

vision |

NEW ORLEANS
BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

Holiday 2007



Through their eyes



Photo by The Portrait Gallery

Dr. and Mrs. Chuck Kelley

Thank you. If you are reading this article, you are becoming more and more important to this school and to the future of theological education in Southern Baptist life. Let there be no doubt at all on how grateful we are for you. If you are reading this article, you are probably not a student. If you are reading this article, you have some sort of interest in New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and in the preparation and training of ministers and missionaries. Unless something very unusual happens, you and people like you are going to play a larger and larger role in the way Southern Baptists train the next generation of Christian leaders.

To better understand the statements above, we need to go back to the long-time philosophy behind the training of SBC ministers and missionaries. Simply put, Southern Baptists decided to train our ministers and missionaries as effectively and efficiently as possible, with the Convention paying most of the cost through the Cooperative Program. The number of seminaries was restricted (6) and they were located from coast to coast. A percentage of the Cooperative Program was given to the seminaries each year, and that percentage was enough to cover most of the operating costs of the schools. Students were charged a small registration fee and could take as many or as few courses as they desired in any degree program for the same amount of money. For example, the largest check I ever wrote to the seminary was for \$125 in my last semester of doctoral work. Students knew if they could get to one of the six SBC seminary campuses, living expenses would be their greatest challenge, and for students who lived on campus, even those expenses were subsidized. The educational degree would be almost free, especially if you took a full load of classes each semester.

The result of this system was wonderful! Most students would finish their seminary training without educational debt. They could serve wherever God called them – small churches, mission fields at home or abroad – without being hindered by debt from the cost of their ministerial training.

As the years went by, however, two things happened that dramatically affected this system. First, in spite of intentional efforts at cost control, the expenses of operating a seminary began to grow rapidly. First it was textbooks. By the time I finished school, a growing number of students were spending more on textbooks than they were on registration. Things like utilities and medical insurance that no seminary could control steadily enlarged the operating budgets of SBC schools. Today our accrediting agency tells us their surveys indicate the average cost seminaries have to pay per full-time student is well over \$30,000 a year. I am proud to say that the average cost per student in an SBC seminary is approximately \$13,000 per year. I am extremely pleased to tell you that the cost per student at NOBTS is approximately \$7,000 per year. We are among the national leaders in cost control, but in spite of our constant efforts, the operating cost for seminaries continues to rise.

The second thing that happened was the very slow growth of the Cooperative Program. While it increases nearly every year, those increases are not keeping up with the increases in costs. The Cooperative Program used to cover most of the cost of operating our seminary. Now it covers only about 45 percent of our operating budget. Personnel costs alone form approximately 70 percent of our budget. That means the Cooperative Program no longer funds our payroll, much less the other expenses of operating a seminary. As a result of the *steady* growth of expenses and the *slow* growth of the Cooperative Program, the seminary student today has to pay a larger share of the cost of his or her education. Instead of

Instead of a registration fee covering all expenses, today's student pays tuition per hour of credit, in addition to other fees. Student debt and the limitations debt brings are becoming the new reality in theological education.

a registration fee covering all expenses, today's student pays tuition per hour of credit, in addition to other fees. Student debt and the limitations debt brings are becoming the new reality in theological education. If nothing happens, the day will come when small churches have a very difficult time finding seminary-trained leaders. The International Mission

Southern Baptists can no longer afford business as usual in their schools for ministers. At New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary we have decided to be a leader in educational innovation as a part of our commitment to control costs.

Board will find more mission volunteers are burdened with debt that makes a missionary ministry impossible. Seminary training could one day be for the privileged and not for any God-called man or woman that wants it.

I do have some good news! Although the problem is all too real, it is not a problem without solutions. The Seminary must be responsible for at least one aspect of possible solutions. Southern Baptists can no longer afford business as usual in their schools for ministers. At New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary we have decided to be a leader in educational innovation as a part of our commitment to control costs.

We are partnering with churches and colleges for extension centers that push education out from our campus. That helps us control the cost of educational centers. We are partnering with a growing number of well-qualified adjunct teachers to control the size of our full-time faculty. This also helps us keep the church and mission field in the classroom. We are constantly experimenting with new ways to deliver training for ministry. For instance, we use educational technology that allows one professor to teach students in two, three, or even four cities at a time, while allowing the professor and students to talk with each other from those cities as if they were in the same room. A number of courses are offered via the Internet, making at least some theological education available to any God-called man or woman on the earth, as long as they have a computer and access to the Internet.

We work very hard on our traditional programs. Recently our faculty was ranked number 12 in the nation for scholarly ability, higher than any other SBC seminary. But we know the seminary of the 21st century must think outside of the box to keep theological education accessible, and we are passionately committed to doing so.

A second aspect of possible solutions lies with our churches. Our churches must give more to the Cooperative Program. Doing so will do more than help our seminary. It will make more money available for missions. It will provide more funds for the work of our state Baptist conventions. Everything we do as a Convention to get the gospel to the ends of the earth and to grow healthy, effective churches

will be helped if we all do more to grow the Cooperative Program. Be an advocate for the Cooperative Program in your church. If it grows, all SBC ministries will grow. There is no easier way to help a larger number of ministries at the same time than increasing the support of the Cooperative Program. If each church in the Southern Baptist Convention will do more each year, wonderful things can happen.

A third aspect of possible solutions concerns you. Now we are back to where I started. Thank you. Your prayers and your giving have never been more critical in the life of the seminary. The funds which the Cooperative Program no longer provides must come from one of two places: the tuition and fees paid by students or the gifts of those who believe excellent training for ministers and missionaries is important. Every dollar you give is a dollar students do not have to pay. If you have done all that God wants you to do for your family and all that God wants you to do for your local church and have some funds left, please consider investing in theological education. Supporting the Annual Fund is a great way to help. Every penny given to the Annual Fund goes toward our operating budget. It costs about \$50,000 a day to operate the seminary this year. How much of a day could you fund? Estate gifts and insurance policies are wonderful ways to help. You do not have to be wealthy to make a significant impact.

Every dollar you give is a dollar students do not have to pay.

Our office of Institutional Advancement would love to help you find a way to give that is perfect for your life and circumstances. Establishing a permanent endowment is a way to keep giving to this School of Providence and Prayer until Jesus comes back. If a student from your church plans to attend seminary, you might consider helping that student with his or her costs for the degree they seek. Our office of financial aid can help you with information about how to do so. There are as many different ways to help the seminary and its families as there are alumni and friends of the seminary. Each one of them matters.

Now you know why we are so grateful for you and why you have such a crucial role to play in our future. As we thank the Lord for the gift of His dear Son during this Christmas season, we shall also be thanking Him for you. May the Lord grant you and yours a wonderful holiday season!



Dr. Chuck Kelley
NOBTS President

Women's Leadership Consultation 2008 New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

beyond Hearing

"...having heard the Word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience" (Lk 8:15, NKJV)

Women's Rally

Thursday, February 7, 2008
7:00 pm

Women's Leadership Consultation XVIII

Friday, February 8, 2008
8:30 am to 9:00 pm
Saturday, February 9, 2008
8:30 am to 12 noon

The **Women's Leadership Consultation** provides a forum for leaders of women's work in the local church to network, learn, and apply biblical truth. Sponsored by the six seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention, the WLC is an annual event; however, it is held at the seminary in New Orleans only once every six years.

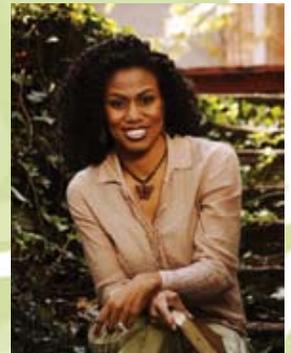
Join Priscilla Shirer, Diane Machen, and other national, state, and local leaders in women's ministry for a weekend of equipping and encouragement.

We'll go BEYOND HEARING as we learn to teach the Word and live the Word. We will also put our feet where our faith is by prayer walking through some of the New Orleans areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

Priscilla Shirer - Featured Speaker

Through the expository teaching of the Word of God, Priscilla desires to see women not only know the uncompromising truths of Scripture intellectually but experience them practically by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Priscilla and her husband, Jerry, have founded Going Beyond Ministries through which she passionately proclaims the Word to women. Priscilla is the daughter of Tony Evans and the mother of two young sons.



Diane Machen - Worship Leader

For over twenty years, Diane and her husband, Chris, have served the Lord in full-time music ministry. Traveling throughout the country, they have sung concerts, led worship, and ministered in ladies retreats and marriage conferences. As seasoned songwriters, the music of Chris and Diane has been published widely. Diane is the mother of two young adults.



For more information go to www.nobts.edu/wlc or 800.662.8701

vision

MAGAZINE

HOLIDAY 2007

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Through their eyes

Cover Story | 4

Keeping Christ the focus of Christmas



CONTENTS

Advancement News | 8

Giving Churches: First Baptist Church in Andrews, Texas

Annual Fund Update

Seminary News | 10

Internet initiatives take NOBTS to 'uttermost parts of the world'

Women's Leadership Consultation set for Feb. 7-9 at NOBTS

Scholars to debate reliability of the New Testament at 2008 Greer-Heard Forum

Words that Changed the World: A look at the library's Rare Books Collection

Faculty News | 14

Steve Lemke celebrates 10 years as NOBTS Provost

New Faculty Members

Faculty honored for research and scholarly production

Alumni News | 16

Alumni Updates

Dr. Claude Howe remembered as friend and model scholar

Looking Back Photo

NOBTS Alumnus and Auburn chaplain recounts story of God's grace in 'Hard Fighting Soldier'

On the Cover

Photo by Boyd Guy

Jonathan Myers, 7, peeks through a Nativity scene at the Public Relations Office.

Through their eyes

Keeping Christ the focus at Christmas

By Paul F. South



Dec. 25 was weeks away, still 5-year-old Olivia Peavey's mind turned to thoughts of Christmas. But not a single sugarplum danced in her head. Instead, her young mind was set on Bethlehem and the baby born in a manger more than 2,000 years ago.

Olivia's mother, Donna Peavey, Associate Professor of Christian Education at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's Leavell College relates the story – a discussion of the holiday's meaning.

"She said, 'God wanted Jesus to live with us,'" Peavey recalled. "I asked her why He had done that." With her 5-year-old mind turning, Olivia responded: "Because He wanted to know what we were like."

Olivia's answer is the dream of every Christian parent. But each Advent season, many Christian parents walk a holiday tight-wire – seeking to keep Jesus at the center of a season overrun with Santa Claus, red-nosed reindeer and materialism gone mad.

Donna Peavey's advice, whether to her Leavell College pupils or to parents, is simple:

"One of the things I teach in my classes is it's all about Jesus," Peavey said. "We have a responsibility to spread the gospel. So, all we do at church should focus on the spiritual reason for the season, that Jesus was born, and we celebrate His birth this time of year."

If recent surveys are accurate, keeping Christ at the center of Christmas is becoming increasingly difficult in a postmodern culture. In 2006, the BBC reported that only 44 percent of children surveyed believed Christmas was about Jesus. Peavey believes the same survey would yield similar results in America.

So, what is the responsibility of the church in educating children on the true meaning of Christmas?

"It is not the church's responsibility to promote anything but Jesus," she said.

For the church, the sacred and the secular should not mix.

"It's our responsibility to saturate our children with Christ and His birth and Christ coming. At our churches, we should be very intentional about promoting that, as well as being very intentional about not

purposefully promoting the other. In other words, Christmas is about Jesus being born in Bethlehem. It's not having breakfast with Santa in the Fellowship Hall."

For Peavey, it's a matter of integrity.

"What we tell our children should always be the truth," Peavey said. "And the truth of the season is that Christ was born."

Another tug from the world comes from Madison Avenue, with children bombarded by toy ads and the push for presents.

"It's a slippery slope," Peavey said. "My parents did Santa Claus when I was little, and I'm not scarred from it. But I have told my daughter that we give presents because the Wise Men gave presents to Jesus. That's one way we show our love for the reason we have Christmas is because it's Jesus' birthday."

"What we tell our children should always be the truth," Dr. Donna Peavey said. "And the truth of the season is that Christ was born."

But, the decision on Santa and trees and other secular symbols of the season rests with parents.

"Ultimately, every parent is going to have to come to a place where they decide how much of the secular holiday is going to infiltrate our family celebration of the birth of Christ."

While gifts are exchanged at the Peavey household during the Christmas season, the birth of Christ is at the center of the home year round thanks to a collection of Nativity scenes gathered over a lifetime of travel around the world.

Those scenes paint a picture of how the birth of Christ is seen around the world.

"We do have a Christmas tree, but we do not have Santa Claus ornaments," Peavey said. "We have ornaments from places we've been as a family or ornaments Olivia has made. But it's not commercial in the sense of Santa and flying reindeer."

Despite parents' efforts to emphasize Christ's birth during the holiday, children will see the secular, Peavey said.

"They're going to see Santa and all these other trappings. But it's your responsibility as Christian parents to say, 'we're going to celebrate Christmas as Jesus' birthday.'"

Parents must be intentional about teaching the meaning of Christmas if they want to model a biblical worldview for their children, Peavey said.

Dr. Paula Stringer, Associate Professor of Childhood Education at NOBTS, said it's important to strike a balance.

"I don't tell my students that you can't have Santa Claus," Stringer said. "That's a choice that every family makes. But in Christian homes there should be 10 percent about the traditions of the world and 90 percent about the birth of Christ."

In order to reduce the pressures of a commercialized Christmas, Stringer makes a simple recommendation: Turn off the television.



Philip, Donna, and Olivia Peavey.

Dr. Donna Peavey is a professor of Leavell College at NOBTS.

Photo by Boyd Guy

"There's a constant process of commercials this time of year telling children what they want for Christmas," Stringer said. "Switching off the TV is very helpful."

Like Peavey, Stringer recommends incorporating Nativity scenes, Advent calendars and the gospel account of Christmas into family holiday traditions. Another idea is as basic as a piece of straw for the manger.

"Everybody in the family is given straw they can place in the manger of the Nativity," Stringer said. "But they have to do something kind of anonymously for someone else before they can place their straw in the Nativity."

Everyday dinners leading up to the holiday can also play a spiritual role in the Christmas celebration, Stringer said.

"Families can take the Christmas cards they receive every day, take them out at the dinner table and read them. Then, the family can pray for the families who sent the card. Again, that's putting the focus back on the spiritual," Stringer said.

Doing for others can be another focus of the holiday, especially in post-Katrina New Orleans, where needs are still great, Stringer said.

“There’s a need to come back to helping children understand that why we do things for other people is because that’s what Scripture tells us to do,” Stringer said. “I tell parents to tell their children, ‘We do this because the Bible says this,’ and then show them what Scripture says. The holiday can be an outgrowth of that.”

“There’s a constant process of commercials this time of year telling children what they want for Christmas,” Dr. Paula Stringer said. “Switching off the TV is very helpful.”

For student David McMillen and his wife, Jennifer, of New Albany, Miss., two Christmas traditions involve choosing a family holiday ornament and preparing boxes for Operation Christmas Child – a Christian ministry that sends gifts to needy children around the world.

But for the McMillens and their daughters, Chelsea, 15, and Natalie, 13, Christmas is more about teaching than tradition.

“From the beginning, we’ve tried to make it about Jesus. We’ve always tried not to get sucked in to the commercialism that the world says is important,” Jennifer McMillen said.

When her daughters prepare their boxes for Operation Christmas Child, the emphasis is on needs, not the typical wants of teen girls.

As with God’s gift of His son in Bethlehem 20 centuries ago, the emphasis for seminary families is on giving, not receiving.

“For us, it’s never been about running out and seeing a bunch of gifts under the tree,” McMillen said. “It’s about what God has given to us and what we can give to others.”

Boyd and Jennie Hatchel and their four children bring a global perspective to Christmas. As missionaries currently on stateside assignment after stints in Romania and the Czech Republic, their children have been somewhat insulated from the commercialism that is a trademark of Christmas in America.

As for family traditions that emphasize the birth of Christ during the holiday season, the Hatchels read the Christmas story on the nights leading up to Christmas.

“From the time the kids were little, they’ve memorized certain passages of scripture, like ‘Mary’s Song,’” Jennie Hatchel said. “And we like to do hymns after dinner, either with a candle or in front of the Christmas tree with the lights on, singing Christmas carols.”

Hatchel said that while the children are being exposed to more of the commercial side of the season during stateside assignment, they are also able to worship in English, attend holiday worship services and spend time with family, all which act as a balance.

Like the Peaveys, the Hatchels collect Nativity scenes, gathered during global travels.

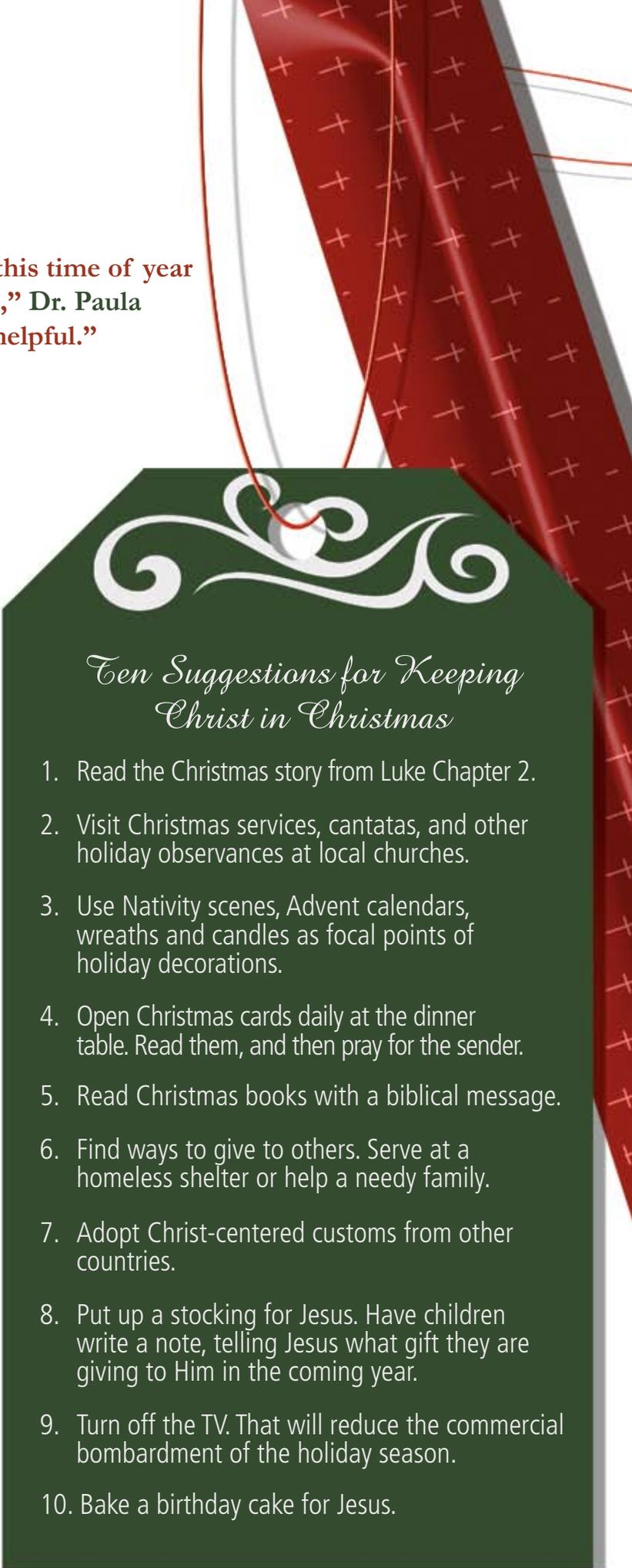
“Some of them are very kid-friendly,” she said. “They are able to play with them and use them, and move them around and retell the story. That’s been a fun part of our holiday tradition, as well as acting out the Christmas story.”

Last month, the four Hatchel children, ages 9, 7, 4 and 3, worked at Hardin Student Center, gathering gift boxes for Operation Christmas Child.

“We’ve really tried to minimize the gifts and the commercialism and emphasize the true meaning,” Hatchel said. “Since we’ve been overseas, we’ve seen Operation Christmas Child from the distribution end.”

The secularization of Christmas has come at a creep, Stringer said, like the analogy of the frog in the kettle of water. However, she sees signs for hope, at least in the Christian community.

“Maybe not so much in the world at large, but in our Christian families, I see [families] bringing the holiday back to what it really means,” she said.



Ten Suggestions for Keeping Christ in Christmas

1. Read the Christmas story from Luke Chapter 2.
2. Visit Christmas services, cantatas, and other holiday observances at local churches.
3. Use Nativity scenes, Advent calendars, wreaths and candles as focal points of holiday decorations.
4. Open Christmas cards daily at the dinner table. Read them, and then pray for the sender.
5. Read Christmas books with a biblical message.
6. Find ways to give to others. Serve at a homeless shelter or help a needy family.
7. Adopt Christ-centered customs from other countries.
8. Put up a stocking for Jesus. Have children write a note, telling Jesus what gift they are giving to Him in the coming year.
9. Turn off the TV. That will reduce the commercial bombardment of the holiday season.
10. Bake a birthday cake for Jesus.

One Family's Christmas

By Paul F. South

For Jeremy and Sommer Starnes and their four children, part of their recipe for keeping Christ in Christmas involves three key ingredients: The Bible, bathrobes and butter cream icing.

Either their first or second Christmas season as a married couple, they can't remember exactly when, the Starnes make a contous decision to establish Christ-centered Christmas traditions.

"We started looking at other Christian families, and some of the things they keep as traditions in their families and how they interacted with each other, and wondered how we could implement traditions in our family," said Jeremy Starnes, a student at Leavell College from Amant, La.

And now, with four children and one set to be born this December, the Starnes family has traditions in place that keep Christ at the center of the holiday.

"We do a Christmas birthday cake for Jesus," Jeremy said. "Sommer does a good job with that. We sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus and blow out the candle, eat the cake and commemorate it that way."

Three years ago, the Starnes also produced a family Christmas play, with shepherds and wise men in robes.

"Someone was Joseph, Sommer was Mary and one of the kids was baby Jesus. They all just put towels on their heads. It was nice," Jeremy said.

One year, Sommer helped the children make Nativity scenes, which were then wrapped and given as gifts.

The Starnes also have given gifts through Operation Christmas Child. As a result, a needy child overseas receives Christmas gifts.

The Starnes also use a teaching tool called "What Jesus Wants for Christmas."

It includes a story of Christmas and seven boxes that are opened on each of the seven days before Dec. 25 that help teach the true meaning of Christmas.

This helps the Starnes children see Christmas through different eyes.

The Starnes make it a point to get all the shopping done before December. That relieves some of the stress in the days leading up to Christmas.

"We started that before our daughter, Anna, was born, because she was due in December," Jeremy said. "After that, we



Jeremy, Sommer, Noah, Jude, Anna, & Sara Starnes.

Photo by Boyd Guy

decided to do it that way every year so that we could concentrate on Christmas and the Christmas season, without a whole lot of thought about gifts."

The Starnes ease the impact of toy advertising during the season – indeed throughout the year – through lessons in virtue.

"We do a Christmas birthday cake for Jesus," Jeremy Starnes said. "We sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus."

"We try to shoot right to the value system with our children at Christmas and all through the year," Jeremy said. "We try to differentiate with them between wants and needs. It seems like the advertising that 'children need this toy or need that toy' is continuous throughout the year. So throughout the year we have to deal with that."

"We try to instill that ethic, teaching the value and difference between needs and wants," he said. "It's a balance of give and take and instilling values."

Noah, Jude, Anna and Sara Starnes are already showing that some of the seeds planted by their parents have taken root.

Last year, the children gave a loved one a Bible. In the year since, they have prayed that the family member would accept Christ as Savior and Lord.

"It seems that the kids know what Christmas is about," Jeremy said.

Giving Updates

FBC Andrews, Texas: Giving church becomes going church

By Gary D. Myers

In some ways, First Baptist Church in Andrews, Texas, is a typical county-seat town church.

The church offers a full range of ministry opportunities in their West Texas town with a population of 9,652. And the church is reaching people in Andrews. Pastor Jeff Donnell (DMin. 2001) baptized 25 people during September and October. Twelve were

baptized at one Sunday service.

In other ways, though, First Baptist is anything but typical.

GIVING CHURCHES

Two years ago God began leading Donnell toward a mission focus. The church had always given generously for missions around the world, but members were not involved in going. Now FBC Andrews is both a giving church and a going church.

“We have been very missions-minded through missions interest and missions giving, now we have become missions involved,” Donnell said.

During the past two years, 10 percent of their Sunday School attenders have participated in international mission trips to Belize, Armenia, Venezuela, Greece and Senegal. In June, the church will send a group to the island of Trinidad for an evangelism-focused trip. Participants will spend their days



Dr. Jeff Donnell preaches during an international mission trip to Armenia.

sharing the gospel one-on-one and then lead evangelistic rallies in the evenings.

“We’ve seen [our mission involvement] carry over into our church and our community,” Donnell said. “People are bringing home what they have learned on the mission field and they are doing it here in town.”

Donnell has been personally involved in overseas missions on another level as well – sharing what he has learned with other believers. He has taught certificate courses for Leavell College in Ryazan, Russia, and in February, he will teach at Leavell College’s Indonesian certificate site.

FBC Andrews also invests in the future of mission work and church ministry through its gifts to New Orleans Seminary.

The church first began giving to NOBTS after several visits by seminary faculty members. Dr. Thomas Strong, Dean of Leavell College, and Dr. Argile Smith, a former preaching professor, each led a January Bible Study at FBC Andrews. Each of them made an impression on the church. That impact, coupled with Donnell’s love for his alma mater, resulted in monthly gifts to the seminary.

After Katrina, the church wanted to do even more for NOBTS. Now the church gives 1 percent of their receipts to the school for a student scholarship.

For FBC Andrews, an outward focus on giving and going is bringing growth and excitement to the congregation. ☑

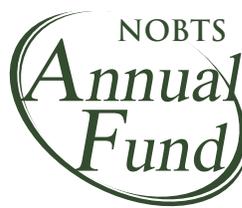
Gifts help offset cost of living increases in New Orleans

By Bill Hughes

Just imagine receiving a notice in the mail that informs you that your water bill is going to increase. The amount of the increase is going to be more substantial than slight, to the tune of about 50 percent. Also in your mail is a notice indicating that your gas and electricity are increasing by about 30 percent. You open yet another piece of mail from your insurance agent informing you that your property insurance premium is making a sizeable jump.

News like that is enough to make you not want to receive any more mail! These kinds of unanticipated expenses are a fact of life in post-Katrina New Orleans.

The previously mentioned increases are exactly what have happened at NOBTS. The seminary’s water bill has gone up by about \$100,000 a year compared to the average annual expense before the hurricane. Gas and electricity have increased by \$200,000, while property insurance premiums jumped by \$800,000. These additional expenses do not include the increased staffing expenses that are dictated by the higher cost of living. Who feels the greatest pinch when it comes to covering these expenses?



Goal: \$1,025,000

Received: \$341,895 (33%)

Deadline: July 31, 2008

Unfortunately, our students must shoulder the burden for these increases through higher tuition and fees. However, the Annual Fund provides a way for alumni and friends of the seminary to help slow the rising cost of tuition. Gifts to the Annual Fund go directly to the seminary’s operating expenses, keeping the cost of a seminary education within reach.

Gifts are being sought through direct mail campaigns, Vision appeals, and by applying for grants from private foundations. Our students want to be obedient to God’s call upon their lives. Will you prayerfully consider giving a gift to the Annual Fund to help keep seminary education affordable and accessible to all? ☑



Thanks



for Giving

NOBTS Annual Fund

Alfred Nobel, a Swedish chemist, made a fortune inventing explosives, namely dynamite. But as he reflected on his life accomplishments, Nobel decided he wanted to leave a different legacy – one that would better benefit humanity. His commitment lives on today: the Nobel Peace Prize.

In a real sense your gifts to NOBTS are being used to benefit humanity now and forever. Please know how grateful we are for you and your gifts that assist us in pointing people to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the real “peace prize”.

Thank you for your gifts,
_____ Dr. Jerry Garrard



Internet initiatives take NOBTS to 'uttermost parts of the world'

By Gary D. Myers

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's high-quality theological training opportunities will soon be as close as your computer – worldwide. NOBTS recently announced two major online learning initiatives, a Leavell College degree completion program and the creation of the Center for Online Theological Education.

"We are passionately committed to making theological education as accessible as possible for God-called Southern Baptists," NOBTS President Chuck Kelley said. "We want to strengthen our [course] offerings through the Internet."

Leavell College Degree Completion Program

The degree completion program, administered by Leavell College, allows students who have completed an associate degree through NOBTS to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Christian Ministry. While much of the completion program can be completed through online studies, a minimum number of on-campus,



short-term courses are also required.

"We are excited about the opportunity to help students complete a Bachelor of Arts through Leavell College while maintaining the balance of making education accessible and guarding the integrity of the degree," said Thomas Strong, Dean of Leavell College.

"This process provides the opportunity for many of our students to continue to gain additional tools and encouragement for ministry. We look forward to building on the good foundation that has already been in place."

Strong said the program will primarily reach students who cannot come to the main campus due to ministry or other concerns, including many who attended NOBTS extension centers.

Center for Online Theological Education

The seminary will also create a Center for Online Theological Education designed to study, develop and implement additional online learning opportunities. The center will be led by Craig Price who has been named Associate Dean for Online Theological Education. Price, who has served as Dean of Students since 2005, will be charged with developing an online theological education program that is accessible throughout the world.

"Dr. Kelley's vision for our online program is to make theological education accessible to anyone in the world who has Internet," Price said. "We want to make

our theological education available in 'Jerusalem' as well as the 'uttermost parts of the world.'"

"I am excited and humbled by Dr. Kelley's confidence in me to take our NOBTS online program to the next level. On a personal level, this transition to the associate dean position will also allow me more time for teaching and writing," Price said.

Seminary Provost Steve Lemke noted that Price excelled in online teaching, including the utilization of innovative applications of technology.

"When many of the seminary's classes continued in an Internet format during the year of Katrina, Craig Price was one of our most diligent and creative teachers in his online courses," Lemke said. "We are delighted that he will be giving focused leadership to the development and promotion of our online learning program."

"We've made the commitment to be on the cutting edge of theological education,"

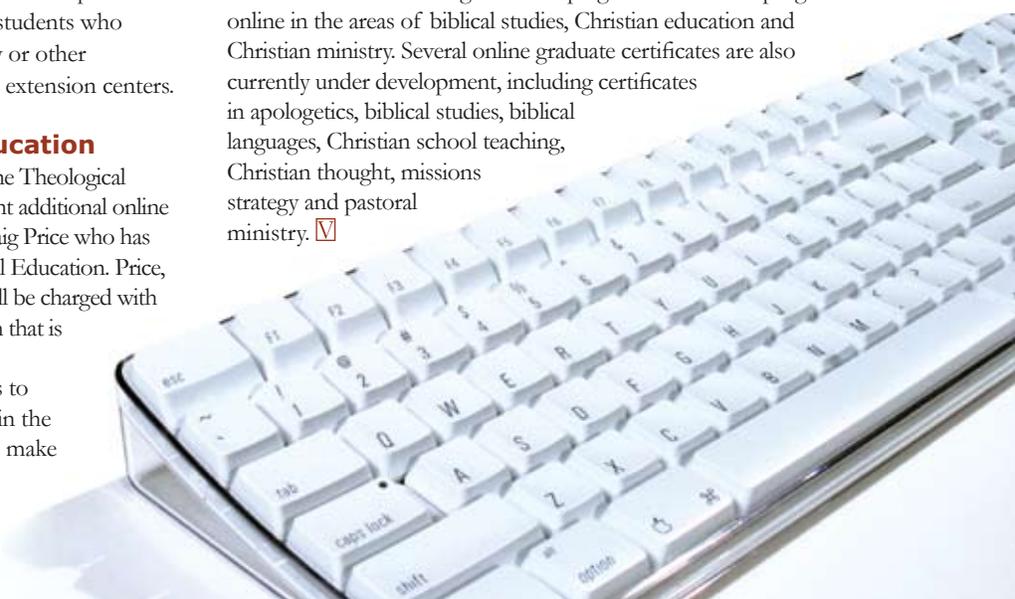
– Dr. Chuck Kelley

In a related move, Kelley announced that Laurie Watts, associate vice president of information technology, has been invited to serve on the school's administrative council. Watts is the first woman to serve on this council which directs the strategic planning and day-to-day operations of the seminary.

Watts will advise the council on the growing technological needs of the seminary.

"We've made the commitment to be on the cutting edge of theological education," Kelley said. "That, in today's world, involves a high use of educational technology. We feel that it is critical to have our resident expert in technology as a part of our administrative planning process."

The seminary already offers about 30 hours of online courses each semester in Leavell College and graduate level courses as well. In addition, faculty members are developing several new Internet certificates. Leavell College is developing three certificate programs online in the areas of biblical studies, Christian education and Christian ministry. Several online graduate certificates are also currently under development, including certificates in apologetics, biblical studies, biblical languages, Christian school teaching, Christian thought, missions strategy and pastoral ministry. ☑



Women's Leadership Consultation set for Feb. 7-9

The invitation to the Women's Leadership Consultation (WLC) at NOBTS was an answer to prayer, because it arrived soon after a church member informed Christi Gibson it was her job as the pastor's wife to start a women's ministry. Scared, but determined to rise to the challenge, Gibson persuaded the church member to go with her to New Orleans, where they encountered many women just like them. Some were seeking direction for starting a women's ministry, while others were hoping to take an existing ministry to the next level or looking for ways to deal with the challenges of blending women's missions and ministry.

"We were there to network, and that is what we did," said Gibson. "We consulted other women and all of the 'experts' who were there to help us."

Speakers and discussion facilitators opened God's Word, where Gibson discovered that women's ministry was not solely the job of the pastor's wife, but that of women in the church, who were called to minister to women and use their gifts to build up the body of Christ.

"I went home less scared, but equally determined, and soon our women's ministry was up and running," Gibson said.

The 2008 meeting promises to be just as meaningful. Women today are facing new challenges, and this event offers fresh ideas and solutions. It will be held at NOBTS February 7-9, 2008, with a theme of "Beyond Hearing." A Thursday night women's rally will begin the consultation and is offered free of charge to all women. The training sessions for women's leaders are on Friday and Saturday. Keynote speakers include Priscilla Shirer, Dorothy Patterson, and Jackie Kendall, with worship leader Diane Machen.

Twenty training WORDshops will be offered as well as a New Orleans prayerwalking event.

"It is the prayer of the steering committee that God who reveals Himself through His Word, will challenge women leaders to also teach and live the Word," Dr. Rhonda Kelley, Professor of Women's Ministry at NOBTS.

The first WLC took place at Southwestern Baptist Seminary, several years before the one that Gibson attended in New Orleans. Rhonda Kelley was involved from the very first.

"It was the vision of the founders to bring together, in prayer and partnership, women involved in traditional missions programs and women desiring additional ministries," Kelley said, reflecting on the first event.

"The Lord truly blessed the first gathering, and annual meetings have followed, moving among the six

SBC seminaries in different geographical areas of the US."

This year marks the eighteenth WLC and the third to be held at NOBTS. Laura Leathers, graduate of the Women's Ministry Program at NOBTS, will be there as a WORDshop leader. She attended the 2001 WLC to fulfill a class requirement for her certificate, but it became a spiritual marker in her life.

She vividly remembers the speakers' challenge to pour her life into the lives of others. Now, Leathers has a teatime ministry through which she literally pours "a cup of encouragement, hope and love," seeking to "serve the world through biblical hospitality, one person at a time."

For more information, go to www.nobts.edu/wlc or call (800) 662-8701.

beyond Hearing
to equip and encourage women in the Word

February 7-9

Scholars to debate reliability of New Testament at 2008 Greer-Heard Forum

By Paul F. South

Two prominent religious scholars will debate "The Textual Reliability of the New Testament" April 4 and 5 at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Daniel Wallace, Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, and Bart Ehrman, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, will be featured as part of the Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum.

Greer-Heard Forum April 4-5

Wallace is founder of the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts. He is the senior New Testament editor of the New English Translation (NET) Bible.

Wallace's work, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, is used in more than two-thirds of the colleges and universities that teach the subject. His recent books include *Reinventing Jesus* and *Who's Afraid of the Holy Spirit?*

In his work in textual criticism, Wallace contends the Bible is reliable and that Christ is at the center of the truth of Scripture.

Ehrman challenges the reliability of Scripture. He has published a number of books and articles on the New Testament. Among his best-known works are *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind the Men Who Changed the Bible and Why* and *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies*.

While at Princeton, Ehrman began to reject teachings of his evangelical upbringing. Following a professor's comment that "perhaps Mark made a mistake" in the Gospel account, Ehrman began a journey that would result in what he calls a "seismic change" in his view of the Bible.

Other speakers will include New Orleans Seminary's Bill Warren, Michael Holmes of Bethel University, David Parker of the University of Birmingham, and Dale Martin of Yale University.

Greer-Heard Director Robert Stewart, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Theology who occupies the Greer-Heard Chair of Faith and Culture, said the annual forum is unique.

"It brings together an evangelical scholar and a non-evangelical scholar to dialogue on an important topic in faith or culture in a context that is fair and balanced." □

More information is available at www.greer-heard.com.

Words that Changed the World

Story by Gary D. Myers – Photos by Boyd Guy



he strong but pleasant smell of old leather and parchment fills the rare books room in New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's John T. Christian Library. Shelf after shelf of old books and documents line the walls of this long narrow room.

Stepping into the room is a step back in time – into the world of the Reformers and the dawn of the printing press. It's also a step back to the earlier days of the seminary when the library's namesake, John T. Christian, donated the collection shortly before his death. Because they are so delicate, the books have rarely been seen.

Though closed to the general public, the room was the site of intense research last spring. Ellen Middlebrook Herron, a scholar specializing in medieval history and rare books, spent four months carefully assessing and cataloging the collection.

For years, library workers suspected that the collection was special, if not remarkable. Herron's research has confirmed its uniqueness and importance.

"It's a really nice collection and now that it's getting organized, it's a great opportunity to get students fired up," Herron said. "I'm excited to have a small part in helping these books that have been quiet for 80 years or so live again."

The books and documents include a manuscript from the 12th century, a leaf from the Gutenberg Bible, a Geneva Bible and works by the Reformers such as Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli. Several books are inscribed with handwritten notes by Charles H. Spurgeon.

In total the seminary owns 600 rare and unique books and documents.

Herron first became acquainted with the collection in early 2005. At the time, Herron was serving as the curator of the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit in Mobile, Ala. In connection with the display of the scrolls, Herron put together an exhibit on the history of Bible translation using several of the NOBTS volumes.

After the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit, Jeff Griffin, director of libraries at NOBTS, invited Herron to come assess the NOBTS collection on a contract basis. For her, it was an easy decision.

"I developed a great affection for the seminary when I was working on the Dead Sea Scrolls [exhibit] and a great affection for the city," she said. "I wanted to come down and do some things to help."

Herron stressed the importance of organizing, cataloging and registering the existence of these rare books. The cataloging process often leads to surprises. And it didn't take her long to make an exciting discovery at the NOBTS library.

Shortly after arriving in February, she discovered a book she had not seen before – a collection of sermons by an Italian preacher printed in 1479. The book was printed just 24 years after Johannes Gutenberg produced the first press-printed Bible. She called the volume "one of the treasures" in the John T. Christian Collection. Only two other known copies of this pre-Reformation book exist.

"I think this is a particularly great find and needs to have some research done on it," Herron said. "This is one of my favorite things in the collection."

Besides the sermons, the book tells the story of how printing and binding developed, Herron said.

"It is a really great example of early printing," she said. "It looks a lot like a manuscript. It's a really nice example of book history"

Early printers carried over the practice of hand-lettering highly decorative initials from manuscript production. The wear of the book also offers a look at early book construction.

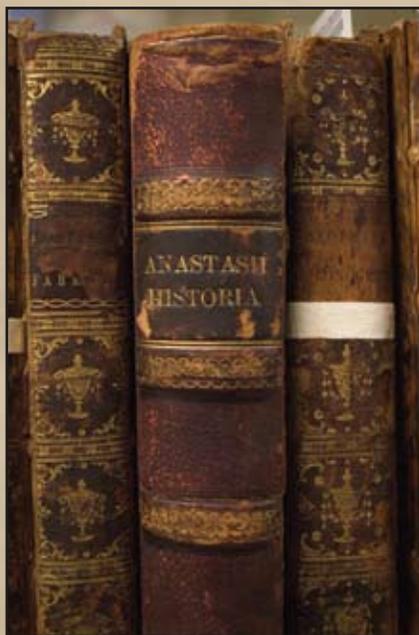
The missing inside of the cover reveals that the pages were bound together by thick leather straps. The straps also attach

the pages to wooden end boards, forming a sturdy cover. The end boards were then covered with fine leather.

The faded shelf mark on the book attests to how books were stored. Unlike current shelving procedure which stores books vertically with the spine out, in that period book were stored flat with titles written across the page edges.

"This is in remarkable condition for a book that's 550 years old," Herron said.

Another book that caught Herron's attention is a volume that profiles the leaders of the Reformation. Written by Theodore Beza in 1581, the book gives descriptions of





ABOVE RIGHT: A rare engraving of reformer John Wycliff is included in a 1581 work by Theodore Beza. **BELOW:** In addition to the early press-printed books and documents, the NOBTS library holds a few illuminated manuscripts like this 12th century Psalter leaf.

important Reformers and the work they did. The book also includes engravings of each of the Reformers.

While engravings of John Calvin and Martin Luther are common, Herron said woodcuts of other Reformers are extremely rare.

“I think this is a really neat find. I’ve never seen anything like it,” she said. “To be able to see the faces of the early Reformers, I think, is pretty amazing. The engravings are just beautiful.”

Other collection rarities include a theological work by Zwingli written in 1523 and the Gutenberg Bible leaf from the Book of Isaiah. The collection also features a Mennonite confession from 1620, of which only three other copies of this Dutch text exist.

“This is history,” Herron said about the Gutenberg page. “It’s the first book ever printed. It’s amazing.”

Though not as rare as some of the other volumes, the collection includes a copy of the Geneva Bible, an English Bible printed in 1562. This Bible, sometimes called the “Breeches Bible” due to the somewhat humorous translation of Gen. 3:7, was the first English Bible to include chapter divisions. According to Herron, the Puritans would have had a copy of this Bible with them on the Mayflower.

The quality, quantity and rarity of the collection raises the question, “How did the seminary acquire the books?” According to Griffin, John T. Christian collected most of the books in Europe in the early 20th century. The trained church historian made frequent summer trips to London combing through the shops and bookstalls looking for important books.

One of the seminary’s founding fathers, Christian served on the committee that recommended the establishment of the seminary in 1917. In 1919, trustees elected Christian to the faculty. From 1919 until his death in 1925, he taught church history and served as the school’s librarian. Now, 82 years after his death, the full impact of Christian’s diligent work of collection is finally coming into focus.

Griffin said that there are no plans to begin showing the books in the current library. However, the board of trustees approved the planning process for a new, state-of-the-art library. When the new library is built, space will be available for display of these important works.

This does not diminish the importance of Herron’s work in cataloging and organizing the collection, though. Through her efforts, the academic community now knows the existence of additional copies of several rare volumes. ▣



Steve Lemke celebrates 10 years as NOBTS Provost

By Paul F. South

When Dr. Steve Lemke was named Provost of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1997, the institution was at a crossroads.

The seminary's enrollment of 1,800 students was on a downward trend, in part because of a delay in filling the presidency after the retirement of Dr. Landrum Leavell. The school's Doctor of Ministry program was among the smallest in the Southern Baptist Convention. However, Lemke saw much hope in the school.

"In many ways, we were Southern Baptists' best kept secret," Lemke said. "It was a school that people talked less about. I mean that in all aspects. It wasn't the first choice of a lot of people for seminary training."

A decade later, under the leadership of President Chuck Kelley, Lemke and the faculty, that has changed. Enrollment reached a pre-Katrina high of 3,898 students. The Doctor of Ministry program, once among the Southern Baptist Convention's smallest, is now its largest.

The dramatic increase in enrollment, Lemke said, "is unheard of in seminary life. We became the largest Southern Baptist seminary before Katrina hit. The storm knocked us back a little bit, but we're still one of the five largest seminaries in the world."

"I'm very concerned that the institution be student-friendly and that we have both academic excellence and close ties with the local church as we prepare students for ministry."

– Dr. Steve Lemke

When Lemke arrived at NOBTS from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1997, a year after Dr. Chuck Kelley became the institution's eighth president, he outlined his key concerns:

"I'm very concerned that the institution be student-friendly and that we have both academic excellence and close ties with the local church as we prepare students for ministry," Lemke said. "If we skimp on either one of those commitments, we have not provided a good theological education."

That combination of scholarship and servant leadership among the NOBTS faculty has reaped rich rewards. Recently, the seminary faculty was ranked 12th best among American schools of theology in research and scholarly productivity. Still, the NOBTS faculty averages 10 years of practical ministry experience as pastors, ministers of music, ministers of education and missionaries.

Among other milestones in Lemke's decade at the seminary:

- The Doctor of Ministry program has become more flexible and student-friendly. While still demanding a high level of scholarship, the program has been tailored



Photo by Boyd Guy

to accommodate the demands of ministry.

- The Baptist College Partnership initiative, created early on in Lemke's tenure, allows students to test out of graduate level courses if they have had similar undergraduate courses at Southern Baptist institutions. Some 1,500 students have come through the program.
- The basic Master of Divinity program curriculum was revamped, with a renewed commitment to the classics, with the addition of course requirements in Greek, Hebrew and Philosophy. Also, specialized master's programs have been created, notably the M.A. in Marriage and Family Counseling.
- The seminary has also bolstered its delivery systems for courses through interactive technology. The number of extension centers has increased, as well as the new hub campuses in Orlando and suburban Atlanta, with a goal of making world-class theological education more accessible.
- Along with a commitment to research, funding has also been increased for faculty professional development.

A native of Ruston, La., Lemke served as Chairman of the Philosophy of Religion department and Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Religion department at Southwestern Seminary. He holds three degrees from the Fort Worth school (M.R.E., M.Div., Ph.D.). He has also done graduate work at the University of Texas at Dallas, Texas A&M University and Texas Christian University. He earned his undergraduate degree at Louisiana Tech, where he graduated cum laude with a major in history and a minor in journalism.

Lemke, 56, has also served in ministry at Southern Baptist churches in various pastoral roles for more than a quarter-century.

As Provost, Lemke oversees a variety of responsibilities, but in his heart, he said, he remains a pastor. He sees his role as helping "shape pastors for the 21st century."

"I see myself as a pastor, the person who cares about people," he said. "I realize people don't see that and I don't often have the opportunity to express that. But that's who I am."

Lemke and his wife, Carol, live on campus with their son, Austin. ☑

Faculty Appointments

Dr. Bayne Pounds Assistant Professor of Christian education; Director of Institutional Reports

Dr. Bayne Pounds returns to the NOBTS faculty to serve under presidential appointment.

Her teaching experience includes service on the NOBTS faculty from 2000 to 2002, six years of adjunct teaching at NOBTS and two years as an Adjunct Professor at Carson-Newman College. She has been a guest faculty member at the Women's Ministry Institute at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. During her time on the NOBTS faculty, Pounds served as Co-Director of the Women's Ministry Program.

From 1994 to 1997, Bayne Pounds served as the Director of Single Adult Ministries at First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C. She is also a frequent conference leader in areas of youth discipleship and ministerial liability.

Bayne Pounds earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Samford University and Master of Religious Education and Doctor of Philosophy degrees for NOBTS.



as the editor in the youth section of the discipleship training department at the Baptist Sunday School Board from 1982 to 1985.

Other Faculty Appointments:

- **Dr. Tim Searcy**, Professor of Christian Education, has been named Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness.
- **Dr. Scott Drumm**, Associate Professor of Theological and Historical Studies in Leavell College, has been named Director of Institutional Research.
- **Dr. Kristyn Carver**, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Counseling, has moved from the Leavell College faculty to the graduate psychology and counseling department.
- **Dr. Francis Kimmitt**, Associate Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew in Leavell College, has been named Acting Assistant Director and Acting Director of Student Services for the North Georgia Hub in Marietta, Ga.

NOBTS Faculty Honor

NOBTS faculty ranks high in academic and research productivity study

The New Orleans Seminary faculty was listed among the top religious studies research faculties in the country in an index of faculty scholarly productivity done by Academic Analytics. The findings were reported by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Academic Analytics is a company offering a new measure of professional development, the Faculty Scholarly Productivity index (FSP), that allows research doctoral degree granting institutions to compare the professional development of their faculties. The FSP takes into account faculty scholarly publications in factors such as journals and books, grants received and honors received. While it is an inexact science, this index at least allows some objective comparison of faculty development among institutions with similar programs.

The last data posted by Academic Analytics was for 2005 and reflects pre-Katrina activity. In it, NOBTS ranked 12th in the nation of all seminaries and divinity schools offering a doctor of philosophy degrees in religious studies. The ranking places NOBTS between the Graduate Theological Union at 11th and Princeton Theological Seminary at 13th.

– with reporting by Dr. Steve Lemke

Dr. Jerry Pounds Professor of Discipleship; Assistant to the President

Dr. Jerry Pounds returns to the NOBTS faculty after serving five years as President of Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland, Ga. He taught Christian education at NOBTS from 1988 to 1994 and again

from 1997 to 2002. Pounds served as Vice President for Development at the seminary from 2000 to 2002.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Samford University, a Master of Religious Education degree at NOBTS and Doctor of Education at Vanderbilt University.

In addition to his teaching background, Jerry Pounds is an experienced minister. He served as Associate Pastor of Administration at First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C. from 1994 to 1997. He has served as an interim pastor at five churches and led youth groups at six churches.

Jerry Pounds has authored or co-authored 12 books, including *Discover the Winning Edge*. He also served



ALUMNI UPDATES

Class Updates

1960s

Harry Eskew (MSM '60) Professor Emeritus of Music History and Hymnology, presented a paper at the Baptist History Celebration held at FBC Charleston, S.C. in August 2007. His paper was titled *William Walker: Carolina Contributor to American Church Music*.

1980s

John Burns (MDiv '81) has authored *Modeling Mary in Christian Discipleship*, which was recently published by Judson Press. This book looks at Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a model for Christian growth.

Robert Knight (ADiv '82) and wife, **Judith**, were recently called to FBC Cuba, Mo. Bob had previously served as pastor of Eolia BC for 23 years. Bob is also a Chaplain with the Cuba Fire Department and the Missouri Highway Patrol.

Steve Hamrick (MCM '86) was recently named the State Director of Worship and Music Ministries for the Illinois Baptist State Association, beginning Dec. 3.

Dean Register (ThD '84) is the founding pastor of Crosspoint Community Church in Hattiesburg, Miss., and is the author of Lifeway's January 2008 Bible study of Romans, titled *God's Amazing Grace*.

1990s

Richard C. Statham, Sr (MDiv '95) has been Senior Pastor of Salem Baptist Church in McDonough, Ga., for 12 years as of Dec. 10.

2000s

Chris McCombs (MDiv '02) has been named chaplain for the Kent State (Ohio) University Golden Flashes Football Team. He also serves as pastor of Broadman Baptist Church in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

Births

Daniel Ausbun (MDiv '03; ThM. '05) and wife, **Sherri**, welcomed their second child, Elizabeth Reese, on Sept. 6, 2007. Daniel pastors FBC Moreland, Ga.

Deaths

Carl E. Conrad (DDiv '48) died June 16, 2007, in Baytown, Texas, at the age of 95.

George L. Zbinden (BDiv '54; MRE '55; DMin. '81) passed away April 17, 2007. His wife, **Jayne**, currently resides in Birmingham, Ala.

Annezell Gafford, wife of **Larry Gafford** (BDiv. '65; MDiv. '70), died on Sept. 23, 2007. Rev. Gafford currently resides in Mississippi.

Mission Appointments

International Mission Board

Jeffery Holeman (MDiv '94) and wife **Liesa** were appointed by the IMB on Sept. 12, 2007, to serve in Lima, Peru. Jeffery will serve as a Strategy Coordinator.

CORRECTION

Incorrect degree information was listed in Dr. Joe H. Courson's obituary in the Fall Vision. He earned a Bachelor of Divinity from NOBTS in 1956 and returned to earn a Doctor of Ministry degree in 1976. Below is the corrected listing.

Dr. Joe H. Courson (BDiv '56; DMin. '76) went to be with his Lord and Savior on May 5, 2007. He was 75 years old. Survivors are his wife of 55 years, Ann Jackson Courson of Jacksonville, Fla., three children and two grandchildren.

Courson began his pastoral ministry in 1954 in Orlando, Fla. He also served as Assistant to the President and Director of Development at New Orleans Seminary. He was Director of Missions in the Gulf Stream Baptist Association, greater Ft. Lauderdale area. He served as Director of the Annuity Department of the Florida Baptist Convention for ten years, retiring in 2001. During his ministry he helped start over 100 churches.

"Where y'at" Alumni?

Give the Alumni Office your updates by phone at (504) 282-4455, ext. 3331, or by email at alumni@nobts.edu

Claude Howe, Professor Emeritus, remembered as friend and model scholar

Claude L. Howe, Jr., Professor Emeritus of Church History at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, died Nov. 8 in Slidell, La. He was 79.

"Dr. Claude Howe was one of our local legends," NOBTS President Chuck Kelley said. "His students will never forget either his encyclopedic knowledge of Baptist History or his machine gun delivery of the same."

"His colleagues will remember him as a model scholar, serious about his coffee and his tennis, who was also a faithful friend and colleague. The New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary family will miss him," Kelley continued.

Howe joined the NOBTS faculty in 1959 and served until his retirement in 1994. He also led the Division of Theological and Historical Studies from 1972 until 1994.



Twice a graduate of NOBTS (BDiv. '57; ThD. '59), Howe received the NOBTS distinguished alumnus award 1986.

He also wrote "Seventy-Five Years of Providence and Prayer," a history of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

In 2002, Howe received the Distinguished Service Award for Outstanding Contributions to Baptist History by the Baptist History and Heritage Society.

Howe, who spent his retirement years in Picayune, Miss., is survived by his wife, Mollie Howe; his son, Kenneth D. Howe and daughter-in-law, Angel Howe. Howe also has two grandchildren, Mandy and Kenzie Howe.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Joyce, and one grandson, Banning Pounds. ☞



Looking Back

Child's Play

The children of seminary students play on campus in this 1964 photograph. Unfortunately, the children are not identified in the Public Relations archives.

NOBTS Alumnus and Auburn Football chaplain recounts story of God's grace and transformation in 'Hard Fighting Soldier'

By Paul F. South

Before coming to faith in Christ, Chette Williams was an angry young man. But in a recently published memoir, the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary alumnus and former Auburn University football player recounts his own story of how God's amazing grace radically transformed his life.

Williams' 25-year journey of the prodigal son would carry him from deep in Coach Pat Dye's dog house to the joy of redemption and, today, to the challenge of ministry, impacting young lives as chaplain of the Auburn football team.

His story is published in *Hard Fighting Soldier: Finding God in Trials, Tragedies and Triumphs*, published by Looking Glass Books. Williams wrote the book with freelance journalist and fellow Auburn alumnus Dick Parker.

NOBTS gets more than a passing mention in the 178-page book. Williams, who worked as part of the facilities crew and later as a campus police officer at NOBTS to earn money for seminary, received his Master of Divinity degree in 1993. Williams also met his future wife while attending NOBTS.

He came to NOBTS at the urging of the late Rev. Bob Baggott, former Auburn team chaplain and pastor of the First

Baptist Church of Opelika, Ala. Williams also got some stern advice from his mother:

"If you're going to preach, you're going to get an education first," Katie Williams told her son. "I won't have any jackleg preacher for a son."

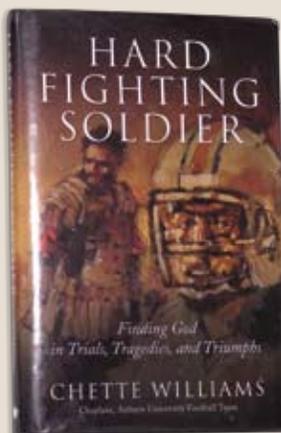
During his time in New Orleans, Williams was shepherded in part by former faculty member Don Wilton, now pastor of FBC Spartanburg, and the seminary's longtime Vice President for Business Affairs Clay Corvin.

But Williams isn't the only story here. Williams movingly recounts the story of lives changed by Christ, against the backdrop of his own family's hard road to redemption. While football weaves its way through the book, it is a sidelight to the victories of faith told here.

Make no mistake, football fans will love this book. So, too will readers who don't know the difference between a first down and a down comforter.

It is also a story of grit and grace of ministry on the streets of New Orleans, a city spiritually wounded long before Katrina, and how God was at work, transforming lives.

This book will bring cheers and tears, all the while reminding readers of the power of God. 



The 2008 Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum - April 4-5 2008

NEW ORLEANS
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



The Textual Reliability of the

New Testament

A dialogue between Bart Ehrman and Daniel Wallace



Bart Ehrman
Chair of the Department of
Religious Studies at the University of
North Carolina at Chapel Hill

April 4-5, 2008



Daniel Wallace
Professor of New Testament Studies
Dallas Theological Seminary

Responses by Bill Warren, Micheal Holmes, David Parker, and Dale Martin, in conjunction with a Special Event of the Evangelical Philosophical Society on the NOBTS campus. For more information go to www.greer-heard.com



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