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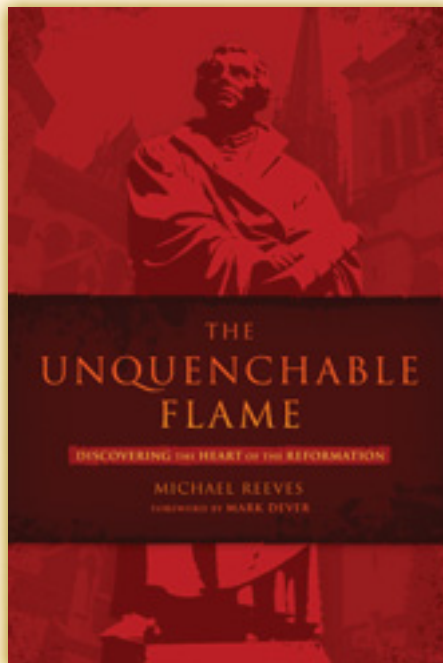


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Mohler to SBTS grads: You won't finish what you start

More than 230 earn degrees in Southern Seminary's 205th graduating class

By JEFF ROBINSON

Christian ministers are not professionals who take their degrees into the world seeking success as it is typically defined, but instead are deployed for a task of Gospel proclamation that they will not finish, R. Albert Mohler Jr. told the 205th graduating class of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary May 14.

Preaching from Revelation 5:6-10, Mohler told the 231 graduates that they have completed advanced degrees, but they will never receive applause from the world.

"Those who graduate from this school today, though rightly congratulated, and being sent out to put everything they have, everything they are, everything they have learned, and everything they hope for, on the line for mission and ministry in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," Mohler said.

"They are not starting careers. Indeed, this may end their careers. They are not newly-minted professionals. In fact, they may be largely useless in the eyes of the secular world. They are now deployed for a life of ministry that runs counter to the wisdom of the world.

"The call to the Christian ministry is a profoundly counter-cultural reality. The conventional wisdom just does not fit. As children, we are taught the adage that we are not to start what we cannot finish. But these ministers of the Gospel will never really finish anything, and



Southern Seminary Ph.D. candidates wait to receive their degrees during the spring 2010 commencement service. Despite looming thunderclouds, the service was held on the Seminary Lawn. *Photo by John Gill*

they are not very qualified to start anything."

Southern's graduates will join a long line of faithful Gospel ministers who have preached the Word across the globe and have served the Kingdom of Christ in anonymity. All ministers are building on a foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, a project that will not be finished until Christ returns, Mohler pointed out.

"They will toil and serve and witness and teach and preach and lead and build, but they will die with more undone than done," he said. "Some will serve long, some may serve only a short time in this earthly life, but they will

serve a cause they cannot complete; they will tell a story they cannot conclude.

"The American dream does not fit this calling. That dream calls for years of preparation to be followed by formal qualification, decades of professional accomplishment, and a happy retirement. Our hope today must be that these ministers of the Gospel will never retire, for the ministry is never accomplished. They may in due time be redeployed, but never really retired — never ready to rest and merely collect a pension or cash in their retirement accounts and live a life of leisure. They are to serve to the end, learn to the end, teach to the end, and be faithful to the end."

Some will be called to minister in difficult places, some will suffer on behalf of the Gospel and some may be martyred for their faith, Mohler said, but for this they will receive a profound reward in the next life.

"This vision transforms the Christian ministry from a profession into a calling that makes no sense according to the wisdom of the world," he said. "The vast majority of Christian ministers and pastors have served without the slightest attention of the world, completely lacking in its accolades and attention. They preached the Word, in season and out of season, evangelized, baptized, taught, tended, wept, and cared — and they were laid in humble boxes and lowered into to the waiting earth. And all is well."

The audio and video of Mohler's address is available at www.sbts.edu. A complete manuscript may be accessed at www.albertmohler.com.



SBTS professor Carl Stam was honored as the recipient of the Findley B. and Louvenia Edge Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence. Stam is pictured with his wife, Doris, and daughter, Clara. *Photo by John Gill*

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ISSUE INSIGHT

Why the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force recommendations are good for churches of all sizes

*This article originally appeared at
www.jdgreear.com*

I have heard the objection that the recommendations of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force (GCRTF) are great for “megachurches” that no longer need the help of the associations and conventions, but not so good for smaller churches who are greatly benefited by the local and state associations.

People say that megachurches may be able — by themselves — to plant new churches, and they may be able — without the help of others — to house huge ministries and pull off great events, but these are things most smaller churches cannot do alone. Thus, the size of structures in the Southern Baptist Convention may be superfluous for megachurches, but for smaller churches they are just about right.

I can understand that objection, and if it were true I would be against the GCRTF recommendations myself. But here is why I believe it is not.

First, the suggestions of the task force come from a blend of both large and smaller church pastors, all of whom have equal voice on the task force and all of which are in support of these recommendations. Second, the objection is built on the false assumption that smaller churches need the large bureaucratic structure in order to network effectively for ministry. I believe that is no longer the case.

The suggestions of the task force do not discourage, in any way, networking or cooperation in ministry. We recognize that churches of all sizes need to learn from one another and band together to do ministry. Cooperation is a deeply held Baptist principle, and one which has helped Baptists succeed in mission for more than 150 years.

One of the reasons I became a part of the SBC in college is that it has put me in a viral community of information exchange that has helped my ministry improve significantly. We Southern Baptists love to look to each other for ideas and support. Smaller churches not only need megachurches

in this exchange, but megachurches need smaller churches. Why? Because our ecclesiology informs us that God places his best ideas not in the minds of megachurch pastors or in anointed Baptist “popes” but in the minds of “regular” Southern Baptists in churches of all sizes.



J.D. Greear,
Lead Pastor of
The Summit
Church in
Durham, N.C.

With that said, the opportunities for information exchange and network formation have shifted significantly since the SBC was organized 50 years ago. The world we live in is different and we no longer need the same kinds of convention structures to facilitate cooperation that we had 30 years ago.

Today, if a pastor is looking for an idea for how to do an Easter service, he can get online and learn what the most effective churches around the country are doing for Easter. He doesn't need to wait for the convention quarterly to give him ideas. Instead, at the click of a mouse he can be face-to-face with the best ideas all over the world.

If he is looking for help in starting a particularly ministry — such as a college or womens' ministry — he doesn't necessarily need the convention to bring program ideas to him. There are multiple groups around the country that can help facilitate that ministry. He is not limited to only what the convention provides.

If a pastor wants to plant a church, he can network with three to four other churches to plant that church. After all, churches are best at planting churches, and churches can and should continue to network with other churches to do so. The most effective church planting networks today are usually comprised of small churches who assist each other in planting. In the most effective church

planting networks, it is not the “network” that plants the churches, but the churches in the network that plant the churches, getting support from the other churches in that network. The GCRTF recognizes the primacy of the local church in church planting, and is trying to recognize what God is already doing in our churches.

Our own goal at the Summit Church is to plant 1,000 churches in 40 years, and with every church we have planted so far, we have done so in cooperation with other Baptist churches.

All this to say, the GCRTF recommendations do not discourage or impede networking, and networking is key for effective ministry by both smaller and larger churches. The GCRTF suggestions simply recognize that networking is happening — and should happen — in different ways today than it did 30 years ago.

Please note that this doesn't mean I think there is no role for centralized convention structures in the future, or that there is nothing unique that they can offer. It just means that they are no longer necessary for much of what pastors of churches (of all sizes) depended on them for 30 years ago. We can either recognize that reality and adjust, or we can remain committed to antiquated, inefficient methodologies that are neither necessary nor effective in advancing the mission.

Simply put, we need more specialized convention initiatives. For example, specialized convention initiatives can help galvanize work in places where there are no local churches. They can help churches strategize and network for training, theological education, mercy ministry and sending out teams to do those things.

Inevitably, some convention structures will have to downsize and realign and this is no trifling matter. Every pastor has had to do this with a particular ministry in a church, and it is never fun. But Paige Patterson has often remarked that we have an alarming shortage of qualified Baptist pastors for the 42,000 SBC churches currently in existence. Many such

churches are without pastors right now.

Many, if not most, convention employees were originally called to the pastorate. Perhaps downsizing convention structures will allow some of them to go back to the local church. That could potentially be a great thing. I don't mean to be callous about the hardship that transition may cause to some, but perhaps in God's sovereignty it could be for the best.

I am grateful for the convention and aspects of the Cooperative Program. Because of the CP, I was able to get a first class education and graduate with no debt. Our church currently has 65 members sent out to the international mission field through the International Mission Board. I'm not sure what the exact cost would be to our church for that, but I know it would be in the millions. We have a number of our own college graduates who are going to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary at a greatly reduced rate, and if the CP wasn't supporting them I know they'd be begging our church for help. Furthermore, the North Carolina Baptist State Convention has really stepped up to help us in accomplishing our dream of getting 1,000 churches planted. I am very grateful for these things that come from the CP.

But there are a number of things CP dollars go to which are no longer the best and most efficient use of missions giving, and — for the sake of the mission — we need to adjust.

The only really central, burning question to me is, “What would Jesus want us to do with His money?” We should remember we are going to have to answer to Him one day for what He gave us stewardship over. I think we should do whatever it takes to get the money to the Great Commission, and most specifically to the 6,500 unreached people groups in the world. If we do with “God's money” what He wants us to do, He will handle any adverse consequences that result from our obedience. As Hudson Taylor was so fond of saying, “Those who do God's work in God's way will never lack God's supply.”

Responding to challenges to the GCRTF recommendations

This article is taken from two blogs in a five-post series at rankinconnecting.com.

I can't imagine anyone who cannot embrace, and get excited about, the final recommendations of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force (GCRTF). The task force has done a thorough and commendable job in recognizing what needs to happen among Southern Baptists if we are to see a renewed impetus in reaching the lost and a higher priority given to discipling the nations.

The recommended changes are far from radical. The task force was wise in recognizing what is palatable to the convention and its entities and how far to go in drafting recommendations that were adoptable. They also correctly discerned that a corrective course and refocus on Great Commission priorities would not occur by voting on a few actions and tweaking our structure; it will come about through a new generation continuing to maintain a new direction in cooperation and use of resources.

State conventions should be pleased that the recommended phase-out of cooperative agreements with the North American Mission Board has been extended to seven years. It is not unlikely, however, that NAMB will move more quickly to reduce these funding partnerships with mainline states, eliminating funding for roles not directly related to evangelism and church planting. Well before seven years, I suspect pioneer states will find themselves much stronger with far more NAMB personnel and resources at their disposal without having to provide a portion of the support.

The effectiveness in which NAMB is able to lead the Southern Baptist Convention to engage the lostness of unchurched major urban centers and the least evangelized parts of North America will be dependent on the extent they use their new strategies to mobilize and facilitate churches, associations and state convention partners, involving them in the task.

Many have misinterpreted the recommendation regarding the International Mission Board as shifting responsibility for the unreached people groups in North America to the IMB. Actually, what is being recommended simply removes the current prohibition in ministry assignments to the IMB working with people groups in North America. The responsibility for reaching all lost peoples in North America is that of the churches, associations and states where they are located. But the GCRTF recommendations would bring about a potential synergy of cooperation we have not had previously.

The recommendations contain very little that will make a difference in the SBC being able to send and support more missionaries and engage the many unreached people groups around the world with the Gospel. The recommended shift of 1 percent in Cooperative Program allocations is a nod in that direction,



Jerry Rankin,
President of the
International Mission Board

but it speaks just as much to the Executive Committee eliminating ministry assignments and returning to a basic administrative role on behalf of the convention.

The challenge for Southern Baptists to give \$200 million to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and \$100 million to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering would be a giant leap in what the mission boards could do, but given the economic climate and the required shift in values and priorities, it may be a few years before the IMB sees a 25 percent increase and NAMB a 90 percent increase in these offerings.

The real heart of the report are the challenges to every aspect of Southern Baptist life from individuals, families and churches to associations, state conventions and each SBC entity, to pastors and leaders. The importance of a theology for Great Commission faithfulness should not be overlooked as this is not something we gained by default through the Conservative Resurgence. Having returned to fundamental doctrinal foundations, we are now positioned for the practical implications that come from biblical inerrancy and a conservative theology.

What if the GCRTF recommendations are approved?

Let's suppose the SBC votes overwhelmingly to affirm the recommendations of the GCRTF. There will then be a sequence of actions to be taken, most of which will be referred to the Executive Committee and various entities. The charters for IMB and NAMB will likely need to be changed by subsequent SBC action. The convention would possibly take immediate action to amend the budget proposal.

Our denominational polity creates a challenging dilemma. Each entity is autonomous, accountable to its board of trustees. They have

the freedom to make changes recommended by the SBC, reject them or modify them. But it would be unlikely any board would do anything but seek to fulfill the directives approved by the convention. Even the Executive Committee would feel compelled to formulate changes needed to implement the recommendations concerning structure and processes.

There would be a new impetus in church planting among the unreached ethnic groups that have flooded our cities and communities as IMB works with NAMB, local associations, state conventions and local churches to plant the Gospel in indigenous immigrant communities. This initiative would result in the Gospel flowing more effectively from the United States to families and relatives among these unreached ethnic groups around the world.

NAMB would shift resources from subsidizing administrative positions and consultants in associations and state conventions to deploying a massive network of national church planters trained to initiate self-supporting church planting movements, primarily in pioneer states. Those state conventions would begin to grow as member churches multiply and the states become more self-sufficient in coordinating their own streamlined programs.

Because churches are empowered and given flexibility in CP giving, funding will increase, greater priority will be channeled to missions and more missionaries will be appointed. Confidence in the denomination will improve and all entities will benefit in budget needs being met. Southern Baptists will be refocused on reaching and discipling the lost, and the SBC will continue at the forefront of global missions in leadership and influence.

A critical factor in this future alternative will be the reaction of the state conventions. Of course, the SBC has no authority over the states nor does the GCRTF have the prerogative of dictating actions to the states. The response will be mixed. Some states, as a few have already done, will form their own Great Commission Resurgence Task Force to determine how their own programs and resources can more effectively reach the lost locally and outside the state; some will even streamline programs in order to forward more funds to the SBC. State budgets will be more focused on mobilizing, facilitating and equipping church involvement in missions overseas and in North America.

Partnership with pioneer states will become a higher priority. While the mainline states continue to call attention to the remaining lostness in their own states, it will be recognized that this is the responsibility of the high con-

centration of churches in those states. If these churches are not effectively reaching the lost where they are, there is little the state convention can do to make a difference. Compelled by this shift in state convention budgeting to concentrate on missions and service to local churches, giving to the CP will increase.

Other states will struggle to continue all their legacy programs and more — adopting a “me first” priority. Failing to embrace the vision and join the momentum established by the GCR, income will decline as churches either bypass the state or follow its example and retain funds for their own programs. Pioneer states will be forced to adopt radically reduced structures, but having become independent of NAMB subsidies, they will no longer seek to emulate the programs of historic mainline conventions. Able to focus on church growth and evangelism in partnership with NAMB, these states will become an effective force of coordinating relevant outreach and growth in the areas of greatest lostness in North America.

The growing numbers of non-traditional churches will retain affiliation with the SBC and continue token support, encouraged that a new paradigm of efficiency and mission focus has been initiated. They will not actively participate in state conventions and local associations, however, preferring to relate to affinity networks of like-minded churches with innovative forms and structures.

The decline in baptisms will be curtailed, but membership growth will continue to stagnate as the convention is unable to relate in a relevant way to a rapidly changing society, urbanization of our society and a multi-ethnic culture. With a renewed focus on evangelism and missions, however, rather than trying to do anything and everything, growth will once again kick in though in a changing demographic that begins to encompass the whole country.

Conclusion

Whether or not we have a Great Commission Resurgence is not dependent on actions taken by the SBC in June in Orlando, but on whether or not every individual, family, pastor, church and entity are moved to meet these challenges. No one has the authority to dictate to any Baptist what they must do. It will happen only when we have such a burden for the lost that God will move our hearts in repentance for complacency, indifference and indulgence in self-centered programs and set our hearts on fire with passion to be aligned with His mission.

Burk to Boyce grads: live with no reserves, retreats or regrets

By EMILY GRIFFIN

In his Boyce College commencement address May 7, Dean Denny Burk took graduates to another graduation — one that took place almost 100 years ago.

Speaking from Matthew 16:24-26 in a presentation titled, “No Reserves, No Retreats, No Regrets” Burk told the 96 graduates the story of William Borden who graduated from college a century ago. Borden operated under the principles listed in Burk’s presentation title. The young man died at age 25 on his way to do missionary work in China.

“Graduates, today we send you forth with the prayer that you would follow hard after Christ so that this might be your legacy as well: no reserves, no retreats, no regrets,” Burk said. “That you would hold nothing back from Christ. That you would let nothing turn you back from following Christ wherever he may lead you. That you would count it all joy to lose everything for Christ.”

Borden felt the call of God on his life to be a missionary, and was determined to preach the Gospel in Northwest China. But unlike most students, Burk said, this young man was fabulously wealthy. Burk explained that Borden was the heir to a significant family estate.

As a 16-year-old, Borden travelled through Asia, the Middle East and Europe. During his travels he felt a growing burden for the lost and hurting people he encountered. Because

of what he experienced on this trip, he wrote home about his “desire to be a missionary.” How could a person with such tremendous financial resources just leave it all behind? Burk said Borden wrote two words in the back of his Bible: “no reserves.” This meant Borden would not hold anything back, not even his vast fortune, from Christ.

Borden spent his college years at Yale University, preparing himself for missions work in China. Burk said that during this time Borden made an entry in his personal journal that read, “Say ‘no’ to self and ‘yes’ to Jesus every time.”

In his first year at Yale, Borden started a morning prayer and Bible study group. By the time he graduated, there were 1,000 of Yale’s 1,300 students meeting in the group.

Burk said that upon graduating, Borden turned down lucrative job offers. In his Bible he wrote two more words: “no retreats.” Borden would not be turned back from what God had called him to do. He would only press forward in his pursuit of Christ.

Burk shared that after finishing his ministry studies at Princeton Theological Seminary, Borden sailed for China. He stopped first in Egypt to learn Arabic. While in Cairo, he contracted cerebral meningitis. Within a month, the 25-year-old Borden was dead.

After Borden’s death, people found his Bible and in it he had written two more words underneath “no reserves” and “no retreats.” As he lay dying he added, “no regrets.” Whereas the world



Boyce graduates listened to challenges from Boyce Dean Denny Burk and SBTS President R. Albert Mohler Jr. at the college’s commencement service in Alumni Memorial Chapel. *Photo by Devin Maddox*

and even some of his friends looked on his life as wasted, Burk said Borden had come to a different conclusion even as he lay dying.

“How do you leave this graduation with the same determination with which Borden left his? How did Borden do it?” Burk said. “You do it by believing what Jesus said in Matthew 16:24-26. He said, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses

his life for My sake shall find it. For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’

“This faculty that has poured their lives into yours does not send you out to follow your dreams. We send you out to follow Christ. And to find that in truth all of your dreams can only be fulfilled in Him. If you have Him, you have everything.”

SBTS graduation photos



(L-R) Southern Seminary professors Tom Nettles and Bruce Ware sing together during Southern Seminary’s spring 2010 commencement. *Photo by John Gill*



R. Albert Mohler Jr. challenges graduates to not view themselves as professionals as they embark on a life of commitment to spreading the Gospel. *Photo by John Gill*

Member care at CHBC: an interview with Mark Dever

By PATRICK SCHREINER

Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. — where Mark Dever serves as senior pastor — is known for a strong emphasis on preaching, membership, church discipline and church government.

What few people know is their equally strong emphasis upon member care.

Past

In December 1993, Mark Dever accepted the call to be pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church. From the moment Dever came to the church he started to get a pulse on its spiritual heartbeat.

“The first thing I did when I got to the church was get pictures of all the members and started learning their names and praying regularly for them,” Dever said.

He also began getting together with some of the members.

“When I first came to the church I thought I was going to do a Richard Baxter type ministry (regularly ministering the Word to people in their homes), but I soon learned that with a large church this is impossible,” Dever said.

Dever would go over to the members’ houses and begin to talk to them about the church, their spiritual journey and whatever else came up.

“It was a good way to find out landmines beforehand so you can avoid them,” Dever said.

Through this process he also found out where they stood on their understanding of the Gospel.

“In some of the interviews some people were less clear on the basics of the Gospel so we would go through (the book) ‘Christianity Explained’ with them,” Dever said.

“Christianity’s impact in America is shrinking ... I think one of the best things we can do is raise up a generation of pastors who think about the Gospel and the church well.”

— Mark Dever

Most importantly Dever said the interactions were a good way to meet with every member of the church and get to know them.

Present

Member care begins at CHBC with mem-

bership classes and interviews.

In Dever’s book “What is a Healthy Church” he argues that church membership is an implication drawn from several passages of Scripture.

He uses 1 Timothy 5 to show that the New Testament churches kept lists of people, such as the lists of widows. In 1 Corinthians 5, the church is told to exclude someone, which implies that there is also inclusion, he argues. Also 2 Corinthians 2:6 speaks of “the majority,” which Dever says again shows that there is separation between those who are part of the church and those who are not.

CHBC’s membership process includes going through six classes, followed by a personal meeting with one of the staff elders.

These six classes take place during Sunday School and are centered on the following topics: (1) statement of faith, (2) church covenant, (3) why join a church?, (4) summary of church history, (5) why Southern Baptist? and (6) nuts and bolts.

These classes are meant to provide prospective members with information on the type of institution they are joining. The classes answer questions like, “What does the church believe?” “What is involved in being a member?” and “What is the history of this church?”

“In the membership interview we are hearing people’s stories essentially,” Dever said. “We ask them basic questions about their life, like if they have been married, divorced, baptized as a believer, and if yes, when and where? We ask them if they are coming from another church, and if yes, why they are leaving that church. We ask them if they are happy to attend regularly and make clear their responsibilities as a member.”

Each person is also asked to explain the Gospel in 60 seconds or less.

“This is not so much a test as it is a way to see if they can boil down the basics of Christianity for us,” Dever said.

Once people are members of the church Dever says that CHBC’s pastors/elders encourage a culture of discipleship among the members of the congregation.

“We don’t have a tier structure where I disciple a couple people and they disciple the rest. Rather we encourage the members to be a kingdom of priests,” Dever said. “If the members are not creating a culture of discipleship and member care then the pastors’ work (of member care) will fall woefully short.”

Dever encourages members to move close to the church so that it is easier for them to get involved. Many of the staff pastors lead by example, living next door to the church.



Mark Dever began serving as senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in December 1993. Dever takes seriously his responsibility to shepherd the members of CHBC, while also challenging people there to take ownership of their faith and sharpen and challenge one another. Photo by Patrick Schreiner

The staff and lay pastors/elders of CHBC work to keep up with the spiritual state of their people by discussing a portion of the members in every elders meeting. Every member of the church comes up for discussion on a rotating basis over the course of time. If no pastor/elder knows how a certain member is doing, then one gets assigned to follow up with that person.

At Sunday worship services, it is clear that the preaching of the Word is central. Sometimes sermons go over an hour.

Dever said he sees preaching as his main task and an essential component of member care.

“If I sit down and talk to one member that is great. I am helping them,” Dever said. “But I have 750 other members I am not helping. Ironically, it is actually the time that I am sitting here preparing my sermon that I am serving the entire congregation.”

Future

CHBC’s forward-looking mentality regarding member care takes the form of an internship program. The internship program at CHBC trains six young men each semester

who move to Capitol Hill where they get a stipend for five months, a place to live and a lot of books.

The pastors/elders at CHBC spend a significant amount of their time with the interns. Each intern regularly trails pastors, reads books and writes papers.

“I read these papers and make comments on them,” Dever said. “Then on Thursday morning we sit down for three hours and talk about them.”

The conversation usually starts with topics surrounding the church but often reaches into all areas of theology. The purpose of the internship is to teach interns the doctrine of the church and to do so in the context of a church.

Dever said he would encourage pastors to think about what they are doing to train up leaders for the future.

“Christianity’s impact in America is shrinking,” Dever said.

“Our kids are growing up in a culture where people are increasingly hostile to Christianity. I think one of the best things we can do is raise up a generation of pastors who think about the Gospel and the church well.”

RESOURCE:

Dever sermon, “Children” at SBTS

Mark Dever preached on children and having faith like a child this spring during trustee week at Southern Seminary.

<http://www.sbts.edu/resources/chapel/chapel-spring-2010/children/>



with Grant Gaines



A cross section of the student body of Southern Seminary

Grant Gaines is an M.Div. graduate and Ph.D. candidate at Southern and senior pastor of Brushy Fork Baptist Church in Canaan, Ind.

What did you expect pastoral ministry to be like entering your first senior pastorate?

I anticipated a situation in which if I genuinely loved and served the people, showed them that I cared for their souls, labored to preach quality sermons and worked hard to lead them in evangelizing the lost, then they would respect me and follow my lead. I know it doesn't always happen like this, but this has basically been my experience.

I also figured there would be a need to teach today's members of the church truths that members from 100 years ago would have been quite familiar with — things like what it means to take church membership seriously, that church discipline is a biblical and healthy practice and that conversion does not simply consist in repeating a prayer after a preacher at the end of a service.

More positively, I expected to find people who genuinely loved Christ and His Word, and who weren't familiar with some of these things simply because it had been so long since someone had taught about them. I have found all of these expectations to be on target.

What do you see as the biblical elements of pastoral ministry (preaching, counseling, etc.)? How have you sought to fulfill those roles at Brushy Fork?

Broadly speaking, I believe the job of the pastor is to “equip the saints for the work of the ministry” (Eph 4:12). I seek to do this through preaching and teaching, counseling and through giving a timely word in various circumstances such as times of sickness and grief, or when it appears sin may be gaining a foothold in someone's life. The last cate-

gory (giving a timely word) seems to be one that young pastors like me tend to overlook. I would suggest, however, that times of pain and suffering are times in which members of our congregation need the proclamation of the cross, resurrection and coming new creation the most.

How have you sought to lead Brushy Fork in making changes in your first year there and what have been those changes?

I've been told by many not to change anything in the first year of pastoral ministry, and I think this is good advice, generally speaking. With that said, I did lead our church to make a couple of changes in my first year.

First, I led us to stop giving funds to the American Baptist Convention. When I came, we were dually aligned with the ABC and the Southern Baptist Convention, and had only been associated with the SBC for about five years. I had major concerns with the ABC, and let those concerns be known during my interview process with the church. Within five months, we voted unanimously to stop sending funds to the ABC. My church seemed ready for it, and I was definitely ready for it, so we changed.

The other change I made was removing an open prayer request and announcement time from the beginning of our Sunday morning order of service. Instead, we now open our time together with a Scripture reading and pastoral prayer. We put announcements in the bulletin, and I reemphasize the important ones at the end of the service. People now write out prayer requests and put them in the offering plate. We pray for these items during our Wednesday night gathering for prayer and Bible study. I felt the freedom to make this change sooner rather than later because the deacons told me that the order of service was my responsibility and that I could change it if I desired.



Tweetable features “tweets” from Southern Seminary faculty and other leaders in Southern Baptist life.

@drmoore

Leaving beautiful Carmel-by-the-Sea. It was an Eden-like place to work on my book about temptation.

<http://twitter.com/drmoore>

@DonWhitney

He shall never find joy, neither in God nor in himself, who doth not both know & practice meditation — Jos Hall 1607

<http://twitter.com/DonWhitney>

@davidsills

Headed back to Louisville after participating in a great NAMB think tank on immigrant and refugee ministry

<http://twitter.com/davidsills>

Bird illustration Copyright © 2009 Luc Latulippe



Timothy Paul Jones

Associate Professor of Leadership and Church Ministry,
Family Ministry Coordinator and Children's Ministry Coordinator at SBTS

Information:

Spouse's name/length of marriage:

Rayann; almost 16 years.

Children's names and ages:

Hannah, 14. We are planning to adopt another child in the upcoming year.

Hometown:

Before Southern, we spent eight and-a-half years in Tulsa, Okla. Most of my life has been spent in Missouri, though.

Hobbies:

Writing, playing guitar, hiking, cooking.

List one of your favorite:

Music groups:

U2, particularly the Achtung Baby era

Movies:

"Star Wars: Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back," "Star Wars: Episode III: Revenge of the Sith," "Star Wars: Episode IV: A New Hope" and "Apollo 13."

TV shows:

"I haven't owned a television in years."

Restaurants:

Havana Rumba

Vacation spots:

"Too many to name: I enjoy new places. Near the top is Sydney, Australia; San Juan, Puerto Rico and Colorado Springs, Colo."

Current church/local church ministry:

Sojourn Community Church, East Campus. Jones teaches elementary school children at Sojourn.

What books, beside the Bible, have most influenced you and why:

Karl Barth, "The Word of God and the Word of Man." Mark DeVine, then a professor at Midwestern Seminary, urged me to read Barth. Although Barth's view of Scripture was far from adequate, this book as well as volumes 1 and 4 of his "Church Dogmatics" caused me to think twice at a time when I was flirting with more liberal views of Scripture.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "The Cost of Discipleship" and John MacArthur, "The Gospel According to Jesus." Together, these two books helped me to define my understanding of what it means to be saved.

C.S. Lewis, "Perelandra." My favorite book by Lewis, his depiction of a world on the verge of plunging into sin is elegantly haunting, prodding at us to see the darkness that still resides in each of our hearts.

G.K. Chesterton, "Orthodoxy." Other texts taught me the necessity of orthodoxy; Chesterton helped me to see the beauty of it: "It is always simple to fall; there are an infinity of angles at which one falls, only one at which one stands. To have fallen into any one of the fads ... would indeed have been obvious and tame. But to have avoided them all has been one whirling adventure; and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling but erect."

What do you want students to take away from family ministry courses with you?

"I spend a great deal of time talking about making changes and managing conflict wherever God places you. There's a reason for this:

I want students to love whatever church they are serving — not continually leaning over the fence, looking for someplace that may be a little easier, a little trendier or a bit bigger. Wherever they go, I hope that they root their lives in that particular community and learn to love that community, seeking the peace of that place (Jer 29:5-7)."

If you had five minutes to communicate to a young pastor-to-be what would you say?

"What you do for God beyond your home will never typically be greater than what you practice with God within your home."

Did you know?

- Throughout college, Jones played guitar in a heavy metal band.
 - Jones said he is "fascinated by cities" — public transit, downtown baseball parks, small local restaurants and old buildings.
 - In 15 years of full-time vocational ministry, Jones has served in only two churches — but in one of those churches he served in three different staff positions at different times: minister of youth, minister of children and administration and senior pastor.
 - Jones is a fan of the Calvin and Hobbes comic strips and the "Star Wars" films.
- "When I served as a youth and children's minister, I kept a bucket of 'Star Wars' toys in my office for children to play with. That theme in my office kept growing until it became the décor of the entire office — I maintained this décor when I became a pastor and then, when we moved here, as a professor. As a result, I suspect that I have the sole office on campus that is decorated with 'Star Wars' toys."

Website:

www.timothypauljones.com

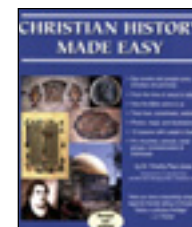
Books:



"Conspiracies and the Cross"
Strang: 2008



"Misquoting Truth: A Guide to the Fallacies of Bart Ehrman's Misquoting Jesus"
InterVarsity: 2007



"Christian History Made Easy: 13 Weeks to a Better Understanding of Church History"
Rose: 1999, 2005

A Q&A with Bryan Chapell on Christ-centered preaching

By JEFF ROBINSON

Bryan Chapell serves as the president of Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., as well as professor of practical theology there. He is the author of several books, including “Christ-Centered Preaching” and most recently “Christ-Centered Worship.” Chapell delivered the E.Y. Mullins Lectures on expository preaching at Southern Seminary March 30-April 1 and while he was here Towers had a chance to interview him.

How profound an impact did transitioning to a Christ-centered approach to preaching have on your life and ministry?

Bryan Chapell: I think the primary thing that changed for me was identifying the motivation and enablement for love for Christ rather than simply preaching imperatives for people. My early task was getting people to do the things that they don’t want to do and ultimately, believing that preaching is getting people to love Christ so much that they have a new heart, new affections and desire to do what He calls them to do; their calling actually becomes their passion rather than what they are resisting. By encouraging people with God’s love for them, they are actually strengthened for service to people.

How did this change you?

Chapell: I think there was a time when I believed that it was the job of the preacher to beat the people about the head and shoulders with the Bible to get them to straighten up. But that was not my personality; I think my personality is more gentle and caring, but I somehow had it in my mind that beating people over the head was what preachers were supposed to do and to be a faithful preacher, I really just kind of needed to get after people and that was my job and God called me to be faithful to do that.

In a sense, I felt like discovering grace in all of Scripture as the motivating power of the Gospel actually brought me back around to my true self. I didn’t have to be somebody I wasn’t to try and get somebody to straighten up. In fact, I could be my truer self of seeking to love people, seeking to be gracious toward them and encourage them, and even when I had to challenge them to do it in a way that says, “But it’s because of a love for you,” and it’s not because I feel like you are not going to be honoring me or not respecting me or not listening to me (if you don’t change). So, my motive came more from my care for them, rather than my own ego building.

In preaching the Old Testament, how can we avoid tacking on the Gospel in an artificial way?

Chapell: I think there are two basic ways, and these have multiple subdivisions, but two basic ways, I think. One is to identify where an Old Testament text fits in God’s redemptive plan, so as we are looking at God’s unfolding of the revelation of His plan of redemption, the primary purpose, (for example) of the story of Sampson, is not “If you have long hair, you will be strong.” There is something in that story about people abandoning God, but God not abandoning them. As that message is maintained, we begin to understand that God is showing His revelation of redemption. For everyone to do what is right in his own eyes is not a way out of the human condition. Human kings are not a way out of the human condition. Obedience to the law is not a way out of the human condition. Ultimately, the path out of fallen humanity has to be a divine path and so you begin to see all the texts of Scripture as unfolding God’s path toward redemptive provision in Christ.

One way of not just doing tag-on sermons is showing where the text fits in God’s redemptive plan. That is the macro approach. I think the micro approach is to identify, “Where is grace evident in the passage? How is God revealing His provision for humanity of a rescue that they cannot provide for themselves?” Somewhere that is going to be in the text. God is saying, “I am providing what these people cannot provide for themselves.” It may just be food for the hungry or strength for the weak or rescue for the hopeless, but in some way, God is saying, “I am providing for you what you cannot provide for yourself.” And in that sense, a grace principle is being shown that we can say has its fullest revelation in what Christ has done.

Sometimes people fear that this is doing eisegesis, that this is imposing the New Testament on the Old, and I simply reply, “I live on this side of the cross. I know where the story goes.” So, for me to say, “Here God is showing the seed of His grace in order for me to understand what the full bloom will be,” is okay to do. I can present the revelation of what grace is here, showing that it has its fullest representation in Christ because I know Christ has come.



Bryan Chapell. Photo by Devin Maddox

How important is it for us to preach what your classic book “Christ-Centered Preaching” calls “the fallen condition focus?”

Chapell: The Holy Spirit did not inspire a text just for our information. There was a purpose behind each text and He is saying that there is something behind our fallen condition that requires the provision of God to correct the human dilemma. If you begin by looking at a text and saying, “What’s wrong here? Why did the Holy Spirit write this?” you are forced to say that He is not just giving God-inspired words so you will be a better person and you will fix the problem yourself.

By identifying the fallenness, you are forced to come up with a divine solution and that divine solution is going to force you to think redemptively about the text and that ultimately is saying Christ must provide something that humanity cannot provide for itself. So, identifying the fallen condition focus, if you will, is identifying the hole that the divine grace of God must fill. Thus, the Gospel comes into play no matter where you are (in Scripture).

You published a book last year titled “Christ-Centered Worship.” We have spent a lot of time debating contemporary vs. traditional, but wouldn’t it be better to ask “Whom are we worshiping in our churches?”

Chapell: We get very divided over style, which is basically, “Does my preference win over your preference?” versus the question of what is the purpose of worship.

If you look at church worship through the ages, across traditions, there is a very consistent

pattern. There is a beginning of adoring God, recognizing His greatness and goodness. And whenever you recognize the greatness of God, the automatic human response is, “If He is that great, I begin to recognize that I am not.” Adoration of God leads to confession which leads to the need for understanding, “Isn’t God going to help me in this?” The answer is yes, He provides His grace. When we understand His grace, we give thanks for that, we want more instruction: “Lord, now tell me how I can live for you.” And then we desire to live for Him and that Gospel pattern is the way the church has worshiped through the ages.

As we begin to think about what a church’s ministry is, it is not simply to tell that Gospel story to its own people, but to think missionally as well. Given those whom God has called us to minister to, how do we make sure they know the Gospel in our worship? That’s not just satisfying personal preference, because then you’re not honoring the greatness of God. Nor is it failing to be aware that, just as I might relate the Gospel different to a high schooler than I might to an attorney, there might be some variations in the way the Gospel might be presented for a missional purpose. The basic Gospel pattern won’t change, but the way in which I might frame it or phrase it could well change, depending on those to whom I am speaking.

“The Holy Spirit did not inspire a text just for our information. There was a purpose behind each text and He is saying that there is something behind our fallen condition that requires the provision of God to correct the human dilemma. ... The Gospel comes into play no matter where you are (in Scripture).”

— Bryan Chapell

In “Christ-Centered Worship,” I am very much calling for the leaders of churches to identify “Who is here and who needs to be here?” In answering that question, I ask, “How do we best frame our worship according to Gospel patterns to minister to those people?” We can’t forget either group: if we only minister to those who are here, we have no outreach; if we only minister to those who are not here, then we actually lose those whom God has called us to build up in the faith.

Books old and new

By JEFF ROBINSON



“40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible” by Rob Plummer (Kregel 2010, \$17.99)

What is the Bible and how should we interpret it? What determines the meaning of the text and can it have more than one meaning? Is the Bible all about Jesus and do the

commands of God all apply to believers today? How did we get the books of the Bible?

Have you ever been asked these questions? Or perhaps you have wondered about these issues yourself. If so, Robert L. Plummer, associate professor of New Testament interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has provided a brand new book that will answer all these and many more fundamental questions about God’s Word.

The book, “40 Questions About Interpreting

the Bible” (Kregel), was released last week and has already begun to make a major impact in the publishing world: it jumped to No. 1 among hermeneutics books offered on Amazon.com during its first few days of publication.

“I envisioned the book as an introductory textbook for a hermeneutics class,” Plummer said. “In my hermeneutics class at Southern, I use a variety of texts that seek to answer a number of important questions, but I wanted to get all that into one book.

“I tried to think about the most common questions I get from students or from laypeople. I wanted to get all those into one place in a way that was accessible, clear, accurate and manageable in 5 to 10 page answers to questions.

“I also wanted to provide something that could be used in a study group with each chapter having five questions and a bibliography of suggested further reading. I wanted to write a book that would benefit both students and laypeople alike and I definitely think it will.”

The book is divided into four parts and each

deals with a major issue of Bible interpretation, including:

- **Text, canon and translation.** Here, the book deals with basic issues such as how the Bible is organized, the inerrancy of Scripture, who determined what books would be included in the Bible and choosing the best English translation.

- **Approaching the Bible generally.** Here, the author provides helpful sections on how the Bible has been interpreted throughout the history of the church and gives some basic principles on how to interpret Scripture accurately.

- **Approaching specific texts.** Key questions in this section include those dealing with different literary genres in both Old and New Testaments.

- **Issues under recent discussion.** The author concludes his survey of Bible interpretation by dealing with current issues ranging from issues such as biblical prophecy, biblical criticism and “Speech Act Theory” to theological interpretation of Scripture.

Plummer’s work is the second volume in the “40 Questions Series” published by Kregel, a series edited by Southern Seminary graduate Benjamin L. Merkle, who serves on the faculty of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. Merkle is author of the first book in the series, “40 Questions About Elders and Deacons.”

Upcoming volumes include works by two other Southern Seminary faculty members: “40 Questions About Christians and Biblical Law” by Thomas R. Schreiner and “40 Questions About Election and Atonement” by Bruce A. Ware.

“40 Questions” is an excellent book for use in a local church setting and will benefit anyone with fundamental questions about the Bible, its history and how to interpret it. Plummer has more than achieved his goal of providing a clear, compelling and accessible volume on understanding God’s Word more accurately. Any book that has that as its goal is worthy of occupying a place in every thoughtful Christian’s library.



“Ecclesiastes: Why Everything Matters” by Philip Graham Ryken (Crossway 2010, \$33.99)

As I prepared to teach through the Old Testament wisdom book of Ecclesiastes recently at my church, one fact soon became abundantly evident: there are few reliable commentaries on Ecclesiastes! But next time I study Ecclesiastes, I will be far better equipped with the release of the latest volume in Crossway’s excellent

“Preaching the Word” commentary series.

Philip Graham Ryken, pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and president-elect of Wheaton College, provides a verse-by-verse examination of an Old Testament book that many view as darkly ironic at best, sadistic at worst. But Ryken seeks to show that Solomon’s assessment of “life under the sun” is really nothing more than a refreshingly frank account of “how life really is.”

Ryken writes in a compelling manner befitting the lively prose of Solomon. For example, he writes on the “meaningful hedonism” of Ecclesiastes 2:1-11: “When we turn back to God, asking him to save us in the name of Jesus Christ, something very surprising happens: the very pleasures that once failed to satisfy us now help us to find even greater joy in the goodness of God. This is not true of foolish and sinful pleasures, of course, which we are still warned against (e.g. Romans 13:13-14). Like Moses, we are called to suffer for the cause of Christ rather than to ‘enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin’ (Hebrews 11:25). But there is such a thing as holy and legitimate pleasure. For the people of God there is meaningful hedonism — pleasure that comes in the enjoyment of God.”

Ryken is a trustworthy guide. Buy this commentary and drink deeply from the well of Solomonic wisdom alongside one of America’s great pastors.



“Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe” by Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears (Crossway 2010, \$22.99)

This is another book that will help believers to understand more clearly how their Bibles fit together. Driscoll and Breshears have provided Christians with an excellent and accessible systematic/biblical theology that takes readers through the entire Bible, fleshing out the major doctrines and key points in redemptive

history, in less than 500 pages.

The book is written in the typical engaging and lively Driscoll style, providing numerous illustrations and employing lay-level language to expound clearly even the more difficult doctrines such as the Trinity and the incarnation. The authors also write with an awareness of historical theology and show how doctrine developed throughout the history of the church, pausing to explain key figures, councils and events across the ages. Each chapter not only expounds the doctrine under consideration, but also exposes heterodox versions of it. For example, the chapter in the Trinity unpacks modalism and Arianism, among other Trinitarian heresies. One of the key aspects of “Doctrine” is its engagement of biblical doctrine and the story of redemption in light of contemporary challenges. For example, the authors consider issues of God’s special revelation raised by Dan Brown’s best-selling book “The Da Vinci Code.”

All in all, “Doctrine” is an excellent book for group study (it includes a study guide for small group study) and serves as a sure guide for those who enjoy giving away meaty and pleasurable books for the edification of fellow believers or for the evangelization of the lost.



“Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry” by Michael Lawrence (Crossway 2010, \$16.99)

Michael Lawrence brings together two relatives, biblical and systematic theology, who are far too often shorn asunder by evangelical scholars, and shows how their close kinship is needed to provide a fully biblical understanding of God’s Word for the church. With a forward by South-

ern Seminary’s own Tom Schreiner, Lawrence’s work provides tools that will help both students and laypeople to connect the important dots in the Bible’s overall storyline: covenants, epochs, prophecy and continuity. He also shows how systematic theology relates to biblical theology and provides a framework for articulating the stories that make up the story of the Gospel itself: creation, fall, love, sacrifice and promise.

Perhaps most helpful, the third and final section of this work shows how a pastor or teacher should employ biblical and systematic theology in his teaching arsenal for the education and edification of the local church. The book provides several case studies for applying Scripture both broadly and specifically to the church and her parishioners.

“Michael Lawrence brings together two relatives, biblical and systematic theology, who are far too often shorn asunder by evangelical scholars, and shows how their close kinship is needed to provide a fully biblical understanding of God’s Word for the church.”

Three nominees thus far for SBC president

Compiled by GARRETT E. WISHALL

As of press time, three candidates have been announced for Southern Baptist Convention president: Bryant Wright, senior pastor of the Atlanta-area Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta; Jimmy Jackson, president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention and senior pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala.; and Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla.



Bryant Wright

Wright is the founding pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, which began in 1981 and has helped plant multiple churches since that time. Wright served as president of the SBC Pastors' Conference in 2006 in Greensboro, N.C.

In an interview with The Christian Index of Georgia, Wright said he thinks the work of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force has "made a great contribution to the future of our denomination."

"I'm so thankful for Johnny Hunt's leadership in forming the GCRTF to help our denomination reprioritize reaching the world for Christ," he said. "It is a crucial beginning in that direction, but it is just a beginning."

Wright said there needs to be a reprioritization towards international missions at all levels

of Southern Baptist life.

"I think any Southern Baptist would be greatly concerned about how small a percentage of our mission dollars actually end up going for international missions," he said.



Jimmy Jackson

Jackson was the SBC's first vice president for 2006-07 and has been senior pastor of Whitesburg Baptist for 31 years. He has been an assistant parliamentarian at the SBC's annual meetings for nearly 25 years and is a former

member of the SBC Executive Committee.

When asked by the Christian Index how he felt about the work of the GCRTF he said this:

"The GCRTF had a great deal of unnecessary inflammatory rhetoric early on," Jackson said. "Since that time there has been an effort by chairman Ronnie Floyd to moderate that. I think the task force was assigned an almost impossible task, but they have worked hard in recent months to hear the concerns of all who are affected by their recommendations.

"I would like to see the task force make its report and make it clear that any implementation that involves an entity or agency of the SBC must be acted upon according to the trustee system and the constitution and bylaws of the SBC."

Traylor is a trustee of the North American

Mission Board and is chairman of NAMB's presidential search team. Traylor has also served as president of the Florida Baptist State Convention, SBC first vice president and president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.



Ted Traylor

Traylor is a member of the GCRTF.

In an interview with the Christian Index he noted that any implementation of the task force recommendations would be in the hands of trustees and leaders of SBC entities and

the Executive Committee.

"My vision is to see our convention of churches embrace the missional vision of presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations," Traylor said. "Implementation of the report, if adopted, will rest with the trustees and leaders of our entities and the Executive Committee. The SBC president should be a major voice in this, as he will have interactive opportunities with those doing the implementation."

This article was compiled from reports by Art Toalston, Baptist Press editor; James A. Smith Sr., executive editor of the Florida Baptist Witness; Scott Barkley, production editor of The Christian Index of Georgia; Jennifer Davis Rash, managing editor of The Alabama Baptist, and interviews done by The Christian Index.

Newsbriefs

GCRTF may be presented as one or multiple recommendations

No decision has been made whether the final report of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force will be presented as a unit or as separate recommendations, the chairman of that group said at a press conference May 4. The decision will be made by the presiding officer, said Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church in Springdale, Ark., during a conference call with journalists. (BP)

IMB trustees plan for interim presidency

International Mission Board trustees meeting in Chicago, May 4-5, made plans for an interim presidency if no candidate for president has been voted into office by July 31. If no candidate is brought forward and elected by the July date, when current president Jerry Rankin retires, trustees will name Clyde Meador interim president.

Meador, current IMB executive vice president, is from Albuquerque, N.M. He has served the IMB nearly seven years in that role and was under missionary appointment for more than 26 years prior to taking that position. (BP)

Moore to chair Resolutions Committee for 2010 SBC

SBC President Johnny Hunt named Russell D. Moore the chairman of the Resolutions Committee for the 2010 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Orlando. Moore serves as senior vice president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Kevin Smith, assistant professor of church history at Southern and pastor of Watson Memorial Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., will once again serve on the committee. (BP)

Delay GCR until 2011, Missouri board urges

Missouri Baptist Convention Executive Director David Tolliver will attempt to make a motion at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June asking messengers to receive the report by the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force (GCRTF) and delay any action for one year until all entities involved can do a spiritual/financial impact study. The motion by Tolliver was sanctioned by the 54-member MBC executive board in an April 13 vote without opposition. (BP)

GCR Task Force lists 7 recommendations

By BP STAFF

Seven recommendations to the Southern Baptist Convention are specified by the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force in the final report released May 3:

"1. That the messengers to the SBC, meeting in Orlando, Florida, June 15-16, 2010, adopt the following as the mission statement of the SBC: As a convention of churches, our missional vision is to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations.

"2. That the messengers to the SBC ... adopt the following as Core Values for our work together: Christ-likeness, truth, unity, relationships, trust, future, local church and Kingdom.

"3. That the messengers to the SBC ... request the Executive Committee of the SBC to consider recommending to the SBC the adoption of the language and structure of Great

Commission Giving as described in this report in order to enhance and celebrate the Cooperative Program and the generous support of Southern Baptists channeled through their churches. We further request that the boards of trustees of the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board consider the adoption of the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong offering goals as outlined in this report.

"4. That the messengers to the SBC ... request the Executive Committee of the SBC to consider any revision to the ministry assignment of NAMB that may be necessary in order to accomplish the redirection of NAMB as outlined in this report; and that the Board of Trustees of NAMB be asked to consider the encouragements found within this report in all matters under their purview.

"5. That the messengers to the SBC ... request that the Executive Committee of the SBC and the IMB of the SBC consider a revised

ministry assignment for the IMB that would remove any geographical limitation on its mission to reach unreached and underserved people groups wherever they are found.

"6. That the messengers to the SBC ... request the Executive Committee of the SBC to consider working with the leadership of the state conventions in developing a comprehensive program of Cooperative Program promotion and stewardship education in alignment with this report.

"7. That the messengers to the SBC ... request the Executive Committee of the SBC to consider recommending an SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget that will increase the percentage allocated to the IMB to 51 percent by decreasing the Executive Committee's percentage of the SBC Allocation Budget by 1 percent."

The full GCRTF report is available at www.pray4gcr.com. (BP)

The ‘LovettOrLeaveIt’ challenge: putting feet to adoption

By ANDREW WALKER

What do you call 34 legs and 248.9 miles? Adoption ministry.

Or, at least, that’s how one group from Highview Baptist Church recently expressed it.

During the early morning hours of Saturday, April 24, a group of 17 students from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary — the majority from Highview’s Kingdom First adult Bible fellowship (ABF) — banded together to support Ken and Sarah Lovett, fellow seminary students and members of Kingdom First, who are in the process of adopting two children from Ukraine.

The task before the group was completing the annual Kentucky Derby Festival mini-marathon. While the event itself was memorable, the cause behind it was eternal.

The Lovetts had felt called to proclaim the Gospel in their own lives through adopting two children. Considering the expensive fees associated with adoption, Ken and Sarah began to think about creative ways to raise money for the adoption. With the help of their friends, the Lovetts proposed running the half-marathon with hopes that others might be willing to donate money to support them in the run.

“Right now there are two young children in Ukraine, babies who don’t have a father or a mother ... But we do know that soon, Lord willing, those two orphans will be brought into a home, and Ken and Sarah Lovett will be to them simply ‘Dad’ and ‘Mom.’”
— Robbie Sagers

The idea quickly gained support from their ABF, including co-teacher and Southern student Robbie Sagers.

“Right now there are two young children in Ukraine, babies who don’t have a father or a mother,” Sagers said. “We don’t yet even know their names — we don’t yet even know if they are a ‘he’ or a ‘she!’ But we do know that soon, Lord willing, those two orphans will be brought into a home, and Ken and Sarah Lovett will be to them simply ‘Dad’ and ‘Mom.’”

The response was overwhelming. Not only did more people race in the half-marathon than the Lovetts had originally expected, but others

supported the cause by generously sponsoring runners and purchasing official “LovettOrLeaveIt” race-day t-shirts. One individual was even able to raise more than \$1,600 for the adoption.

“God just kept blessing us with friends who wanted to run for us,” Ken said. “Some were even friends of friends that didn’t know us personally. We ended up with not just 10, but 17 people running. And several of our friends didn’t just raise \$10 to \$15 per mile, but rather \$20 to even \$100 per mile. Pledge cards were still in the mail on the day of the race, but from the amounts we knew already when we were crossing the finish line, it came out to more than \$8,000 raised.”

The Lovetts are currently in the process of working with an adoption organization that pledges to match dollar-for-dollar, up to a certain amount, the contributions already made — thereby doubling what contributors give. The Lovetts believe that with the dollar-matching grant, the money needed for their adoption will have been met through the race initiative.

The day’s events were memorable as pelting rain fell early in the race, coupled with the chaotic presence of 15,000 other runners all seeking to cross the finish line. The race began with a difficult and hilly trek through Iroquois Park, a brief trip through Churchill Downs and a downtown finish with hundreds of onlookers cheering on the runners.

The race and its accompanying difficulties experienced were lessened in the minds of the runners in light of the eternal reason for why they were running: two Ukrainian orphans located thousands of miles away who do not have the love of a mother or father. With each additional mile came one more dollar toward expediting the adoption process.

Russell D. Moore — senior vice president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology at Southern, and author of “Adopted for Life” — believes that events like the “LovettOrLeaveIt” run for adoption can serve as a catalyst in mobilizing churches to form strong, vibrant cultures of adoption.

“These are precisely the kinds of things virtually any church can do,” said Moore, who also serves as a preaching pastor at Highview Baptist Church and co-teacher of the Kingdom First ABF. “Not everyone can adopt. Not everyone has the money to help fund an adoption. But everyone can do something.

“In this case, folks ran for adoption . . . and, in so doing, encouraged others to help some Ukrainian orphans. This is faith working through love. The parts of the body love and minister to one another, and to some Ukrainian orphans they haven’t even met yet.”

Ken found that the run for adoption

sparked phenomenal opportunities to have conversations about the Gospel — both in his life and in the lives of others who ran.

“God has used this to open doors for our runners to talk about the Gospel with coworkers and friends who asked why they were running the half-marathon,” he said.

While the adoption process itself feels as though it were even more difficult than a 13.1-mile run, the Lovetts hope to bring their children home sometime later this year or in early 2011.

Asked about how the seminary community can pray for the adoption, Ken requested prayer for the protection and provision of the babies that are soon-to-become he and Sarah’s

children. Ken also requested that individuals pray that the entire adoption process — including all of the paperwork involved — would progress smoothly.

Sagers summed up the mission of adoption and the purpose of the day’s events.

“Someday, perhaps, we’ll get to tell those children about the race we ran, the money so many were good to provide and the prayers petitioned on their behalf,” he said. “More than this, though, we’ll be looking forward to telling them about the Gospel, about the Father God who has adopted us into his own household through the life, death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ.”

HISTORY HIGHLIGHT:

First commencement at SBTS

By STEVE JONES

On May 28, 1860, Southern Seminary held its first commencement ceremony. The seminary had officially opened on Oct. 1 of the previous year with nine students. Those numbers had increased to 26 by 1860. Eighteen of those students were recognized as having passed their coursework for the session at the first commencement.

At that time, students graduated from individual schools within the seminary. Those schools included biblical introduction, Old Testament interpretation, New Testament interpretation, systematic theology, polemic theology, homiletics, ecclesiastical history, and church government and pastoral duties. The graduating students in this first class received passing grades in at least one of those schools, with some students graduating from multiple schools within the seminary.

J. William Jones and William L. Curry both graduated from a total of five schools, and Crawford H. Toy, John A. Chambliss, and Thomas B. Shepherd graduated from four schools.¹ The school of Old Testament interpretation contained the largest number of graduates, 13, with six completing the requirements in English and seven completing the requirements in both English and Hebrew.²

John A. Broadus recorded his recollection of the seminary’s first commencement writing that, “At the Commencement for this first session, near the end of May, 1860, a missionary sermon was preached by President G. W. Samson, D.D., of Washington City, and an address was made by the venerable Dr. B. [Basil] Manly,

Sr., both of whom had taken a great interest in the various conventions leading to the formation of the Seminary. By request of Dr. Boyce, Professor B. [Basil] Manly, Jr., wrote a Commencement hymn, beginning, ‘Soldiers of Christ, in truth arrayed,’ which has been sung at every subsequent Commencement, and it is hoped will be sung for ages to come. As a whole, the opening session was thought to have been highly successful and encouraging.”³

Many of the graduates honored at the first commencement returned for the seminary’s second session to continue their studies in other theological areas. After completing their studies, graduating students from this first seminary commencement went on to serve in many different areas of Baptist life including pastoral ministry, home missions, theological education, associational ministry and in leadership positions within the Southern Baptist Convention.⁴ At least six of these graduates, J. William Jones, John A. Chambliss, Hilary E. Hatcher, George W. Hyde, Robert H. Marsh and Crawford H. Toy would go on to serve as chaplains during the Civil War.

To learn more about early seminary alumni or the history of instruction at the seminary, visit the archives on the second floor of the library or visit archives.sbts.edu.

ENDNOTES

¹Southern Seminary Catalog, 1860. Archives and Special Collection, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

²Ibid.

³John A. Broadus, *Memoir of James P. Boyce*. (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893), 175.

⁴Ibid., 169-172.

A Q&A with the founders of Focus on the Family's Boundless.org

By COURTNEY REISSIG

Steve and Candice Watters met at Regent University while earning master's degrees in public policy. Marrying shortly after graduation, they moved to Colorado to work at Focus on the Family. Together they founded Boundless.org webzine in 1998. Candice served as the Boundless editor for four years until leaving in 2002 to be a full-time mother doing a little freelance writing and editing on the side.

Candice is the author of "Get Married: What Women Can Do to Help It Happen." Steve is the director of young adults for Focus on the Family, where he gets to manage Boundless and Focus projects related to getting married and starting families.

Steve and Candice recently co-authored "Start Your Family: Inspiration for Having Babies." They have four children, ages 10, 8, 3 and 1.



Steve and Candice Watters with their four children. The Watters' founded Boundless.org webzine for Focus on the Family in 1998. Photo from Steve and Candice Watters

How did your ministry at Boundless.org get started?

Our first jobs after graduate school and getting married were at Focus on the Family.

Shortly after we started working with Focus on the Family in 1997, a donor gave a large gift for the purpose of starting a ministry for college students. His own son was an undergraduate at the time and Focus resources had a gap between teen magazines and help for families with young children. He wanted something to fill that gap.

It was a perfect match: His money; our passion. Thankfully the board of directors agreed. They gave us the green light to start Boundless,

an online webzine for college students tasked with helping them embrace God's design for their lives. Since then, Boundless has grown with the readers to cover the college season and beyond; we now serve single 20 and 30-somethings in the season of life between their childhood homes and the homes they'll form when they marry.

How can men and women preparing for ministry use Boundless?

The site offers daily articles that cover the range of issues facing students and young professionals: time and money stewardship, church involvement, family and friendship dynamics,

mentoring, romantic relationships and more. Our driving themes are purity, community, stewardship and, when it comes to marriage, Christian compatibility.

Additionally, the BoundlessLine.org blog provides a window into the souls of readers through their comments and conversations on the articles and blog posts.

What advice would you give single men and women training for ministry who desire marriage?

If you desire marriage it's a good indication that you're not called to celibacy and whom you marry will be an essential part of your ministry. Far from a side issue or after-thought, your marriage will provide the crucible God uses to shape who you become, what you accomplish and how you minister. Adding children to that mix will intensify those realities.

As you consider your calling alongside

potential marriage partners, ask, "will be we able to serve the Kingdom better together than we can apart?" That's the goal: marriage for God's glory.

What advice would you give married men and women who are ministering to singles who desire marriage (and who don't desire marriage)? How can churches and ministers encourage marriage and children in their congregations?

We would encourage married people who are ministering to singles to, first and foremost, live in fellowship with those singles in the body of Christ — seek first the Kingdom of God together. In that context, they can call both those who desire marriage, as well as those who don't, to be focused on what it means to be Kingdom-minded in the stage of life they are in — and to be starkly distinct from the world's approach to singleness.

Further, helping singles to marry for God's glory is of great Kingdom significance. The vows of marriage and the daily sacrifices required for a couple to become one are the very things that give believers one of the best means for being conformed into the image of God and to be made mature enough to serve others. Unfortunately, singles are too often left to follow the cultural script they've inherited for finding their way to marriage.

Ultimately your example — the story of your path to marriage, and your modeling and input through fellowship in the body will be the heart of the ministry you can provide to singles. This same model can be repeated for couples who launch off into marriage but then need God's truth and grace and the fellowship of believers to embrace, and transform their approach to children.

For more information, contact the Watters at watters@startyourfamily.com.



CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Chapel will resume in the Fall Semester.



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Announcements

'The Albert Mohler Program'

"The Albert Mohler Program," a daily radio show hosted by R. Albert Mohler Jr., can be heard from 5-6 p.m. on WFIA-FM 94.7 or as a live webcast at www.AlbertMohler.com. Previous broadcasts of the nationwide program may be accessed at the web site and are also available as a podcast. Anyone is invited to call the show toll free, 877-893-8255, or to e-mail mail@albertmohler.com with questions and comments.

Free sewing class

The free sewing class led by Mrs. Barbara Gentry meets from 6-7:30 p.m. on Mondays in Fuller Room 16. This class will be continuing throughout the summer. Sewing machines are provided at no cost. No experience is required, but women with experience may also participate. Knitting and crocheting lessons will also be offered. Mrs. Barbara Gentry leads the class, assisted by Mrs. Kathy Vogel. For questions, you can call Mrs. Gentry at 380-6448 or Mrs. Vogel at 742-1497.

Summer mission trip to Haiti

The Great Commission Center is planning a disaster relief trip to Haiti this summer to work alongside the Southern Baptist Convention in response to the earthquake this past January. The dates of the trip are July 3-11 and the estimated cost of the trip is \$1,500. Students interested in the trip may apply in Norton 108 or by emailing missions@sbts.edu. Up to five credit hours are available for students participating in the trip. Tuition scholarships are available.

Louisville Bats outing

The Health and Recreation Center invites to join us for a night at the ball park on June 4. The game is at 7:05 p.m. against the Pawtucket Red Sox. Tickets can be purchased at the HRC front desk for \$6. For more information contact the HRC at 897-4720 or hrc@sbts.edu. For more on the Louisville Bats, visit www.batsbaseball.com.

Vigilance conference: rebuilding perspective on safety and security

The Vigilance Conference at Southern Seminary will equip pastors, leaders and administrators, as well as safety and security staff, to think biblically about their role as shepherds, providing for the physical security of their flock. Speakers will include top names in security to address crucial topics such as executive protection, risk management and security systems. Join us July 20-22 in the faithful pursuit of pastoral vigilance. Visit www.sbts.edu/events to register or learn more.

Connecting Church & Home Conference

The Connecting Church & Home Conference is designed to equip pastors, church leaders and parents with practical ministry strategies for shepherding families within the church. The conference will be held at Southern Seminary Aug. 20-21. Featuring nationally known leaders and ministry speakers, this conference is sure to impact your approach to building stronger families in your church. Visit www.sbts.edu/events to register or learn more.

D3 Youth Conference

The D3 Youth Conference will be a summer experience full of learning and growing opportunities for high school students serious about following Christ. Hosted by Boyce College on the campus of Southern Seminary, D3 will develop students' understanding of leadership, worldview and missions. The conference will be held June 28-July 1. Visit www.sbts.edu/events to register or for more information.

Missions elective in Malaysia

George Martin will teach studies in missions: world Christianity, July 19-23 in Malaysia. The estimated cost is \$2,500 plus tuition. Students who would like to receive on-campus credit of three hours while studying in the multi-cultural and multi-religious context of Malaysia are encouraged to immediately enroll in the course and contact the Great Commission Center, missions@sbts.edu, for assistance in travel matters. Students may contact Martin, gmartin@sbts.edu, in order to receive the course syllabus.

Ministry Resources

Ministry position postings

Full-time and part-time ministry positions may be found on e-campus through the help desk's link to Ministry Resources.

Résumé service

Start or update your résumé file with Ministry Resources by submitting our on-line candidate form. Visit the Church Resources quick link on www.sbts.edu for the simple instructions. The office is also eager to counsel you over your resume and ministry preferences. Visit Norton Room 150 or call ext. 4208.

IMB candidate consultant interviews

International Mission Board candidate consultant Jim Riddell will visit campus June 15-17 to meet with students interested in IMB service. For an appointment, call 800-765-0011.

Mohler to lead Reformation tour to Germany, Switzerland

By EMILY GRIFFIN

The lives and teachings of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and Knox molded and shaped much of what we know as Western Civilization. Through the reformers and the influence of their followers, we have gained many of the religious and cultural enjoyments we daily experience — the Bible in our own language, a recovery of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith and the expository preaching of the Word of God.

Without the reformers, life as we know it would not exist.

This fall, R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, will lead a Christian reformation tour of Europe. From Oct. 27 through Nov. 5, participants will make their way, city-by-city, through Berlin, Leipzig, Wittenberg, Zurich and Geneva. In addition to visiting historic sites associated with Martin Luther, John Knox, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli, the group will also take in the magnificent Swiss Alps.

"You can be there as we view the house where Luther was born, tour the monastery where he first grasped the Gospel of grace, stand at the famous Wittenberg door where

Luther nailed his 95 Theses and visit the historic Wartburg Castle where Luther translated the New Testament into German," Mohler said.

Inspiration Cruises and Tours will ensure that all travel details are taken care of so participants can focus on their surroundings and historical sites. All airport transfers to and from hotels, hotel taxes and gratuities and entrance fees to all sites will be arranged in advance by Inspiration. Throughout the tour, guests will travel by private, deluxe motorcoach with English-speaking guides and will lodge in four and five-star hotels. Reading materials will be provided by Southern Seminary and Inspiration in advance for tour preparation.

"This trip will prove to be more than educational — it will be transformational," Mohler said. "This trip will inspire our imagination, deepen our theological convictions and fortify our resolve to stand, like the reformers, as defenders of the faith once and for all delivered to the saints. As we are challenged by the courage and conviction of the reformers we will no doubt experience reformation and renewal in our own hearts."

Tour space is limited. Visit www.sbts.edu for more information or call Inspiration Cruises and Tours at 1-800-247-1899.

Health and Rec

The Health and Recreation Center (HRC) will be open during the following hours during the summer: M-F — 6 a.m.-10 p.m. Sat. — 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Aerobics schedule

- Fitness Boot Camp M, W & F 8-8:45 a.m.
 - Mommy and Me Power Walking M, W & F 10-11 a.m.
 - Practical Pilates M, T, & R 4:45-5:45 p.m.
 - Aqua Alive T & R 5-5:45 p.m.
 - Women's Fitness Class T & R 9-9:45 p.m.
- **Starts June 1**

Intramural Volleyball

Co-ed Volleyball takes place every Monday at 6:30 p.m., every in the main gym of the HRC.

Fitness childcare

4:30-6:15 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays
\$3 per child

Holiday hours

9 a.m.-9 p.m., Monday, May 31.

Basketball camp

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., June 7-11
\$50 per participant

This basketball camp is for rising fourth through sixth graders. This will be a beginner level camp. Register at the HRC front desk.

Soccer camp

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., July 12-16
\$50 per participant
Register at the HRC front desk.

Basketball camp

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Aug. 2-6
\$50 per participant

This basketball camp is for rising sixth through eighth graders. This will be a mid-level camp. Register at the HRC front desk.

- Call the HRC at 897-4720 with questions about scheduling and events.

- Visit the weekly calendar on the HRC page of the SBTS website to see what is happening at the HRC.

- Become a fan of the HRC on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (SBTSHealth_Rec).



3

Questions
WITH

Shai Linne
Christian Hip-Hop Artist

1 *What are a couple of particularly formative things you are learning through your internship at Capitol Hill Baptist Church with Mark Dever?*

THE FLESHING OUT of one-on-one discipleship with Mark Dever. At one time I thought that to disciple someone meant that you met at a coffee shop and got into the Bible once a week. While that can be a part of it, what I am really seeing is the importance of opening up your life. Mark opens up his life — we are always up in his study. It is really just seeing the life of a pastor in the ordinary events of life that has been so instructive.

The other thing I would say is my understanding of the importance of church membership and church discipline and the role of the congregation in matters of discipline has been absolutely formative.

2 *How did the idea for your Atonement CD come about?*

THE ATONEMENT PROJECT was the affect of having been impacted by the Gospel. Where The Atonement project came from was I was reading “The Cross of Christ” by John Stott and I think around the same time I heard a couple of messages by C.J. Mahaney on the cross and the Lord gave me a burden to proclaim Christ and Him crucified explicitly and in a systematic way. That was really the fruit of meditating on Christ’s work for us and particularly the transaction between the Father and the Son on the cross. A lot of times we inject ourselves into it before we step back and consider what was going on between

the Father and Son. The Atonement project was the fruit of meditation on the cross.

“The Atonement project was the affect of having been impacted by the Gospel. ... (It) was really the fruit of meditating on Christ’s work for us and particularly the transaction between the Father and the Son on the cross.”

— Shai Linne

3 *What did you do on your London/Ireland mission trip and how did that impact you?*

WE HOOKED UP with a jazz band from Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis called the Jason Harms Quartet. They graciously allowed us to come with them and join them in Ireland. That was an amazing experience. London is one of my favorite cities in the world. It is very culturally diverse with a solid community of believers there, so I had really good fellowship.

The thing that impacted me the most was meeting believers around the world who we have nothing but Jesus Christ in common and just the unity that we have in Christ with the saints around the world.

Towers

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