

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Spring 2005

# VISION

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**DR. CHUCK KELLEY**

## **Why I am a Southern Baptist, Part 2**

In the last Vision I began sharing the story of why I made the decision as an adult to be a passionate Southern Baptist, even though there were some things in Southern Baptist life that were disappointing to me at the time. To keep the story interesting, I am using some of the controversies from our past to illustrate the key features of Southern Baptist life. This was originally presented as a Convocation address to the seminary family. The paper is available in its entirety at the website of our Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry ([www.baptistcenter.com](http://www.baptistcenter.com)).

### **The Sin Controversy**

In 1928 the unthinkable happened. C. S. Carnes, the treasurer of the Home Mission Board, used his position to borrow nearly \$1,000,000 in the name of the Board and then embezzled the entire amount into private accounts and fled the country. To make matters worse the Great Depression, the worst economic crisis in American history, was just beginning, and the Southern Baptist Convention and its churches were already beginning to face severe financial problems.

The Home Mission Board entrusted one man with total control of its finances, and that one man became a criminal, nearly forcing the Home Mission Board into bankruptcy and creating a financial problems that took a decade to resolve. You will not be surprised to know that never again has one man or woman had complete control over the financial affairs of an SBC entity. Nor is it typical for one person to have complete control of the financial affairs of a church.

I am a Southern Baptist because Southern Baptists take the sinfulness of human nature seriously. This influence on Baptist polity is seldom discussed, but it is almost always present. We like to tell jokes arising out of the check and balance system you will find in place at every level of Southern Baptist life, but I thank God for it. I suppose the best descriptor of our practice is accountable trust. In the typical Southern Baptist church the offering is counted by those who are trusted, but almost always by more than one person. The pastor does not count, record, or deposit the offering. Rarely can one person borrow or spend money on behalf of a church, association, convention, or entity. We trust each other, but we use systems that discourage abuse and encourage accountability.

The biggest decisions Southern Baptists make, at every level, are always made by a group and never by an individual. If it is calling a pastor, relocating a congregation, or changing the direction of an entity, the biggest decisions are consensus decisions, not personal decisions. The Trustees, not the President, make the decisions that matter at this seminary. If a Southern Baptist leader at any level cannot convince those he serves to accept his vision, he has to adjust his vision, for no Southern Baptist leader has authority over the body responsible for his accountability. This practice has created frustration in many a Southern Baptist leader during our history, but I believe the upside of an emphasis on accountability far outweighs the downside of leadership without accountability.

Students often complain as they move out into ministry in Southern Baptist life and bump into some form of accountability structure. Their immediate reaction is frustration and a strong sense of how easy ministry would be if they had more trust and greater power. Some want to start something new so that they won't have to bother with the burdensome accountability structure of an existing church. I suggest to them that in

**“I am a Southern Baptist because our polity enables the grass roots to bring the fresh air of renewal and reformation to our entities and Convention.”**

**- Dr. Chuck Kelley**

those moments they recall the name C.S. Carnes and get an accountability structure in place as soon as possible. Carnes had the power and the trust, and with it nearly bankrupted the Home Mission Board and forced the Board to reduce drastically its ministries at a very critical time.

I have also noticed that if one takes the time to explain the vision carefully, to answer thoroughly the questions that are raised, and to educate the people so that they see the same picture you are seeing, Southern Baptists usually respond with good decisions. Egotism has been defined as the art of seeing in yourself what others do not see. You will know for sure you are a leader when others are following. We would never have become the largest Protestant group in America if we consistently ignored or hamstrung our leaders. Though I may chafe occasionally at the limitations imposed on me, I am a Southern Baptist because Southern Baptists take the sinfulness of human nature seriously.

How did the controversy end? The head of the Home Mission Board resigned. Carnes was eventually caught in Canada, tried in court, and went to jail. He had already spent almost all the money attempting to become a Hollywood film mogul. It took the Home Mission Board almost ten years to recover financially and begin to expand its mission after the initial severe budget cuts.

## **The Theological Controversy**

The last controversy I will mention is called the Conservative Resurgence. There was a day when many SBC entities were moving to the left theologically, further and further away from the grass roots of the Convention. It was not unusual for seminary professors at several SBC schools to deny the historical reliability of the Bible. The entity head responsible for representing Southern Baptists on ethical issues was passionately pro-choice and advocated abortion on demand. Publications from our Convention publisher were more and more reflecting an attempt to popularize liberal theology among Southern Baptist readers and Bible teachers. A reaction began in 1979 as a growing number of Southern Baptist church members went to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention determined to change the direction of the SBC and its entities. Messengers came because they believed the traditional Baptist conviction that the Bible is inspired by God and therefore inerrant and infallible was under attack. Because meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention are more like a church business meeting than a church growth conference,

Southern Baptists are able to make course corrections in the work of their entities. Our polity makes reformation, renewal, and changes of direction possible.

What followed was unlike anything America had ever seen. Despite intense resistance from nearly all entity heads and many well-known leaders of that era, and an unceasing stream of negative publicity from every state paper but one, year after year a record number of messengers attended the Convention and voted for a change of direction in the entities.

They did not do it by issuing instructions for the entities to change from the floor of the Convention. They did it the Baptist way, using traditional Baptist polity to implement a long-term change of direction. They elected an SBC president who would appoint people interested in change to the committee responsible for nominating the Trustees of the entities. Then each year they affirmed the Trustee appointments recommended by that committee. It took a long time: from 1979 until the early 1990s. But Baptist polity worked. The will of the messengers was implemented by the Trustees they elected. The commitment of Southern Baptists to the inerrancy of Scripture is firmly established. The effectiveness of traditional Baptist polity was vividly illustrated. The entities had to change, because Southern Baptist polity requires the entities to follow the direction of the churches, not the churches to follow the direction of the entities.

I am a Southern Baptist because our polity enables the grass roots to bring the fresh air of renewal and reformation to our entities and Convention. We believe the churches, not denominational leaders or entities control the direction, mission, and values of the Convention. Southern Baptists are people of the Book. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, and we want that belief to be reflected throughout Baptist life. We know we have nothing but Jesus and His Word to offer this sin-sick world, and we are absolutely convinced that is enough. Whatever arises in Southern Baptist life that calls that belief into question will be challenged, and rightfully so. SBC churches always have the right to give direction to their Convention.

## **Between Scylla and Charybdis**

As I reflect on the significance of these controversies in Southern Baptist life, a story from my past keeps coming to mind. It illustrates what we can learn about our future from these incidents in our past.

The first research paper I ever did was for Mr. Reeves in the sixth grade at Sally Curtis Elementary School. My assigned

# "I am a Christian first and foremost, but I am also proud to be a Southern Baptist!"

- Dr. Chuck Kelley

topic was Greek mythology. We had to do an outline, notecards of quotes, footnotes, bibliography: the whole nine yards. I found the paper to be an interesting experience because it introduced me to the fascinating world of the heroes and monsters, the gods and goddesses, and the legendary adventures that comprise that fantasy world. To this day I remember being fascinated by the legend of Scylla and Charybdis. In the voyage of various heroes to the end of the earth, there was a great danger, perhaps the greatest of all dangers to those making such a voyage. The sea narrowed to a channel that had to be passed through for heroes such as Jason and the Argonauts to reach their destination. On one side was the monster Scylla, with a voracious appetite for human flesh and a great reach that would allow her to devour all onboard a ship. Those who attempted to sail away from her then found themselves trapped by Charybdis, a gigantic whirlpool of such power it could suck any ship down to a watery grave. Scylla and Charybdis ended nearly all adventurous voyages. They destroyed lives in completely different ways, but they were both destroyers.

Why were they so dangerous? In an effort to avoid one, ships would flee unknowing into the clutches of the other. No one ever survived to warn that it was death to seek to evade one monster, for the other would surely get you. Only with the help of the gods were heroes like Ulysses or Jason able to stay just out of the reach of either monster.

What strikes me the most about the controversies I shared with you today is the polarities, the tensions that characterize Southern Baptist history. The needs of the local church can be in tension with the needs of Convention ministries, as we saw in the fight over publishing Sunday School literature. The opportunity to evangelize a community can create a tension with the opportunity to evangelize a nation or a world. The freedom to act can create a tension with the need for accountability, and the Southern Baptist passion for religious liberty and the conviction that every person has the freedom and responsibility to follow their conscience in all religious matters does not mean there are no boundaries to what one can advocate and still call oneself a Southern Baptist.

The reality is that dealing with those tensions is a sign of life, not death. Lose sight of the primacy of the local church and you will slip into a dead denominationalism that leads to the ash heap of church history. Lose sight of the needs of the Convention's cooperative ministries and you dramatically weaken what I believe is the greatest mobilization of resources for the evangelization of the world in the history of humanity.

Each side of the tension carries a life-threatening danger. For example, curtail the freedom for leaders to act and the result can be impotent leaders, but eliminate the standards for accountability and the resulting action can lead to embarrassment and disgrace. Both can drain the vitality from a church or convention.

What is the solution? Jason and the Argonauts did not focus on either avoiding Scylla or avoiding Charybdis. They focused on sailing through them to accomplish their mission, knowing there was danger on both sides of the boat. Southern Baptists have been at their best when we have kept our attention focused on the mission to be accomplished and not the dangers on both sides of the boat. Move forward and not sideways, for the further you push away from one danger, the more likely you are pushing yourself into another danger. We have met and defeated our Scylla of liberalism. What might our Charybdis look like?

Each of us must decide whether or not we will embrace our Southern Baptist identity. I hope you will do so, for I have found nothing that more effectively combines integrity with the New Testament teachings on how to do church with a strategy for how one church can maximize its impact on the whole world. As you embrace this identity, take the time to learn our history. It will stand you in good stead as you face the problems in our future. The truth is that if you take up this identity, you need to do more than embrace it. You need to add your own insights and perspectives to it, as each generation before you has done. Whatever you do, never forget the lesson of Scylla and Charybdis. Don't let avoiding danger on one side push you unknowingly into even greater danger on the other. Feeling tensions is not a sign of death. It is a sign of life. You may have to make adjustments to the side in your ministry journey, but never forget the importance of keeping your primary focus on moving ahead. The main thing is keeping the main thing, the main thing. For all of our problems, I believe Southern Baptists have done that exceptionally well. I am a Christian first and foremost, but I am also proud to be a Southern Baptist!

*Chuck Kelley*





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# Faithful Living

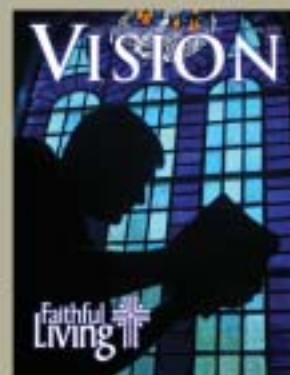
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# Faithful Living

The fabric of faithfulness woven by the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary family is strong. The threads are plentiful, making it difficult to isolate any one without running across hundreds of others. The lives of God's servants featured in this issue are interwoven with the faithful lives of those who went before them or studied beside them, just as those who come behind will be linked inextricably with the faithfulness of the alumni and students they follow.

These men and women serve in different cultures, churches, and ministries. Some have received man's acclaim while others minister in relative obscurity or even total secrecy. Some reach vast numbers of people while others reach only a few. They all have one thing in common: Each has been found faithful.



# A FAITHFUL CALLING

Scott Hanberry has earned the right to speak on the topic of faithfulness. When God called he followed. Scott and his wife Stephanie left great jobs and good friends and moved their family to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, to start a church.

"The position of your feet is not as important as the condition of your heart," Scott said about being faithful. When a believer is walking faithfully with God and following His Word, his heart gets "in tune" with the heart of God.

The new church, Northstar Baptist, held its grand opening on March 20. Eighty-nine people came to the event and three were saved. Scott's work leading up to the launch has been difficult. Nine out of 10 people in the area have no relationship with Christ.

Scott's call to Idaho began about 10 years ago in a mission class at New Orleans Seminary. During the class he and a friend, Mike Palmer, were exposed to the needs of the world. Still, Scott wasn't quite ready to serve so far from home.

"My real ambition, stated or not, was to go back to a county seat town in rural America and pastor there," Scott confessed.

After graduating from NOBTS, Scott managed the Seminary's Providence Guest House for several years and served three years on the staff of Hopewell Baptist Church in Savannah, Tenn. Then Scott returned to NOBTS to manage the LifeWay Campus Store and to begin doctoral studies.

One day, Palmer called Scott at the store with an urgent need for Bibles. As Scott worked out the details of shipping the Bibles overnight, Palmer encouraged him to come serve in Idaho.

Scott's first reaction was "No way!" He enjoyed his job and he didn't want to move that far from home. Palmer asked Scott to pray about starting a church in Idaho.

"My wife and I began to pray about it," Scott said. "We just couldn't say 'no.' God had left the door open, so we flew out to Idaho."

Scott and his wife, Stephanie, had a wonderful visit to Idaho. Standing in the community where Scott would later serve, he heard hopeful signs – the sound of cars zooming by and the ringing of many hammers working on new housing developments.

They returned from Idaho with great hopes, still seeking God's direction. The next week, Scott went to hear Rick Ousley preach at NOBTS. Ousley spoke on the call of Abraham and God spoke to Scott's heart. The Hanberrys moved in September 2003.

After arriving in Coeur d'Alene, the Hanberrys have made the most of every opportunity. They intentionally met people everywhere they went – especially Starbuck's. They invited the new acquaintances to their home for gumbo and a Bible study. At the first dinner, only two of their new friends stayed for Bible study. Since then, more than 30 people have been saved.

The Northstar Church already sees itself as a "church on mission" instead of a "mission church." Even before the church officially launched, it sent out teams of missionaries to help with construction and disaster relief. A giant map of the world in the sanctuary reminds them of the mission task.

Scott said the move has been a wonderful lesson for his two daughters – Hannah and Haley.

"We are leaving a legacy of faith for our girls. They know that when God speaks and we obey, He blesses," Scott said. "The problems come when you don't give God everything."

Opportunities abound in Idaho. But Scott is quick to point out that opportunities abound everywhere. He said, regardless of where a person lives, he or she has an opportunity to minister on a daily basis – at the grocery store or at the gas station.

Some are called to share in far away places, others are called to share close to home. The Great Commission is a gospel imperative for all faithful believers.

By Gary D. Myers



NOBTS graduate Scott Hanberry serves as pastor and church planter at Northstar Baptist Church in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Photo by Jimmy Cole.



**B**obby Welch has been faithful to the Great Commission. In the thirtieth year of his pastorate, First Baptist Church in Daytona Beach regularly leads the state of Florida in baptisms.

The church gives 15 percent of its budget to missions, sends lay mission teams around the world, and has hundreds of people enrolled in weekly evangelism training.

The NOBTS alumnus also helped create the FAITH strategy, which has equipped over 6,500 churches in 49 states and 13 countries to do evangelism. As president of the Southern Baptist Convention, he completed a 25-day bus tour last fall in which he visited all 50 states and gave help to ministers and hope to the lost. Bobby Welch has done his part.

Why then, did this Florida pastor preach in the NOBTS chapel in February and, shortly after, take to the New Orleans streets to tell people about Jesus?

“Hello! Could you wait a minute? I’m a Baptist preacher. I’d like to give you something. It won’t hurt you,” he called as he jogged down the street in his coat and tie.

Why did this busy leader, with a plane to catch in less than two hours, wait patiently on the porch of a dilapidated house and talk to a man who held a half-empty whiskey bottle and a burning cigarette in one hand as he shook Welch’s hand with the other? The man did not receive Christ that day, but a woman on the same porch did. She shut the door on the taunting calls coming from inside the house and listened to

the good news shared by Jay Johnston, a LifeWay representative traveling with Welch. The words of hope and the gospel tracts shared that afternoon were like hand grenades placed throughout the neighborhood, according to Welch. “Someone is going to pull the pin and blast this place to heaven.”

Welch’s passion to reach people for Christ was ignited by an incident almost 40 years ago in Vietnam. While serving as a

## A FAITHFUL WITNESS





**Above:** Bobby Welch and NOBTS student Greg Sharpe share the gospel with a man in a New Orleans neighborhood during an NOBTS evangelism blitz Feb. 2. As a result of the evangelism blitz, twelve people accepted Christ. **Left:** Welch preaches about evangelism in the Leavell Chapel earlier in the day.

Photos by Katherine Albers

**“What keeps me going is not the crowd inside the church, but all those we are leaving outside. What about those we are leaving behind?”**

– Bobby Welch

reconnaissance platoon leader, he was shot at point-blank range by a Viet Cong guerrilla, left for dead and piled into a military helicopter with the casualties. “Ever since that day, I live in the conscious state of knowing that I may not get home tonight, and that drives a great sense of urgency in me,” he told the Baptist Press.

That sense of urgency later brought Welch to NOBTS for his seminary training. As a young businessman with a family, he set out from home with the intention of visiting several seminaries. He stopped in New Orleans first and was drawn to the opportunity to preach on the street in the French Quarter. He never made it to the other seminaries.

“Back then, we had a bunch of blue Volkswagen busses with platforms we took down to the Quarter. Four guys would get up a crowd, and the other one stood on the platform and preached the gospel like a house on fire,” Welch said. “I never got away from that, and hope I never do.”

On the morning of Welch’s recent visit to New Orleans, Dr. Chuck Kelley, Seminary President, introduced him to students and faculty in chapel, issuing a challenge to take part in the evangelism blitz planned for the afternoon. “Ninety-nine percent of people who do it (witness) are scared,” Kelley said, “but God has people out there He has prepared. Don’t wait.”

That afternoon, Welch showed no fear, even as he engaged one man who held a pit bull on a chain and another who received fistfuls of cash from several passersby. But this war hero – recipient of the Bronze star for combat heroism and valor – admitted that he was not in the unafraid 1 percent. “Look around. We make those people in that flop house uncomfortable. That man over there may have a gun. We are vulnerable here,” he said.

Welch does not go into the spiritual battle of evangelism unafraid, but he goes because his greatest fear is one he shared with seminary students and faculty in chapel: “What if God is trying to have a revival out there, while we’re stuck in here? What if we miss it?” Or worse, “What if He doesn’t do it because we won’t go?”

Welch is motivated by the knowledge that the harvest is near its end. He loves his church but says, “What keeps me going is not the crowd inside the church, but all those we are leaving outside. What about those we are leaving behind?” He lends his own voice to that harvest, and it rings with the desperation he must have felt as a wounded soldier was piled up with the dead – “Wait! Please! Come Back! You’ve missed us! We have not been saved!” God hears the cry of the harvest, and so does his faithful servant, Bobby Welch.

By Christi R. Gibson

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*Editor’s Note:* In his role as Southern Baptist Convention President, Bobby Welch is calling Baptists to a lofty goal – “Witness, Win and Baptize” one million new believers during the 2005-2006 church year. The campaign is called the “Everyone Can Kingdom Challenge.” Welch believes the goal is attainable if people commit to be witnesses of Jesus. For more on Welch’s “Everyone Can Kingdom Challenge” visit [www.everyonecan.net](http://www.everyonecan.net).



**“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace.” Romans 10:15**

**S**outhern Baptist missionaries make immeasurable sacrifices to follow God’s call on their lives. They move far from home, far from family, all for the sake of the Gospel. Our missionaries are a picture of faithfulness.

Perhaps none pay a higher cost than missionaries like John and Lisa Robertson\* who serve in a restricted country. Half a world away, you’ll find this NOBTS alumnus and his wife boldly and faithfully living out the Great Commission. Each day they spread light in a very dark culture.

John and Lisa serve in the “10/40 Window” – located between 10 and 40 degrees north latitude. The region is home to some of the least evangelized peoples in the world.

“The Lord is allowing me to be a part of His wonderful act of love to bring the peoples of 10/40 window to Himself,” John said about his ministry.

To follow God’s call, the Robertsons left behind their children and grandchildren. John left a ministry position he loved. However, you won’t hear them complaining. They are convinced that they are right where God wants them. Instead of talking about what they sacrificed, the Robertsons want to speak of God’s faithfulness to them.

“God has been faithful to give us courage beyond our comprehension on the field,” Lisa said. “He has been faithful to bring us home when we needed restoration the most.”

Although John and Lisa miss out on many important family occasions like holidays and birthdays, they have seen God’s

*\*Names have been changed for security reasons.*

faithfulness in the timing of key family events. John was able to participate in their son’s ordination during one trip home. Another time they attended their oldest granddaughter’s baptism - their son performed the baptism.

“We were home to see our daughter walk again and see the power of a mighty God work in her life,” Lisa said.

Their daughter had been severely injured in a fall. Doctors feared she would never walk again. It was a struggle for the Robertsons to leave the U.S. after the accident. They were so thankful to see her walk again one year later when they came home for vacation.

The Robertsons said that prayer and Bible study keep them going even during the trying times. Day-to-day faithfulness for John and Lisa involves loving sinful people and staying faithful even when it doesn’t make sense. The Robertsons keep a proper perspective on results of their ministry - they trust in God’s plan.

“I understand that the results are not my responsibility,” John said. “I am only accountable to God for my radical obedience to His call on my life.”

John and Lisa’s story of faithfulness is also the story of countless faithful Southern Baptists who give to the Cooperative Program. But the Robertsons believe each Christian has a role to play. They believe that role goes far beyond prayer and giving. The “go” of the Great Commission is for all who follow Christ.

By Gary D. Myers

## A FAITHFUL MISSION



# A FAITHFUL CHURCH A FAITHFUL PASTOR

**Y**ou're not what we were looking for, but you're the one God has for us." Not the call a young preacher dreams of hearing. But those were the words Reggie Bridges heard from the chairman of the pastor search committee when he was called to Pine Grove Church near Picayune, Miss. Bridges has served as pastor at Pine Grove for the last four years.

He may not have been what they were looking for, but when they found him, they decided to love him. "He's energetic. A good preacher and pastor," said long-time deacon and Sunday School director, Dr. Laverne Stuart.

Pine Grove has a history of loving pastors, which Bridges says is obvious in the way they speak of his predecessors - a list of NOBTS alumni and faculty. This church has decided to invest in student pastors. Stuart said helping their pastors go through Seminary makes the church members feel valuable in God's work.

Some of the student pastors in whom this church has invested are Bill Veil, Dan Howard, Tony Lambert, Jim Shaddix, and Scott Cappleman. Argile Smith and Billy Warren, both NOBTS professors, have served interims there.

Though Bridges knew he had some pretty big shoes to fill, he was not especially intimidated. The path which led him to ministry and to this pulpit in particular was clearly laid out before him.

He had been a Christian for two years when, at the age of 14, he was asked to help out with the youth group at Blue Springs Church, near his home in Saltillo, Miss. Bridges stayed for six years. He served his first pastorate at Canaan Church in Walnut, Miss., while he was a student at Blue Mountain College.

When Bridges and his wife, Leslie, decided to attend seminary in New Orleans, they had no jobs or place to live. A ministry

acquaintance introduced them to Bill Harden, pastor of First Baptist Church in Picayune. The young couple was surprised when the pastor took the whole day off to show them around Picayune. Before long, they were living in an apartment vacated by a graduating seminary student and attending FBC. One Sunday night, Harden let Bridges preach, and the next day Pine Grove called.



NOBTS student Reggie Bridges serves as pastor at Pine Grove Baptist Church near Picayune, Miss. Photo by Jeff Audirsch.

This small rural church "might not be on the radar as one with great potential to grow," said Bridges, "but it's a special church, and God can do something special with it."

God is indeed doing something special at Pine Grove right now. The church has seen a 50 percent increase in attendance and is on its way to making the difficult transition from a family reunion church to a mission-minded church. Currently, Pine Grove gives 15 percent of its budget to the Cooperative Program, and supports the association and local ministries.

Bridges prays for an extension of his church's influence. He drinks a lot of

coffee and has learned to enjoy hunting in his effort to be a visible witness in the community and build relationships beyond the walls of the church. While serving Pine Grove, Bridges has completed his Master of Divinity degree and is working on his Doctor of Philosophy degree. He even teaches courses in Leavell College. The church has been wonderfully supportive.

However, Bridges is not just putting himself through school. This church has been entrusted to him. He longs to be found faithful to God's Word in his preaching and teaching and to love and care for the flock the way that Christ does.

By Christi R. Gibson



In 1982, Auburn linebacker Chette Williams' bitterness was infecting the team to such an extent that head football coach Pat Dye invited him to leave. Seventeen years later, in 1999, Williams was still considered infectious – but it because of was his faith, not his bitterness – and Auburn head coach Tommy Tuberville wanted his team to catch what Williams had.

What caused such a drastic change? The night he was asked to leave the team, Williams turned to the one teammate who had not given up on him, Kyle Collins. Collins was prepared. He had been praying for Williams, and that night he introduced him to Jesus.

Williams became a new man. He stayed at Auburn, winning a conference championship and three bowl games, and earning

his degree. Then, while pastoring new church plants in New Orleans and Mobile, he pursued a Master of Divinity degree at New Orleans Seminary. After graduation in 1993, Williams and his wife, Lakeba, moved to Spartanburg, S.C. and started a ministry to reach inner city youth.

In 1999, Williams returned to the Auburn football program to serve as team chaplain. He is also Campus Director for Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and State Director for FCA's Urban Ministries.

Those are just titles. Williams' true role is mentor, confidant, guidance counselor, advisor, spiritual coordinator and friend.

The team unity the Tigers displayed on the field in 2004 stemmed, in part, from the influence of their chaplain.

## A FAITHFUL MENTOR





**Above:** Auburn chaplain Chette Williams prays with an Auburn football prayer in the team's locker room. **Left:** Williams rallies the Auburn players during a game. **Below:** Williams, right, is pictured with Auburn University football coach Tommy Tuberville.

Photos courtesy of the Auburn University Athletics Department



Williams credits this to the Friday night, student-led prayer meetings that occur before home games. On Fridays, after the players eat, have chapel, and go to meetings, they gather in a room to pray. They share prayer requests and praise reports - pausing periodically to pray for each other. They pray for their coaches, their families, and their relationships with teammates. And they sing.

One of their songs took on a life of its own in the 2004 season. Williams said of the spiritual *Hard Fighting Soldier* "It was our song. We sang it just for us." But after their victory over Ole Miss, they were just too excited to contain themselves. The song broke out spontaneously in the locker room after the game. Visitors heard it - and the rest is history.

The song captures what has happened to the Auburn football team through its prayer meetings. Williams says that, as they began to pray for each other, they began to know and care about each other. Gradually they became a unit, a band of brothers going into battle.

God has been good to Chette Williams, and he has had a tremendous impact on those under his care. He and his wife have three children, and live in a beautiful home in Auburn. He was chosen as a Distinguished Alumni of NOBTS in 2002. But faithful living has not only given Williams success. It has helped him weather the storms associated with success.

In January of this year, a New York Times story raised questions about the role Williams plays in the athletic department at Auburn that resulted in a review of financial records at his nonprofit organization. Although Williams was cleared of the allegations, he felt like he was under attack. He was angry, but had preached Ephesians 4:26-27 to his players, and knew that he could not give the devil the place he was seeking. He soon realized that God had already put several things in place to help him through this time.

Williams had a responsibility to those he leads and was well aware that the influence God has given him goes beyond his team. He regularly receives emails, letters, and pictures from parents whose children and teens are imitating the Auburn Tigers and their faith. One mother wrote about her 10-year-old son praying with a teammate in the car on the way to a little league game, and then singing *Hard Fighting Soldier*. Williams did not want to have run the race, only to disqualify himself.

Scripture has been a great help to Williams in this trial. Two that stand out in his mind were previous team verses - Jeremiah 29:11 and Proverbs 3:5-6. Trusting that God has a plan for him and acknowledging Him in all His ways has given him great hope.

Finally, Williams has leaned "on the shoulder" of his wife, Lakeba. "She has been my rock through all of this," he said.

God has indeed been good to Chette Williams. That does not mean that he has faced no opposition - but that in the face of opposition he has had the resources that he needs to keep going. That is faithful living.

By Christi R. Gibson



Diane and Bill Horn

“Get out of that place, from your family, and from your father’s house, to a place and a ministry that I will show you.” Bill and Diane Horn, of Gainesville, Fla. responded to a call much like the one Abram and Sarai received in the Old Testament.

The Horns are NAMB US/C-2 missionaries serving as associate Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) directors at the University of Florida and Santa Fe Community College. As evangelism director for the BCM, Bill sees that there is a great need for college students to hear the gospel and come to Christ at this crucial point in their lives.

Yet, when Bill was first called into the ministry, he did not even know that college ministry existed. As a teenager playing his dad’s guitar in a youth worship team, he only knew that God had given him the desire and provision to join Him in what He was doing. It was only later, while attending the University of South Florida, that he was invited to play in the band at the BCM, and discovered the ministry in which he would be involved for the next few years.

This is the way God seems to work in this young man’s life. God starts the call, and gradually shows him where to go and what to do. Horn feels blessed to have found, in his wife Diane, a life partner who believes the way he does. They have not acquired a lot of material possessions, believing that they would only tie them down, so they can go wherever. They have learned to be flexible with career plans, so they can do whatever God leads them to do.

Bill’s boss gives him Mondays off to pursue his seminary education through the extension center in Orlando. All of that is about to change.

This summer, they are moving to the main campus in New Orleans. Diane hopes to find a job in the New Orleans area and possibly pursue a Master’s Degree in the field of art and museum studies. Bill is surprised to find himself, a student who did not enjoy reading in college, thinking about a Ph.D.

in Biblical Studies. The world opened up for him through the extension center. All it took was one course for God to begin fueling a passion.

Looking to the future, Horn continues to be drawn to a ministry to college students, but has discovered a gift and passion for teaching. He dreams of an opportunity to impact students’ lives, as the Christian professors he encountered in secular education impacted his. “God did not call us to leave (the world), but to affect it,” he said.

Bill Horn understands that faithfulness to God’s call means denying his own desires. His future ministry will be one in which he “cracks open the Word, and feeds God’s people,” he believes. “Whether that is in a seminary, Bible college, or in a public university - domestic or abroad - has yet to be cleared up.”

He trusts that God gradually will show him where he is going and what he is to be doing - just as He did with Abram.

By Christi R. Gibson

## A FAITHFUL COUPLE





# Faithful Living

The men and women described in these pages long to hear the words of the Master, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21, 23). We saw the faithfulness of their lives through sacrifices, perseverance, and obedience. We heard the faithfulness of their words as they expressed their heartfelt desire to hear from God and follow Him. These men and women stand faithfully, but they do not stand alone. They stand alongside all of those who have passed through the gates of NOBTS to go on to the place that God has shown them.