches are strategic—they are positioned well, and they are making an impact.”

“I’ll just be honest. Our guys could be pouring 100 percent into just reaching their communities, just reaching Hawaii,” he adds. “But being born of missional roots keeps us focused with mis-

sional eyes and that is exciting to me, because our folks don’t look at, ‘Well, this is my area.’ They take it all on. The pandemic set us back a little bit, but it’s good. Out in front of us, it’s good, and I couldn’t be more thankful for what God’s doing in our churches.”

Currently four congregations in Malaysia, Vietnam, Japan, and South Korea are petitioning to join the HPBC, further expanding the reach of the state convention that had its beginnings when Southern Baptist work in Hawaii began after World War II.

Of the 161 churches in the HPBC, 80 are on the Hawaiian island of O’ahu. Asian churches constitute about 10 percent of the total number of churches, and they are contributing about 10 percent of the Cooperative Program budget, Martin says.

“These churches are involved, they’re engaged, their members are studying at SBC seminaries. They come to our annual meetings and serve on our committees, and they’re involved across the



South Pacific and Asia.”

The expansion of the territory of the HPBC came in 1995 as congregations in the American territories of the Pacific—American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of North Marianas Island—had no connection to the Southern Baptist Convention. More recently, international Baptist churches ministering to English-speaking expatriate communities in places like Okinawa, Japan, and Seoul, South Korea, are connecting with the HPBC.

The rich cultural context of the churches in the HPBC is the missionary context Martin thought he would be serving in when he was called to ministry at 34 years of age while working in the paper industry in St. Mary’s, Georgia. However, when he soon after enrolled for classes for the first time at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, he felt led to switch from missions to pastoral ministry studies.

After pastoring in Louisiana while in seminary and afterwards at a church in Cedar Key, Florida, a vacation spot with a somewhat transient population in the Gulf of Mexico similar to Hawaii, God called Martin to Maui for a “wonderful” pastoral ministry he didn’t want to leave when he reluctantly agreed to apply for the post to lead the HPBC. So, many years after believing he was called to missions, Martin is living as a missionary leading Hawaii Pacific Baptists, he says.

“It wasn’t quite what I thought it was going to be, but yeah, this is mission work, and I love it. ... Everywhere I go, I’m in the mission field, and I enjoy it. I really, really do.”

A major need for the HPBC is leadership development, Martin says, noting conversations with Southwestern Seminary



to bring more theological education opportunities to the HPBC.

Martin praises the leadership of President Adam W. Greenway ('02) and other leaders at Southwestern Seminary.

"I'm extremely excited about the current direction of the seminary. I think that Dr. Greenway's leadership is opening new doors for the seminary in ways that I think will provide for students," he says, calling the institution's leadership "forward thinkers." The administration is "effectively leading now, but they're prepared for the future, and I think that's exciting. It gives me a confidence that whenever I go to someone and say, 'I recommend Southwestern Seminary,' I feel I know what they're going to get, and I am very confident in that."

Leadership development is a significant challenge, he says.

"The raising of local leaders to be able to serve our churches" is one of those challenges, he says, because "for far too long we've had a dependence on the mainland," noting he is an example of such. "Leadership development is a huge issue and I think God's giving us the opportunity at this moment to turn the corner on that and to see that change."

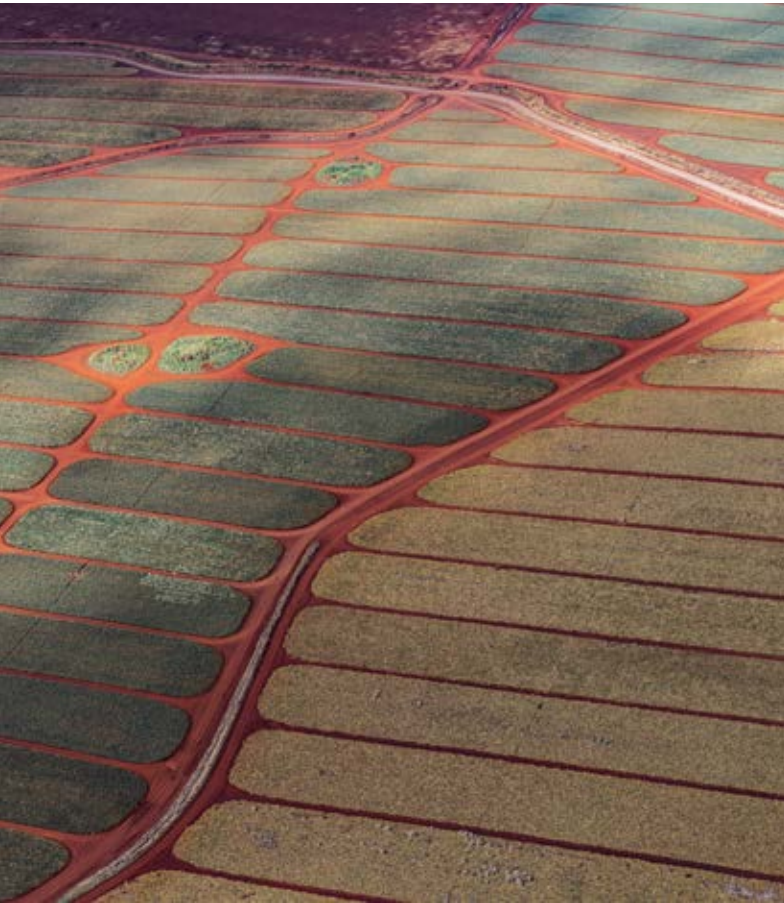
Martin points to his own experience at Southwestern Seminary as a 2020 PhD graduate of the World Christian Studies program in the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions as an example of how theological education can impact his convention.

"It wasn't quite what I thought it was going to be, but yeah, this is mission work, and I love it. ... Everywhere I go, I'm in the mission field, and I enjoy it. I really, really do."

"The program helps expand your understanding of the depth of the integrity of Scripture and the truth of theology and the power of the Word of God, while being able to engage—that you're able to communicate effectively and to be able to raise up leaders. ... I think it's an incredible program," he says, praising Professor of Evangelism Matt Queen, his "mentor" and "dear friend." Queen has ministered often in the HPBC and is "loved" by the churches, Martin says.

Martin says the World Christian Studies program was "extremely beneficial for me because it immediately helped me in my own setting. But [with] the [cultural] change that's taken





“We can engage so many different cultures that you can go back and have a different view.”

place on the mainland, it’s needed for us to be able to wrap our heads around reaching cross-culturally.”

Indeed, Martin says that Hawaii Pacific congregations are a model of ethnic diversity that have much to offer the rest of the Southern Baptist Convention in the mainland United States, which is experiencing similar changes. “I’m able to send, from paradise, men, women, pastors, leaders, churches, equipped to do ministry that really makes a difference in the rest of the U.S.”

The ethnic diversity of the HPBC is one of the reasons why Martin is so eager for more Southern Baptists to visit Hawaii and other locations in his convention.

“We can engage so many different cultures that you can go back and have a different view. You can do that in the United States mainland, but I think out here the setting is just different enough to catch the attention a little bit better,” he says. “I think Southern Baptists are going to have to embrace ethnic diversity.”



Martin says Southern Baptists also need to recognize that fewer and fewer people in the mainland United States operate from a biblical worldview or even basic biblical knowledge, pointing to a co-worker in St. Mary's, Georgia, years ago who was unfamiliar with the biblical characters of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

He also related the story of a man who approached him after a sermon, while pastoring in Maui, who asked, "What does it mean when you say somebody's name and numbers after it?" not understanding his references to biblical passages.

"To embrace that challenge out here I think is the best part of ministry. You're countercultural, but you're not militant. You're embracing it and you're allowing it to help others understand Christ, then see the Gospel make that impact. I think that's just amazing," he says.

While Hawaii is largely a secular society, there remains a level of respect for pastors and religion, Martin says, citing as an example activity that is paused on the beaches when congregations do beach baptisms—and some observers even applaud.

"The Polynesian culture and the Asian culture, they both

"I'm doing my best to give our churches every chance to be healthy, be successful, be effective. And that's a good place to be."

are receptive to ministry. They don't see it negatively. For our churches, they've got incredible opportunities to engage their communities and to explore opportunities and actually be welcomed," he says.

Martin also says visitors to the HPBC congregations will understand better the challenges being faced by their fellow Southern Baptists.

"The perception of paradise is totally off track when it comes to the difficulty of ministry in Hawaii or the areas of our convention," he says, relating what he has heard from visitors. "I've heard that from denominational leaders. I've heard that from entity leaders. I've heard it from a lot of folks who say, 'This trip changed my understanding of what you're doing.' That's the reason I try to get more and more out here as best I can."

Many people move to Hawaii because they see it as paradise and "their last thought is about God. It's tough," Martin acknowledges.

"I think one of the greatest opportunities to make an impact is when that paradise crashes in people's minds. They did come out here expecting to get away from everything. And you can surf every day if you want to or swim every day or hike every day or bike every day. There's a lot to enjoy. But for a lot of folks, when things begin to really crash and they turn to those who are

steady, there's an incredible opportunity for the Gospel," Martin says.

In the face of all the distractions available in Hawaii, Martin praises the faithfulness of the HPBC congregations.

"When you do get down time a lot of people don't think about the church or serving the church, but our church members, they do and they're faithful in that. I know that on a Sunday morning, especially those with kids, there will be ball teams across the street from our church on the ball field. You hear that noise. ... But our church members are faithful, and I'm thankful for that."

While some may not see it in some of the metrics, Martin says, "Our churches are doing incredible work—statistically, it's hard out here."

He says his "number one job" is to empower the HPBC staff "to do everything that they can do to serve our churches. And our collective goal is to see every church be positioned to be healthy, to be effective in their place of ministry."

"I'm doing my best to give our churches every chance to be healthy, be successful, be effective. And that's a good place to be."

Martin praises his wife, Wendy, "my number one everything," for her "ministry of presence" alongside him ministering to Hawaii Pacific Baptists. She is so well-loved that he has been chastened at times for failing to bring her along to visits across the HPBC.

"It's a good time to be a Hawaii Pacific Baptist, in my opinion. We've got a bright, bright future." 📖

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







IN A CLASS OF HER OWN

God's good work in the life
of Norma Hedin

BY ASHLEY ALLEN

In 2000, when Adam Davis ('02, '11), took the course Principles of Teaching as an elective in his Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Master of Divinity degree plan, "a light bulb went off."

Davis, who serves as the associate pastor at Belle Aire Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, says the class and the professor, Norma Hedin ('84, '90), "played a significant role for me in determining, in many ways, kind of the future direction of my life." The lessons Davis learned through Hedin's class, and subsequent foundations of education classes after he added a Master of Arts in Christian Education degree to his seminary studies, in addition to his MDiv degree program, are still used as he leads the educational ministries at the Tennessee church.

Davis is one of the hundreds, if not thousands, of students Hedin taught and inspired during her 17 years as a professor of foundations of education in the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries at Southwestern Seminary. Hedin, who has served as the provost of Dallas Baptist University since 2018, faithfully taught aspiring ministers of education and other Christian workers how to teach Scripture, design lesson plans, the history of biblical education, and how to set teaching goals and objectives that would impact the affective and cognitive domains of the learner's brain. Additionally, she taught scores of Doctor of Philosophy students in the Terry School how to write their doctoral dissertations in the "language" of statistics - the "language" of the program at the time.

Hedin's desire to teach teachers to teach with excellence stems from her own salvation experience and calling.

The morning after praying to receive Christ at Biltmore Baptist Church in her hometown of Elizabethton, Tennessee, Hedin knelt beside her bed

with an open Bible and began to read. The nine-year-old wanted to know what to do next to grow in her relationship with Christ. She explains the influence of her church and her grandparents taught her the next steps in walking with the Lord, but so did attendance at church summer camp, where she eventually became a counselor herself as a high school student.

The petite, reserved Hedin says during this time she “began to see that God can use even the smallest people, the most introverted people. He can use anyone for His Kingdom.”

After one summer of camp, she asked the Lord, “Please don’t put me on the shelf. Let me be used by You.” After praying that prayer, Hedin began looking through her Bible and came to Philippians 1:6 and the promise that He who began a good work in her would continue to perform it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Hedin explains “in that moment” she sensed a call to be obedient to the Lord, whatever it meant. The college-aged counselors at the camp attended Christian colleges, which Hedin learned about for the first time and saw as “an opportunity to attend an institution that



“I really want to help people in the church know what to do after they become Christians.”



Hedin began teaching at Southwestern in 1990.

would help prepare me for what God had in my life.” One of her school counselors asked her what she wanted to do in life and Hedin said, “I really want to help people in the church know what to do after they become Christians,” because, as she explains, “I felt there was a gap that people would come to Christ, but then they wouldn’t know what to do after that to grow in Christ.”

The high school counselor told Hedin about Bryan College, a Christian liberal arts college in Dayton, Tennessee, about four hours away from her East Tennessee hometown. The college had a Christian education program and Hedin says her years at the institution “really changed the trajectory of my life.”

At Bryan College, her major professor, Brian Richardson (’66, ’71), told her about Southwestern Seminary. Richardson had an arrangement with the seminary that a Christian education graduate of Bryan College would have 15-hours counted toward what was then known as the Master of Arts in Religious Education. Richardson also told Hedin “words spoken at the right time,” that changed the course of her life, she says, as he encouraged her to enroll for study at Southwestern, earn a doctorate, and return to the college to teach.

Following college graduation, Hedin married her husband, Eric, and moved to the Chicago area to serve with a Christian ministry for three years. During this time, the Lord spoke to her and said, “Now is the time to complete the work that I’ve started in you and move forward in that.” As the couple looked to relocate to Texas, her husband had three job offers in the Dallas area within a week.

Hedin was one of hundreds of students in the 1980s working toward earning a MARE, but William R. “Rick” Yount (’75, ’78), one of her foundations of education professors and later faculty colleague, says she stood out among the other students.



The faculty of the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries in the late 1990s.

“There were a few students who came through the master’s class that gave the evidence that this student is doctoral material, and, perhaps, even faculty material for some graduate school somewhere,” Yount says. “And Norma was one of those people.”

After graduating with her MARE, Hedin began her doctoral studies where Yount says she did “exceedingly well” and “worked hard behind the scenes, but she didn’t talk about that. She just performed.” As a doctoral student, Hedin served as an editorial assistant for the *Southwestern Journal of Theology*. In the role, she met fellow doctoral students who needed their dissertations edited and proofed. The Lord used the experience she gained later as she taught doctoral students to write their doctoral dissertations in the required formal academic style.

Hedin graduated with her Doctor of Philosophy in 1990, the same year she was elected to the faculty as an assistant professor of foundations of education. In the classroom, she was known for her teaching abilities and high standards of excellence, but also for the care and concern she had for each student.

N. Chris Shirley ('94, '02), interim dean of the Terry School and professor of foundations of education, was one of Hedin’s master’s level students and she was his doctoral supervisor. Hedin and Shirley later served together at DBU.

Shirley was “impressed” by Hedin’s ability to teach as she not only taught the students how to teach but modeled it before her class. “Her example in the classroom was a lesson in itself,” he says. “This is the kind of teacher we’re training.” Learning from Hedin’s example, Shirley still seeks to emulate the same model to his students today.

In 1995, Hedin became the associate dean of the then-School of Religious Education, where she oversaw all the school’s master’s degree programs, chaired the curriculum

committee, served as a permanent member of the school’s PhD committee, and served on a number of seminary-wide committees, where she learned leadership lessons from the late Bill Tolar, Tommy Brisco ('73, '81), Jack D. Terry Jr. ('62, '67), Daryl R. Eldridge ('77, '85), and her fellow Elizabeth-ton-native, Robert “Bob” H. Welch ('85, '90).

Calling Hedin “the most brilliant young lady” he has ever met, Welch, who served as the dean of the Terry School

She “worked hard behind the scenes, but she didn’t talk about that. She just performed.”

WILLIAM R. YOUNT

from 2004-2008, said she was “consistently selected by the students as the number one professor” in the Terry School and “frequently the number one professor selected by the students in the entire seminary.” Welch says other faculty members compared themselves to Hedin and her teaching abilities as she challenged them to be better teachers by her example.

While her teaching impacted her students, Davis explains Hedin’s walk with Christ did as well. He says in one of Hedin’s classes he mentioned a prayer request and several weeks later she asked Davis for an update – mentioning the individual’s specific name and specific event involved.

Davis says the experience made him realize Hedin was “a little bit different breed of teacher” as she is “someone who really cares.” He says it revealed in “many ways” her “walk with the Lord and her prayer life.”

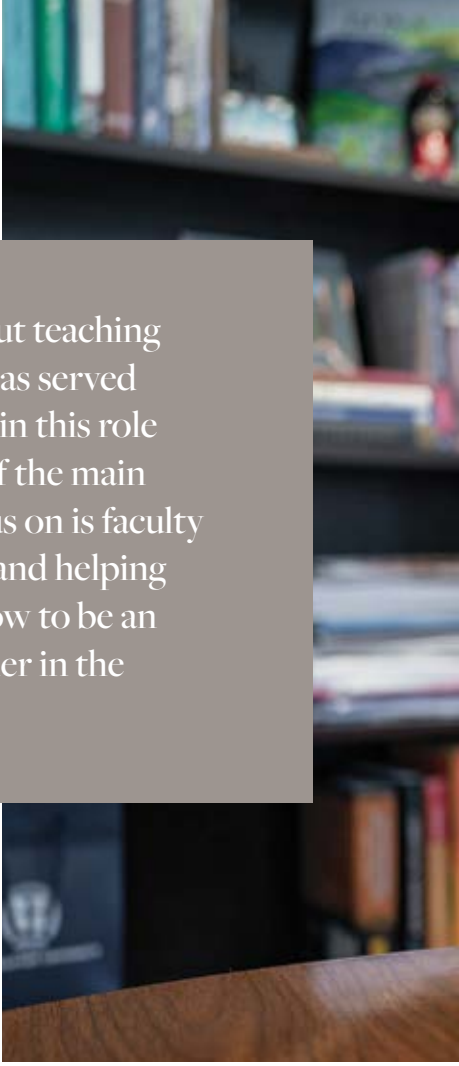
In addition to her classroom instruction, Hedin contributed chapters to *The Teaching Ministry of the Church*. The first textbook of its kind, the 1995 publication was written by foundations of education professors at Southwestern Seminary and used in Christian education classes around the world.

In 2005, when DBU began its PhD program, the university asked Hedin to teach the research seminar she taught at Southwestern to the Dallas-based institution’s inaugural cohort. She taught simultaneously at Southwestern and DBU, until she left Southwestern in 2006 to serve as a senior fellow at B.H. Carroll Theological Institute. She served at Carroll for nine years, all the while teaching as an adjunct at DBU as they added more courses to the doctoral program. Hedin also taught Christian education courses at the Canadian Baptist Theological Seminary.

Hedin says “over the years” DBU would ask her to come and teach on the faculty and she would explain, “God has not released me from theological education.” She says making the decision to step away from theological education was “a really big decision” because “God called me to theological education and preparing people for the church.” Hedin adds, “Stepping away from that was something that I really had to wait on the Lord to release me from.”

However, when DBU’s longtime president, Gary Cook (’77), announced his retirement, the incoming president, Adam Wright, approached Hedin about serving at the university full-time. Wright had been in DBU’s second cohort of doctoral students and Hedin chaired his dissertation committee. For two years she prayed to seek the Lord’s direction and “God gradually released me” from theological education “and a lot of it had to do with the transformational experience I had as a college student.”

“Knowing how attending a Christian liberal arts college, just like DBU, had changed the trajectory of my life and prepared me to do things that I never anticipated” served as a catalyst for Hedin to begin serving full-time at DBU in 2016 as the vice president for executive affairs. As she transitioned from a seminary setting to a university setting, she explains she prayed “the Lord would be the voice behind me saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’”



“Knowing about teaching and learning has served me really well in this role because one of the main things we focus on is faculty development and helping them know how to be an effective teacher in the classroom.”

In 2018, Hedin moved to the role of provost at DBU. As the university’s chief academic officer, she oversees the university’s eight colleges and schools, academic accreditation, institutional effectiveness and assessment, and academic support, which includes the university’s library, registrar, advising, and writing center. In addition to her responsibilities as provost, she is also a professor of leadership and research in the Gary Cook School of Leadership at DBU.

The lessons and experience Hedin learned at Southwestern – both in the classroom and in faculty and administrative capacities – are the same she uses at DBU today.

“Knowing about teaching and learning has served me really well in this role because one of the main things we focus on is faculty development and helping them know how to be an effective teacher in the classroom,” she says. “But also, there’s a ministry component to it because we’re integrating faith and learning – there’s no separation between what we do in the classroom and what we live out in our lives. Because I have a theological background it helps me shape the focus on ministry to the students.”



Hedin has served as provost at Dallas Baptist University since 2018.

The good work God began in the life of nine-year-old Hedin continues to bear fruit as her students serve around the world. However, her impact on Seminary Hill remains embedded in the lives of Terry School faculty she taught and trained.

"She represents the best of Southwestern, particularly what the school is about where we are training church leaders, but we're also training Kingdom leaders," Shirley says of his former professor and colleague.

"I am here today because God used Southwestern in my life," Hedin concludes. "I'll always, always, be grateful for that." 🙏

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

Some photos for this article were provided by Dallas Baptist University.

RUNNING ON EMPTY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ADAM COVINGTON



With less than three miles left to complete an ultra-marathon run from one rim of the Grand Canyon to another and then back to the rim where he started, Michael Criner ('07, '16) was certain he would not be able to finish. Having already traveled more than 40 miles, including more than 10,000 feet of elevation change over more than 14 hours, Criner said he hit a wall. His legs were like jelly. He was spent.

And as he looked up toward the final stretch of the Bright Angel Trail, a trail characterized by switchbacks tightly hugging the south wall of the Grand Canyon, he felt the Lord impress upon his heart a simple phrase, "At the rate you're going, you will not make it."

Criner knew if he were going to finish that challenge, he would need help. A friend who had run the same trail a day earlier came two and half miles down the trail to physically help him finish the final stretch. Shouldering his pack for him and sitting with him to recover at the end of each switchback, Criner's new friend helped him finish just as daylight began to fade. Roughly 10 months later, Criner would look back on that moment and realize the Lord wasn't only speaking to him about climbing out of the Grand Canyon when He told him, "At the rate you're going, you will not make it."

HE WAS 'JUST' AN EVANGELIST

When Ed Hecht, Criner's maternal grandfather, moved to Dallas, Texas, with his bride, Janie, they determined to join First Baptist Church of Dallas where W.A. Criswell served as pastor at the time. After he walked the aisle one Sunday to declare his intention to join the church, Hecht was asked about his relationship with Lord. Unaware of his own lostness, Hecht met with Criswell later that afternoon in the pastor's office and he gave his life to Christ.

"He moved to Dallas and was an insurance salesman his whole career, but his real passion was biblical counseling," Criner recalls. "He worked the lines at First Dallas, you know the call center, and would witness to people. He probably led thousands of people to Jesus; there's no telling how many."

One of the many people whom Hecht led to the Lord was his grandson, Criner, who now serves as lead pastor at Rock Hill Baptist Church in Brownsboro, Texas. In the small office at his home in East Texas, Criner often finalizes preparation for his weekly sermons, and a wallet-sized picture of his grandfather perches just above his head on a shelf full of books and other memorabilia.

"He had a profound influence on my life," Criner said. "He led me to Jesus, disciplined me in Jesus, paid for me to go to seminary to learn more about Jesus. That's his legacy."

It was on a trip with his grandfather to a Christian conference that



Criner began to sense a calling to vocational ministry around the age of 12. Broken over a clear calling from the Lord, Criner shared the decision with members of his church, Tabernacle Baptist Church in Ennis, Texas. Some thought he may be too young to decide about a call to the ministry, but for Criner it was indisputable: "I just knew this is what I wanted to do with my life."

As a senior in high school, Criner was asked to serve as the interim youth minister at his home church until he left for Howard Payne University to pursue an undergraduate degree. Over the course of the next four years, he would lead Bible studies at his university as a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Baptist Student Ministry, while also serving as a collegiate intern at Coggin Avenue Baptist Church in Brownwood, Texas. A bookend to his time in college, Criner served again at Tabernacle Baptist, this time as interim children's minister for the summer, before beginning his Master of Divinity studies at Southwestern Seminary.

'THEY CARED FOR ME AS A PERSON'

Reflecting on his four years at Southwestern Seminary while pursuing an MDiv, Criner attributes growth in his relationship to the Scriptures and the implanting of seeds for a heart for rural ministry to the many professors under whom he studied. Among many memories during his time on Seminary Hill, Criner fondly remembers traveling to Oxford, England, on the Oxford Study Tour trip with Malcolm Yarnell ('91), research professor of theology in the School of Theology.

"He'd read his lectures while we're on the bus and we'd just want to take a nap," Criner said of Yarnell with a smile that quickly turned serious. "But he's so intent on us getting our theology of the Trinity right, so intent on us getting our systematic theology right."

One of the requirements for the MDiv degree during his time at Southwestern was a class on worship, and even though he had similar



“But I consider my life of no value to myself; my purpose is to finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God’s grace.”

ACTS 20:24

courses in his undergraduate studies, Criner acknowledges that the worship class he took with Bruce Leafblad, a professor in the School of Church Music and Worship at the time, was one of the “most foundational” classes he took at Southwestern.

“The intensity and the biblical connection to the Old Testament and the New Testament of what worship is was completely transformed under Bruce Leafblad’s class. Completely.”

“So, here’s the big picture: each one of these professors to a degree, brought their subject to life, but helped to connect the dots of why it mattered. And not just that – they cared for me as a person,” Criner recalls. “That’s the impact Southwestern has had for me. It wasn’t just that I was getting theological training; I did. It wasn’t just that I was getting help connecting the dots to the current streams of the culture; we did. But it was that they cared for me as a student and as a person, that changed the game.”

‘A CHURCH NEEDS YOUR LEADERSHIP’

Criner married his college sweetheart, Abigail, before graduating from Southwestern Seminary and together they moved to Lubbock, Texas, where he briefly served as an interim college minister before being called to First Baptist Church of Woodway in Woodway, Texas near Waco, in 2006 as a collegiate minister. When he arrived at First Woodway the college ministry averaged around 40 college students in weekly attendance, and over the course of the nearly six years he served, and as result of faithfulness in proclaiming the Word of God, it grew tenfold.

It was under the mentorship of senior pastor Mike Toby at First Woodway that Criner again began to fully realize his call to be a senior pastor that had been so clear at a young age. Toby, who encouraged Criner to pursue a doctorate at Southwestern Seminary, also compelled him to make the move to a church as a senior pastor.

Criner remembers a conversation in which Toby came to him and said, “I want you to be here forever, but I’m telling you a church needs your leadership.”

Emboldened by the affirmation of his mentor and sustained in his call to be a senior pastor, shortly after that conversation God prepared the way for Criner to be called as senior pastor to First Baptist Bellville, Texas, where he would spend eight years with his family. In Bellville, a rural community about an hour west of Houston, Criner learned how to pastor, completed his doctorate at Southwestern Seminary in Christian Worldview and Cultural Engagement, and ultimately grew as a pastor. It was during an annual retreat with some other pastors and their wives, that he began to hear the Spirit saying, “The winds are changing; just be ready.” A month later he received an invitation to consider leading a church in East Texas.

ROCK HILL BAPTIST CHURCH

Rock Hill Baptist Church sits nestled among tall pine trees right off Highway 31 in East Texas - equidistant from the cities of Brownsboro to the west and Chandler to the east. Rock Hill, which was founded in 1857, is in some sense an anomaly when compared with other churches in similar contexts. With a combined population of roughly 4,500 people between the two towns as of the 2020 United States census, a church with more than 1,000 members does not seem like it should exist in the area. But, according to Criner, this is evidence of

God’s grace.

“The growth that it experienced, the baptisms that it has experienced – none of that is possible apart from the Spirit and the movement of God.”

When he arrived at Rock Hill in August of 2019, one of Criner’s main concerns was that he not “mess it up” and that they would continue to see the hand of God upon the church. A little more than six months later he would be faced with some of the most difficult decisions of his life when the global pandemic of COVID-19 hit even this rural part of East Texas.

“I don’t think leadership is built during tough times, I just think it’s delivered during tough times,” Criner said. “It’s revealed.”

Criner’s leadership as senior pastor of Rock Hill was tested as he recalls having to make major decisions in the life of the church to which he had been called without having been there for very long or having built much trust. But in God’s providence, he came alongside a long-tenured staff. What COVID did in the life of Rock Hill, according to Criner, was it “tested the moxie of people’s buy-in to Rock Hill, to the Gospel, and to the Kingdom – which is what it should be anyway. It exposed in so many of us – where is actually the foundation of Rock Hill?”

Key to the foundation of Rock Hill is Christ at the center of all things; it’s one of the core values of the church and Christ is present in all they do – in preaching, in youth ministry, in adult ministry, kid’s ministry – Christ is at the center. Criner has seen a spirit of evangelism caught by the members of Rock Hill and the Lord continues to bless the church and the community through it.

“We want to declare the Gospel,” Criner said. “And you declare the Gospel not by simply being nice to people or being cordial. You have to verbally explain to people what the Good News is.”



“The growth that it experienced, the baptisms that it has experienced – none of that is possible apart from the Spirit and the movement of God.”

Through regular evangelism classes and staff members modeling how to share the Gospel, Rock Hill is on track to have more baptisms this year than any other year in its 165-year history. The church has seen 17 weeks in a row with at least one baptism and more than 70 people who have come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

‘YOU CANNOT MAKE IT AT THE RATE YOU’RE GOING’

In February of 2022, Criner began to feel, in addition to the normal stressors of life, the weight and effect of pastoring through COVID-19, navigating staff transitions, and committing to provide foster care as a family for two children with a traumatic background. While he was talking with his wife on the phone one afternoon, Criner began to slur his words and lost all sensation on one side of his face. The symptoms he experienced were serious enough that it warranted an immediate trip to the emergency room with thoughts of the worst diagnosis in mind: a stroke, an aneurysm, or a tumor.

Criner was officially diagnosed with Bell’s Palsy after undergoing a number of tests at the hospital. While relieved a clear diagnosis ruled out other possible life-altering illnesses, his doctor warned that if the situation wasn’t cared for, it could become permanent. His church leadership gathered with Criner and prayed over him and then told him they didn’t want him to do anything, other than to get better, over a period of a least six weeks. As a part of his time away from the church,

Criner took the chance to reflect on and change some rhythms in his life.

Three things Criner discovered as a result of his medical setback were that he needed physical rest, soul rest, and also that he needed help. In the days of respite, regrouping, and re-orienting his life to accommodate this new challenge, Criner came to the realization that his current physical setback “was all just affirmation of me not learning that lesson I learned in the canyon.”

“What did the Lord teach me in that time? You’re limited, bro. You cannot make it at the rate you’re going.”

Since returning to Rock Hill after six weeks of rest and recuperation and making a full recovery, Criner has been reinvigorated to empower his staff in a way like he has not before, but also to partner with other churches in the area. The Lord reiterated in his heart that one of Rock Hill’s major roles would be to strengthen neighboring local churches.

Current projections and new homes being built in the city of Chandler indicate that the population will double in the next year. This growth excites Criner and helps cast a vision for how Rock Hill can make a difference for the Gospel in their community, but he recognizes they cannot do it alone.



“There are 33,000 lost people in our own county. If every one of them got saved tomorrow, we cannot fill them in all the churches we have in our county,” Criner said. “So, our burden is to say, ‘How can we make these churches stronger?’ because we actually need more churches, not less.”

“What did the Lord teach me in that time? You’re limited, bro. You cannot make it at the rate you’re going.”

“There are churches in the middle of nowhere that nobody’s heard about and they’re seeing baptisms, they’re seeing record attendance, they are growing exponentially. And they won’t be on any preaching circuit, but they’re going to be the churches that are Kingdom movers. So we want to come alongside and strengthen them and encourage them and resource them to be better. Because we’ve had people do that to us -- that goes back to pastors investing in me; I want to be a pastor who invests in these next generation of guys.”

By God’s grace and by His Spirit, Rock Hill Baptist Church will continue to reach the lost, strengthen churches, and build the Kingdom in Henderson County and beyond. 🏡

Adam Covington ('09) is senior editor of Southwestern News.



How to avoid running on empty as a pastor

In the days since the COVID-19 global pandemic, pastors have experienced more stress in their roles than ever before. A few tips Criner shared from his own experience and from reading 1 Kings 19 that he hopes others can learn from are:

1. Prioritize physical rest

- Change your sleeping habits; make sure you get enough physical rest.
- The first thing God told Elijah in 1 Kings 19 is “Eat. Sleep.”

2. Get soul rest

- There can be an unhealthy rhythm of straight pouring out.

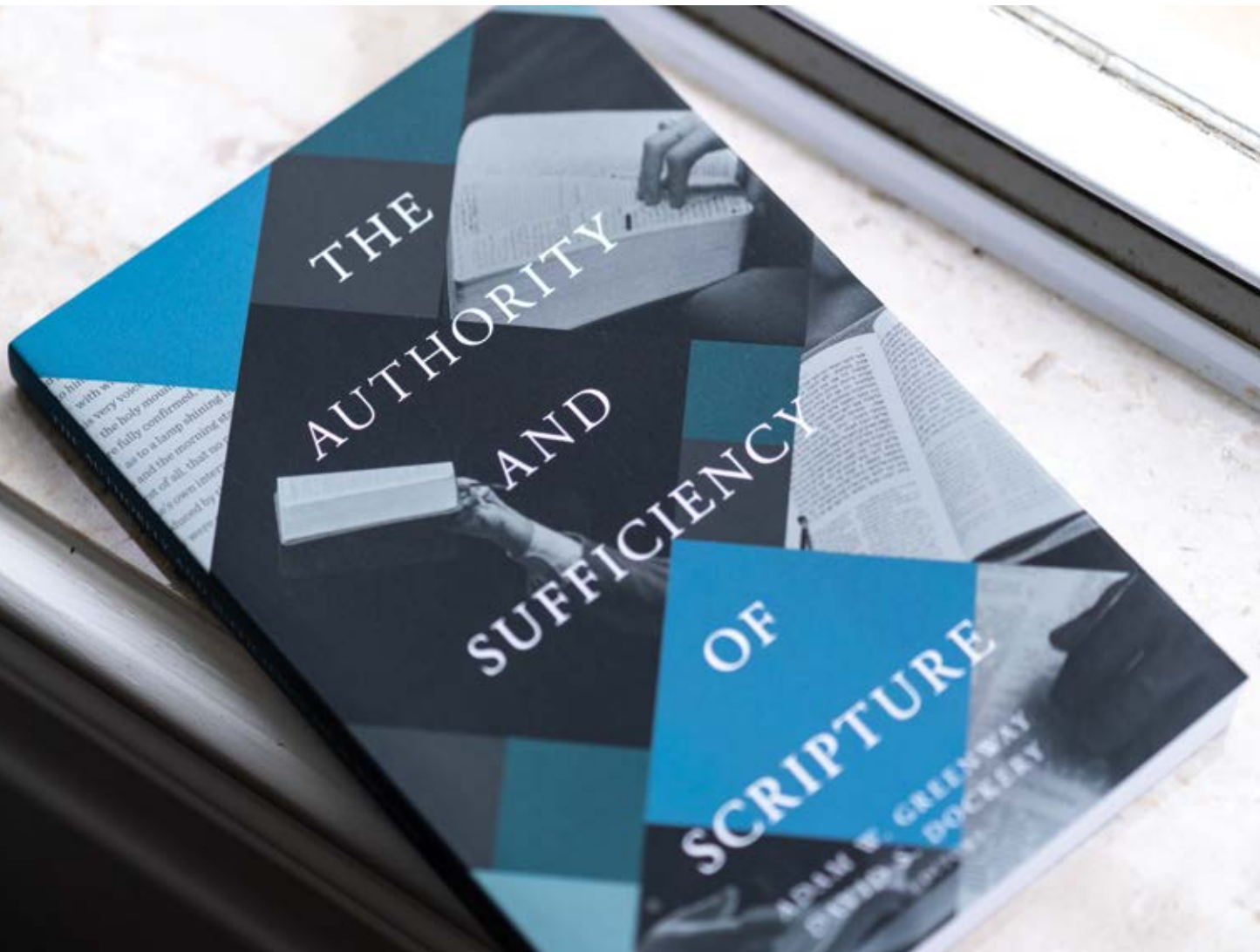
- Be sure you spend time with God and are poured into.
- “You need more care for your soul than less.”

3. Ask for help

- Be willing to recognize your limitations.
- Don’t be so arrogant as to think you can do everything in your own power.

4. Have something you are working towards

- Set some type of achievement that you can do and that only you can control in that moment.



The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture

New release focuses on the authority and sufficiency of Scripture

In the preface of this new release from Seminary Hill Press, the editors remind the reader that much is at stake in how the Bible is viewed and how believers relate to God's written Word on a daily basis. Edited by President Adam W. Greenway ('02) and Distinguished Professor of Theology David S. Dockery ('81), *The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture* represents Southwestern Seminary faculty's shared commitment to the Bible as the prophetic-apostolic word, which is God's Word written. Without this writing, there would be no Scriptures and therefore no Word of God available to humanity. This understanding calls for a renewed commitment in every generation to the Bible's full truthfulness, sole authority, and supreme sufficiency. To affirm these truths about Scripture means God's Word is believed to be trustworthy, reliable, infallible, and inerrant. *The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture* includes contributions from 15 of Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College faculty representing disciplines including theology, pastoral ministry and preaching, worship, discipleship, biblical counseling, and ministry with families.

“The writers brilliantly remind us of the importance of Scripture for everything the child of God could ever face or endeavor in His name. *The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture* is an excellent volume, and I am grateful for the faithful saints who have contributed to it. It is certainly needed in our churches, colleges, and seminaries and is an exceptional response to the questions of our times.”

—CHARLES F. STANLEY ('57)
FOUNDER, IN TOUCH MINISTRIES
PASTOR EMERITUS, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, ATLANTA, GEORGIA

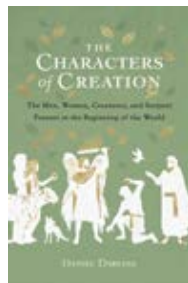


OYE, HIJO MÍO: UNA GUÍA PRÁCTICA PARA CRIAR A TUS HIJOS EN EL SEÑOR

B&H Español (2022)

JUAN SÁNCHEZ

Written with his wife, Jeanine, Sánchez seeks to share with other parents the biblical principles that helped them raise their five daughters. This book focuses on ancient truths to guide and aid parents as they raise their children.

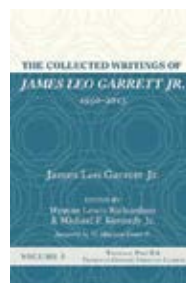


THE CHARACTERS OF CREATION: THE MEN, WOMEN, CREATURES, AND SERPENT PRESENT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD

Moody Publishers (2022)

DANIEL M. DARLING

Darling examines the account of Creation and the fall of man while examining the first people in God's redemptive plan for humanity, including Adam, Eve, the serpent, Cain, Abel, Noah, the Nephilim, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.



THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF JAMES LEO GARRETT JR., 1950-2015: VOLUME FIVE: THEOLOGY, PART II, AND TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHRISTIAN LEADERS

Resource Publications (2022)

W. MADISON GRACE II ('06, '12), FOREWORD

The fifth volume in the collection of writings from the late Southwestern Seminary distinguished professor of theology emeritus includes a selection of essays focused on general theological considerations and 20th century Christian leaders such as H.E. Dana, W.T. Conner, John Newport, Herschel H. Hobbs, and David S. Dockery ('81).

BYLINES

From joy to anger, faith leaders react to Roe's reversal

Adam W. Greenway ('02)
president

“More than ever, those who value all human life must demonstrate their commitment not merely with their words, but also by their deeds. We must urge legislators to protect the unborn, and we must provide compassionate support for women that will help them choose life.”

(on apnews.com)

More programs train complementary women to teach Bible

Terri H. Stovall ('91, '01, '12)

dean of women

“Women coming up haven't experienced all the cultural boundaries as others before. And I have seen an increase in the conversation about what roles women can fulfill ... since I started at Southwestern 20 years ago.”

(on christianitytoday.com)

Churches posting song lists ahead of service feel they are helping prepare congregants for worship

Joseph R. Crider

dean of the school of church music and worship

“...when the songs are wonderfully rooted in Scripture, I think it's a beautiful way for people to grow in their spiritual formation.”

(on texanonline.net)

Longtime professor of adult education Lucien Coleman dies at 91

LUCIEN EDWIN COLEMAN JR., RETIRED PROFESSOR OF ADULT EDUCATION AT SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (1983-1993), died Saturday, June 11, in his home in Weatherford, Texas. He was 91.

"The influence of Lucien Coleman in the area of Christian adult education is still being felt today in the lives of the countless students he taught and the lives of persons taught by those teachers," said Adam W. Greenway ('02), president of Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College. "I'm grateful for Dr. Coleman's years of investment in Southwestern Seminary. I urge all Southwesterners to join me in praying for the entire Coleman family during this time of loss."

Jack D. Terry Jr. ('62, '67), vice president emeritus for institutional advancement and senior professor of foundations of education, was instrumental in bringing Coleman to Southwestern Seminary when he served as dean of what was then known as the School of Religious Education.

"It was my happy privilege in 1982 to contact Dr. Coleman, who was teaching adult education at Southern Seminary," Terry said. "At that time, Dr. Coleman was the premier seminary professor and writer in adult education in the Southern Baptist Convention. I was told by my colleague, Jim Williams, who was also a professor of adult education at that time, that to convince Lucien Coleman to leave Southern Seminary and come to Southwestern Seminary was a 'religious education coup.'"

Terry added that Coleman "was a master

at creating adult learning sequences that could be used in a class of any size from the smallest adult class in country churches in rural America, to the adult classes in the largest metropolitan mega churches in the convention. His ability to instruct the least able adult teacher to the most educationally qualified adult teacher in Southern Baptist churches was his greatest and most enduring quality as a teacher of teachers."

Coleman was born March 2, 1931, and graduated from Ouachita Baptist College, where he met his wife, Bobbie, of 69 years. He was ordained for ministry in 1950 and served as pastor and minister of education to several congregations before and during his time as professor of religious education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, where he served from 1966 to 1983 prior to coming to Southwestern Seminary.

While at Southern Seminary, he earned four degrees, including his Doctor of Education in religious education. He also earned a Master of Arts in communications from the University of Kentucky. From 1979-80, he was a visiting scholar at Regents Park College, Oxford University. During his tenure at Southwestern, he taught at Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary and Korea Baptist Theological Seminary as a mission volunteer in 1988-89.

He was the author of numerous books, notably *How to Teach the Bible* (1980), *Understanding Today's Adults* (1983), and *Why the Church Must Teach* (1984). He was also the recipient of numerous awards and recog-



nitions, including the Distinguished Leader Award from the Baptist Association of Christian Educators (BACE) in 1995. Coleman taught in seminaries and conference centers on six continents. He was a frequent contributor to numerous Southern Baptist publications, including Sunday School material, *Open Windows*, and the Lucien Coleman Teaching Ideas for Lifeway's Bible study material. He and his wife wrote training materials from their home for 38 years, reaching at its peak more than 800 churches.

Coleman is survived by his wife, Bobbie, and their three children: Vivian Conrad and her husband John; Lynette Johnson and her husband Garry; and Martin Coleman and his wife Shirley. They have 12 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.—*T.M.*



Russell honored for 77 years of service

CHARLES RUSSELL, A 1957 BACHELOR OF DIVINITY GRADUATE OF SOUTHWESTERN SEMINARY, was honored in May by the Enon Baptist Association for 77 years of faithful service as pastor of churches in Northeast Texas. The 93-year-old has served as senior pastor of Turkey Creek Baptist Church in Hughes Springs, Texas, since 2000. <#>



Barber elected SBC president

BART BARBER ('96, '06), PASTOR OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS, was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14 in Anaheim, California. Barber previously served as a trustee of the seminary from 2009-2019. In addition to Barber's election, James Cheesman ('15), associate pastor and worship leader at FBC Farmersville, was selected as the 2023 Southern Baptist Convention music director. <#>

ALUMNI UPDATES**1970**

Clarence Ray Stonecypher (*MDIV 1976*) to Rolling Hills Baptist Church in Bon Aqua, TN as Pastor.

1980

Agustin Lucas Reyes (*MARE 1980, EdD 1987*) to Dallas Baptist University in Dallas, TX as Director of Hispanic Partnerships.

1990

Gary George Gerber (*MM 1990, DMA 1993*) to Mercer University, Townsend School of Music, in Macon, GA as Dean.

Ken Darryl Braddy, Jr. (*MARE 1993*) to Lifeway Christian Resources in Nashville, TN as Director of Sunday School & Network Partnerships.

Brad S. Johnson (*MARE 1996, MAMFC 1996*) to College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, MO as President.

Eric Thomas Spivey (*MDIVBL 1996*) to Vestavia Hills Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL as Senior Pastor.

2000

Joe F. Thomas (*MDIVBL 2003*) to The Lakes Church in Sachse, TX as Lead Pastor.

Andrew Michael Wood (*MAMiss 2008*) to Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, CA as Lead Pastor.

2010

J. Todd Haymans (*MACE 2015*) to Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, TX as Discipleship Pastor.

RETIREMENT**1970**

Roger Dale Fisher (*MDIV 1977*) retired with Barbara, living in Hudson, NC.

Kirby L. Clark (*MRE 1978; EdD 1985; PhD 1994*) retired with wife, Deborah, living in Williamsburg, KY.

Donald Thomas Vigus (*MARE 1978*) retired, living in Wilmington, NC.

Richard D. Warren (*MDIV 1979*) retired with wife, Kay, living in Trabuco Canyon, CA.

1980

Joseph C. Godfrey (*MDIV 1980*) retired with wife, Joy, living in Birmingham, AL.

Brent William Scott (*MDIV 1980*) retired with wife, Marilyn, living in Elkwood, VA.

David Wayne Hardage (*MDIV 1983*) retired with wife, Kathleen, living in Dallas, TX.

Michael Huel Keown (*MDIV 1983*) retired with wife, Kathy C. Keown (*MACM 1983*), living in Ochlocknee, GA.

Joe Mark Flegal (*MARE 1984*) retired with wife, Sueann, living in Gresham, OR.

MEMORIALS**1950**

Harold Loyd Inman (*MARE 1953*)

Roy Yates Jerrell, Jr. (*BDIV 1953; MARE 1955*)

Charles Davis Vanderslice (*BDIV 1953; MRE 1954*)

Nathaniel Wilkerson Fox (*BDIV 1954*)

Jimmie Durr Spann (*BDIV 1954*)

Vanita May Baldwin (*MRE 1955*)

James Dudley Land (*BDIV 1956*)

BJ Keller (*BDIV 1957*)

Jack Riddlehoover (*BDIV 1957*)

Eleanor Reba Gathings (*MARE 1958*)

1960

Elaine Wilson-McHenry

Lois Marie Ronsick (*AscRE 1961*)

Omar Alvin Ronsick (*BDIV 1961*)

James Harral Ellis (*BDIV 1964*)

Bruce Thomas Morris (*BDIV 1964; MDIV Exch 1964*)

David Lawrence Ashford, Sr. (*MARE 1965*)

Bobby Lynn Layman (*MARE 1967*)

Calvin Floyd Meyer (*MARE 1968*)

1970

L. B. Flanigan (*MRE 1974*)

Lynda Diane Conway (*MRE 1975*)

Ben R. Hayden (*MDIV 1978*)

Sharon Maria Walker (*MRE 1978*)

Billy Ray Bissell (*MDIV 1979*)

James Edward Healer (*MARE 1979*)

1980

Carl Wesley Lane (*MARE 1989*)

1990

Dave Andrew Paxton (*MARE 1990*)

Michael Lance Smith (*MARE 1991*)

Frank Eugene Johnson IV (*DMIN 1993*)

Gary D. Brown, Sr. (*MDIVBL 1999*)

2000

Randolph Eugene Smith (*MACE 2001*)

Frank M. Merlino (*MDIVBL 2005*)

Bradley Paul Coble (*MACE 2007*)

**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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‘God’s perfect will’ for Jim and Jeannine Carter

The Southwestern story of Jim and Jeannine Carter

BY
ASHLEY ALLEN



W

HEN W.A. CRISWELL, LONGTIME PASTOR OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF DALLAS, officiated the wedding ceremony of Jim and Jeannine Carter, the couple prayed they “would always be in the perfect will of God.”

The couple, who grew up together in the Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas, graduated from W.H. Adamson High School and were active at the downtown Dallas church. Following their graduation from Hardin-Simmons University in 1961, Jim enlisted in the United States Army as part of the Medical Service Corps. After training at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, the couple relocated to Fort

Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina, for Jim’s first assignment.

Over the next 20 years, Jim was deployed on behalf of the Army in medical assignments that included tours of duty in Germany, Vietnam, Washington, D.C., and culminated with his final tour in Dallas, where he was senior Army advisor to what was then known as the 807th Medical Brigade, a large unit that covered five states at the time. By the time he retired from the Army in 1981, he had earned the rank of lieutenant colonel and received military recognition from both U.S. and foreign governments.

While Jim earned a Master of Business

las, “which was the largest bank holding company in Texas at the time.” His career continued with roles at Bank One, Lyco Energy Corporation, and First Insurance Group as executive vice president.

It is “an amazing thing to see how the Lord works in your life,” Jim says of God’s hand of leadership over the couple’s next steps.

While he was working at First Insurance Group, the Carters moved into their “dream home” to be closer to their first granddaughter. The couple was still unpacking boxes when Jim received a call from Lifeway Christian Resources asking if he would consider

and reserved, has been a part of more than 60 mission trips and has probably “led more people to Christ than most pastors.” Jeannine has served on mission teams in Cuba, Poland, and Russia among other places. After she was caught and interrogated for bringing Bibles into mainland China, she wrote a book about her experiences titled *Have Heart, Will Travel*. Jim notes his wife continues to lead a “lifestyle” of evangelism.

Since moving back to Dallas following Jim’s retirement from Lifeway, the Carters remain active in mission trips around the world, many stemming from the relationships

“Our grandson benefited from the love gift provided by someone who gave in the past.”

— JEANNINE CARTER

joining their staff. Thinking “there was no way” Jeannine “would agree to move,” Jim shared the phone call with his wife and asked what they should do. She responded, “If the Lord is in it, then that’s what we ought to do.”

Jim interviewed with Lifeway in Nashville, and upon his return to Dallas, Jeannine asked how the interview went. He told her, “Just keep unpacking. We aren’t going anywhere.” Two weeks later he returned to Tennessee for interviews with Jimmy Draper (’61, ’73), then president and chief executive officer of Lifeway, and other executives. Though Jim was “not interested in moving,” he knew he and his wife “needed to be in the perfect will of God.”

Recognizing God’s plan included serving as vice president of the finance and business services division of Lifeway, in 1995 the Carters moved to Nashville where Jim assumed the leadership role. In 1997, Draper announced Lifeway would give all employees two weeks of paid vacation and pay half their way so they could participate in evangelistic mission trips, Jim explains. Draper tasked Jim with the role of mission trip coordinator in addition to his executive-level responsibilities.

Working with the International Mission Board, Jim helped coordinate thousands of employees on hundreds of mission trips around the world until he retired from Lifeway in mid-2005. While Lifeway’s employees were impacted by the trips, the Carters were as well. Jim explains Jeannine, who is quiet


formed when he served with Lifeway. However, they are also faithful in investing in the next generation of kingdom servants. Jim explains he and his wife “very strongly believe in the Cooperative Program.”

In 2019, the Carters established The Kingsbury Endowed Scholarship at Southwestern Seminary. Named in memory of Jeannine’s parents, the scholarship assists a Master of Divinity, Advanced Master of Divinity, Doctor of Ministry, or Doctor of Philosophy student who is preparing for pastoral ministry. Jeannine explains her mother always thought the Lord would call the Carter’s son, David, into ministry. Instead, the Lord called Britton Carter, the Carter’s grandson, a 2021 Master of Divinity graduate of Southwestern. Britton currently serves as the senior pastor of Freedom Fellowship of Roanoke, Texas.

“Our grandson benefited from the love gift provided by someone who gave in the past,” Jeannine says. The couple wanted to do the same for someone else.

The Carters remain active at First Baptist Dallas, leading a missions-minded Sunday School department and leading the mission elements of the church’s Vacation Bible School. Their hearts remain focused on God’s will, though.

“It’s all about His glory,” Jim tearfully concludes. 🙏



In 2019, Jim and Jeannine Carter established The Kingsbury Endowed Scholarship at Southwestern Seminary.

Administration at Southern Methodist University in Dallas and graduated from the U.S. Army War College, Jeannine earned a master’s degree at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. When the couple resettled in their Dallas hometown, it allowed their sons to finish their education at First Baptist Academy, First Baptist Dallas’ school that was based on the downtown Dallas campus at the time.

Jim began working as the controller of the InterFirst Services Corporation, which included 9,000 employees who handled the data and item processing and accounting for all the member banks of InterFirst Bank-Dal-

Convictional Cooperation and Confessional Commitments

Text continued
from page 5

church is using the BFM for its dictionary.

I believe the vast majority of Southern Baptists, myself included, did not in 2000 and do not in 2022 affirm a woman serving as “the pastor”—that is, in the primary office that leads the local church. Indeed, I would not be a member of a church that had a female in such a position of leadership. I am a committed complementarian who holds that God has uniquely gifted men and women for service in His Kingdom but that certain roles of local church leadership are reserved for scripturally qualified men. I am a member of a church that positively affirms our Convention’s adopted statement of faith, and I am privileged to lead the first SBC seminary ever to adopt the BFM as its confession of faith (in 1926) and that requires every member of the faculty and instructional staff to sign the BFM without hesitation or mental reservation.

The BFM established the doctrinal boundaries by which Southern Baptists should expect their entities to operate. I am confident I speak for all my fellow SBC entity heads in affirming this vital function of the BFM. But what Convention entities require with respect to positive affirmation of and strict subscription to the BFM is not and has never been required of local churches to be deemed to be in friendly cooperation with the SBC. This distinction in the nature and function of our polity must not be lost.

While significant, the discussion stemming from Saddleback’s decision regarding women serving as non-senior pastors vis-à-vis the BFM reveals a more fundamental question that must be addressed: what does it mean for the SBC to deem a local church to be “in friendly cooperation”?

Since we have in the BFM a Convention-adopted statement of faith, some have described the SBC as a confessional convention. While Southern Baptists are indeed a confessional people, the term “confessional convention” can be subject to misunderstanding and misappropriation. Many Southern Baptists would be surprised to learn that a local church is not

required to affirm explicitly the BFM statement to be deemed a cooperating church. Article III of the SBC Constitution, which defines what it means to be a cooperating church, simply states that the church must have “a faith and practice which closely identifies with the Convention’s adopted statement of faith.” The linchpin of cooperation in the SBC may well be three words: “closely identifies with.”

As I proposed in my amendment offered during debate on the Credentials Committee’s recommendation, I believe the question of how closely identified a local church’s faith and practice must be with the BFM is the real underlying matter that deserves careful consideration. Serious discussions are needed about what it means to be Southern Baptist, and how close our communion needs to be when it comes to our adopted statement of faith and the unity/diversity of local church faith and practice. The pressing issue regarding women and the “office of pastor” language is not the only area of concern. Upon closer examination, the BFM is potentially being contradicted by a significant number of cooperating SBC churches.

By way of example, every iteration of the BFM (1925, 1963, 2000) has defined scriptural baptism as the immersion of a believer in water and that as a church ordinance it is prerequisite to church membership and the Lord’s Supper (see Article VII). Yet, there appears to be an ever-growing number of cooperating churches that allow all self-identified believers admittance to the Lord’s Table irrespective of baptismal condition or church membership, a practice often labeled “open communion” (in contrast to the BFM position of “close” or “closed communion”). The words of the BFM are unambiguously clear, however, and mean that any church that practices “open communion” does so in contradiction to the Convention’s adopted statement of faith.

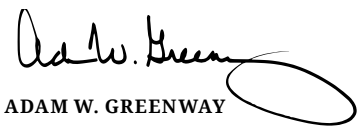
“Open communion” is hardly the only doctrinal deviation from the BFM present in SBC life today. The list expands rapidly when considering churches who admit into membership those who have not been scripturally baptized (e.g., “open baptism” and “alien immersion”), multi-site churches, corporate-board-governed churches, churches which embrace certain forms of dispensationalism, others who hold to original guilt and condemnation in Adam,

not to mention “free grace” theology, strict Sabbatarianism, and other points of debatable faith and practice across the SBC church landscape.

If the description of the SBC as a “confessional convention” means that the SBC should require strict conformity to the words of the BFM to deem a church “in friendly cooperation,” then the task before the Credentials Committee is exponentially greater than just Saddleback Church. Countless churches would need to be disfellowshipped from our Convention.

Undoubtedly, there are and will always be some SBC churches that I would not join as a member because I believe they are in error when it comes to certain matters of doctrine and polity. But as a Baptist by conviction, I also believe that just because I consider another SBC church to be wrong does not automatically mean I think they should be out. Moreover, the enumerated examples of disqualifying church acts in Article III of the SBC Constitution (homosexual behavior, sexual abuse, and ethnic discrimination) are matters Southern Baptists have agreed are clearly sinful, not merely wrong. Such a distinction might be a helpful blueprint for the Credentials Committee moving forward.

The 1994 Presidential Theological Study Committee report included these words worth repeating today, “We affirm the wisdom of convictional cooperation in carrying out our witness to the world and decry all efforts to weaken our denomination and its cooperative ministries.” In this era of cultural chaos and moral confusion, may we Southern Baptists defend vigorously our theological and ecclesiological commitments, but reject attempts to narrow further the confessional parameters that define our cooperation. 🏠


ADAM W. GREENWAY
President



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