



Southwestern

NEWS

ISSUE 01
Winding Road
to Pastorate



Darin Wood follows winding road to pastorate

After many stops and connections to Seminary Hill, distinguished alumnus finds fruitful ministry in Midland.

Collaboration with Taiwanese Baptists

Southwestern faculty inspired and equipped the president of the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary.

Pursuing the high notes, one student at a time

Marc Brown's contagious kindness and love for music is perfect fit for leading Southwestern A Capella group.

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Southwestern

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Hopeful steps toward institutional stability

In the fall of 2022, the Southwestern community recognized in a new way the need to acknowledge our deep dependence on our great Triune God. On a regular basis for the past two years, Southwesterners have gathered to pray and to ask God for wisdom from on high, for divine provision and protection, and for a renewed spirit of unity in our shared efforts to advance the Southwestern mission. The Lord in His kindness has heard our cries for help. We gratefully acknowledge that whatever good has taken place at Southwestern over the past two years has come as a gift of God's grace.

Markers for which to give thanks

We offer thanks for positive enrollment patterns with increases in the overall headcount and credit hours each of the past two years. We are also excited to see the fall 2024 enrollment increase by more than 70 students over the previous year.

Likewise, we give thanks for the renewed commitment to institutional stewardship and the resulting steps toward institutional stability. As we conclude the 2023-24 fiscal year, we rejoice to see measurable markers of improvement in the increase in total net assets, in the increase of operational revenue and the decrease of operational expenses, in the strengthening of the seminary's cash reserves, in the elimination of short-term debt, and the reduction of longer-term debt. While ongoing work must continue in all financial areas, the remarkable improvements over the past two years are a testament to God's faithfulness. The Lord has used many of you as His instruments to help Southwestern during this time through your generous gifts to the seminary, for which we are ever thankful.

A special year to celebrate

In 2025, Southwestern will join with Southern Baptists across the country to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the initiation of the Cooperative Program and the affirmation of the Baptist Faith and Message. The 1925 year was also the time that Southwestern Seminary was welcomed as

an official entity of the SBC. An article in this issue of the Southwestern News expands on these three historic developments and the ongoing implications for our current work on Seminary Hill.

Reminders of our heritage in this way also encourage us to reflect on the pioneering and innovative spirit that characterized Southwestern from 1908 to 1925. During those years, Southwestern established the first chair of evangelism,



We gratefully acknowledge that whatever good has taken place at Southwestern over the past two years has come as a gift of God's grace.

as well as the first schools of Christian education and church music.

As we think about and pray for Southwestern's future, we simultaneously need to reflect on the wonderful heritage that is ours, giving thanks for those who have shaped this institution in such important ways. This spirit of innovation will once again be needed in the days to come to help move Southwestern from institutional stability to genuine institutional health.

Campus culture and the importance of the new core values

Given the number of complex challenges over the past two years, the importance of strength-

ening the campus culture has taken on a new priority. The genuine embrace and concerted efforts to live out the meaning of the seminary's six core values have been of great importance. On a daily basis, administrators, faculty, staff, and students seek to live and serve in a way that reflects Southwestern's commitment to being grace filled, Christ centered, scripturally grounded, confessionally guided, student focused, and globally engaged.

More progress is needed in all aspects of our shared work, but we offer thanks to God for the joyful, prayerful, and thankful ways that people all across the Southwestern community carry out their teaching, learning, and service. In this regard, we have selected 1 Corinthians 15:58 as this year's theme verse, trusting the Lord to help us understand afresh that our labors across the campus matter, even as we trust the Lord to strengthen our resolve to remain steadfast and immovable, while abounding and excelling in the work of the Lord.

Moving forward together

By God's grace, Southwestern Seminary is in a very different place than was the case just a few months ago. Led by our Board of Trustees, the seminary community has recommitted itself to the Southwestern mission, undergirded with prayer and a renewed sense of unity. Even as the institution seeks to navigate the ongoing accreditation, financial, and legal challenges, Southwesterners are working together, with God's gracious enablement, toward a hopeful and blessed future for this institution that we love. We invite you to join us in this journey through your prayers, gifts, encouragement, and support. Together, we will trust God's sufficient grace for each and every day.

Faithfully,

David S. Dockery, president
O. S. Hawkins, chancellor

FIRST LOOK





PLAY BALL!
President Dockery leads opening prayer before throwing out first pitch in annual Faculty/Staff vs. Students softball game.

Dockery urges conviction, cooperation, collaboration among Southwesterners during Convocation

PRESIDENT DAVID S. DOCKERY called on Southern Baptists and the seminary community to recommit to conviction, cooperation, and collaboration as he looked toward the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Dallas next June during the fall Convocation service at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Aug. 27.

The Dallas SBC will be the centennial anniversary of the 1925 annual meeting in which three historic actions closely connected to Southwestern were taken: adoption of the Baptist Faith and Message confessional statement, creation of the Cooperative Program, and transfer of Southwestern's ownership to the SBC. Southwestern's second president, L.R. Scarborough, played a key role in each matter, Dockery noted.

"Let us reflect together on the ongoing implications of those three important decisions 100 years ago in 1925, doing so with remembrance, thanksgiving, and recommitment," Dockery said. Dockery announced Southwestern's fall semester enrollment of 2,821 already exceeds the 2023 fall enrollment total of 2,782, although this fall's data will not be final until later in the semester.

"For each one of these students, those who are on campus and online, all 2,821 of you, we give thanks to God and thank you for your confidence in the faculty and staff of Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College," he said.

In remembering Southwestern's beginnings with the SBC, Dockery said Southwestern and

Southern Baptists need to return to that spirit of conviction, cooperation, and collaboration. At times, Southwestern has experienced an imbalance in those three commitments, but Dockery said the Southwestern community has experienced its greatest effectiveness when all three are emphasized.

Just as the Southern Baptist Convention is made up of thousands of churches from cities



We need conviction and cooperation, boundaries and bridges, and a Holy Spirit-enabled sense of collaboration to guide us in the days to come.

and states across the nation with memberships of diverse backgrounds and cultures, so the Southwestern community is also diverse and should also be united in serving Christ and each other, Dockery said.

"We want people to look at Southwestern and see how they love one another," Dockery

said. "Look at how well they work and serve together. Look at how they think of others as more important than themselves.' We long for that kind of spirit to permeate this campus."

While looking back at Southwestern's heritage and 100 years as part of the SBC, Dockery also said the institution is looking ahead to the 2025 SBC annual meeting, which will be held in nearby Dallas next June, and the continual task of equipping the next generation of men and women who will carry the Gospel to a lost world.

"We need conviction and cooperation, boundaries and bridges, and a Holy Spirit-enabled sense of collaboration to guide us in the days to come," Dockery said.

—M.W.



Faculty installed in academic chairs, professors sign confession, new faculty introduced during Convocation

THE SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY COMMUNITY gathered on Aug. 27 for fall convocation, which included the installation of four new academic chairs and the new Texas Baptist College dean, two faculty signings of the Book of Confessional Heritage, and the introduction of two new faculty members.

The recognitions and new academic chair installations began with O.S. Hawkins as the L.R. Scarborough Chair of Evangelism (“Chair of Fire”), the oldest academic chair at the seminary. Hawkins is a two-time Southwestern alumnus and was named a Distinguished Alumnus in 2000 and currently serves as the seminary’s chancellor and senior professor of pastoral ministry and evangelism in the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions and School of Theology.

Joseph R. Crider was installed as the James C. McKinney Chair of Church Music. Crider received degrees from Bowling Green State University and the University of Northern Colorado. Crider has served the seminary since 2019 as dean of the School of Church Music and Worship and professor of church music and worship.

Jonathan K. Okinaga was installed in the Hope for the Heart Chair of Biblical Counseling. Okinaga received his Bachelor of Arts from Vanguard University and is a two-time alumnus of Southwestern. He has served Southwestern since 2019, as an adjunct professor and now assistant professor of biblical counseling in the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries.

Lilly H. Park was installed in the Hultgren Chair of Ministerial Counseling. Park holds degrees from the University of Maryland, Master’s University, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. She serves as associate professor of biblical counseling in the Terry School.

Carl J. Bradford was installed as dean of Texas Baptist College. Bradford received his bachelor’s degree from Xavier University before becoming a two-time alumnus of Southwestern. Bradford has served since 2018 and is currently assistant professor of evangelism and the Malcolm R. and Melba L. McDow Chair of Evangelism.

Two Terry School faculty were also invited to sign the seminary’s Book of Confessional Heritage, which contains the Baptist Faith and



Message, the seminary’s statement of faith. Amy Crider, associate professor of foundation of education and the director of the Center for Writing Excellence, and Okinaga signed the book.

The new faculty introductions included Kevin Rodgers, associate professor of missions for the Texas Baptist College, and Christian Rata, professor of the Old Testament for the School of Theology.

Rodgers holds degrees from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has previously served as a church planter, theological educator, and Outbound Team Leader for the International Mission Board in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Born in Romania, Christian Rata holds degrees from the University of California San Diego, Corban University, and the University of Toronto. Beginning in 2006, Rata was a professor at Torch Trinity Graduate College in Seoul, Korea, where he also served as pastor of Seoul Union Church beginning in 2017.

—R.C.



Dockery tells trustees Southwestern has moved to 'time of hopefulness'



SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL Seminary has moved “from instability to stability, from a time of crisis and challenge to a time of hopefulness ... only because of God’s goodness and grace to this institution,” President David S. Dockery told the board of trustees Oct. 23 in its fall meeting, during which trustees approved two task team reports, elected and promoted a faculty member, and participated in a campus prayer walk with faculty, students, and staff.

“We started 2024 in a good place,” Dockery told trustees in his report to the board, noting key financial areas of improvement from 2022 to 2024, such as increases in total tuition, unrestricted gifts, and operating revenue while lowering operating expenses and eliminating short-term debt. Cash reserves increased from \$1.7 million in 2022 with a short-term debt of \$4.2 million, to more than \$12 million cash on hand with no short-term debt in 2024, he said.

“Ultimately our report today, Mr. Chairman, concludes with four words that summarize the heart of the Southwestern campus: thanks be to God,” Dockery said.

Echoing Dockery’s affirmation of those who have given to the seminary in recent years, trustees unanimously approved a resolution to express “gratitude to the donors of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for their responsiveness to the Lord’s leading and their abundant generosity during the past two years.”

In his written report to trustees, Dockery also pointed to enrollment gains in the last two years: non-duplicating headcount, 3,403 to 3,586, annual credit hours taught, 33,253 to 35,984, and traditional full-time equivalent, 1,375 to 1,471.

In his report to the trustees, board Chairman Jonathan Richard commended Dockery for “two years of commendable service,” noting the institution has “flourished” under his leadership.

Dockery “has led us to a place of financial stability that we had not dreamed was possible 24 months ago,” Richard said. “... I give glory to

God for that and thanks to Dr. Dockery for his willingness to be used by God in such a way that we have made such tremendous strides toward financial stability.”

Richard also expressed appreciation to the trustees for “being so engaged and willing to ask valuable questions and contribute to healthy discussion.”

After ten months, the Space and Property Utilization Task Team issued a report that was recommended for adoption by the Executive Committee and unanimously approved by the board. The task team was chaired by trustee Mike Bussey and Travis Trawick, vice president for administration, effectiveness, and strategy, and composed of trustees, administrators, and outside consultants.

The approved recommendations were to:

- Maintain the seminary’s commitment “to serving both online and residential students from the existing campus.”
- “Explore innovative ways to gain efficiencies of its existing space” and “recognize the need to consider repurposing some campus facilities, which are currently underutilized and in need of updates and renovations.”
- Explore “opportunities for increasing event availability awareness.”
- Authorize the seminary’s realtor “to seek potential buyers for underutilized and/or unsustainable property who will directly or indirectly enhance quality of life for students and contribute to the revitalization of the neighborhood surrounding the seminary.”
- Remain steadfast in prayer “seeking the Lord for wisdom and direction necessary to ensure that the seminary will continue to serve in a faithful manner both the current generation of students as well as those yet to come.”

Dockery said he believes the report and recommendations have “opportunity to strengthen the seminary for years to come.”

The report also recommended that periodic

audits of the space on campus be conducted to assist in the ongoing plans of the seminary.

Trustees also approved unanimously a new Board Policy Manual and revised bylaws as recommended by the Executive Committee, which received a report from a trustee task team appointed in October 2023 by Richard “to guide the work of the board and the seminary administration in their shared efforts to set and implement policy and to advance the mission of the seminary.” The new manual was “initiated to strengthen the work of the board as well as to provide responses to concerns” raised by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges resulting in warnings being placed on the seminary’s accreditation.

Trustees also approved unanimously the election of Kevin W. Rodgers to the faculty and promotion to the rank of professor of missions. Rodgers and his wife, Suzie, served the International Mission Board as missionaries in Sub-Saharan Africa for 27 years before returning to the United States to join the Southwestern faculty. He holds degrees from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

On Oct. 22, trustees participated with faculty, students, and staff in a campus prayer walk that featured tables of the various schools, departments, and offices and prayer points for each, available on the seminary’s prayer page.

“I know that I am deeply grateful for the prayers of so many throughout, not just today and not just this week, but my life and ministry,” Richard said. “And I am humbled to know that this seminary is praying for us in the same way that we are praying for them.”

—M. W.

Carl Trueman lectures on how churches can guard truth in a changing culture

FOR THE FALL 2024 DAY-HIGGINBOTHAM Lectures held Oct. 17-18, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary welcomed historical theologian, church historian, and former pastor Carl Trueman to present two lectures with the topics of “Blessed are the Transgressors” and “The Culture of Confessions.”

Trueman, who serves as professor of religion and biblical studies at Grove City College in Pennsylvania, said he was grateful for the opportunity to address the drastic changes in the secular world.

“One of the things that has gripped my imagination over the last couple of years is not so much why our world is becoming so secular in the typical sense of the word, but why it is becoming so exaltedly so,” Trueman began his Oct. 17 lecture, “Blessed are the Transgressors.”

Trueman walked through the centuries that saw humanity transition from the agrarian lifestyle and the adherence to one religion, to the arrival of technology that resulted in the ability to choose where to live, what profession to pursue, and eventually what religion to follow, if any.

Trueman said with this new ability to choose, the question of what it means to be human began to emerge. A question today’s secular world still struggles to answer, Trueman pointed out.

Trueman said today it has become acceptable to transgress social norms, systems of morality, and human nature in order to show authenticity and individuality.

“Why is it that we now live in a world where boasting and exalting in what would typically have been considered wrongdoing has become a virtue?” Trueman asked, listing examples such as abortion and transgenderism. “Why is it that transgression, if you like, is now something in which we are to glory?”

Trueman said in his Oct. 18 lecture that it is



One of the things that has gripped my imagination over the last couple of years is not so much why our world is becoming so secular in the typical sense of the word, but why it is becoming so exaltedly so.

important for believers and churches to stay grounded in the Scriptures, creeds, and confessions that focus on the unchanging truths of God.

Trueman noted that while visiting the campus, he saw that one of Southwestern’s core values is “Confessionally Guided.”

“What that means, of course, is you have a state-

ment of faith somewhere that you consider a summarizing, central, key message of Scripture that guides and shapes everything that goes on on campus here,” Trueman explained. “... It is not something that stands above Scripture. It is something that summarizes Scripture, and is, in theory at least, correctable in light of Scripture.”

For church members and leaders wanting to move their churches in a confessional direction, Trueman advised careful consideration of the songs sung in worship, the preaching, and the examples lived out by the pastors and elders in the church, since the congregation will often mirror them in how they speak and act.

Trueman said he believes the upcoming years will be critical for churches, and having statements of faith that clearly express the church’s confessions of belief will prove useful.

“The church needs good intellectual leadership, because the church needs to catechize her own people before she can address the wider culture,” Trueman said while meeting with doctoral students between lectures.

“The church is a culture,” he said. “And we need to think first and foremost about the rising generation within the church. And that means we need good thinkers working in all different areas of church life.”

Trueman’s lectures in their entirety are available on Southwestern’s Equip The Called website.

—M. W.



Welcome Week greets new, returning students

NEW AND RETURNING SOUTHWESTERN Baptist Theological Seminary and Texas Baptist College students were welcomed back to campus before the first day of classes on Aug. 19 as faculty and student organizations met with students at a variety of orientations and other events during Welcome Week.

“It’s so good to see each and every one of you—welcome,” said President David S. Dockery as he addressed students during New Student Orientation on Friday, adding the seminary leadership had prayed for that day and were excited and energized by the students’ arrival.

During the SWBTS and TBC new student orientation, new students had the opportunity to meet and eat with faculty during the Welcome & Connect Lunch, while gathering information from Student Life and other student services available on campus.

Clara Wangui has lived the past 12 years in Dallas after having been born and raised in Kenya. She attended a preview day and tour on campus and said she came to love the culture on campus, how intimate it felt, and how the faculty builds relationships with their students in order to help them in their goal of following God’s calling. She is now beginning her intercultural studies degree in the 5-year program, hoping to use that to take her back to Kenya to help in a church plant or through a foundation.

“I’m just open to whatever God calls me to do,” Wangui said.

James Cummins, a SWBTS police officer and pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Weatherford, Texas, said it is important to him to be grounded in sound doctrine. This led him to pursue a Master of Divinity in the School of Theology,

which Cummins said he believes will help him in his theology, studies, and preaching.

“Southwestern is known worldwide for its theology program and my former pastors were graduates of SWBTS,” Cummins said. “I believe that the Lord gave me this opportunity, and now it is up to me to make the most out of it, to glorify Him.”

Ryan Hennig moved to Texas a year ago and already has a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction and spent time working in the secular world before becoming a believer, when he said everything changed. He worked at Colorado Christian University for a time, but felt God was leading him into a different realm.

“Counseling kept knocking on my heart,” Hennig said.

After hearing about Southwestern for the first time and exploring the institution’s options, Hennig said he knew the Master of Divinity in biblical counseling was what he needed.

Welcome Week ended with the church fair and block party in the Riley Center on Friday evening, in which approximately 500 people participated. Representatives from area churches were present, sharing information with students looking for a congregation to join or at which to serve.

—Staff





Southwestern turns focus to the nations during Global Missions Week

SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL Seminary celebrated and encouraged its core value of being globally engaged with a Global Missions Emphasis week, Sep. 3-6, which included a variety of opportunities for students to meet missionaries, hear from evangelism and missions faculty, and learn of opportunities for them to join in missions.

"This is a very important week for our community as we stop and reflect upon the Southwestern heritage of commitment to taking the Gospel to the nations and renewing that commitment together," Southwestern President David S. Dockery said while introducing chapel Tuesday, Sept. 3. "... We give thanks to God for how he

has used this institution in days past to prepare men and women to go into every continent and take the Gospel to the unreached people groups."

Kevin Rodgers, associate professor of missions for the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions, spoke in the first chapel of the week about the heart of God for the missionary task, warning his listeners that not every sentiment of burden for the lost is a calling from the Lord to be a missionary.

"Loving the lost is not the right reason to go to the ends of the earth," Rodgers said, saying in his years with the International Mission Board (IMB) he saw numerous people serve for the wrong reasons. "We go because God commands us

to go, and we go for His glory. ... It has to begin with God's glory, not with your own sentiment or sentimentality. God's glory is the reason we go, and God's glory is the reason we stay."

Gordon Fort, senior ambassador for the IMB and graduate of Southwestern, led the Thursday morning chapel service with a focus on the power of prayer, saying he believes prayer is "the most underutilized weapon in the Great Commission arsenal." He noted that people do not have to know another language or have a visa or passport to appeal to God on behalf of the peoples of the earth.

The World Missions Center and Student Life also hosted the Night of the Nations event, where approximately 220 students got to taste food and hear music from a variety of cultures and also participate in fundraising efforts for upcoming Southwestern student mission trips. Almost \$800 was raised during the one-night event.

SWBTS' Women on Mission and the IMB also held events during the week, while missionaries visited classrooms all around the campus to speak about their experiences, and also joined students for lunch in the café and for times of questions about what it looks like to serve as missionaries. Meetings were available to those interested in learning more about participating in short- or long-term mission trips.

—Staff





Faculty panel discusses Southwestern's 'globally engaged' core value

SOUTHWESTERN SEMINARY CONTINUED its emphasis on missions during its Sept. 10 chapel service, which featured a panel of SWBTS and Texas Baptist College (TBC) faculty discussing the seminary's globally engaged core value.

The panel featured Dean Sieberhagen, interim dean of the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism, director of the World Missions Center, and the Charles F. Stanley Chair for the Advancement of Global Christianity; Daniel Sanchez, distinguished professor emeritus of missions; Michael Copeland, associate director of the World Missions Center and associate professor of missions; John Mark Terry, affiliate professor of evangelism and missions; and Kevin Rodgers, associate professor of missions. Chandler Snyder, vice president for institutional relations and instructor of missions, served as panel moderator.

W. Madison Grace, provost and vice president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology, talked about Southwestern as "a globally engaged community," adding that the mission field could be down the street or on the other side of the world. The globally engaged core value is among six core values of the institution, which also include grace filled, Christ centered, scripturally grounded, confessionally guided, and student focused.

Grace read Matthew 28, noting that it commands Christ's followers to fulfill the Great Commission.

"This is why we do what we do," he said. "This is why we come to be equipped, to become effective ministers of the Gospel."

Snyder said the panel discussion resulted from feedback from students at the spring town hall meeting. He said students wanted to hear about faculty members' experiences and how they shaped the way they teach and lead in the classroom.

He noted the missions focus of the panel discussion was building on "the incredible, bold" Global Missions Week that the seminary

observed the previous week, and added the panel participants had "over 100 years of [missions] field experience."

Copeland spoke of the importance of prayer in being globally engaged. Christians are admonished to pray, he said, adding, "there's no way to know where He's sending us if we're not listening."

Rodgers, a new member of the seminary faculty, said he has been "encouraged to see the way that this community is actually engaged globally, even here within Fort Worth, and so many people are working with refugees, working with people who are from all over the world, here in Fort Worth, and then going all around the world. So I think it's the total package is what you should be after in your daily life: your study of God's Word, your devotional life, and even how you're growing as a believer."

Snyder said the formalization of the globally engaged core value started about two years ago. Sieberhagen explained that "we looked at some of our legacy, and from the very start of Southwestern we've been known as the Great Commission seminary. Dr. [Robert] Naylor is famous for saying that you can go to any time zone of the world and find a Southwesterner serving on the mission field," referencing the seminary's fifth president.

The seminary also has students from all over the world in its classrooms, Sieberhagen said, adding that, "Every single classroom is a globally engaged classroom." He also noted that any program SWBTS offers is needed on the mission field.

"One of the greatest needs we have on the field right now is for theological educators," he said, adding that Old Testament professors on the mission field also are scarce.

"Any program you're in, we need you on the field," Sieberhagen said.

Sanchez talked about Southwestern's Global Leadership Development (GLD) endeavor. He

said that 12 years ago, SWBTS was getting requests for help from seminaries in other countries. "We now have a consortium, which is a voluntary association of seminaries where they share resources and encourage one another," he said. The consortium includes seminaries in Latin America, Europe, and other countries.

"We're working with them, many of them in the shadow of a war that's going on. But people are responding to the Gospel, and they are wanting to train more people," Sanchez said.

Asked about the changes in how missionaries are sent, Terry said most missionaries previously went to "open countries," where they could enter on a missionary visa. Today, he said, about 75 percent of the missionaries appointed by the International Mission Board are going into "closed," or high security, countries.

"But those countries are essential for the progress of the Kingdom, because that's where we find the greatest lostness," Terry said.

As the talk turned to upcoming mission trips the seminary is offering, two students were brought on stage to talk about trips they have recently taken. Cameron Wormack, a student in the 5-year program, spoke of sharing the Gospel with a refugee on a recent mission trip to Germany. Nate Croft, a Master of Divinity student, talked about how the Lord answered prayer on a mission trip to South Asia. He said the group interacted with 50 people, and two people came to Christ during the mission trip.

The panelists also advised students on how to do mission work, noting they can come to faculty members for help in getting started.

"So Romans 10 says, 'If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord,'" Sieberhagen said. "If He's Lord, then give Him your yes, just give Him your yes. Say, 'Lord, if and when you call. I'm not fighting. I'm not arguing. You have my yes. I will go.'"

—K.G.

Mission Teams share love of Christ around the world

STUDENTS OF SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST Theological Seminary (SWBTS) used their time away from class during the summer months and the fall reading days to participate in mission work in other states and even other countries.

Germany

Seven SWBTS and Texas Baptist College (TBC) students and two faculty traveled to Cologne, Germany, during the summer to share the love of Christ with refugees in that city.

Dean Sieberhagen, interim dean of the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions, and TBC Dean Carl Bradford led the students in working with refugees from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, and Turkey.

Sieberhagen led training seminars for students on ways to reach refugees and teamed with Bradford during the second half of the trip to train refugees who had come to Christ. Team members also used volleyball games, time in parks, and prayer walks to minister to people they met.

“There’s a lot of hope for missions,” said Noah Turrubiate, an intercultural studies student at TBC from Anahuac, Texas, noting that missionaries are reaching international people not just in their native countries, but it “seems that God is even sending the people to us also, ... allowing for easier access for us Christians to reach them. So there’s always a hope for a way for the Gospel to be given.”

Norman, Oklahoma

Prior to leading a team of students on a mission trip to the University of Oklahoma (OU), Micah

Englehart, associate director of Student Life at SWBTS, prayed that God would allow the seminary students to “enter the harvest there and sow many Gospel seeds that produce fruit.”

The team of four TBC students, led by Englehart and Alex Miller, director of Student Life at the seminary, saw eight people come to Christ during a three-day mission trip to the university in Norman, Okla.

The TBC students set up at different locations on the OU campus with a large chalkboard bearing the words “Tell Me Your Story.” They asked OU students to write one word that described their life story, which they said opened up opportunities for Gospel conversations.

Joshua Williams, a Christian studies student, spoke highly of the OU Baptist Collegiate Ministry members, noting they “made sharing the Gospel look like a lifestyle. Going on the trip, I thought of evangelism as a ‘check the box’ type of thing. Seeing other students making evangelism a priority in their daily routine has challenged me to share my faith more with anyone willing to listen.”

Boston, Massachusetts

During fall reading days in October, Ashley Allen, assistant professor of women’s ministries and assistant to the president, led a group of four female students to Boston where, in order to get an idea of what life as a full-time missionary might be like, they acted as volunteers in service to Send Relief’s Boston Ministry Center.

While in Boston, Kristen Patrick, Nietalii Vero, Mimi Asita, and Lynne Brisco* partici-

“

The boldness they have really encouraged me to be more bold and be more confident.

pated in the Friendship, Beloved, and Geneva initiatives created by the Send Relief. Each of these initiatives provides opportunities to serve the homeless, victims of human trafficking and sexual abuse, and refugees, including a Venezuelan family the Southwestern team was able to minister to that had been in the United States for just a couple weeks.

The team also visited “The Well” coffee shop in the heart of downtown Boston, one of Send Relief’s main points of outreach in the city. Vero, a Master of Worship Leadership student, was inspired by the mission of the shop in what could be a hostile environment towards Christianity.

“It was very encouraging, how they work,” Vero said, “to minister [to] the people who come and get coffee. ... The boldness they have really encouraged me to be more bold and be more confident.”

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

—Staff



Naylor receives M.E. Dodd Award

FOR HER DECADES OF DEDICATED missionary service, Rebekah Naylor, distinguished professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, was awarded the M.E. Dodd Award by Union University at the alumni dinner during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Indianapolis in June.

For 50 years, Naylor has fostered the growth and mission of Bangalore Baptist Hospital in Bangalore, India, serving as a surgeon while living there for 30 years and continuing to visit regularly since retirement. Naylor also served briefly as an interim teacher in the Southwestern Department of Surgery at UT Dallas and has been the leader

of health strategies work for the International Mission Board since 2010.

Naylor is the first woman to receive the award, which is presented annually to a Southern Baptist for their service for the SBC.

"M.E. Dodd was the father of the Cooperative Program, and obviously, therefore very denominationally aligned, so to receive an award that was named for a person like that, and the purpose of the award was denominational service ... was very affirming," Naylor said, describing herself as a loyal Southern Baptist who benefited from the Cooperative Program as a an IMB missionary. "To receive the award that has that name and that purpose was a very special honor, because it represented my loyalties."

At the award presentation, Ray Van Neste, Union's vice president for university ministries, expressed the university's gratitude for her many contributions to Southern Baptists over the decades, Union noted in a press release.

"Dr. Naylor has been a faithful ambassador for Christ for decades," Van Neste said. "And her service to Southern Baptists on the mission field has inspired countless others to join her ranks."

—R.C.



Students helped during annual Supply Day

SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY and Texas Baptist College students roamed the aisles set up in the Recreation and Aerobics Center (RAC) in search of items to help them settle into their new "home" on Seminary Hill. The annual event known as Supply Day, held Aug. 14, featured a giveaway of furniture, bedding, towels, housewares, and other items benefiting international and other students on the Fort Worth campus.

Approximately 150 students and their families were served through Supply Day, which was organized by the seminary's Office of International Student Services (ISS) and co-sponsored by the Women's Missionary Union of the Tarrant Baptist Association (TBA-WMU). Several area churches donated gently used items for the event.

Naomi Key, TBA-WMU director, has helped with the event for several years, noting that it benefits all students. She noted that international students "come in from overseas with one suitcase," adding that American students may have



already been living in an apartment but still may be missing some things.

"It really is exciting to see them light up" when they find something for their apartments or rooms, she said.

Vithoria Sippert, from Brazil, said she first came to the event in 2017 as a single student pursuing an undergraduate degree at Texas Baptist

College. Now married with two children, she is pursuing a Master of Theological Studies (MTS) degree at Southwestern Seminary.

"Now I get to bring my family and find things for my family," she said. She found comforters, kitchen items, and more, adding that it would make a big difference for her family.

—K.G.

'Equip the Called' website eases access to Southwestern ministry resources

A NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED this month brings together scholarly Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) publications and websites, such as the *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, *Preaching Source*, and *Artistic Theologian*, with other seminary resources previously available on different platforms. The new site, "Equip the Called" (ETC), creates a more visible and accessible platform for established and new faculty-led content and seminary resources.

The site, equipthecalled.com, houses a library of ministry content and resources including blogs, preaching tools, academic articles, and more. Jaclyn Parrish, director of marketing in the seminary's Office of Communications, spearheaded the project, which has been more than a year in the making.

"The project began by consulting with our provost and faculty stakeholders," Parrish said. "The idea was presented to them for their discussion and consideration, allowing time for each professor to give careful thought to how this move might affect their work." This allowed the team ample time to not only address potential concerns or pitfalls, but to also discuss ideas for new content, she added.

Content moved to the ETC website includes:

Southwestern Journal of Theology (SWJT)

Volumes 48-66 of the historic academic journal of Southwestern Seminary have migrated from

the seminary site, with plans to continue posting additional past and future volumes on ETC. SWJT is the oldest Southern Baptist theological academic journal still in publication today.

Preaching Source

This ministry resource includes a library of articles, Sermon Starters, Sermon Structures, videos and podcasts of sermons (including historical footage and audio from SWBTS chapels), videos of conferences (including footage from events such as the Text-Driven Preaching Conference and the Expository Preaching Workshop), and more.

Artistic Theologian

All 11 volumes of the academic journal and the blog for the School of Church Music and Worship are on the ETC site.

Southwestern News

A total of 51 issues of Southwestern's flagship magazine, dating from 2008 to the present, have been added to ETC, with plans to add previous issues when possible.

Other Content

While serving as the new home to these resources, the ETC site also provides a live portal for Southwesterners to attend and participate in Southwesterners' Forum, held monthly during the fall and spring semesters, connecting Southwestern alumni with seminary professors to address current topics in ministry. Video-on-

demand episodes will be available about a week later as video and podcast content.

The forum, an initiative launched in 2023 by the seminary's alumni engagement team, completed its first season in May, with several episodes for the fall 2024 already released.

An alumni portal with on-ramps to alumni benefits, live online events, and upcoming in-person events is another feature of the ETC site.

Additional content on ETC includes videos of seminary chapel services as well as videos and podcasts of Ministry Now, a previous series of interviews with Southwestern Seminary faculty.

"If you've enjoyed and been edified by articles, podcasts, or videos from these SWBTS projects, then you'll be happy to hear that this site will make that content even easier to find, and there's more coming," Parrish said.

A new blog on Equip the Called features articles and resources from seminary faculty.

To build the website, the Office of Communications worked with Interactive Supply Company (ISC), based on its extensive portfolio "as well as our shared faith and evangelical beliefs," Parrish said.

Next came the design phase of working with ISC and the Communications' graphic designers crafting the look, feel, and functionality of the ETC site.

"We wanted a design that would be familiar to our Southwestern family, but also distinct from our main website," Parrish said. They also needed a site design that would make navigating the many content pieces and publications intuitive and user-friendly, she added.

Once the website structure was complete, the team worked with ISC to ensure that each content piece was successfully migrated and placed in its proper spot on the ETC site.

"Imagine the digital equivalent of taking thousands of books from eight different libraries, transporting them across town in a thunderstorm, and placing them in perfect order in a new building," Parrish said. "That's about what it took!"

Parrish believes the most exciting part still lies ahead.

"We now have a place where our faculty members can publish new articles, ministry resources, interviews, and more," she noted. "We have already begun discussing ideas for new content with our SWBTS faculty members, and we're honored to provide a new place for their work to live and remain accessible to our Southern Baptist family."

Explore the site at equipthecalled.com.

—K.G.





Southwestern workshop offers guidance on preaching 2 Corinthians

PREACHERS AND STUDENTS WHO ASPIRE to be gathered for the annual Effective Preaching Workshop at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Sept. 30. Five speakers worked through 2 Corinthians, each one bringing their own unique styles and approaches to the task with counsel on how to preach the New Testament book.

"We want this to be a real help for pastors," said Matthew McKellar, professor of preaching, of the annual event. "We want this to be a one-day event where a guy can come and hear a clear, effective teaching on [preaching] through a particular book. He can go home at the end of the day and have a head start on what he needs to do."

This year's workshop undergirded that goal by bringing together pastors and seminary faculty to present a variety of ways to preach through a book of the Bible. McKellar covered the first two chapters of 2 Corinthians.

McKellar emphasized the theme of "comfort in crisis" that faith in the Lord provides, affirming the adequacy of God's comfort for every circumstance in life. He spoke of not being ignorant of affliction, but remembering God's mercy through that inevitable reality.

"In His fatherly love, God meets us in our affliction, like a dad scooping up a child with a skinned knee," McKellar said.

Diving into his passages, Keith Collier, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Groesbeck, Texas, and PhD preaching graduate of Southwestern, focused on the concept of enduring hope, saying, "Through the New Covenant, we



**Through the New Covenant,
we have an enduring hope that
empowers us to endure until
the end.**

have an enduring hope that empowers us to endure until the end."

Collier further described how faith in Christ and hope of an eternal dwelling motivates us and encourages us to remain steadfast, not giving up.

André A. Kirkland earned Master of Divinity and Master of Theology degrees from Southwestern and is a PhD student in practical theology at Mid-America Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn.

"To Paul, the Christian is in Christ," said Kirkland, senior pastor of Mt. Hebron Missionary Baptist Church in Garland, Texas. "And therefore, the

old self of that Christian has died, and he arose a new man."

Clay Smith, senior pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., and PhD candidate in preaching at Southwestern, lectured from chapters 8-10, focusing on the role giving plays in the life of a church, a pastor, and a believer.

Chris Osborne, the former longtime pastor of Central Baptist Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, and professor of preaching and pastoral ministry, concluded the book of 2 Corinthians by pointing out Paul's passion for that church.

"He believed reaching the urban centers of his day would move the Gospel to the rural as well," Osborne said. "If this church is lost to the faith, the impact in the area is profound."

He emphasized the importance of devotion to Christ, warning that the world will challenge that devotion, and said churches today need to rise above the morals and values of their cultural context and avoid complacency and corruption like that which had befallen the Corinthian church.

Osborne also warned against arrogance taking hold of a teacher's heart, while emphasizing the importance of holiness in their own lives.

The next preaching workshop will be held on October 6, 2025.

—R.C.

Southwestern community gathers for prayer during board of trustees meeting

MEMBERS OF SOUTHWESTERN Baptist Theological Seminary's board of trustees gathered with faculty, students, and staff around the fountain in the MacGorman Chapel on Oct. 22 to worship and pray before moving outdoors to continue participating in a campus prayer walk.

Participants walked down a row of tables, representing the various schools, departments, and programs of the institution, including areas such as Admissions, Facilities, the World Missions Center, and many others. Each table provided specific prayer requests to participants.

Trustees expressed gratitude for the opportunity to be involved in the event and stressed the importance of corporate prayer.

"It's amazing to walk in, to sit and to see a list of things that people, that the students have been

praying for us, that the faculty has been praying for us, that Dr. Dockery has had us upon his heart," trustee Nancy Rivera said. "So, we know that we have a job to do, more work to do here, but to know that it's much more than just a job, to know that we've been prayed for and to know that that's what it means here. It's given me so much joy to be a part of it."

Board Chairman Jonathan Richard was delighted to be at the prayer walk, fellowshiping with and praying for the students they as the board of trustees are striving to support.

"That's the exciting part being out here, is just being able to connect with them and find out how we can support them and better engage with them and hear their concerns, and to know that they're praying for us," Richard said of the event

that connected the trustees with the students in a different way.

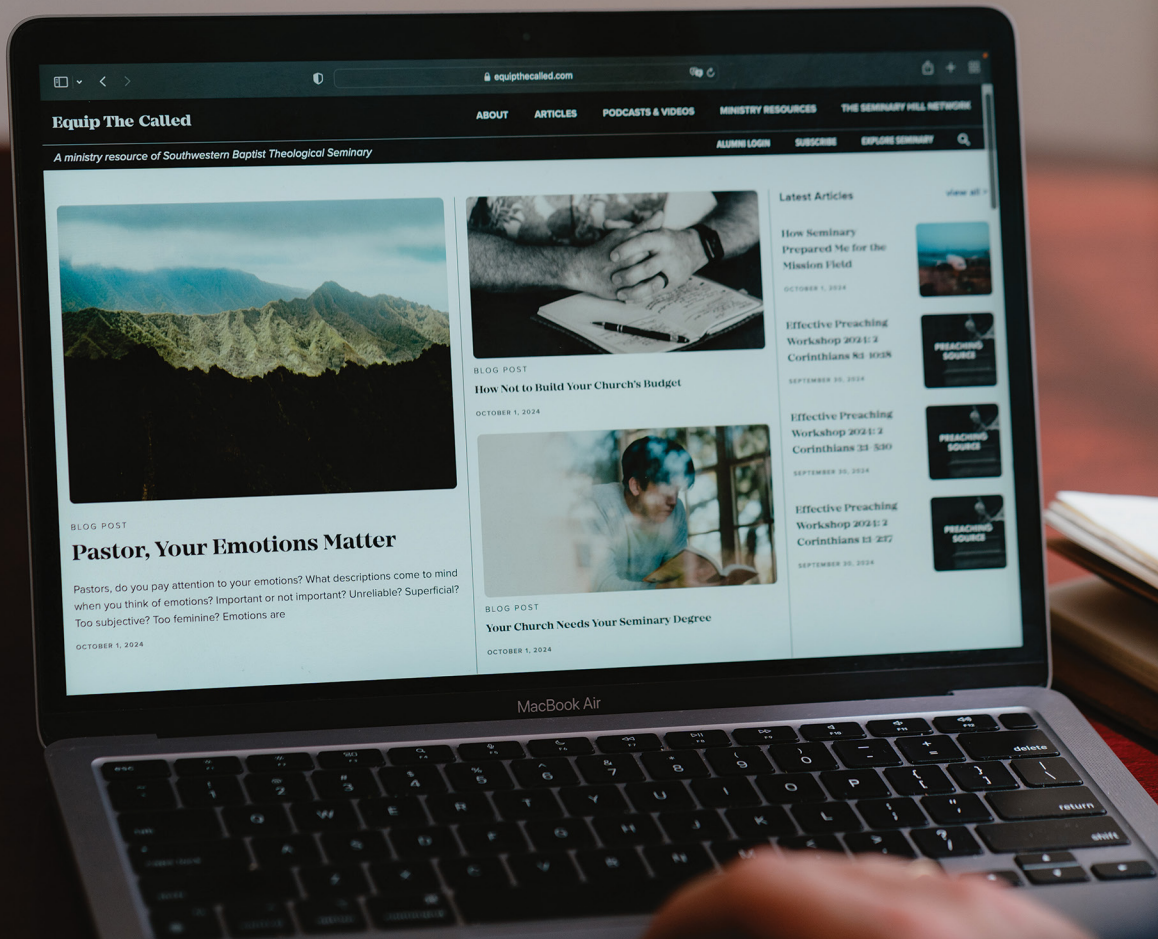
Joshua Grega, one of the newest board members, said the prayer walk served to redirect his focus, from the budgets and other board items they frequently make decisions on, to their reliance on God.

"It's very encouraging to center ourselves, not around man's ideas, first and foremost, but around God's and leaning into him," said Grega.

"... Ultimately, the prayer walk is a thing that embodies the sole source of our sustainability, and that's in God."

—R.C.





Equip The Called

Introducing a new online ministry resource hub for Southwestern alumni, partners, and friends. This website includes original articles, videos, podcasts, and ministry resources from SWBTS, as well as the content libraries from Preaching Source, *Artistic Theologian*, *Southwestern News*, and *Southwestern Journal of Theology*.

[EQUIPTHECALLED.COM](https://equipthecalled.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.

Riley Holland*

Current Master of Arts in Missiology and Certificate in Biblical Counseling student.

"I WAS DRAWN TO Southwestern because of its focus on evangelism and biblical counseling. During my first year, through taking an evangelism class and attending Global Missions Week, I felt that the Lord was calling me to go overseas. I decided to pursue the 2+2 degree in International Church Planting. The 2+2 degree allowed me to study while I was on the field, better equipping me to reach the nations, and actively putting into practice what I was learning. I am thankful for Southwestern giving students like me an opportunity to study as we pursue God's calling."

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

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



STUDENT

ALUM



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

Jenifer Wakefield

*Founder and Executive Director of Restoration Ranch, Texas
MA in Christian Education ('17)
Doctor of Educational Ministry ('22)*

"IT IS DIFFICULT TO PUT INTO WORDS the impact Southwestern has had on my life as a Christ-follower and as a full-time servant of a non-profit organization. Beginning with the certification program, I experienced something special as a student by the way the professors cared for and presented biblical truth. This set me on the path of pursuing the MACE degree, and then completing the doctoral program in 2022. I have never regretted this decision. The SWBTS staff were available to help at all times, but most importantly, their passion for serving Christ and emphasizing excellence to the Lord was compelling as a student. There are still many leaders at SWBTS who have become friends. Today, I know if I need help or advice I can pick up the phone. I love Southwestern and am grateful for the opportunity to train for ministry with the best disciple-makers in the world."

STUDENT



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

JERRY JEWELL

Current Master of Theology student; Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Theology, 2008; Master of Divinity, 2019.

"I HAVE BEEN A STUDENT at Southwestern for over two decades. I had been serving as a pastor for seven years when God called me to seminary. I was unsure why I needed to go, but it was His desire. I had no undergraduate degree, but SWBTS had a diploma plan for men like me. I knew that God had given me a vision to plant a church in my hometown. I completed every church planting class available. In 2005, we planted Living Hope: The Church in The Field. Over the last twenty-three years, I have gained invaluable knowledge and insight in biblical languages, the history and geography of the land of the Bible, pastoral ministry, and church planting. I have made many friends from around the world and still enjoy my time at the beautiful campus. God's plans are much greater than mine."

FACULTY



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

BENNIE C. CASTON JR.

Professor of Voice

"I TEACH IN THE SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC AND WORSHIP because it gives me an opportunity to train men and women to use their voices in a healthy and efficient way as they prepare for worship ministry and academic settings. Through lessons, ensembles, and classes, I help students cultivate a functional understanding of their voice across multiple genres that will equip them to grow as artists and flourish in ministry. God has given each of his children a voice and the song of redemption. It is up to us to sing that song skillfully and impact our world for Christ and His Kingdom."



ALUM

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

George H. Guthrie

*Professor of New Testament
Regent College, Vancouver, BC
Master of Divinity ('84)
Doctor of Philosophy ('91)*

"IT HAS BEEN FOUR DECADES since I attended Southwestern. Yet, the effects of my time on Seminary Hill continue to reverberate through my life and various ministries. My professors at Southwestern grounded me deeply in the Scriptures, taught me to live in light of rich theology and church history, and exposed me to what God, through his mission, is doing in the world. They modeled for me a holistic, integrated approach to life, one oriented to a walk with God, one that attends to the needs of my family, loves the church, revels in serious academic study, and lives to advance the Kingdom. The effect of Southwestern's impact has stood the test of time, as well as the vicissitudes of life circumstances, for which I am profoundly grateful."

Paul and Vivian Spann

Donors

PAUL AND VIVIAN SPANN of Little Rock, Ark., began giving to Southwestern and the Mandarin Translation Project when their Chinese church discovered how difficult it was to find a Chinese-speaking pastor with good theological training. "Jesus said, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest fields.' When our Chi-

nese Bible study grew into a church, we had a very difficult time finding a Chinese-speaking pastor. It is a problem across the United States as well as internationally. Southwestern is trying to help the situation with their Mandarin Translation Project. They now offer degree programs in Mandarin. This should produce well-trained and doctrinally-sound workers for the harvest."



FACULTY

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

BRIAN BERRY

Instructor of Biblical Studies, Texas Baptist College

"I TEACH AT SOUTHWESTERN because this campus is where God has planted me to serve his body of believers by equipping the saints for the work of ministry on a broad scale (Eph 4:11-13). I teach at Southwestern because this is where God has graciously given me the opportunity to pay forward the investment that many professors and staff members deposited towards my spiritual growth while I was a master's student on this campus. Finally, I teach at Southwestern because I can exhibit faithfulness before the Lord out of gratitude for all he has done on my behalf and continues to do for me."



DONORS

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

APRIL 11, 2025

Preview Day

Explore the campus, learn about degree and financial aid options, meet your faculty, and hear from current students about how Southwestern can help you live your calling. Registration, meals, and lodging for Preview Day are all free.

[SWBTS.EDU/PREVIEW](https://swbts.edu/preview)



How to start discipling women in your church strategically

IF YOU GATHER A GROUP of local church women's ministry leaders and ask them to identify an ongoing ministry challenge, the majority will most likely say discipling women. Making disciples is part of Jesus's Great Commission (Mt 28:19-20) and the apostle Paul noted the need for spiritually mature women to disciple less spiritually mature women to have a healthy church (Titus 1-2). The two-fold goal of discipleship is to help women grow in their walk with the Lord while transformation into Christlikeness occurs. What steps can ministry leaders take to disciple women well?

Pray

Seeking the Lord's face for His direction and purposes is crucial for ministry leaders. Pray and ask the Lord to show you the women in your church who have a healthy and consistent walk with Jesus. As He reveals the names of those ladies, pray for and with them as you ask if they would be willing to disciple a younger woman.

Plan

Spend time prayerfully planning what women's discipleship will look like in your church. How does women's discipleship fit in the overall mission, vision, and purpose of the church? Will

women meet one-on-one, in trios, or in larger groups? Will a curriculum be used alongside the Bible? How long will formal discipleship groups last? When and where will the groups meet? Are there expectations? How will women connect? How will the groups multiply for continuous discipleship? These are some of the details to determine in the planning process. Planning a strategy helps everyone know the expectations for the short-term and the long-range hopes moving forward.

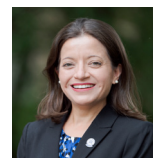
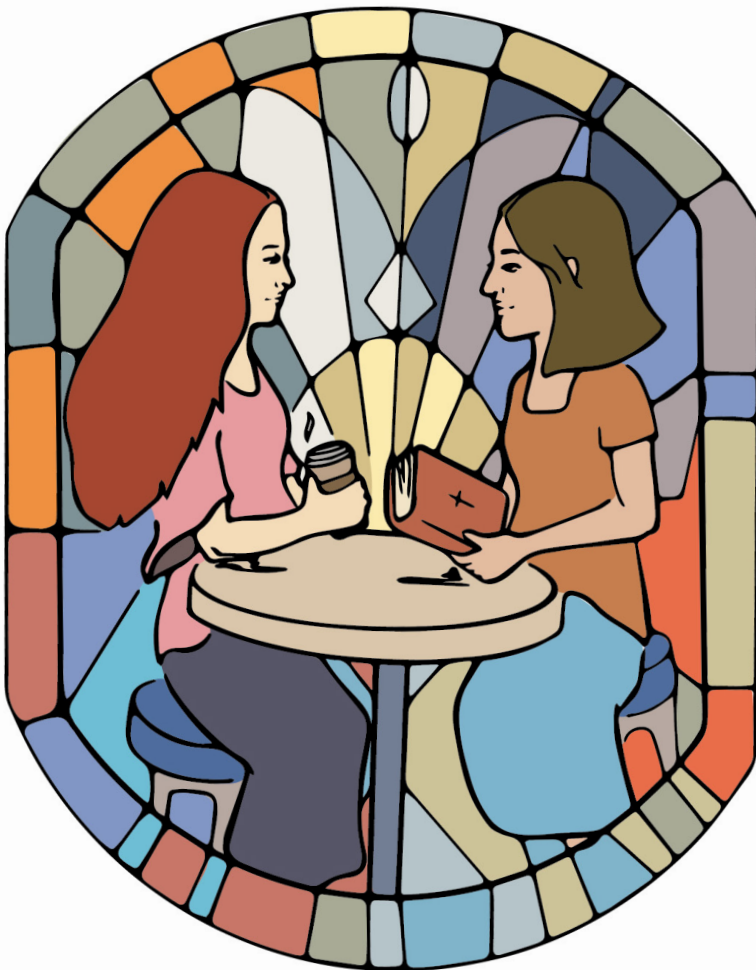
Prepare

Equip the women in your church with the tools to disciple another woman. Often women do not know where to begin when they are asked to disciple someone else. Providing training for what a time of Bible study and prayer might look like is helpful for those who do not know where to begin. Framing a structure for how to study Scripture together, questions to ask, and assurances they do not have to know it all are important areas for equipping.

Pull off

After praying, planning, and preparing, you are now at the stage where discipleship groups begin to meet. Ministry leaders should check in with those who are discipling to see how things are progressing and ask how the discipled is growing in her own walk with the Lord.

As women engage in discipling another woman, they are not only fulfilling Jesus's last command to His church to go and make disciples, but also actively engaged in taking the things entrusted to them and investing them in the next generation for lasting Kingdom impact (2 Tim. 2:2). [📖](#)



ASHLEY ALLEN ('03, '09) is assistant to the president and assistant professor of women's ministries at Southwestern Seminary.



TEXAS
BAPTIST
COLLEGE



TEXAS BAPTIST COLLEGE

STUDENT WORSHIP CAMP

JUNE 3-6, 2025

High school students will learn from TBC and Southwestern Seminary faculty and students how to fine-tune their musical skills, study the theology of worship, and interact in a band setting.

[TEXASBAPTISTCOLLEGE.COM/WORSHIPCAMP](https://www.texasbaptistcollege.com/worshipcamp)



How to apply church history to ministry

CHURCH HISTORY MAY NOT BE OBVIOUSLY applicable in a "how to" sense, but knowing about God's work in His saints in the past is a discipline that silently shapes us and our ministries in intangible ways. Here are several:

- Reading church history can help confirm our Christian identity. The modern world we live in dazzles us with spectacular technology and great riches, but it is essentially rootless. It tells us we're nothing but a mass of molecules with cravings that need to be satisfied. When we study church history, we encounter men and women who had a different sense of self: they were prayerful and walked closely with Jesus, they devoted themselves to mastering and teaching the Scriptures, and they tirelessly spread the Gospel. In short, they added substance to our weightless world. By engaging their stories, we sink roots deep into the Christian past, an action which adds substance and purpose to our lives and confirms in us the realization that we, too, are Christian pilgrims like they were.
- Reading church history brings us into contact with great Christian thinkers of the past and

challenges us with their ideas. Giving careful attention to the ways theologians long ago thought about Christ, God, salvation, and the Christian life acts as a cardio workout for the soul, a time in God's mental gym where we are challenged and sharpened to think carefully about divine things. As we gain greater clarity in thinking God's thoughts after him by reading ancient writers and their old books, we come to love the Lord more deeply with our minds and see more clearly the path of discipleship that lies before us.

- Reading church history, especially Christian biographies, surrounds us with wonderful examples of Christians who lived remarkable lives. Who can forget the single-minded courage of Martin Luther or Corrie ten Boom, the selflessness of David Brainerd or George Müller, the evangelistic fervor of George Whitefield or John Wesley, or the missionary zeal of Adoniram Judson or Lottie Moon? While we don't directly apply their actions to our specific situations, the total impact of their lives inspires us to live more faithfully and resolutely. Together these benefits help cultivate in us a

heart of wisdom. I might not have acquired a technical skill by taking a class in church history, but I have a better sense of my bearings in life. I know more deeply why things are the way they are, and I understand that the struggles my church and I face today have been addressed by Christians before. Church history helps us realize that we are not alone, and that God has always guided his people across the centuries. By it, we can take courage that God will continue to be with us and guide our churches through times of great change. [📖](#)



ROBERT W. CALDWELL III is the Professor of Church History at Southwestern Seminary.





Darin Wood follows winding road to pastorate

BY MICHELLE WORKMAN

PHOTOS BY AMANDA WILLIAMS



Darin Wood's ('93, '06) first memories of visiting the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary campus are as a five-year-old, cutting across the Student Village Apartment complex with his grandmother while walking to worship at Gambrell Street Baptist Church. Those first treks across campus came full circle when Wood later attended and graduated from Southwestern, and in June 2024, was named a distinguished alumnus of the institution.

Wood's life, starting as a young boy and continuing throughout his ministry including his current pastoral ministry at First Baptist Church in Midland, has been closely connected with Southwestern Seminary on so many stops along the way.

Wood says his grandmother treasured the opportunity to live so close to campus and was respectful of the professors who attended her church. Her proudest moment was when Wood enrolled at the seminary, though she did not live long enough to see him graduate.

Wood says he was humbled and felt like he had done little to earn it when he was named one of the recipients of the distinguished alumni award for 2024, but he felt honored to receive it specifically for his grandmother and mother, who had also previously passed away but supported him on his journey.

"I'm just a pastor," he says, expressing his gratitude for the opportunity to serve at First Baptist Church of Midland, a church with a historical partnership with Southwestern. "I regard myself as a shepherd, and it just so happens that I serve this church."

The path that eventually led Wood's family to Midland in 2016 was one that traveled all over the state of Texas, as he sought out what God's calling in his life meant.

"When I was 15, I felt like God was calling me to ministry," Wood said. "And didn't really understand all that that meant, but just said, 'Okay, Lord, whatever you have in mind, I'm willing.'"



Wood went to Dallas Baptist University for his undergraduate degree, and when a scholarship was given to him, he returned to what he calls home to get his Master of Divinity at Southwestern.

"My parents were thrilled, and so coming to Southwestern just seemed natural," Wood said, adding even today his father and his sister both still live near the seminary, his father having worked at the Bruce Lowrie Chevrolet for 35 years. "It's very much like home."

Wood says his time at Southwestern, starting in 1990, was transformational as he studied under professors such as Bill Toler, Tommy Lee, Earl Ellis, Grant Lovejoy, and James Leo Garrett, who Wood says taught the first class he had to record because he could not take notes quickly enough. Each one was a treasure to the school and himself in different ways, Wood says.

"The men who invested in me in that time period, while I was a master's student, they awakened something in me that I didn't know existed," Wood said. "And really helped me understand my role and my calling in a new way. ... In so many ways, I'm a better man, a better pastor, better husband, better father for the example they left."

He credits Bruce Corley with convincing him to continue his education with doctoral work. Wood had a proclivity toward Greek at that time, and said Corley approached him one day after class to ask about when he had completed a recent assignment. Wood answered that he had done it during the eighth inning of the baseball game the evening before—his way of expressing how little effort and thought it had required.

"He saw right through that," Wood said. "And he said, 'Listen, if you ever decide to get serious about being a scholar, will you just call me? Because I don't think you are right now.'"

Years later, Wood would ask Corley to be his reference for the doctoral program, and he was.

Prior to beginning his Doctor of Philosophy, after completing his MDiv in 1993, Wood worked for the Baptist General Convention of Texas offices and then served as a youth pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

After a couple years in Oklahoma, Wood returned to Southwestern to begin working toward his doctoral degree in the fall of 1999. During his first semester in the PhD program, Wood's father-in-law, a director of missions, informed him that he knew of a small church in Corsicana looking for a



The men who invested in me in that time period, while I was a master's student, they awakened something in me that I didn't know existed. And really helped me understand my role and my calling in a new way. ... In so many ways, I'm a better man, a better pastor, better husband, better father for the example they left.

DARIN WOOD





I really wanted to teach, and still probably will one of these days, but it was clear to me that pastoral life was a fit for who I am, and God shaped me this way.

DARIN WOOD





preacher and a pianist temporarily until they filled those positions, and he believed Wood and his wife, Julie, a Southwestern alumna with a Master of Arts in Religious Education, could assist.

Wood took that interim position, saying he believed it would only be for a few weeks while he continued pursuing his degree. His plan had been to teach. Wood even recalls a preaching class where he did his best not to sound like a preacher. But that first pastorate lasted for eight years and steered him and his family in a new direction.

"We'd been there a couple of years when Julie said to me, 'You know, Darin, it seems God has called you to pastor, and you're the only one who doesn't know it,'" Wood says of that time. "I really wanted to teach, and still probably will one of these days, but it was clear to me that pastoral life was a fit for who I am, and God shaped me this way."

At that time, Wood says he was not looking for a job and the church was not actively looking for a pastor, but Wood believes God drew them together and says he still considers his time at the 25-member church some of his best pastoral work as they loved and served each other selflessly, with the church paying for his tuition, though they could offer him little else.

But while that tuition payment and the close relationship with the small church was a precious time for Wood and his wife, eventually they recognized that the side jobs they had been working, including teaching and coaching in the community, were not enough to support them for the long term.

This led them to an East Texas church where Wood faced a number of challenges and strife in a congregation, which resulted in him again ques-

tioning whether he should continue pastoring. At one of those moments of doubt, Wood says he had a moment where he experienced direct encouragement from God.

"I sat up in bed and was getting ready for the day, and just felt like God whispered into my heart, 'You were made for this,'" Wood says, remembering that he glanced around to see if it was his wife speaking to him. "... I was like, 'What? What is it that you're trying to say to me, God?' And I just felt like the Lord said, 'This is what you were created for. So don't look back over your shoulder. Don't look around. Look ahead.'"

That moment of affirmation gave him the strength to persevere through difficult trials that he faced during his two years at that church.

What followed was again a time of encouragement at a church in Jacksonville, Texas. There Wood's son Joshua was born, and Wood was heavily involved in the community, not just as pastor of their church, but also president of the rotary board, member of the board of directors for the chamber of commerce, and member of different committees at the local school district.

But once again, in early 2016, Wood felt God pulling him to a different place of service, this time in Midland, Texas. Wood admits Midland is an acquired taste for some. And again, Wood wondered if he had left a good situation to go to a difficult one, as the community in Midland had just come off a difficult year for the oil market, which dictates the success or failure of the area as the producer of more than 40 percent of the United States' oil and gas supply.

"Goodness gracious, it was tough," Wood said. "And there were a couple of days I was like, 'You know, I wonder if we could go home to East Texas. This is a lot harder than I thought it would be.' But there were opportunities for us to change and move and grow, and indeed, we did."

Despite the initial hardship of the boom-or-bust nature of the city, Wood and his family soon discovered First Baptist Church of Midland is a generous congregation with a mission-minded focus that stretches back decades.

"It's like God said, 'Hey, we're not going to put anything above the ground that's going to be worth seeing,'" Wood says of the barren, oil country in West Texas. "So we're going to put a beautiful spirit in the people who live there. And this generous, loving, missions-minded people will be what I use to accomplish My purposes in so many other places."

Already, during the almost nine years Wood has served there as pastor, his family has witnessed the community go through two booms and two busts and seen the city's economy swing from there not being space available in any hotels or restaurants to the devastating impact a bust has on morale and financial stability for families and businesses.



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JULIE WOOD

But despite that fluctuation, Wood says the economy provides a great opportunity for churches to touch the world when they come to them for oil. The Midland/Odessa area also has more non-profit organizations per-capita than anywhere else in the nation, he says.

"Part of it is there's money here, but another part of it is there's generous people here who love missions, who love Jesus, who want to be active in the kingdom of God," Wood says. "... Because of some of the generosity of the people who live in this community and the opportunities God has given us, it gives us the chance to use that missions heart in some really bold ways."

Wood says FBC Midland gives generously to the Cooperative Program, but is also involved in about 80 other partnerships with nonprofit organizations and ministries such as a seminary in Mexico, orphanage in Kenya, schools and other projects in Uganda and Ethiopia, and ministries in the Middle East and East Asia that require careful partnership due to security concerns in those countries.

About 20 of those 80 ministries are local to the Midland and Odessa area, including a crisis center, soup kitchen, food bank, and crisis pregnancy center. Since the 1980s, the congregation also has partnered with the North American Mission Board SEND initiative in Toronto, planting about 40 churches in that area. That effort started even before SEND existed, when a deacon of the church frequently did business in Toronto and used that as an opportunity to share the Gospel and plant a church, which has since multiplied in partnership with NAMB.

Since the early 1950s, the church has also been a financial blessing to others through the Noble Scholarship Fund, a trust established by the Noble family when they found themselves experiencing great financial success because of their oil and gas wells and decided to use that money, through the guidance of the church, to help others. Due to the instability in the oil market, that fund has waxed and waned over the decades, but Wood says just before his family arrived at the church, those wells had begun to generate revenue once again and the church decided to grow its partnership with Southwestern specifically and increase their support in local and international missions and ministries.



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DARIN WOOD



"That gave us a chance, in the time that I've been here, to reevaluate and say, you know, the Lord offers no rewards for arriving home in heaven with a full bank account," Wood says. "So we don't regard those funds as ours. They are the Lord's money, and we will be held accountable for how they're spent."

Wood says this year, the church has begun to focus some of those efforts on the Midland area. That area of Texas did not have a Baptist association that could work with the area churches and partner them together, so FBC Midland launched one, funding a director and providing an office on its campus, though the director does not work for the church but for all churches in their new West Texas association.

"That's really exciting to me personally, and I'm really hopeful for next steps," Wood says of this new partnership with the Baptist association and area churches. "So it's a real opportunity for us to embrace God's calling to reach our Jerusalem, and we intend to."

In the last few years, Wood says the church, through that Noble trust and the trustees overseeing it, became more aggressive in partnering with Southwestern, specifically with President David S. Dockery. Today, Wood says the congregation sponsors approximately 55 students according to their needs.

Wood says the church is honored to send not just money and students through scholarships to Southwestern, but also some of the church's own members who are enrolled at Southwestern as students.

"It's a reflection on the long relationship that Southwestern and my church have enjoyed," Wood says of that partnership, mentioning that the brother of Southwestern's second president, L.R. Scarborough, was once a member of their church. "... We love Southwestern and what God is doing there and we're looking forward to how God will use the partnership that we have."

Darin Wood's sometimes circuitous ministry route to Midland began as boy being led by his grandmother across the Southwestern Seminary campus—the place he considers home—and continues today as a seasoned pastor of First Baptist Midland, which he gratefully leads to love and support future ministers of the Gospel studying on Seminary Hill.

Michelle Workman is managing editor of Southwestern News.

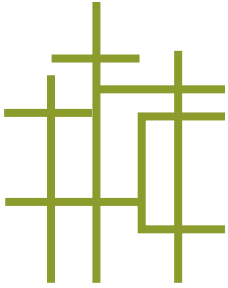


We love Southwestern and what God is doing there
and we're looking forward to how God will use the
partnership that we have.

DARIN WOOD







Southwestern collaboration with Taiwanese Baptists continues

Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary led by latest generation of Southwesterners

BY MICHELLE WORKMAN

Since its earliest days, individuals from all over the globe have come to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to receive training to strengthen ministries in their home nations.

Demonstrating its Globally Engaged core value, Southwestern has partnered closely for decades with the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary in Taipei, Taiwan, accepting students who would go on to serve as faculty and future TBTS presidents in order to prepare them to in turn equip their students to serve the churches of Taiwan.

Current TBTS President Kuo-Tsai “Joseph” Tan (’00) and his wife Chuan-Ming “Monica” (’97) are two of those alumni who have traveled thousands of miles to receive an education under Southwestern faculty and use that experience to lead and serve others.

Joseph began attending church at 4 years old with his mother at a small Baptist church in Keelung, Taiwan, with only 10 to 20 members. Growing up with that knowledge of Christ and eventual relationship with Him, Joseph initially went to undergraduate and graduate school, finishing his degree in engineering at the best school in Taiwan with his eyes on a successful

career in that field, just as several of his friends had done. But Joseph began to sense the Lord leading him in a different, and unpopular, path.

“I felt the call for ministry since I was an undergraduate college student,” Joseph says. “And I asked my mom, ‘Can I become a pastor after I graduate?’ And she said, ‘No way.’”

With no support or confirmation in that calling, even from his believing mother, Joseph continued in his education as he prepared for a career in engineering. During that time, he dated and eventually married Monica, who grew up in a non-Christian home but was led to Christ by a high school teacher when she was 17. But once again, Joseph began to sense that he was not on the path God had planned for him. Two or three years into their marriage, Joseph revealed to Monica that he sensed the Lord was redirecting their lives.

“After I get married and I almost graduated from the graduate school in engineering, God’s calling came upon me again,” Joseph says. “So, I started praying, seeking for God’s will for about two years. And those two years was a special time, because I struggled, but I had strong moving—God’s

moving—in my heart. ... After two years of seeking, I was sure that to become a minister was God's will on me and Monica."

Joseph's mother was not the only one who struggled with Joseph's decision to become a pastor, as Monica says she also had a difficult time accepting that decision and what it would mean for their future.

"In the beginning, I was struggling because I thought, wow, being a minister, that means we have to live simply, because the income probably won't be that good," Monica says, adding she specifically struggled with her husband's plan to be the pastor of their small church that had a congregation of mostly elderly members and had seen little growth since Joseph first joined there as a child.

Despite her hesitancy, Monica's desire was to follow her husband's leading and God's plan for them, even as she saw their friends and peers from university begin their careers and seek success in their fields. Although their path was a different and narrower one, Monica says it has led them to an abundant life.

"God's love really came into me," Monica says. "And then I surrender to Him, and I said to [Joseph], 'Well, okay, I will support you, and I will earn the bread for you. Don't worry about that. You just go and follow God's will.' So that's how we started our ministry over here."

Joseph began his Master of Divinity studies at the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary while Monica worked to support them and his mother, whom they lived with at the time. While completing his MDiv, Joseph remained at what he calls his "mother church" that he had grown up attending, Holy Light Baptist Church outside of Taipei, and there he was ordained as a pastor in 1991 and served for five years.

But while he was still finishing his studies, the dean and future president of the Taiwan seminary, a Southwestern graduate, had encouraged Joseph to consider continuing his studies in the United States at Southwestern.

"He came to invite me to study in America, prepare me to become a teacher, a faculty member, in the future for Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary," Joseph said of the dean's advice to study at Southwestern, a suggestion he acted upon.

In 1992, Joseph and Monica moved to Fort Worth while he pursued his Doctor of Philosophy and Monica her Master of Arts in Religious Education. Joseph says the language difference made learning more difficult, recalling his first class, taught by a professor with a strong Texas accent that he struggled to understand, to the point he came to class one day not realizing there was a quiz.

But Joseph says he was committed to the task with the knowledge that he was being supported by the Taiwan seminary, his church in Taiwan, and the Foreign Mission Board, now the International Mission Board.

"We enjoyed the study there," Joseph says of their time at Southwestern, adding they especially enjoyed the beauty of the campus, the resources at the library, and their professors, who were "good, excellent, professional, but also with the heart of pastor."

Joseph remembers being taught by James Leo Garrett, who visited them with a gift of beef when their twins, whom Monica calls their "Southwesterner kids," were born.

"Those professors are role models for me, both for academic study and for the Christian pastorate," Joseph says. "So, I was very impressed and learned a lot in those years."

Monica says her time at Southwestern was also a great time of learning and refreshment for her, as her professors taught her not just academically, but through their spiritual lives as well. During Joseph's first five years of pastoring in Taiwan, before traveling to the U.S., Monica says she had found herself in a time of spiritual drought, when she was busy with working to help care for her family and also serving their church while not seeing



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JOSEPH TAN





much spiritual fruit. This grew to a point of burnout in Monica's spiritual life.

"Going to Southwestern was a rest for me," Monica says. "It's an oasis in deserts in my spiritual life. So I really, really treasure that moment. So I gain the strength and I gain the knowledge, and I gain the faith in God, and then moving back, and then keep fighting for God until now."

That time of growth, rest, and encouragement at Southwestern led Monica to rediscover her joy in ministry, as she says the Lord reminded her that she is His daughter and she is able to do His work with His strength.

During their five years in the United States, Joseph and Monica also joined another church for the first time, a Chinese Baptist church in Fort Worth where they worked with other Chinese seminarians to reach out to non-Christians in the area who were from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other places. Monica says they are grateful that through that ministry they were able to serve others and glorify God even while they were studying.

After five years, Joseph and Monica returned to Taiwan, though they would go back to Southwestern three years later when Joseph completed his dissertation. Joseph and Monica then began a busy time of life that would continue for more than 25 years, as Joseph returned to pastoring their Taiwan church while also joining the faculty of the seminary. Monica also taught at the seminary for about two years before devoting her time to volunteering at their church while still holding a secular job in accounting and trading. Joseph said his wife has supported him as the pastor at the church and has also served and helped in many ways, including leading many people to Christ and helping their church grow.

"We only had, like, 60 church members," Monica says. "Our mother church, that was a very weak and small and suburban area church, and God blessed us. And He really blessed us then and gave us a lot of good co-workers so that we can plant new churches."

Through their faithfulness, partnership with co-workers, and the Lord's favor, their church now has three separate churches that were planted from the mother church, which grew to about 450 members. During those years, Joseph would work at the seminary during the day and in the evenings and weekends he would lead small groups at his church, visit people in the hospital, preach during services, and serve among the young adults.

Three years ago, Joseph's responsibility grew again as he took on the role of president of the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary, which today has about 70 students. As he finds himself in what he considers the busiest time of his life, Joseph says he still relies on the knowledge and wisdom he gained while at Southwestern to persevere through every new trial or task he faces.

"Those seminars helped me to reach to the deep fountain of theology," Joseph says, adding the classes served as a root that connected him to the Word of God. "And so for so many years of busy ministry, my life didn't feel dried up because I always come to the fountain—actually, that is Jesus Christ. That is Holy Spirit."

Joseph said he is the third TBTS president who earned degrees from Southwestern, while a missionary early in the process of starting the seminary in the 1950's was also a Southwestern alumnus. Now Joseph says they, as the only Baptist seminary in Taiwan, are focused on equipping pastors who will lead the 260 Baptist churches in Taiwan.

As president, Joseph says his vision for the seminary is that they would have a time of renewal, both physically and spiritually as they strive to raise money to repair aging buildings but also as they invest in faculty who will be good instructors and examples to their students.

"It's hardware renewal, but also the software, like faculty development, spiritual life, and academic and professional training in this seminary," Joseph says. "These are my burdens and my vision and prayer every day."

In recent months, Joseph has met with Southwestern President David S. Dockery to continue that connection between the two seminaries with the goal of sending potential TBTS faculty to Southwestern, while also praying for each other as both seminaries seek renewal.

"Those of us who serve on the Southwestern campus are truly thankful for the good work taking place at the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary under the leadership of President Joseph Tan," Dockery says. "Both President and Mrs. Tan are Southwestern alums and we count it a joy to recognize them as friends and co-laborers in the important work of preparing the next generation of ministers and leaders for the global church. We rejoice at the opportunities that Southwestern has been given to help equip members of the Taiwan Seminary faculty and trust that the Lord will strengthen the connection between our two institutions so that these ongoing efforts can be multiplied in the days to come."

"I hope our seminary can continue to have good connection with Southwestern," Joseph says, adding their goal for their faculty development includes sending them to Southwestern when possible, something they have discussed with Dockery and a member of the board of trustees. "... I think that in the future, we will continue to prepare good teachers for this seminary, and that's the most important asset for the future of Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary."

Michelle Workman is managing editor of Southwestern News.



Going to Southwestern was a rest for me. It's an oasis in deserts in my spiritual life. So I really, really treasure that moment. So I gain the strength and I gain the knowledge, and I gain the faith in God, and then moving back, and then keep fighting for God until now.

MONICA TAN

PURSUING THE HIGH NOTES, ONE STUDENT AT A TIME

BY REMINGTON COOK
PHOTOS BY AMANDA WILLIAMS







*I FEEL LIKE GOD'S
CALLING ME TO BE
A MINISTER OF
MUSIC.*

Walking through Cowden Hall on any given afternoon is assured to be an uplifting experience. If there is an archetype for a great, campus music hall, with a brilliant, classical artist playing a grand piano or slaving over a piece of sheet music late into the night beside a lamp's light, the home of the School of Church Music and Worship at Southwestern Seminary is the epitome.

As you walk through its ornate halls and listen to the sounds of various instruments greeting you warmly from countless doors, you are bound to hear the echoes of the voices of the Southwestern A Capella and other student groups coming faintly through the walls.

And where there is a voice singing in that building, you are bound to find Assistant Professor of Church Music Marc Brown.

Brown joined the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary faculty in 2022, but his story leading up to his arrival at the seminary goes back much further. Born in South Carolina, he remembers very clearly when, at 6 years old, he told his initially skeptical parents he had decided to follow Jesus and was ready to be baptized. At that moment he began his journey of faith that eventually brought him to Southwestern.

Brown grew up playing baseball but always had a passion for music, eventually joining his school's choir before attending Western Kentucky University as a music major. While in college, he married his wife, Cyndi, a fellow music major whom he knew from high school, and it was around this time where he first felt his call to full-time ministry. While in church one day, he spoke with his pastor about it.

"I told my pastor, 'I feel like God's calling me to be a minister of music,'" Brown says of that conversation. "He was very wise. He was a Southwesterner, and he said, 'Let's just share with the church that you feel that

God's calling [you] to full-time Christian service, and we'll see how God's call plays out."

Brown followed that calling by choosing to attend Southern Baptist Theological Seminary because of its proximity. He graduated from the seminary in 1996 and enjoys being able to claim Southwestern President David S. Dockery, who was at that time the dean of the School of Theology and provost, as his first systematic theology professor.

Following seminary, Brown served at churches in Indiana and Virginia for the next 15 years before deciding he would pursue a doctorate. This would lead him to the Weber Institute for Worship Studies in Jacksonville, Florida, where he pursued his degree in worship studies. More importantly perhaps, was the impact this journey had on his life as a follower of Christ.

"It didn't really have anything to do with music," Brown says, "but rather it had to do with theology, history, philosophy, methodologies, and things like that. It kind of re-awakened in me this real passion for God's calling in my life, when I had gotten a little bored, a little burned out, and stagnant."

He and his wife moved back to Kentucky, where he became reacquainted with his old seminary in Louisville as he pursued his PhD. While there, he met Southwestern's current dean of the School of Church Music and Worship, Joe Crider, and Associate Dean Chuck Lewis. Unbeknownst to Brown, this would be a pivotal moment in his life, as years later it would be Crider who reached out to Brown with an invitation to join the Southwestern faculty.

"He said, 'Marc, the school here is the only School of Church Music and Worship that still exists' in Southern Baptist seminaries, Brown recalled.

Brown learned that the SCMW continued to hold to the tradition of training students who could teach at an academy, university, or seminary level, as well as those who serve in the churches.

"That fills my soul," Brown said of Southwestern's providing such a broad education through SCMW. "There's so much more, in addition to the ministry and the theology and all that. There's so much music here, and that means a lot."

Since 2022, Brown has served at Southwestern. This year, Brown is particularly excited to be taking on a new role atop his current responsibilities as the leader of the Southwestern A Cappella student group, a position which will see him excersising that which he does best: raising his voice in song as he directs, teaches, and encourages his students on how to do the same. Brown has always felt called to lead in singing and finds that is the aspect of music he enjoys most. As such, he is particularly excited about the prospect of leading such a talented group of SCMW students.

"It's a real honor, and so far, it's been a real pleasure," Brown said of this new responsibility. "I'm looking forward to seeing how everything progresses with these students. There is a real nice mix of veterans and new people, and some fun music that has potential to help listeners and worshipers be able to understand God revealing Himself, and maybe even lead them to respond. And that's what it's all about for us."

Students say Brown's personality of welcoming kindness has been contagious, filling Cowden Hall with an even more uplifting air. For many students, Brown would not just be considered a professor, but a mentor as well. Brown encourages and supports every student who walks into his office seeking help, guidance, or just a friendly voice. He is constantly imparting on his students the importance of getting involved with and serving in a local church.

The warmth and positive encouragement that Brown brings to his students and peers is palpable, whether conveyed through his overall kind demeanor or through his office which can only be described as homey. His walls are lined with family photos mixed with musical muses. His shelves packed with books while a grand piano sits before his desk. These efforts of open-



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HE IS CONSTANTLY OPEN TO HELP ANYONE AND SHARES HIS WONDERFUL LIBRARY AND WISDOM WITH THOSE OF US WHO HAVE THE JOY OF BEING TAUGHT BY HIM.

NELLY VILLEGAS, MDIV IN WORSHIP LEADERSHIP STUDENT

ness and kindness are affirmed by those who interact with him every day, and Nelly Villegas, a Southwestern student pursuing her MDiv in Worship Leadership, gives a perfect example of this.

“Dr. Brown is a passionate, generous, and caring professor,” Villegas says. “He and his family are one of the most warm and hospitable families on campus. On occasions when people go to see their families, like Thanksgiving, Dr. Brown makes sure to invite some international students like me, knowing that we are away from home and might not have a place to celebrate. He has also spent a lot of time perfecting his musical skills and knowledge about biblical worship, so is always a delight to have a conversation with him. He is constantly open to help anyone and shares his wonderful library and wisdom with those of us who have the joy of being taught by him.”

Crider praises his longtime friend and colleague, “Dr. Brown has an incredible heart for his students. One of his greatest joys is to see students grow and develop in their walk with Christ and mature in their God-given musical talents. He brings years of ministry experience to our SCMW and is one of the most positive people you will meet on our campus.”

While reflecting on his journey that led him to serve at Southwestern, Brown gives all glory to God.

“God has always blessed us with this call in our life,” Brown said, applying Psalm 16:6 which describes boundaries falling in pleasant places. “God really threaded a needle to get us here, and so even with the uncertainties that may have existed in certain times of the first two years we’ve been here, we know that God is the one that called us here, for us to be able to make an impact on putting more worship leaders into service for churches. I absolutely know that I could not do that in a place better suited for it than right here. That is the greatest way that God has blessed me, is that he’s still using me, and in a place where we can make the most maximum impact for His Kingdom. And you know, I hope that we’re able to do it for a really long time.”

Brown has a clear vision of his goals and the role he wishes to serve in respect to the seminary and within the lives of all the students he encounters. He wishes to encourage more churches to send students for training at



the school, and likewise to maximize the impact of the seminary in putting more worship leaders into churches. To build bridges with new and old churches alike so they can know just how Southwestern trains and prepares their worship and music students, so that when new graduates go forth into the world, there are places which know and value the experience that comes with a degree from the Southwestern School of Church Music and Worship.

But, perhaps most importantly to Brown, he seeks to form fond memories in Cowden Hall, which will echo through the minds of generations of alumni to come, just as the music continues to echo throughout its historic walls.

Remington Cook is a news writer for Southwestern News.



Missionary finds London is door to the nations

BY MICHELLE WORKMAN

For Elisabeth Coleman* (’23), the tug toward international missions was a gradual process that stretched over several years. But she now finds herself in London, a city she never imagined she would be living in as a journeyman missionary.

A Dallas native, Coleman attended Texas A&M in pursuit of a degree in communications, while she tried to figure out what it was God wanted her to do, since she already believed He was leading her into some area of ministry.

“I struggled to kind of figure out what I wanted to do,” Coleman says.

It was during her final years of college that Coleman first started to consider looking into missions opportunities, starting with short-term missions through her local church to places such as Austria. Through those international trips, Coleman’s exposure to the rest of the world grew and she was able to partner with different International Mission Board teams and take part in intentional Gospel conversations with complete strangers.

“I think the Lord did kind of two things,” Coleman says of her time of attending church during college. “... Deepen my heart for the local church, and the importance of having healthy churches and discipling people through that ... but then also really expanding my view beyond, not just the world that I grew up in.”

Around this time, Coleman says she knew she was being called to make disciples in a mission field, whether that mission field was on her college campus, through the youth she was serving as a member of her church’s youth ministry leadership, or overseas such as when she went on international mission trips.

Coleman says she could see “the Lord was doing so much across the world. And to get to be a part of that in some way, was a gift and a privilege. ... The Lord kind of started expanding my eyes to, I think, really ask the question of

... if it’s not in the U.S. that you have something specific for me, what would it look like to serve you among the nations abroad?”

But Coleman says what followed was five years of redirections as she completed college and continued to serve in her church’s youth ministry.

Through prayer, speaking with others, and the desire to steward well the calling she felt on her life, Coleman says she “felt like pursuing formal education in theological education was the path that the Lord was kind of opening up for me, and so that’s why I ended up at Southwestern to study.”

Coleman enrolled in Southwestern’s online courses for the first year, pursuing a Master of Divinity with a concentration in biblical counseling. While missions was still something her mind kept turning back toward, Coleman says the MDiv provided a good base of theology studies that she could use in any ministry.

Coleman says she is grateful for her instructors, including professors of biblical counseling Lilly Park and Jonathan Okinaga, and Madison Grace, provost and dean and professor of the School of Theology, who fulfilled her desire to “grow and to learn and to be in a position where, not that I was going to know everything, but to be equipped, to have resources, to be taught by others who had been in ministry.”

“I just really appreciate their leadership and the way that they conducted their own lives,” Coleman says of her professors, who emphasized the character of their students and not just retaining information. Those professors “sought to see us flourish as Christ followers, but also as future workers in the church and beyond.”

While pursuing her degree, learning from her professors, other students, and the Word of God, Coleman says she began to feel that pull toward missions again. With one more year to go before graduation, she began



the application process with the International Mission Board for the journeyman program, which would place her with an international mission team for two years.

But Coleman cut that application process short as doors seemed to close and she again wondered if that was what God was calling her to do. After another seven months of praying, conversations, recognizing the need for the Gospel overseas, and not finding a ministry in the United States that she felt God wanted her to participate in, Coleman knew it was time to take the final step toward missions during the fall of 2022.

“I think the Lord made it really abundantly clear that what He had for me next, at least for the immediate future, was to serve Him overseas,” Coleman says. “That pull of wanting to serve the Lord in this specific capacity just became very apparent through a lot of different conversations. And so I re-opened the application. And ... there was a lot of peace just about going forward.”

Coleman was accepted into the journeyman program, and, after graduating from Southwestern in May, found herself in London by the end of September in 2023, even though she never pictured herself as a missionary in Europe.

“London is not where I thought I would be, of all places,” Coleman says, having imagined herself in a country considered closed to or unreached by the Gospel.

“

The Lord was doing so much across the world. And to get to be a part of that in some way, was a gift and a privilege.

ELISABETH COLEMAN

While she did not have to learn an all-new language, Coleman says she still had much to learn about the United Kingdom culture even in day-to-day actions, such as using the public transportation system, going grocery shopping, having tea after Sunday church services, and learning to understand different phrases.

Coleman is a member of the North London mission team, and specifically part of a team that visits three different universities each week to engage with students through Bibles studies, surveys, prayer walking, game nights, sports, and whiteboarding to encourage questions and conversations. She also partners with a local, international church where last term she discipled a group of young women.

But while Coleman did not plan to be a missionary in London, she quickly learned that there are opportunities for the Gospel there that can be found in few other places. Not only is the city large, even for Coleman who grew up in Dallas, but scores of countries are represented on the campuses she visits and even on the buses she rides, where she says she can sometimes overhear conversations in five languages simultaneously.

“The significance of the city and the position it has to reach the nations is huge here,” Coleman says. “There are students and just people in general who have moved to the city from all over the world.”

The multi-ethnic nature of the city is also found at the universities in central and west London, where Coleman visits weekly. At one of those universities, Coleman says there are 159 countries represented. Some of the students she has spoken with are from countries that missionaries are not welcomed into and she would not be allowed to speak about Jesus openly, while others do not have access to Bibles in their country.

“I think the Lord has used being here to really change my mind about what I thought I was walking into,” Coleman says. “Where I thought the state of Europe was, what it’s like living here ... I can’t imagine kind of living elsewhere at this point right now.”

Because of the high level of international diversity, Coleman says she does experience what she refers to as “cultural whiplash,” when conversations can change drastically from one person to the next.

Coleman said that is another way her education at Southwestern prepared her, by training her in core doctrines of the faith and apologetics so she can answer questions from people who might have grown up as Hindu, Muslim, or atheist.

But despite their diverse backgrounds, Coleman says university students are at a perfect time in their lives since they are looking to the future and asking questions.

"With the university students, they're already in this position of they're outside of their parents' home, they're asking these questions about life," Coleman says. "And so I think so many of them are searching for something."

Coleman says that stage in their lives is an ideal time for her and other missionaries to step up and show love to them in tangible ways, and tell them there are answers to their questions about life, purpose, and identity.

After a year of living in London, the strain of being in a culture different from the U.S., living in a large city, and constantly having conversations with people has taught Coleman the importance of finding times of rest and personal abiding in Jesus. Fortunately, Coleman says London is one of the greenest cities she has seen, providing many opportunities to visit parks or other quiet places to rest.

While there is also a strong Christian legacy in and around London and deep in its history, Coleman says it still often feels like a spiritually dark area filled with hearts hardened against the Holy Spirit.

"It's hard ground," Coleman says of the spiritual state of London. "And feels like sometimes you have all these conversations and you're like, did that go anywhere?"

Just a short distance from her own church in London is the church that was once pastored by John Newton, the author of the hymn "Amazing Grace" and former slave trader who helped to end British slave trade. That is the same church once attended by William Carey, considered the father of the modern missionary movement. So many areas of the world are seeing the Gospel shared and Christianity grow because of faithful Londoners from the past, but now Coleman says that spiritual need has come full circle.

"It can feel really dark and can feel like there's a lot of need here," Coleman says. "There's so much, but the Lord's doing something here, and He's used this city to bring the nations here. And people are hearing the Gospel, and they can take that back into countries across this world."

During her remaining year as a journeyman in London, Coleman says she and others on her team will continue to try to live out the transformation that has happened in their lives because of God's gift of salvation and then verbally share that gift with others she meets on the university campuses, at their church, or in the city. She has learned that her responsibility is to be faithful to God, and let the results and responses be according to the work of God.

"So much of what we're called to is so much beyond our actual ability," Coleman says. "And I think that's the best place to be, when we recognize that we are utterly and absolutely dependent on the work and the power of the Lord to move and to change people's lives and hearts and to change our hearts as well."

After her two years as a journeyman ends, Coleman says her opportunities are many as to what she does next. Since she has already finished her education through Southwestern Seminary, she could go right into long-term mission work with the IMB, serve at a church or get another job, and continue work in London or another country.

But while she had initially been hesitant to serve in London, Coleman says she now recognizes the need there and the impact missions has there on the rest of the world.

"It's so neat to live here and to do ministry here," Coleman says. "And it's hard and challenging, but it's also probably one of the greatest gifts to be able to step into as well."

Michelle Workman is managing editor of Southwestern News.

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

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The significance of the city and the position it has to reach the nations is huge here. There are students and just people in general who have moved to the city from all over the world.

ELISABETH COLEMAN



THE ESSAY

SOUTHWESTERN

A CENTURY OF CONVICTION, COOPERATION, & COLLABORATION



A Time for Remembrance, Thanksgiving, and Recommitment

By, David S. Dockery



PROGRAM!



M. E. Dodd, Chairman.

"First. That a simultaneous every member canvass of every Baptist church in the South be conducted from November 30th to December 7th, 1924, for subscriptions to cover denominational needs for the calendar year 1925, ever keeping before our people the ideal of an annual increase over each year's gifts."

The above is item No. 1 in eleven specific recommendations, which the Committee on Future Program for Southern Baptists recommended to the Convention in Atlanta, and which was unanimously adopted by the Convention.

The date for this canvass, November 30th to December 7th, may seem to some to be inadvisable and impracticable. The committee, itself, was not at first unanimous on this date. Many other dates, varying from October to March, were suggested and discussed, but this was finally settled upon as the very best that could be done. To have set an earlier date would have preceded most of the state conventions, and would have gotten into the district associational period. It is at these meetings that final arrangements must be made for the canvass. To have set a later December date would have gotten too



committee, that as far as possible, the canvass be made simultaneous and universal on this date, Nov. 30 to Dec. 7.
In the case of fourth or half-time churches, which the pastors can reach and organize for the canvass on this date, it is expected, of course, that the work be pressed on until the ideal of every Baptist church in the South is attained. It is recommended that this recommendation be reported to the members of the church and to the people of the

1925

to get in with the Kingdom program our nearly 4,000 sent with a pledge of their pleads ments of c
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or



L. R. Scarborough, Southwestern Seminary's second president.
Pictured in illustration on previous page: M. E. Dodd, father of the Cooperative Program.

Seventeen hundred years ago, in 325, one of the most important statements regarding the doctrine of the Trinity and the person of Jesus Christ was affirmed at the Council of Nicaea. Fifteen hundred years ago, in 525, what has become known as the Christian calendar was introduced by Dionysius. Eight hundred years ago in 1225, Thomas Aquinas, one of the greatest thinkers of the medieval period, was born. Five hundred years ago, in 1525, William Tyndale completed his translation of the Bible into English, and that same year marked the birth of the Anabaptist movement. But, our focus in this article is on what happened one hundred years ago in 1925, a year in which three important things took place that have shaped Southwestern Seminary for the past century.

Southwestern was considered an institution of the Baptist General Convention of Texas from its founding in 1908 until 1925, when a process was completed for Southwestern to become an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention. A key aspect of the vision of our founding president B. H. Carroll, was for this new seminary to serve the churches of the Southwest. At that Memphis convention in 1925, the vision for serving the churches officially and formally took a big step toward expanding Southwestern's reach and influence.

That same year, the Southern Baptist Convention affirmed two major decisions related to the adoption of the 1925 Baptist Faith and Message as well as the launch of what has come to be known as the Cooperative Program. At this time, one hundred years on the other side of these three important decisions and as we look toward the 2025 Southern Baptist Convention to be held in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, let us reflect together about the ongoing implications of these three developments for Southwestern Seminary, and in doing so, recognize the importance not only of remembrance, but of thanksgiving and recommitment.

Cooperation and Conviction

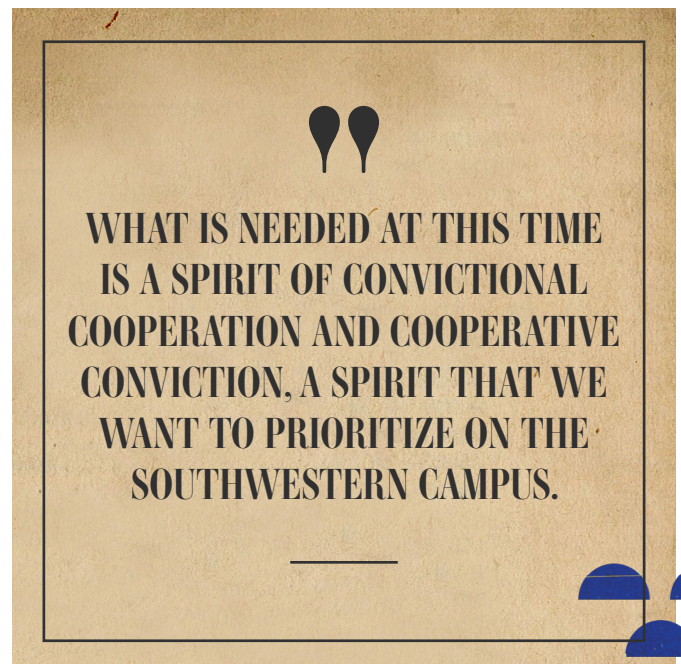
In 1919, Southern Baptist Convention leaders proposed what was referred to as "The Seventy-five Million Campaign," a five-year campaign to raise financial support for the various mission agencies and ministries of the SBC. From these efforts, which were led by Southwestern Seminary's second president, L. R. Scarborough, the Cooperative Program, under the leadership of M. E. Dodd, was developed and adopted.

The Cooperative Program is a cooperative partnership whereby churches across the Southern Baptist Convention combine financial gifts, given to and through the various state conventions, which are then passed on to support the work of national convention entities and agencies. These financial gifts are employed to send missionaries and support missions around the world as well as across North America. These efforts also help to equip pastors and church leaders, to enable educational institutions, and to address benevolent, social, ethical, and moral concerns.

The Cooperative Program helps to bring together more than 47,000 congregations for the purpose of advancing the Gospel around the world. With a global population now exceeding 8 billion people, and a commission from the resurrected Christ to take the Gospel to every nation (Matt 28:18-20), this spirit of cooperation is now needed more than ever if we are going to fulfill Christ's command. We must pray, plan, prepare, work, give, and go – and do so together in the spirit of Christian unity.

Within Southern Baptist polity, churches do not actually join associations or conventions so much as they choose voluntarily to cooperate together for shared purposes. What is needed at this time is a spirit of convictional cooperation and cooperative conviction, a spirit that we want to prioritize on the Southwestern campus. It is our prayer that Southwestern will embrace and model these commitments in new and fresh ways as we prepare to enter the second century of our relationship with Southern Baptists.

At the 1925 annual convention in Memphis, the messengers not only received the report to approve the Cooperative Program, but they also



approved the recommendation to adopt the Baptist Faith and Message as the confessional statement for the SBC. The convention, in a formal way, declared that both conviction and cooperation mattered. It should be noted that almost immediately following the Memphis Convention, President Scarborough led the Southwestern community to adopt the 1925 Baptist Faith and Message as the Seminary's official doctrinal statement.

Let us not think that adopting a doctrinal statement was something new for Southwestern. When the seminary was birthed in 1908, it was from the start a confessional and convictional institution, having adopted the nineteenth-century New Hampshire Confession as a guide from the beginning.

It was newsworthy, however, in 1925 when the entire Southern Baptist Convention adopted a complete confession of faith. The confessional statement was needed to address mounting concerns about evolution and naturalism, seeking to clarify Southern Baptist doctrinal commitments in the midst of the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversy that raged across the country in the early decades of the twentieth century.

The 1925 Baptist Faith and Message was largely a restatement of the 1833 New Hampshire Confession with some revisions and additions. The committee, led by Southern Seminary president, E. Y. Mullins, and Southwestern's L. R. Scarborough, chose to move beyond the realm of classic doctrinal affirmations not only by addressing the questions of evolution and naturalism, but also by making key declarations regarding the importance of stewardship, cooperation, education, evangelism, missions, and social ministries. It is important to note that the article on cooperation was penned by President Scarborough, underscoring these commitments that characterized both our first and second presidents.

By adopting the 1925 statement, Southern Baptists in general, and the Southwestern community in particular, placed themselves in the tradition of Nicaea, Chalcedon, the Reformers, and the Pietists regarding the doctrines of God, Christ, and salvation, while maintaining and articulating significant Baptist distinctives such as a regenerate church membership, the priesthood of all believers, congregational polity, believer's baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

The reports in the state papers at that time reveal that the adoption of the Baptist Faith and Message was seen as the major story in 1925. These reports failed to give the same attention to the twelve-page report from the Committee on Future Programs to develop a general outline of plans for the next forward movement of Southern Baptists -- which, of course, came to be known as the Cooperative Program. Yet, the marvelous plan outlined in that twelve-page report has been used of God to advance the work of Southern Baptists in this country and around the world for the past century.

We need to join together afresh to give thanks for a century of conviction and cooperation at Southwestern with a renewed and shared commitment to both. The Southwestern community at this time needs to emphasize our biblically, theologically, and historically informed convictions that will help us understand our history, our heritage, our beliefs, and our practice so that we can move forward to carry the Gospel around the world and disciple the nations in these middle decades of the twenty-first century.

In doing so, we must deepen our commitments to the full truthfulness and authority of Scripture, to the uniqueness of the Gospel message, and to an overarching Christian orthodoxy. These things are needed more than ever in our confused secular context. We need a generation that will be both convictional and cooperative, that purposefully chooses not to compromise nor to be cantankerous. We need to balance conviction with



cooperation and cooperation with conviction, with a focus on Scripture and the Gospel message.

We need a renewed appreciation for developing a theologically, historically, and biblically informed understanding of what it means to be Christian, evangelical, Baptist, and Southern Baptist. Such a renewed identity is needed for our campus as well as for the Southern Baptist Convention at-large, especially since the programmatic and cultural identity of Southern Baptists has now all but disappeared. In order to move forward toward a new cooperative conviction with a spirit of convictional cooperation, we need simultaneously to focus on a collaborative commitment to serve the churches in this region, in this nation, and across the globe, while exemplifying and emphasizing both truth and unity.

Collaboration

The Southwestern community, not unlike the Southern Baptist Convention at-large, includes men and women who are multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, intercultural, intergenerational, and international. But, in spite of our many differences, we recognize that we belong to the same Lord, and thus to each other. Yet, far too often, this shared commitment to Christ and his church is blurred by infighting, fragmentation, discord, and self-serving efforts.

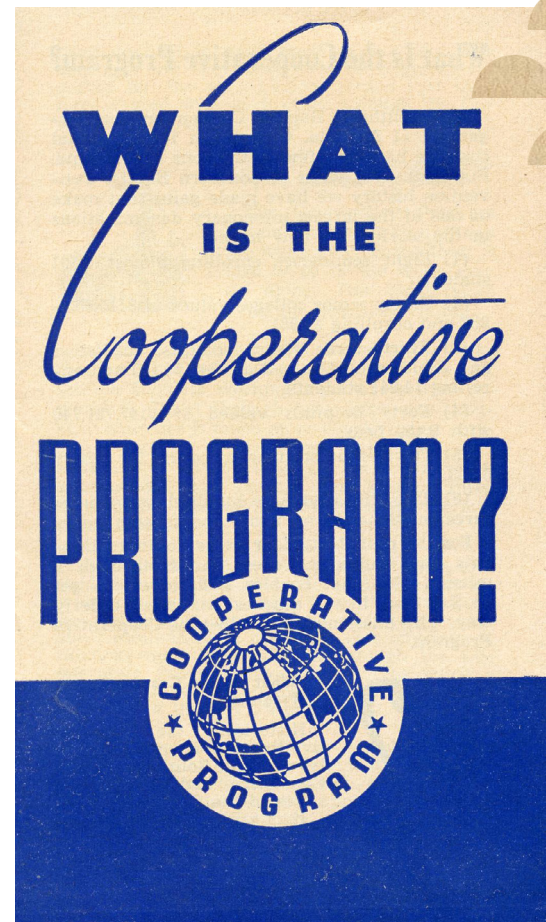
Christ's call on our lives demands that we seek to do better, for our Lord himself prayed that we would be one so that the world may believe that the Father has sent the Son (John 17:21). We have mentioned that 1700 years ago, in God's providence, the Council of Nicaea affirmed not only a classic statement on the holy Trinity and Jesus Christ, but also declared

that the church is “one, holy, universal, and apostolic.” The body of Christ is universal in that it crosses all geographical, social, racial, and ethnic lines. It is one because it is founded on the person and work of Jesus Christ and the common salvation we share in him (John 17:2-5; Eph 4:1-6). When the world sees Christ’s followers exemplifying this kind of love and unity, they will be more open to believe the good news that “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, so that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Christ calls on his followers not only to demonstrate love and unity, but also love and truth. Certainly, we are to promote Christian unity at every opportunity. We belong to the same Father and are called to the same service. We trust the same Savior and have received the same gift of grace, thus sharing a common salvation. Yet, ultimately, true unity is based on biblical truth. Any other kind of unity is earthly, worldly, temporal, and thus falls short of the biblical ideal.

A unity that exists without truth is mushy, misguided, and meaningless. Yet, truth without a concern for love and unity is hardly consistent with the teaching of Scripture. Let us across this campus echo the prayer of Jesus who prayed that the Father would sanctify his followers in truth, for his Word is truth (John 17:17). A renewed commitment to conviction, cooperation, and collaboration must be undergirded by prayer for the sanctification of our lives, for the sanctification of the Southwestern community, and the sanctification of the Southern Baptist Convention.

We are called to engage the world without becoming characterized by it, emphasizing both truth and love, holiness and unity. If we are to be people with conviction about the revealed truth of God, if we are to be people with a heart’s desire to cooperate with fellow believers for the shared support of the work of God’s Kingdom around the world, and if we are to be a people purposeful about collaborating with the churches in Texas and across the Southern Baptist Convention, then it is essential for us to manifest both truth and love, holiness and unity.



Conviction, Cooperation, and Collaboration: A Time for Remembrance, Thanksgiving, and Recommitment

We offer thanks to God for those who have gone before us who had the courage to adopt and affirm the Baptist Faith and Message in 1925 and the creativity to propose something as ingenious as the Cooperative Program. Southwestern president L. R. Scarborough was involved in both of these historic moments, even as he was leading Southwestern to commit to the Baptist churches in Texas and across the Southern Baptist Convention as a new and official entity of the SBC. The threefold initiatives that took place at the 1925 Southern Baptist Convention were immediately put into place at Southwestern and they have guided our work for the past century. During this time, Southwestern has been exceedingly blessed of God to receive more than \$420 million in support of the Seminary’s mission from gifts given through the Cooperative Program.

It must be acknowledged that at times the Southwestern community has emphasized one of these commitments more than the others or has gone through periods when one or more of these three commitments was seemingly ignored. If we understand Southwestern’s history, we recognize that we have at times been imbalanced and inconsistent in these matters. Yet, we also know that the Southwestern community has been at its best when all three were prioritized and emphasized together.

This anniversary year is a time for us to offer heartfelt gratitude for President Scarborough and all of those who have come after him over the past century, having followed in his footsteps to emphasize these important institutional attributes. Moreover, we give thanks for our founding president, B. H. Carroll, who was genuinely a leader with conviction, a man with a heart to cooperate, and a Texas Baptist among Texas Baptists who

modeled collaboration with the churches across the southwest. We give thanks for our history, inconsistent as it has been at times, while recommitting ourselves afresh to efforts needed to manifest these traits with a renewed zeal and faithfulness for a day quite different from those in 1925.

Calls for conviction without cooperation, and calls for cooperation without conviction, result in imbalanced and unhealthy institutional life. One without the other will not provide the visionary roadmap needed for the future of the Southwestern community in the days to come.

In calling for a spirit of cooperation, we need not spend our time yearning nostalgically for the past when we enjoyed a more cultural and programmatic uniformity. It would be misguided for us to do so. What is needed today, in light of the complex challenges of twenty-first century life and culture, is a fresh look at apostolic precept and practice, which begins with a recognition of the need for convictional boundaries as well as the importance of working together in oneness and cooperation.

We cannot ignore necessary boundary markers in our beliefs and in our practice. Yet, we must not fail to understand that the ultimate danger to the Gospel lies not in the nuances of our doctrinal differences, but in the rising tides of liberalism accompanied by its illiberal spirit, as well as the societal shifts toward neo-paganism, deconstructionism, and the meta-modernism that threaten to swamp our Baptist and evangelical identity in cultural accommodation.

What we are calling for today must be supported by a confessional and convictional faith and a collaborative and compassionate sense of cooperation. We gladly offer thanks to God for the recovery of a convictional confessionalism that was initiated 45 years ago, a recovery that has kept Southwestern, the other SBC institutions, and the Southern Baptist Convention at-large from going the way of so many mainline denominations who have become untethered to Scripture and the Gospel, seemingly having lost their theological compass.

Yet, in this moment we also must stress the need to regain a spirit of collaborative cooperation. We offer this call not merely for the sake of efficiency, but because we want Southwestern to model all that is involved in collaboration. When people look at us, let us pray that they will say, "Look at how they love one another; look at how well they work and serve together; look at how they think of others as more important than themselves."

We long for Southwestern to be a witness to our denomination and beacon of truth in all areas of learning and practice. Southwestern must seek to maintain a strong relational, confessional, and cultural tie with Southern Baptists, even while serving aspects of the broader global evangelical community. We will certainly seek to learn from Southwestern's wonderful heritage while living in the present with an eye on the future.

Many wonder if we can once again find a way to cooperate together. After all, we are so different. No longer can a programmatic pragmatism or a cultural homogeneity alone be the foundation of our work. A call in this day to cooperate together with both our service and our financial gifts differs greatly from the 1925 world of L. R. Scarborough and M. E. Dodd. Yet, we still need to reclaim their spirit for our day. While these things have implications for people, churches, and entities across the SBC, our focus is the Southwestern community, and we will recommit ourselves to apply these important truths across this campus and among our constituencies.

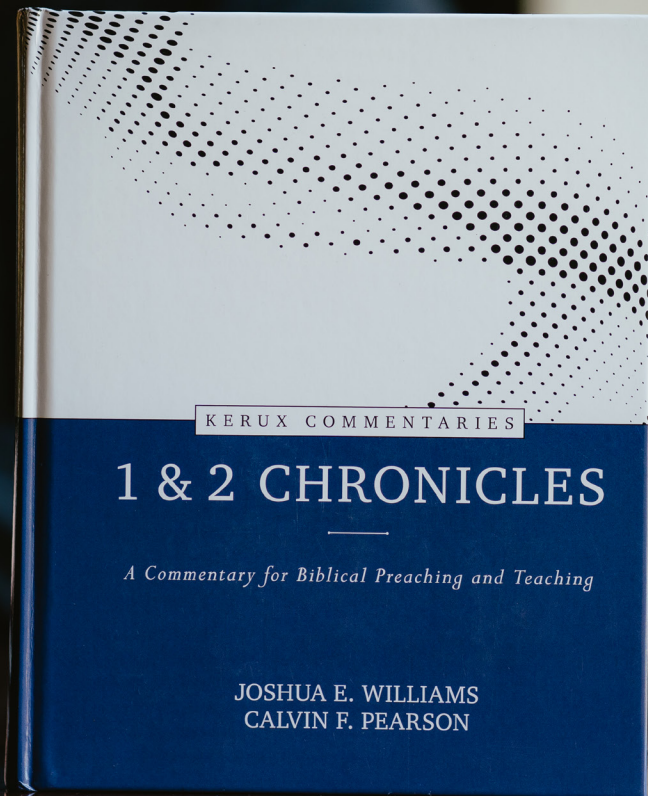
Let us celebrate our variety as we seek to serve together in harmony, demonstrating genuine love for one another, and manifesting a spirit of cooperative collaboration in our service to and for one another, as well in our service to the churches of Texas and beyond. In doing so, with the

enablement of God's Spirit, we can do things together that we could not do alone. An important aspect of these matters also involves a renewed commitment on our part to exercise wise institutional stewardship of the Cooperative Program dollars that come to Southwestern through the bountiful support of those in the churches.

Ultimately, we need a renewed commitment regarding the full inspiration and authority of the Scriptures as well as the transformational power of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, his atoning death and resurrection. We trust the Lord to bring renewal to our shared service, to our theological convictions, and to our cooperative and collaborative efforts in every phase and aspect of our work at Southwestern. In the year ahead as we celebrate the century mark of the historic 1925 Southern Baptist Convention, we will seek to remind ourselves anew of these three important developments, recognizing their significance for our ongoing work in this academic year and beyond.

We will need conviction and cooperation, boundaries and bridges, and a Holy Spirit-enabled sense of collaboration to guide us in the days ahead. So, in faithfulness to the best aspects of the Southwestern heritage, as well as to our institutional mission and shared core values, let us pray for ongoing revitalization across the Southwestern campus, celebrating our past with heartfelt remembrance and thanksgiving, while looking forward with renewed commitments as Southwestern deepens its efforts to be a convictional, cooperative, and collaborative group of faculty, staff, students, administrators, and Board members, dedicated to work together to equip a new generation of men and women for the church of Jesus Christ who will take the good news of the Gospel to a lost and needy world.





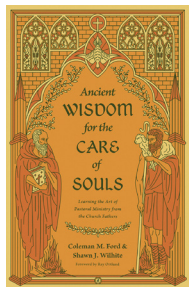
1 & 2 Chronicles

A Commentary for Biblical
Preaching and Teaching
(Kerux Commentaries)

The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles do more than provide an account of historical events involving God's people; they also point to the future using a picture of the past. In this commentary, Southwestern Old Testament professor Williams explores the interrelated themes of divine covenant, the worship of God's people, the kingdom as God envisions it, and the God-formed community found in this far-ranging and didactic narrative. God's holiness, faithfulness, and gracious character find concrete expression in the accounts of the Davidic monarchy over many generations. These often-failed national leaders prefigure a better coming Davidic king who will lead the way back to proper worship of God. *1 & 2 Chronicles* calls readers to both action and hope.

“Some books of the Old Testament receive a lot of attention among church members. ... In contrast, 1 and 2 Chronicles seems to be far more unfamiliar, except perhaps for Jabez’s prayer or the occasional revival sermon addressing 2 Chronicles 7:14. ... [Chronicles] points the way to an ideal picture of the people of God: a people gathered to worship God properly, ruled by a Davidic heir. This portrait presses into the New Testament and the coming of Jesus, son of David, son of Abraham. In this way, the book points to the faithfulness of God toward His people and the hope that he will fully establish his rule and finally restore his people. May God hasten that day.”

Excerpt from Foreword by Joshua E. Williams in *1 & 2 Chronicles: A Commentary for Biblical Preaching and Teaching* (Kerux Commentaries)



ANCIENT WISDOM FOR THE CARE OF SOULS: LEARNING THE ART OF PASTORAL MINISTRY FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

Crossway (2024)

COLEMAN M. FORD, SHAWN J. WILHITE. FOREWORD BY RAY ORTLUND

Ancient Wisdom for the Care of Souls helps pastors to embrace a classic, biblical vision of ministry through the study of selected pastoral virtues and early church figures. Calling for a “return to the sources,” Texas Baptist College professor Ford co-authors a work that considers what a scriptural vision of ministry is, how patristic voices help inform this vision, and how pastors today can cultivate this pastoral vision in their churches.

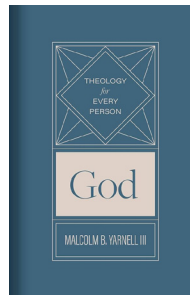


CONFIDENT WITNESS: EVANGELISM AND APOLOGETICS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Crossway (2024)

DAVID S. DOCKERY ('81) (EDITOR), AND OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Southwestern President David S. Dockery serves as editor of this compilation of essays from various Christian scholars. The chapters help educators and students understand the importance of evangelism in every generation while covering a variety of topics including the theological foundation of evangelism; discipleship and apologetics; evangelism in church history; and evangelism in a post-Christian context.



GOD (VOLUME 1) (THEOLOGY FOR EVERY PERSON)

B&H Books (2024)

MALCOLM B. YARNELL ('91)

Yarnell, research professor for Southwestern Seminary, provides the first volume of a three-part series entitled *Theology for Every Person*. The first installment gives an overview of the doctrine of God and divine revelation, so every disciple of Jesus, not just vocational teachers and ministers, can love, know, and worship God.

BYLINES

30 years later, the evangelical purity movement still impacts sex education

Richard Ross ('74, '80)

senior professor of student ministry

“It was ‘a complete surprise to the adults that teenagers on their own, without any coercion from adults,’ would choose to wait for sex until marriage.”

(on [npr.org](https://www.npr.org))

Gateway Church hopes to help congregation heal with new interim pastors, independent investigation

Christopher Osborne ('77, '19)

professor of preaching and pastoral ministry

“Pastors—we’re not immune to failure. But I know a ton of guys that have done it right, and did it a long time, and finished well. They don’t make the papers. ... You’ve got to make sure you understand, because a pastor fails, that doesn’t mean Jesus failed.”

(on [cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com))

Until the Next World Comes, Christians Hold this World Together

Coleman M. Ford

assistant professor of humanities, Texas Baptist College

“Christians dwell in the world, yet in the beliefs they confess and the virtues they seek to model, they also transcend the things of this world.”

(on [christianitytoday.com](https://www.christianitytoday.com))

Former missions professor Earl Martin passes away



AFTER A 14-MONTH BATTLE WITH CANCER, Earl R. Martin passed peacefully at home surrounded by loved ones on August 23, 2024, in Fort Worth, Texas.

Martin, who taught missiology and world religions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982-1987, was born in Milton, Penn., in 1927. In 1948, he married Mary Jane Winchester, his high school sweetheart, in Washington D.C.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Maryville College; Bachelor of Divinity from Southwestern ('53); Th.M. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; and a Ph.D. from University of Nairobi, Kenya. Martin was founding pastor of Temple Hills Baptist Church, Temple Hills, Md. He and Jane served as missionaries for the International Mission Board and later with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in countries

including Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda.

In addition to Southwestern, he also taught at Carson Newman University, B. H. Carroll Theological Institute, and the International Baptist Theological Seminary, Rüschtlikon, Switzerland. After 50 years of teaching, the Martins retired to East Tennessee.

Martin was preceded in death by his parents Luther and Maude Martin, and siblings Florence Sinclair, Evelyn Rawlings, Eleanor Snyder, and Lu Martin.

He is survived by his wife, Jane, and children, Judi Smalling, Susan Albright, Char Gray Sorensen (David), and Wayne (Shirley) Martin. He is also survived by 10 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

—M. W.

Long-time music professor William Colson passes away

WILLIAM WILDER COLSON, a long-time member of the faculty at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, passed away Oct. 13, at 79 years.

Colson was born in Kansas City, Mo., in 1945, and married Barbara Joy Simpson in 1977. He received degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory and two from the University of Illinois, and spent sabbatical leaves in Sweden; Heidelberg, Germany; Denton, Texas; and Tucson, Ariz.

Colson came to Southwestern in 1971 as an assistant professor of theory and composition and remained until 2014, when he ended his career as distinguished professor of music theory and composition, chair of the Music Theory and Composition Department, and associate dean for the performance division. He also served on

the editorial board of the *Journal of Schenkerian Studies*.

Colson was a renowned musician as a cellist and was featured in various editions of "Who's Who." For several years, he was a member of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra.

Allen Lott, professor of music history who worked alongside Colson, said he was an integral part of the School of Church Music and Worship and devoted his entire teaching career to that program.

"He was a beloved colleague, admired teacher, and excellent administrator as well as a fine cellist," Lott said of Colson. "He was especially significant in overseeing the school's continued accreditation with the National Association of Schools of Music. He was noted for his extensive musical knowledge, quick wit, and dedication to his colleagues and students."

Colson and Barbara moved to Largo, Fla., from Fort Worth two years ago and the past 16 months he was a resident at a long-term care facility after

being diagnosed with Alzheimer's. He is survived by his wife Barbara, sister Rosemary, and son John William, married to Felicia.

—M. W.



Alumnus Steve Gaines announces transition from pastoring

AFTER SERVING AS PASTOR, of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., for 19 years, Steve Gaines ('84, '91) announced to his congregation Sept. 22 that he would be transitioning away from his position to begin an itinerant preaching ministry.

"The Bible says, 'There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven' (Ecclesiastes 3:1)," he read aloud from a letter he wrote to his congregation, as reported by Baptist Press. "Nineteen years ago,

the Lord began a season for us at Bellevue, and now we have heard His voice that it is time for a new season."

Gaines graduated from Southwestern Seminary in 1984 with his Master of Divinity and completed his Doctor of Philosophy in 1991.

Gaines pastored churches in Texas, Tennessee, and Alabama and served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention 2016-18. In 2013, Gaines received Southwestern's Distinguished Alumni Award and has been a member of the

Southwestern Board of Reference since 2023.

"My race as senior pastor of Bellevue is coming to an end, but my commitment to you is to keep running with all my strength and effectively hand the baton to the next senior pastor," Gaines said.

"... The greatest days for Bellevue Baptist Church are yet to come," Gaines closed his letter.

"I am looking forward to experiencing them with you. God bless you all."

—M. W.

Southwesterner Don Biadog Jr. receives President's Lifetime Achievement Award

RETIRED NAVY CHAPLAIN Manuel "Don" A. Biadog Jr. ('87) was awarded the President's Lifetime Achievement Award for his lifelong commitment to volunteer service. The award, presented on behalf of President Joe Biden April 18 at the historic Officer's Club at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego, requires 4,000 documented volunteer hours over the recipient's lifetime. Biadog accrued more than 13,000 hours between 1990 and 2023.

"I was completely surprised by the award," said Biadog, who earned a Master of Divinity and a Master of Religious Education from Southwestern in 1987. "I give glory to God."

Throughout nearly 30 years in the military in 12 major commands, Biadog always found a way to serve communities during port visits or while stationed overseas by leading Community Relations Projects and participating in volunteer work.

"Volunteerism is in my DNA," he said. "Growing up in a poor village [in the Philippines], we were taught to help one another."

Helping others is biblical, he added.

"Jesus Christ is the greatest example of service," he said. "My life verse is Mark 10:45, 'For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'" Since reiring in 2019, Biadog has volunteered as a Veterans of Foreign Wars post chaplain and currently mentors pastors and chaplains in the San Diego area. He recruits, trains, and serves with volunteers packing and delivering food to families, veterans, the homeless, and military members around San Diego. He also started and serves as a volunteer chaplain for "Eternal Honor" at Miramar National Cemetery, a special



outreach to the grieving families of veterans. He also recently led a missions team to the Philippines during the 80th anniversary of the Leyte Landings in Palo, Leyte, providing humanitarian outreach to more than 1,900 people.

"I removed the word 'retire' from my vocabulary," he said.

"... The sky is the limit when it comes to volunteering and serving the Lord."

—K.G.

ALUMNI UPDATES

1990

Jerome M. Stockert (*MDIV BL 1994*) to Missouri Baptist Convention, Jefferson City, MO, as director of collegiate ministries.

Sterling D. Claypoole (*MAMFC 1997, MARE 1997, DEdMin 2011*) to Central Baptist College in Conway, AR, as director of admissions.

2000

Andrea Lennon (*MACE 2004*) to Lifeway Christian Resources as director of women.

2010

Matthew S. Gilmore (*MTS 2017*) to Dale Baptist Association

in Alabama as associational mission strategist.

2020

Kevin Ulmer (*ThM 2021*) to the Louisiana Baptist Convention as evangelism strategist for Louisiana Baptist congregations.

RETIREMENTS

1980

Philip A. May (*MDiv 1980*) retired with his wife, Delaine, living in Rome, GA.

Randy W. Covington (*MARE 1984*) retired (effective September 2025) with his wife, Robin, planning to live in Arizona.

Keith T. Parks (*MM 1989*) retired with wife, Judy, living in Americus, GA.

1990

Randy Adams Jr. (*PhD 1993*) retired with wife, Paula.

MEMORIALS

1950

Robert A. Harty (*MARE 1959*)

1960

Cortland Bernard Savage (*BCHDIV 1960*)

Nelda Pilgreen (*MCM 1961*)

James W. Hughes (*BCHDIV 1963*)

James Richard Best (*BCHDIV 1965*)

1970

Joseph Francis Keith (*MCM 1974*)

Ronnie Lee Horton (*MDIV 1974*)

Bernard (Bernie) Spooner (*EdD 1975, PhD 1994*)

Ralph Hansford Hines (*MDIV 1977*)

Yip Wai-hong (*DMA 1979*)

1980

Charles D. Murray (*MDiv 1982*)

Thomas (Tom) Pieper (*MDIV 1985*)

1990

William Craig Steedley (*MARE 1996*)

Lori Elizabeth (Knight) Kennedy (*MACE 1999*)



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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Music lovers support Southwestern, SCMW students

Robert and Anita Robidou carry on family tradition of generosity

**BY
MICHELLE WORKMAN**

FOR ROBERT AND ANITA ROBIDOU, music and generosity have been a key part of who they are for decades, just as their connection with Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary stretches across generations.

Anita's grandfather was a chaplain and attended Southwestern in the 1940s. She was born in Oklahoma while her father was attending Oklahoma Baptist University studying music, though he would later become a CPA. Her family then moved to Kansas, her father serving as a volunteer church choir director for about 30 years while Anita sang in choirs since she was 4 years old.

Robert and Anita married while living in Kansas, later moving to Nebraska and then to Texas in 1994 as Robert worked for Cook Children's Health Care System and other medical centers. But through all those moves and changes, they both continued to share a love for music, singing in church choirs and participating in handbell groups.

"We both love music," Robert said. "... Church music and music at church is very important."

While searching for seats at a music program at Southwestern about seven years ago, Anita and Robert recall wondering how they could sit in the reserved section closest to the stage to appreciate the music more. Learning the section was for donors, they

“So, it’s not just the scholarship piece of it, not just the relationship piece with people there, but introducing others to the seminary and all they have and the benefits that they have, and they really bring to churches throughout, not only here, but around the country and the world.”

– ROBERT ROBIDOU

made their first donation to Southwestern. But their support of the seminary increased as their connection with the seminary grew.

Later, a friendship with School of Church Music and Worship Dean Joe Crider bloomed when they discovered mutual friends and other connection points between their families. It was Crider who introduced the Robidous to the SCMW doctoral program.

“We’ve been helping with three or four students financially with their doctoral program,” Anita said, while Robert added they also set up scholarships, underwrote events such as dinners, and donated the sound equipment used in the downstairs music lounge of Cowden Hall.

“We’ve been blessed,” Anita said of their ability and willingness to support the seminary, adding financial support is something her family has done for generations even when they did not have a lot, supporting organizations such as Focus on the Family and scholarships at other schools.

“Generational blessing is what it is because they did pass down to us, and they had a history of supporting,” said Anita, speaking of her parents and grandparents. “They preached and preached, ‘With blessing comes responsibility.’”

“I think we both feel it’s important ... to really give back and support the things that are important,” Robert said of giving to the seminary. “And that is an area that has affected our lives overall and been very beneficial in that respect.”

Anita said they also enjoy the opportunity to meet regularly with and get to know the families and students they currently scholarship in their doctoral pursuits, some just beginning that doctoral journey while others are in the dissertation stage.

“It’s not just donating to the scholarship, it’s not just that aspect of it,” Robert said. “We feel it’s important that we get to know people a little bit, building that relationship a little bit to show them support as well.”

The Robidous said over the past five years or so, they have enjoyed partnering with the seminary, where their son graduated with a Master of Divinity in recent years. Robert said they remain committed to supporting the music school and its students since it is a field special to them personally.

“We feel very good about Southwestern, especially right now; things are very positive,” Robert said. “And so, it’s not only supporting them financially but supporting them in other ways, to tell other people about the programs and introduce them to the things are going on down there as well. So, it’s not just the scholarship piece of it, not just the relationship piece with people there, but introducing others to the seminary and all they have and the benefits that they have, and they really bring to churches throughout, not only here, but around the country and the world.”

—M.W. 



Partnering in Southwestern's historic mission

BY
CHANDLER SNYDER

"I am blessed to continue sharing the powerful story of God's mission at Southwestern, helping to connect Kingdom resources with our mission."



For 116 years, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has been shaped by legends—heroes of the faith who have led with biblical clarity, advancing the Kingdom of God through their dedication to excellence in theological education. One such hero is Jack D. Terry, Jr., whose leadership in educational ministries and institutional advancement has been an exemplary model of God's blessing on and His work through Southwestern. As I follow in his footsteps, it is my prayer that his legacy continues through the commitment of partners, alumni, friends, and donors like you.

I am blessed to continue sharing the powerful story of God's mission at Southwestern, helping to connect Kingdom resources with our mission. Although the precise wording may have changed, there is great joy in knowing that the core mission has not changed since 1908 when B. H. Carroll founded our seminary: Southwestern exists to glorify God by providing theological education for individuals engaging in Christian service, assisting Southern Baptist Convention churches by biblically educating men and women for ministry which encourages the priority of the Great Commandment and the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Our task is clear: to see this mission advance for God's glory. There are many reasons to praise God for what He's doing at Southwestern. Students have returned to the classroom with enthusiasm, both on-campus and online, in numbers that exceed the previous fall. Our dedicated faculty are pouring themselves into teaching, guiding students in the Scriptures, and preparing them to live out their calling in churches and ministries. Staff members are equally committed to serving students, creating an atmosphere of tangible support and spiritual encouragement as we move forward.

God's faithfulness is unmistakable—especially in challenging times. Over 116 years, through difficulties and obstacles, He has provided for Southwestern, and we trust He will continue to do so until the mission is complete. As with all things that matter, God uses His people to support His work. To see this vision realized, we need the ongoing commitment, prayer, and financial support of our alumni, friends, and partners. Your generosity and prayers are essential in maintaining the momentum that God has been building here on Seminary Hill.

So, how can you partner with us in this mission? Prayer is always our deepest need. Every Monday during the semester, we gather in the historic Memorial Building Rotunda for a

community prayer meeting, lifting up the seminary's needs before the Lord. We also have prayer times each Tuesday and Thursday in MacGorman Chapel before chapel services. If you're in the area, we invite you to join us in person or follow our prayer updates online at swbts.edu/prayer.

Beyond prayer, we invite you to consider how God might be leading you to partner financially with Southwestern. It is our joy to help you connect your God-given passions with the work God is doing here. There are several ways you can make an impact:

First, we ask you to prayerfully consider giving to the Southwestern Fund. This fund directly impacts students by allowing us to provide a student-centered educational experience, both on Seminary Hill and online. Gifts to the Southwestern Fund are put to immediate use, helping us maintain and enhance the education and resources we offer our students today and tomorrow.

Alternatively, if you feel called to make a lasting impact, you may consider establishing a legacy gift. These contributions help grow our endowment, ensuring that Southwestern can continue equipping future generations of students to engage the world with the Gospel. Legacy gifts sustain the work of our faithful faculty and secure the long-term mission of preparing leaders to serve the church and advance God's Kingdom.

As we look back on God's provision over the past 116 years, we are filled with confidence that He will continue to use Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for His purposes in the future. The world needs the Gospel now more than ever, and our students are ready to meet that need by serving in churches and engaging the lost with the hope of Christ.

As 2025 approaches, we ask you to prayerfully consider partnering with Southwestern before the end of this year. Your prayers and financial support are crucial to sustaining this work. God has been faithful, and through the generosity of partners like you, we are confident that His mission through Southwestern will continue.

Thank you for your prayers, and thank you for giving generously to support the future of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Chandler Snyder is vice president for institutional relations.



MARCH 21, 2025

PREVIEW DAY



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[TEXASBAPTISTCOLLEGE.COM/PREVIEW](https://www.texasbaptistcollege.com/preview)

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