

# vision

NEW ORLEANS  
BAPTIST  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY

SPRING/SUMMER 2009 | Volume 65.1



equipping  
leaders to grow  
healthy churches

A  
Global  
Reach

**Inside**

Hamblin Faculty Chair | Music Computer Lab | 'Hybrid' Courses



Dr. Chuck Kelley, New Orleans Seminary President

## Through a Glass Darkly

**P**eople have always been interested in the future, but never more so than now. I have little insight on when the economy will improve, but I can suggest what tomorrow holds for NOBTS. To borrow a phrase from Paul in the magnificent 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, I will attempt to “see through a glass darkly.”

First, we know the winds of change are blowing. The world of theological education changed permanently as the cost of traditional approaches to theological education put enormous pressure on all seminaries and colleges to find new models for equipping the next generation of leaders. Also, technology created models for education that were neither possible nor conceivable when I was a student. A physical classroom is useful but no longer essential for professors and students to interact. They can gather in physical space, media space, or the virtual world of internet space. Technology can bind these spaces together, making a “one size fits all” approach to ministerial training no longer necessary, possible, or even desirable. In addition, today’s students are searching for new ways to be trained. Many called to ministry are not able or do not choose to follow the traditional training process, even if that means no training at all or being trained at non-SBC schools. Southern Baptists need us to explore new paths for theological education.

Thankfully the Spirit of God is at work in all this. We are not stumbling blindly into the great unknown of the future. Rather,

we see more clearly adjustments God intends for us to make in the preparation of shepherds for His people. The Lord is using this fresh landscape to make theological training more accessible to more God-called men and women.

Second, the Southern Baptist Convention is in crisis. Only 11 percent of SBC churches are experiencing healthy, evangelistic growth. Holding on to who we have is getting harder. Adding to our congregations is harder still. Our clear sense of denominational identity is fading. It is becoming more and more difficult to use the word “typical” to describe the practices of Southern Baptist churches.

Of greater significance is the fading strength of the Cooperative Program. Its growth is not keeping up with the needs of the ministries it supports, much less their opportunities. In the past CP provided more than 70 percent of our budget. Now it provides less than 50 percent. Also, the way CP funds are distributed to the seminaries actually discourages innovation and the development of new models. We are profoundly grateful for Cooperative Program funding, but we cannot depend upon it solely for support.

The third fact we know is that the road ahead is uncertain. Old questions are now being asked afresh. How will we teach? Who will our students be? At what times will we teach? What sorts of programs will we offer? Where will teaching take place? There is no definitive answer to these questions. Everyone, not just those who want to be innovative, is looking for answers. Uncertainty is the only thing a seminary can be certain about!

The defining issue we face is how to respond. Like an armadillo rolling up in a protective ball when threatened, we can attempt to ignore what is going on around us and hope it will go away. This assumes doing seminary as we have always done it will always work. Another possible response is to start making changes to what we do just because change is now possible.

A better response is to seek the purpose of God in what is happening around us, like Queen Esther in the Old Testament. She was told by her uncle that God elevated her “for such a time as this,” to help her people when they needed help the most. We believe this is an Esther moment! All that has unfolded in our 91 year history, including Hurricane Katrina, was preparation for this time and these circumstances. Our challenge is not a change of direction. Our challenge is a change of pace. The future is now!

At NOBTS we enter our future with a **Conviction:** We believe that theological education is crucial because the typical God-called man or woman will be more productive with training than without it. To express that conviction we have a **Goal:** We will make some form of theological education accessible to any God-called man or woman on the face of the earth. To accomplish this goal we have a **Strategy:** We are creating a cafeteria for ministry training that will offer a wide variety of ways for ministers and missionaries to be equipped for service in the Kingdom of God. To determine what to include in the cafeteria, we have a **Target:** We will prepare leaders to start or develop healthy churches that will reach the lost, teach and nurture the believer, and do ministry in the name of Jesus in the community.

Students at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary will choose among three basic approaches to prepare for a lifetime in ministry. They can choose an immersion approach, by coming to the New Orleans area to study. This is the fastest, broadest, and deepest way to prepare for any form of ministry. It gives students the maximum opportunity for building lifetime relationships with both professors and other ministry students, and gives access



to every program offered by the seminary. Students making the transition from another vocation into the ministry, or with little ministry experience, or seeking specializations or advanced study programs often find the immersion approach particularly helpful.

Other students may prefer the marathon approach for part-time students getting their training through an extension center. It takes longer, offers fewer options for specialization, and provides less opportunity for building lifetime relationships, but it makes seminary training possible for those who are unable to relocate. Patience and persistence are essential, but the combination of education plus further ministry experience is the benefit.

The third option in the NOBTS ministry cafeteria is the "as needed" approach made possible by the internet and the various certificate programs of the seminary. Students have maximum opportunity to focus on precise areas of need or interest, and in the case of internet courses, can work seminary training into almost any schedule or life circumstance. While some aspects of ministry training are not available in this format, it does provide maximum flexibility for students seeking to fit seminary training into a demanding life and schedule.

To fulfill this vision we face three challenges. Finding the right faculty is essential. Not every person qualified to serve on a seminary faculty can fit into the demands of a ministry cafeteria. Some are capable teachers, but better suited for a more traditional environment. Others lack experience with the nuts and bolts of church life. We look for both bright minds and ministry experience. We want the ability to teach and to innovate. Pray for us as we seek the right people.

Funding for the cafeteria is a second challenge. Our ministry cafeteria will operate more efficiently than a traditional approach to seminary, but basic costs still have to be met. We need four kinds of gifts: **Gifts for everyone, Gifts for individuals, Gifts that will last until Jesus comes back, and Gifts for specific projects.** We call **gifts for everyone the Annual Fund.** Every dollar given here goes to the operating budget and thus is a dollar no student has to pay. **Gifts for individuals are called scholarships,** and they can be for gifted students, students in need, students in specific programs,

etc. Scholarships often make the difference in enabling a student to come for training or to complete training. Funds for student assistance have never been more important.

**Gifts that help until Jesus returns are called endowments.** With our conservative investment policy, gifts to an endowment produce interest income that will continually provide funds in a manner the donor chooses. More and more of our donors are planning estate gifts to create or add to an endowment for training ministers until Jesus comes back. **Project gifts help us with specific needs.** For instance, we still need to replace the tennis courts and apartments destroyed by Katrina. Hardin Student Center needs some paint and carpet, and the cafeteria needs a new HVAC unit. We keep a list of projects to do when funds become available. All four kinds of gifts are and ever will be important.

Keeping the faith is perhaps the most important challenge of all as we make this vision our calling. When nothing is certain, everything is possible! As God told the prophet Jeremiah, when we seek to obey His vision, He will show us "great and mighty things which we do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3).

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is at a fork in the road. The path we choose will determine the future we discover. This choice is NOT a moral choice between good and evil. This choice is NOT an intellectual choice between a reasonable course and an unreasonable course. This choice is a spiritual choice between moral, reasonable uncertainties about where God is leading our Seminary at this point in time. "Fork in the road" choices require confidence in the direction God is leading, more than perfect clarity on what the future will be.

Our choice is to reinvent Seminary in light of the needs, opportunities, and ministries of Southern Baptists in the 21st century, so that some form of theological education will be accessible to every God-called man or woman.

I am happy to announce the ministry training cafeteria is open for business! The Trustees have approved all of its basic features, and the faculty needed to staff the cafeteria is coming together. Hurricane Katrina tested our resolve, but it was an affirmation of where we are headed, not a detour.

Students are already enrolled in all of the delivery options I have mentioned. Our enrollment will be about 3,600 students for the second year in a row, and many, if not most, will take classes using more than one path for delivery. The NOBTS cafeteria is not merely open. It is busy! The future is here. The future is now. We are making some form of theological education accessible to any God-called man or woman on the face of the earth.

"Fork in the road" choices are inevitable for all who follow Jesus. The Bible does give us advice for these circumstances, found in Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths." The principle is this. Growing clarity follows bold obedience. We often become certain after we obey His call and follow His directions, not before.

When we are finally able to look back on these days with the perfect clarity hindsight always brings, we will see that once we stood in the fork of a road. We will know that we could have chosen the clearer road of what already was, or the uncertain road of what could be. On that day, we will know that our choice of the uncertain road made all the difference.



## The NOBTS Vision

### OUR CONVICTION

Theological Education is Crucial

### OUR GOAL

Make Training Accessible to Any God-Called Man or Woman

### OUR STRATEGY

Offer Cafeteria for Ministry Training

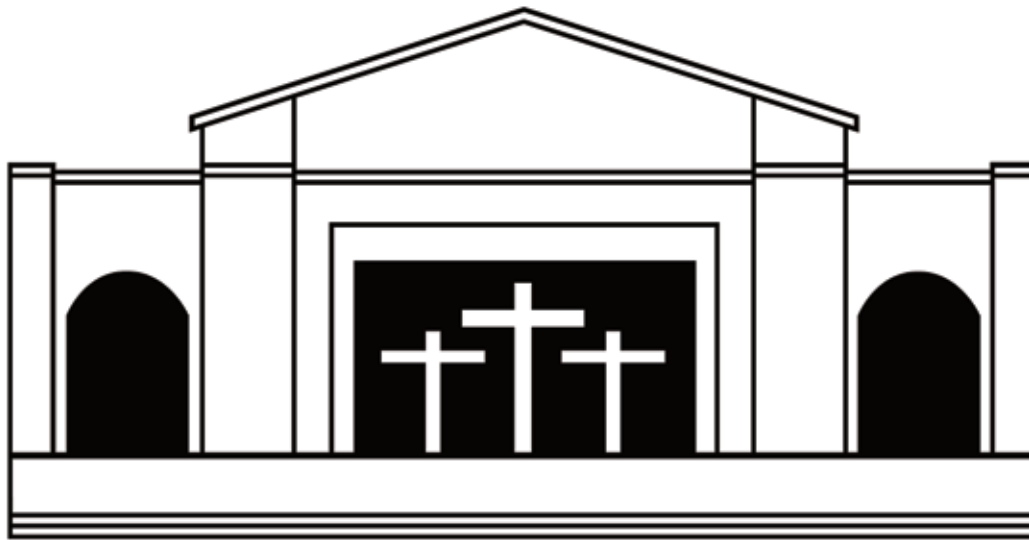
### OUR TARGET

Healthy Churches Reaching, Teaching, and Ministering in the Name of Jesus

*We will reinvent Seminary for the needs, opportunities and mission of Southern Baptists in the 21st century*

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary visits

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To visit the official Oberammergau Passion Play website, go to [www.passionplay-oberammergau.com](http://www.passionplay-oberammergau.com).

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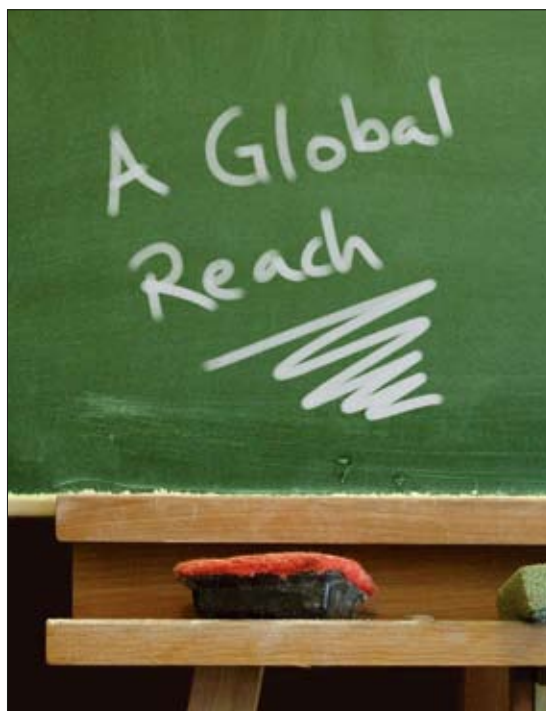


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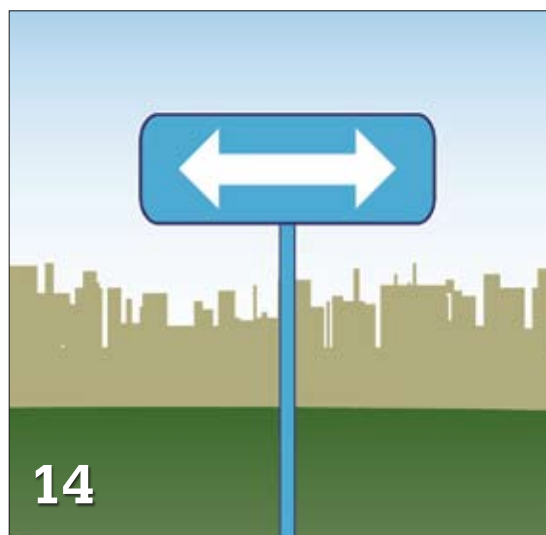
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A Global  
Reach



# NOBTS ministries are helping fulfill Great Commission through cutting-edge technology and greater access

By Paul F. South

In the first century, the apostle Paul relied on providence, prayer and good old-fashioned shoe leather to take the gospel of grace to the known world. Even a man with the wisdom of Paul could never have imagined the global reach of 21st century technology. Like their early predecessors, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's faculty and students are armed with providence, prayer and the power of evangelism. But by adding cutting-edge technology to the mix, the seminary delivers world-class theological education to students wherever the fields are white for harvest. And as a result, the global mandate of the Great Commission is closer to being accomplished.

Armed with the power of the Gospel and equipped with a combination of cutting-edge technology and old-fashioned hard work, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and its ministries are fulfilling Christ's command to take His message of hope and healing to the ends of the earth.

## Beyond the Blackboard

Close to home, NOBTS students and faculty continue to minister in New Orleans, serving in local churches and assisting in the recovery of a city still trying to rebound from Hurricane Katrina. Every NOBTS graduate student takes a course providing hands-on experience in one-on-one evangelism. Last year, students reported almost 6,000 witnessing opportunities, resulting in 340 professions of faith.

A number of graduate students are participating in Unlimited Partnership, a unique partnership between the seminary, the North American Mission Board and several state Baptist conventions and local associations. It provides class credit, special mentoring opportunities and meaningful ministry experience in the church setting.

In the Nelson L. Price Center for Urban Missions, MissionLab hosted more than 2,000 people from SBC churches last year, who offered their hearts and hands to help rebuild

New Orleans physically and spiritually with hurricane relief and evangelism. The seminary has also added a New Orleans Missions and Ministry course to provide disaster relief training and ministry opportunities in New Orleans.

Across North America, the seminary's Day Center for Church Planting has equipped 457 master's-level students in church planting. Forty-one NOBTS graduates are church planters through the Nehemiah Project, plus another 53 students are church planting interns. These students serve in churches in Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington and in Canada.

Many NOBTS students serve in summer missions positions in the United States each summer. They serve through NAMB, M-fuge and Centrifuge camps and local church mission trips.

The transforming message of the cross even blossoms behind bars. Special undergraduate programs are offered in some of America's historically most violent prisons. Ministers are being trained behind prison walls at Angola State Penitentiary in Louisiana, Parchman Prison in Mississippi and Phillips State Prison in Georgia. More than 100 professions of faith in Christ have been made among inmate populations.



Globally, the seminary is engaged in a multifaceted ministry, reaching even into nations with a history of hostility to the gospel, including Cuba. NOBTS students and faculty have traveled to Russia, Cuba, Indonesia, Haiti, Peru, Guatemala, Ireland and other locations in Africa and Asia. More than 70 NOBTS graduates have been commissioned as IMB missionaries since 2005. And through the Day Center, students and faculty participated in six mission trips in 2008 and witnessed to 124 people, resulting in seven professions of faith.

## In the Classroom

While the tangible results of NOBTS ministries can be seen across the world, the preparation for that hands-on work begins in the classroom. At NOBTS, that classroom is no longer limited to four walls and a ceiling. Thanks to new, ever-changing technologies, the world-class academics offered at NOBTS can indeed be experienced around the globe. Eventually, the hope is that NOBTS will educate God-called men and women throughout the world, preparing them to share Christ's message where they live.

In May, the seminary reached a significant milestone by awarding its 17,000th diploma. With new delivery methods, the number of equipped ministers is expected to grow exponentially, as access to academic excellence expands.

## World-class Instruction and Scholarship

Access has expanded beyond the seminary community. The Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum brings the world's best and brightest evangelical and non-evangelical scholars to New Orleans to debate critical contemporary issues of the Christian faith.

In one of the powerful real-world examples of the seminary's reach beyond the wrought-iron gates of the Gentilly campus, NOBTS faculty members provided master's-level academic instruction for a selected group of church discipleship and worship leaders at Western Cuba Theological Seminary. These leaders in turn will train hundreds of other lay leaders in Cuba's 5,000 estimated house churches. Similar work is also being done in Russia, Haiti, Indonesia and Peru through a partnership with the International Mission Board. And it's important to note that NOBTS faculty members bring an average of a dozen years of real-world ministry experience to the classroom. The Great Commission is serious business, and the NOBTS faculty is deeply committed to fulfilling Christ's command.

Providing world-class instruction requires a world-class faculty. The NOBTS faculty is made up of 72 well-trained scholars who, along with classroom teaching, are engaged in research at institutes within the seminary. Those academic centers include: The Leavell Center for Evangelism and Church Growth, the Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry, the Youth Ministry Institute, the Institute for Christian Apologetics, the H. Milton Haggard Center for New Testament Textual Studies, the Center for Archaeological Research, the Global Missions Center and the Cecil B. Day Center for Church Planting.

The seminary's various centers have attracted a wide array of scholars, including church growth expert Ed Stetzer, internationally-known theologian William Lane Craig and Oxford papyrologist Michael Theophilos.

## Equipping Healthy Church Leaders

In the classroom, the seminary has continued its tradition of equipping students, offering academic training that leads to certificates, undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees. Leavell College is distinctive from similar programs in a number of ways. Leavell College targets the non-traditional student who is returning to the classroom after a period in the working world. The Leavell College curriculum focuses on providing ministerial training for these non-traditional students. The majority of coursework provides specific instruction for church-related ministry. All Leavell College students must provide evidence of a clear call from God.

Total Leavell College enrollment for 2007-08 was 1,733 students, including 880 certificate students and 853 diploma, associate and baccalaureate students. The seminary's church leadership certificate program witnessed a spike in enrollment. The program is offered at a number of locations in the Southeast to train lay leaders and bi-vocational pastors, through state conventions, associations and local churches, including FBC Jacksonville, Fla., FBC Merritt Island, Fla., FBC Orlando, Fla., FBC Brandon, Fla., Flamingo Road Baptist Church in Cooper City, Fla.; Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., and The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala.

The college also offers five certificate programs either completely or partially online in areas such as Biblical Studies, Christian Education, Christian Ministry, Basic Women's Ministry and Advanced Women's Ministry.

In keeping with the seminary's Great Commission mandate, Leavell College is engaged in a global outreach. A partnership with Hunter's Glen Baptist Church in Plano, Texas has enabled the college to provide certificate-level training for ministers in Manado and Jakarta, Indonesia. A similar partnership between the college and the Florida Baptist Convention provides similar training for ministers in Haiti. Ethnic language certificate programs are also offered in Vietnamese, Haitian, Spanish, Cambodian and Korean.

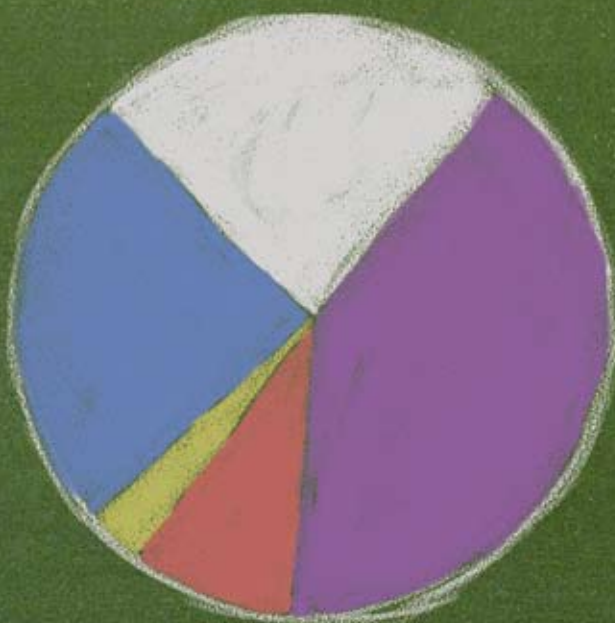
At the graduate level, master's degree students make up the largest segment of enrollment, with 1,456 students in graduate work. Some 719 students are enrolled at the New Orleans campus, with 737 at strategically-placed extension centers across the Southeast. Instruction combines education in the classical disciplines with training in practical ministry.

The seminary's professional doctoral program (Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Educational Ministry) is among the strongest programs at NOBTS, and the largest such program among the six SBC seminaries. Enrollment in the program has grown by 500 percent since a curriculum revision eight years ago. In 2007-08, 314 students were enrolled in the program. The program recently moved to the Perry R. Sanders Center for Ministry Excellence on campus.

In the research doctoral program, 111 students are enrolled; 84 students are pursuing Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.) degrees, while 27 are working toward Master of Theology (Th.M.). Opportunities for scholarship are enhanced by the research centers on campus, including many that offer doctoral fellowships. Teaching fellowships allow doctoral students to teach at Leavell College, or one of the seminary's graduate classes on the main campus, at an extension center, or online.



Enrollment 2007-2008



The seminary has also revolutionized the means of delivering a world-class education, in an effort to accommodate busy ministerial schedules, as well as the demands of family and finances. Courses are offered at extension centers, at night, on weekends, through a combination of internet and classroom work and straight internet instruction. More than 20 graduate classes are offered online each semester. In fact, the largest increase in graduate programs came in online classes, where enrollment essentially doubled.

In response to this growth, the seminary is crafting an online Master of Divinity program, which will allow students virtually anywhere in the world to complete much of their degree online, supplemented by the delivery methods mentioned earlier. The seminary wants to make quality theological education as accessible as possible wherever God-called individuals serve.

Beginning in the fall, the seminary will offer a new “hybrid” course model which combines a limited number of on-campus classroom meetings on the main campus with an enhanced internet component (read more about the plan on page 10).

Cutting edge technology is also coming into play at the doctoral level. At the request of the seminary’s accrediting agency, the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, NOBTS is engaged in a pilot program to experiment with a “modified residence” residency requirement for Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) students in Christian Education, exploring a variety of delivery systems for non-residential students. The seminary, the first approved by ATS for such an initiative, will lead a consortium of schools in exploring this new possibility in theological education.

Leavell College has also embraced the technological revolution to deliver ministry education to students anytime, anywhere, offering 15 classes online each semester. The college

offers an online degree completion option, in which students with associate degrees or some college credit can complete their Bachelor of Arts in Christian Ministry via the internet, wherever they live.

The apostles, who went forth into the known world to share Christ’s gospel armed with hearts aflame with the power of the Holy Spirit, could never have envisioned the face of ministry and ministerial education today. In his 2008 State of the Seminary address, NOBTS President Chuck Kelley offered some perspective on theological training, and ministry, here in the early days of the 21st century:

“Did you ever ask God to let you be part of a miracle,” Kelley asked. “Did you ever ask God to let you be part of a mighty act, when you knew that God and God alone was at work? If you ever did, this is what it looks like.”

Kelley added, “We are a part of God preparing His church for the future.”



## Robert Hamblin honored with endowed faculty chair



Dr. Robert Hamblin preaches in Leavell Chapel during the 2002 Stanfield Lectures.

### *Donations still needed to fully fund the new Robert L. Hamblin Chair*

BY GARY D. MYERS

**N**ew Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary trustees activated the Robert L. Hamblin endowed faculty chair of New Testament exposition during their April 15 meeting. The chair honors long-time pastor, evangelist and professor Robert Hamblin.


According to Seminary President Chuck Kelley, friends of Hamblin are in the process of raising \$500,000 for the faculty chair. The funds will then be matched through an internal grant program of the seminary. With the activation of the chair, interest income from the portion that has been raised will begin funding the salary of a professor in the fall.


Hamblin taught evangelism at NOBTS for six years and served as Vice President at the Home Mission Board, now known as the North American Mission Board, for six years. Before serving on the denominational level, Hamblin pastored for 33 years, including a 22-year pastorate at Harrisburg Baptist Church in Tupelo, Miss.

The seminary announced the chair during a chapel service April 14 in which Hamblin was the featured speaker and guest of honor. Before Hamblin spoke, Kelley commended him for his commitment to evangelism and expository preaching.

“Dr. Hamblin is a very important contributor in Southern Baptist life,” Kelley said. “The great love of his life is preaching the Bible, particularly the New Testament. He loves the exposition scripture more than anything else in life other than telling people one-on-one about Jesus.”

“We are delighted that there will be someone in the Hamblin chair teaching our students to preach the Word year after year until Jesus comes back.”

Hamblin retired from the NOBTS faculty in 1998, and moved to North Carolina. He and his wife, Ruth, are active members at First Baptist Church in Huntersville, N.C. 

 For information about donating to the chair, contact the NOBTS Office for Institutional Advancement at (504) 282-4455, ext. 3252


## Annual Fund giving update

BY BILL HUGHES

**G**iving to the Annual Fund has not been immune to the effects of the world’s economic situation. As of mid-May, alumni and friends of the seminary have given \$478,599 towards the \$1,025,000 goal. Only a few months remain until the fiscal year closes on July 31.

The Annual Fund is unique because regardless of the amount of each individual gift, all NOBTS students benefit. This is because sharp tuition increases are prevented because this fund provides general operating support for the seminary. Therefore, your tax-deductible gift helps to pay the electric bill, salaries, and other basic, but vital needs for day-to-day operations. Without the Annual Fund, additional student fees are needed to help cover these costs. Every dollar given to the Annual Fund is a dollar that a student does not have to pay for his or her tuition.

<p>Given To Date</p> <p><b>\$478,599</b></p> <hr/> <p>2008-09 Goal</p> <p><b>\$1,025,000</b></p>
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Did you know that the seminary needs over \$49,000 per day to operate? The Annual Fund supplements the seminary’s operating budget. If you are among our more than 600 donors who have given to the Annual Fund this fiscal year, thank you for your generosity in being able to give during a time when financial giving is not necessarily easy. If you would like to help, but have been unable to do so, thank you for loving our students. If you have not yet supported the Annual Fund this year and are able, will you please prayerfully consider how you may be able to give one gift from which all students will gain? 

## New Orleans Seminary Student Housing Project



Proposed student apartments

**N**ew Orleans Seminary is facing a significant housing crisis. Each semester a number of students must live in temporary housing. Please join us in asking the Lord to supply the funds needed to construct the new two-bedroom apartments.

 For information about donating to this project, contact the Office for Institutional Advancement at New Orleans Baptist Theological at (504) 282-4455, ext. 3252 or visit [www.nobts.edu/development/NewStudentHousing.html](http://www.nobts.edu/development/NewStudentHousing.html).



# Larry Black gift helps create new music computer lab

**T**hanks to a recent gift from Larry J. Black Ministries in Madison, Miss., music students have access to a new, state-of-the-art computing lab in the Sellers Music Building. The new lab officially opened April 30.

Black (MCM '62), a Baptist music icon who served 34 years at First Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., wanted to give something back to his alma mater. He and the advisory board of his ministry approached the seminary looking for a way to assist the music program at NOBTS. Upon hearing of the music department's computing needs, the board funded the project. It is only fitting that the new lab is located in a room where Black took some of his most memorable music theory and composition courses in the early 1960s.

The new lab is well-equipped. The ministry board purchased six new Dell computers. These computers facilitate the use of an interactive Smart board and numerous music software applications for the lab including *Finale 2009*, the premier composing and music notation program. Each of the new computers is equipped with two keyboards – one is a traditional computer keyboard, the other is a Korg digital music keyboard.

## Sellers Computer Lab

"Believe me, you have made our year," said Dr. Darryl Ferrington, Acting Chair of the Division of Church Music Ministries. "This is a wonderful capstone on the year."

"We are just thrilled to be a small part of it," Black said. "We're honored and we appreciate the people who have given to our ministry to make this possible. We want to do more in the future."

Seminary President Chuck Kelley expressed his thanks to Larry Black Ministries for the gift. He said while many schools are looking for ways to trim music programs, the seminary is not.


"We think this is one of the most important times in the history of church music," Kelley said. "Churches are using more musicians than they have ever used before and they are




Photo by Boyd Guy

Allan Black (seated) attended the opening of the new music computer lab with his mother and father, Sandy and Larry Black. In the background are (left to right): Dr. Steve Lemke, Dr. Ed Steele and Dr. Darryl Ferrington of NOBTS and Charles Carter and Roy Ward, board members for Larry Black Ministries. Allan Black also serves on the board of Larry Black Ministries.

doing more complex things than they have done before. There are very important skills that must be passed on from one generation to the next."

Kelley commended Black for his years of faithful service as a music minister and thanked him for his help in training the next generation of church music leaders. 

 For information about donating a gift to the seminary, contact the Office for Institutional Advancement at New Orleans Baptist Theological at (504) 282-4455, ext. 3252



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## Trustees approve distance learning M.Div., new ministry certificates

BY GARY D. MYERS

**N**ew Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary trustees approved a new distance learning track in the Master of Divinity program and other initiatives designed to make theological education more accessible to God-called men and women throughout the world.

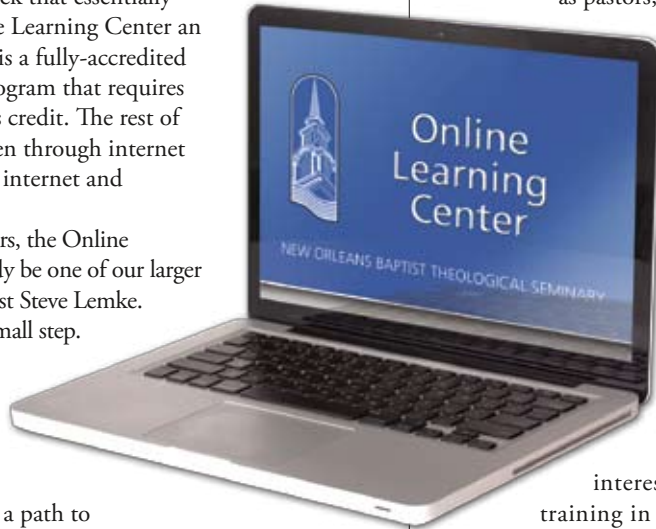
During the April 15 meeting, the trustees approved a new distance learning M.Div. track that essentially makes the seminary's Online Learning Center an extension center. The result is a fully-accredited master of divinity degree program that requires only 30 hours of on-campus credit. The rest of the course work may be taken through internet courses or a combination of internet and extension center courses.

"If you look at the numbers, the Online Learning Center would already be one of our larger extension centers," said Provost Steve Lemke. "In some ways this is a very small step. It's just adding a few more internet courses."

In other ways, the distance learning M.Div. is a significant innovation, Lemke said. The plan opens a path to accredited, master's-level, theological education to people in regions of the country and the world that are not served by a Southern Baptist seminary.

The seminary currently has 45 hours of master's-level course work available online. Lemke said that the Online Learning Center is working to develop at least five additional online courses over the next few years to make a total of 60 hours of internet training available.

Trustee also approved seven new certificate training programs – six on the graduate level and one on the undergraduate level.




The graduate certificates included specialized training programs in missions, biblical preaching, bivocational ministry, church planting and basic and advanced certificates in Islamic studies. The undergraduate certificate is a Florida-based program focused on student ministry.

The seminary's certificate programs are designed to equip students in selected areas of ministry who are called to serve as pastors, staff members, worship leaders, or

missionaries. Certificate training is also open to lay leaders serving local churches, ministries or denominational organizations. Many of the courses are fully transferable into the seminary's degree programs if a student decides to seek further training.

Each of the graduate certificates require 12-17 hours of coursework with exception of the advanced graduate certificate in Islamic studies which requires 12 additional hours of credit. The student ministry certificate requires eight hours of training.

"We have received significant interest from persons who want specialized training in a specific area of interest, rather than a longer and broader general theological degree, Lemke said. "These certificates provide this focused specialized training. Of course, we hope that some students who complete a certificate will continue on and earn a full degree."

Trustees also approved an additional certificate training site. First Baptist Church in Olive Branch, Miss., received the board's approval to offer certificate in biblical ministry training. The program offers Sunday school teachers, lay leaders and bivocational ministers with basic training in biblical literacy and doctrinal foundations. 

## New Orleans Seminary to test unique 'hybrid' teaching model next fall

BY GARY D. MYERS

**N**ew Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary announced a unique new approach to on-campus courses during the school's April 15 trustee meeting – "hybrid" courses.


Hybrid courses combine a limited number of classroom meetings with an enhanced and expanded internet component. While many regular NOBTS classes already include some internet components, hybrid courses will utilize the internet in a different way. Classes will meet once a month on the seminary campus for three hours of classroom lectures and interaction with faculty members, the rest of the instruction and coursework will be accomplished through the internet.

"The hybrid courses are similar to our current Saturday classes," said NOBTS Provost Steve Lemke. "They have regular periodic meetings on campus, but a significant part of the course is accomplished online between class meetings."

Saturday classes at NOBTS also meet only four times per semester, however the Saturday courses require more time in the classroom than hybrid courses.

NOBTS will launch the pilot project this fall with four graduate hybrid courses and two undergraduate hybrid courses. The seminary will continue to offer a full slate of traditional classroom courses as well.

Two of the graduate courses will be paired on Wednesday morning and afternoon, and another pair of courses will be offered on Fridays. The Friday hybrid classes will be scheduled to meet the same weeks as Saturday courses offering students the come for two classes on Friday and stay over for class on Saturday. Undergraduate hybrid courses will be offered on Mondays. Leavell College, the seminary's undergraduate school, does not offer Saturday courses.

"Not only will this hybrid class schedule help students with busy schedules, but the hybrid courses are also less expensive than internet courses, provide more personal interaction with the faculty member and class, and count toward campus housing and financial aid eligibility," Lemke said. "A student could meet full-time requirements by taking one or two hybrid courses and one or two hybrid courses and one or two Saturday classes or night classes. We believe that hybrid courses are going to be the wave of the future in theological education." 



## NOBTS announces austerity budget

BY GARY D. MYERS

**N**ew Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary announced significant budget cuts during a meeting attended by the entire seminary faculty and staff Jan. 19.

Seminary President Chuck Kelley called the meeting in response to the deepening world-wide economic downturn and its effects on Southern Baptists, their churches, and the Cooperative Program.

“We learned in December that New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary would be seriously affected as well,” Kelley said. “It appears that our total income from the Cooperative Program, tuition, gifts and investments will be more than \$1 million less than we anticipated.”

“All of these adjustments are very difficult,” he said. “Every employee, including me, will be negatively impacted in some way.”

The budget cuts include adjustments in medical benefits; temporary salary reductions; temporary adjustments in faculty teaching loads; intentional reductions in campus energy consumption; a freeze on non-essential operating expenses; and a hiring freeze.

While the reductions were significant, no employee layoffs were announced at this time. The budget adjustments took effect Feb. 1.

“We have made our decisions in light of the same basic principle we followed in responding to the Katrina disaster. Our guiding principle is the preservation of employment necessary to accomplish our mission,” Kelley said.

**“Our guiding principle is the preservation of employment necessary to accomplish our mission.”**

– Dr. Chuck Kelley

The adjustments in medical benefits include a change in staff eligibility for insurance and changes in the deductibles for all faculty and those staff members who remain eligible for medical benefits.


Changes in staff eligibility for medical benefits will primarily affect student employees taking more than one class per semester and employees who have a spouse taking more than one class per semester. Kelley said those affected by this change will receive a raise of 50 cents per hour to help offset the loss of benefits. According to Kelley, Guidestone representatives will be working with affected employees to find alternative medical coverage.

Kelley said that faculty and staff members who retain coverage must now pay a higher deductible. For those with single coverage the deductible will be \$250. The deductible will be \$500 for family coverage.

Kelley’s plan also called for a 5 percent salary reduction for all faculty and staff members except those who lose medical coverage. The salaries of senior administrators will be reduced by 7 percent. Kelley will receive a 10 percent reduction in salary.

“Restoration of full salaries is a high priority and will be done as soon as possible,” Kelley said.

Temporary teaching load adjustments will be made for all faculty members. Kelley said three hours will be added to the base teaching load and three hours will be added to the maximum load. Kelley said the temporary increases in teaching loads will be in place for at least 18 months.

Kelley called on seminary cost centers to control energy consumption and freeze all non-essential operating expenses. These non-essential expenses, he said, include purchases, travel and professional development. Such reductions, along with the hiring freeze, should balance the budget and stem any further cuts Kelley said. 

## news briefs

### *Seminary launches Vision Online*

In efforts to reduce printing and mailing costs, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary will produce fewer editions of the printed Vision magazine each year. However, to keep the seminary family well informed, NOBTS has launched Vision Online. The bi-monthly e-publication, a supplement to the printed Vision, is sent directly to email inboxes.

“The new online Vision not only helps us to be good stewards of our Cooperative Program dollars, it will help us tell more of what God is doing in and through the seminary and its students,” said Gary D. Myers, Director of Public Relations.

Two issues have been sent to the alumni who have their email address on file with the seminary. The seminary will expand the list to include donors in the future.

### *Christ in the Passover: Jews for Jesus director leads Seder service at NOBTS*



David Brickner, the Executive Director of Jews for Jesus, shared the rich heritage and the common bond between Jews and Gentiles found in the Passover. Brickner said that woven into the story of God’s deliverance of the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt is a far greater redemption—the deliverance from sin by Christ on the cross. Brickner demonstrated a Passover Seder as part of the “Christ in the Passover” presentation at NOBTS March 24.



Additional articles are available online, including:

- Spiritual brokenness, repentance hammered home at NOBTS campus revival
- Orleans Parish DA holds prayer breakfast at NOBTS

[www.nobts.edu/Publications/NewsIndex.html](http://www.nobts.edu/Publications/NewsIndex.html)

# Greer-Heard 09: Netland defends truth of Christianity

BY GARY D. MYERS

**A** 2008 Pew Forum survey found that 65 percent of Americans believe that many religions lead to eternal life. The research revealed that 52 percent of American Christians believe salvation can be found at least some non-Christian religions.

At a time when American belief is shifting toward religious pluralism – the idea that all religions are equal in offering truth – New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary’s annual Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum March 27-28 addressed the issue. The two-day event on pluralism posed the question: Is Christianity the one true religion?

“The topic is very important given the politically-correct, tolerance-laden culture we find ourselves living in today,” said Robert Stewart, director of the Greer-Heard Forum and associate professor of philosophy and theology at NOBTS. “Ultimately we need to take a stand on the clear teaching of God’s word, which teaches us that Jesus is the only Savior of the world.”

Stewart said that evangelical Christians as a whole are not embracing pluralism. However some are drifting away from an exclusive view of salvation.

“The recent Pew Forum survey found that a majority of American Christians believe that some non-Christian faiths lead to eternal life and that 37 percent of those Christians were evangelical Christians,” he said.

The keynote speakers at the main forum March 27, Harold Netland of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Paul Knitter of Union Theological Seminary, presented divergent answers to the question of pluralism.

Citing the often conflicting and contradictory views of the various religions, Netland rejected pluralism as a viable option. He instead argued in favor of the evangelical position that Christianity is the one true religion. Knitter, who identifies himself as a Christian and disciple of Jesus Christ, argued that Jesus “is a way open to other ways.”

Netland opened the forum by acknowledging that his belief that Christianity is the one true religion puts him at odds with many in today’s culture.

“The assertion that Christianity is the one true religion for all people, strikes many as hopelessly out of touch with current realities,” he said. “Nevertheless,



Photo by Boyd Guy

Harold Netland, Professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, defends the truthfulness of Christianity during the Greer-Heard Forum on religious pluralism.

with proper qualification, I do believe that the Christian faith as defined by the Christian scriptures is true and that this sets the Christian faith apart from other religious traditions,” Netland said.

Netland rejects pluralism in part because the major world religions intend to make real, often exclusive, truth claims. Religious adherents from most traditions are expected to regard the claims of their religion as true, he said. These claims are not meant to be taken as personal or mythological.

Netland suggests focusing on the essential or defining beliefs of a religion in determining the truth of a religion. A religion is true only if these essential beliefs are true.

“For Christianity to be true, the defining beliefs of Christianity, namely certain affirmations about God, Jesus of Nazareth and salvation must be true,” Netland said. “If they are true, Christianity is true.”

On the other hand, Knitter claimed that true Christianity would never make an exclusive claim to truth.

“If we look at our history, there has been a change in Christian beliefs about this question,” Knitter said. “Although at one time, almost all the churches held firmly that Christianity is the only true religion, today many Christian churches do not.”

Knitter cited the 2008 Pew Forum study as evidence that many Christians are moving away from the belief that Christianity is the one true religion.

“The fact that our question has already been answered by a broad group

of Christians ... that we have to take into consideration,” he said. “Our job as theologians is to work with what people are actually believing.”

Knitter said that there is a danger that an exclusive claim would hinder dialog among the religions. To him, hindering dialog is a grievous error.

“What impedes a moral imperative, if dialog is a moral imperative, what impedes a moral imperative looks to be immoral itself,” Knitter said.

After the event, Stewart said he hopes students learn to be “both properly charitable and properly critical in evaluating claims with which they disagree.” While he disagrees with the position of Knitter and other pluralists, Stewart sees value in engaging their ideas. He hopes exposure to scholars such as Knitter will help students better defend the truth of Christianity.

“I don’t find the hermeneutical arguments that pluralists make on this point strong enough to overcome the case for the traditional reading of passages like John 14:6 and Acts 4:12,” Stewart said. “However ... we are training Christians for ministry in today’s world and must thus trust that we have given them what they need to interact critically with the wide range of opinions that they will encounter in real-world ministry.” **V**

Read the entire article:  
[www.nobts.edu/Publications/News/GreerHeardForum09.html](http://www.nobts.edu/Publications/News/GreerHeardForum09.html)



## Greer-Heard 09: Millard Erickson speaks on the Trinity

BY MICHAEL McCORMACK

Quoting hockey legend Wayne Gretzky isn't a typical launching pad for talks on theology.

But for renowned theologian Millard Erickson, who addressed a packed crowd at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's Leavell Center March 27, Gretzky's words provided the perfect introduction for his topic of discussion: the Trinity.

Gretzky, known as "The Great One" by hockey fans, once was asked the secret of his success, Erickson said.

"Other hockey players skate to where the puck is," Erickson quoted Gretzky as saying. "I skate to where the puck is going to be."

Erickson drew a quick comparison.

"Too often in the church and in theology, we skate to where the puck is or where the puck used to be instead of where the puck's going to be," he said.

Erickson, who was hosted by the NOBTS Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry in conjunction with the annual Greer-Heard Forum, highlighted one specific aspect of the doctrine of the Trinity – the issue of authority.



Photo by Boyd Guy

Millard Erickson speaks at the Leavell Center March 27.

"The issue pertains to the relationships of authority that apply among the members of the Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," he said.

Specifically, the question is whether the Father, the Son and the Spirit are eternally equal in authority or whether the Father is the eternally supreme member of the Trinity, with the Son and Spirit subordinate to the Father with regard to authority, Erickson explained.

Erickson surveyed both sides of the debate, but he made clear from the start that his main concern was not for where the debate stands today but for where today's debate may be taken by the next generation of theological thinkers.

The typical terms applied to the two views on the authority of the Trinity debate, Erickson said, are "complementarian" and "egalitarian." Complementarianism argues for God the Father's supremacy with regard to authority over the Son and the Spirit. Egalitarianism, then, argues for the eternal equality of all three members of the Trinity, authority included.

But Erickson believes those terms present a problem.

"That terminology has been applied to two views of gender relationships, of the relationship between husband and wife and

the role of male and female in ministry," he said. "I don't want to confuse [the issue of authority in the Trinity] with that one."

Erickson, thus, opts for other terminology. He replaces "complementarianism" with the term "gradational authority," the idea that there are grades of authority within the Trinity. He also replaces the term "egalitarianism" with "equivalent authority," the idea that, though the Father, Son and Spirit may have different roles, they are equivalent in their authority.

Erickson pointed to Romans 8:29, James 1:17 and 1 Corinthians 15:24–28 as verses that gradational authority advocates frequently cite. He also said that backers of the gradational authority view point to the use of the names "Father," "Son" and "Spirit" for support.

"There is a reason these terms are used, and they are eternally applied, they would say," Erickson said. "[The use of these] did not simply begin to be used when Jesus came to earth. It's always been 'Father' and 'Son,' and there's always been a command and obedience relationship."

That line of reasoning extends also to the order found in the Matthew 28:19–20 record of the Great Commission: "...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Erickson also highlighted portions of the view of equivalent authority.

"[The other view] says, 'Yes, indeed there was a submission of the Son to the Father, but it was functional and temporary,'" Erickson said. "The three are equal not only in what they are but also in authority."

He highlighted Philippians 2:5–11, a passage known for its description of Jesus' incarnation and obedience to God. Verse 8 says that Jesus "became obedient to death."

"There was a point in time when that [obedience] began," Erickson said. "It was not eternally so."

Hebrews 5:8 makes a similar case, Erickson said.

With regard to terminology, advocates for the equivalent authority view point to the variation of names used for the three members of the Trinity. "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit" are not the only names used for the Trinity. Erickson pointed to the Apostle Paul's more typical terms: "God," "Jesus" or "Christ," and "Spirit."

"If 'Father' and 'Son' are so important in conveying that relationship, why does Paul prefer the other one? In fact, it's interesting that Jesus' preferred term for Himself was not 'Son of God' but 'Son of Man,'" he said. "Maybe 'Father' and 'Son' don't necessarily mean what the gradationists hold."

Erickson admitted that rarely does all the evidence point to one side of an issue.

In his final thought, he returned to the beginning of the discussion -- urging attention for where the "puck" was going with regard to the debate. In theological forums, the gradational view has been compared to Arianism. That early Christian heresy sought to explain the Trinity by concluding that Jesus was somehow less than God yet more than mere man. Arianism argued that Jesus was neither equal to God or co-eternal with God.

Erickson stopped short of equating the gradational view with Arianism, but he did express concern for where the position might be taken in the future. ▣



Read the entire article: [www.nobts.edu/Publications/News/GreerHeard09Erickson.html](http://www.nobts.edu/Publications/News/GreerHeard09Erickson.html)



# THE NEW METHODISTS

## NOBTS President Chuck Kelley urges repentance and return to evangelistic discipleship to reverse SBC decline

By Paul F. South

**S**outhern Baptists are the new Methodists,” New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary President Chuck Kelley said March 3, and are in danger of following the mainline denomination into deep decline and all the problems that follow.

According to the Leavell Center for Church Health and Evangelism at NOBTS, 89 percent of Southern Baptist churches have either plateaued in their growth or are in decline. The way to reverse the downward spiral, Kelley said, is to repent and to return to the practice of evangelistic discipleship that made the SBC the largest non-Catholic religious body in America.

Kelley delivered the prepared remarks at a Tuesday morning service at Leavell Chapel. At the end of the service, Kelley eschewed his usual practice of meeting with students, staff and faculty. Instead students streamed to the altar or prayed in the pews, many weeping openly in the wake of a call to repentance.

A digital recording and PowerPoint presentation of Kelley’s chapel message is available online at <http://www.nobts.edu/Publications/NewMethodists.html>

In 1945, Kelley noted, SBC churches baptized approximately 257,000 people into local congregations. Ten years later, SBC churches baptized a record 417,000 people. Never again have Southern Baptists experienced the dramatic growth in baptisms that typified the 1940s and 50s.

Kelley attributed the baptism explosion of that 10-year period to doing church the way a farmer operates a farm. A successful farmer obtains land, plants, cultivates, sows and reaps. He said the current generation of Southern Baptists are no longer farming their way to fruitfulness.

“For 15 years I said: ‘Southern Baptists are a harvest-oriented denomination living in the midst of an unseeded generation.’ We reduced planting, neglected cultivation, and not surprisingly have found the harvest coming up short. I now realize something more is going on,” Kelley said. “We are more like gardeners working the window boxes than farmers working the fields. We are the grandchildren of farmers keeping harvest stories alive over coffee and dessert at family reunions.”

At the heart of the decline, Kelley said, is not inadequate funding or outdated methods, but inadequate discipleship on the part of Southern Baptist churches.

Though Southern Baptists are often criticized for overemphasizing conversion, the opposite has been true.

“In the era of our greatest evangelistic growth, typical SBC churches had more discipleship activities than evangelistic activities,” Kelley said. “Aggressive evangelism was matched by aggressive discipleship.”

Churches have become “atomized” Kelley said, focusing more on particular methods of reaching people than on an integrated process of sowing and reaping.



Kelley introduced two new terms during his presentation: “discipl-istic” and “Biblelationships” The term “discipl-istic” refers to evangelistic discipleship that incorporates both evangelism and discipleship at the same time. Kelley uses the term “Biblelationships” to describe the combination of teaching Scripture and building nurturing relationships.

Kelley said that Biblelationships are “often used by the Holy Spirit to draw closer those who had heard the gospel but not yet responded.”

The genius of Southern Baptist evangelism was the integration of church planting, decisional preaching, personal evangelism, Sunday school and revivals. It was a paradigm not crafted by SBC agencies in Nashville or Atlanta, or on seminary campuses, but in the biblical practice of sowing and reaping in 1 Cor. 3:6, and its application in the local church.

... “[T]he SBC way of doing church emerged unconsciously out of a biblical worldview being preached and taught in our churches,” Kelley said. “Southern Baptists did not vote to use this approach at a convention meeting. It just seemed to be the right thing to do.”

Kelley lamented the “death” of the discipleship process in SBC life, calling its demise, “the most significant and influential death in the modern history of the Southern Baptist Convention. I am talking about the death of an SBC discipleship process, not a particular discipleship training program.”

“We neither maintained the process we had or reinvented it for a new day,” Kelley said.

Kelley praised Methodism for its role in the First and Second Great Awakenings, for taking the gospel to the American frontier with a call to holy living at its core. But the Methodism of John and Charles Wesley is no more.

“What Baptists know about evangelistic harvesting we learned from Methodists,” Kelley said.

But Methodist churches have set records for the fastest loss in membership in the history of the American church. Kelley cited several characteristics of Methodism today.

“Their efforts in evangelism and missions have greatly diminished,” Kelley said. “The passion for holy living has been replaced by behavior blending with the culture. Most surprising, they have set new records for the fastest loss of membership in the history of the church in America.”

Southern Baptists, Kelley said, are on the same path as their Methodist brothers and sisters.

“Universalism is settling into our pews as more and more Southern Baptists believe and behave as though they believe a personal relationship with Christ is not necessary for one to be right with God,” Kelley said. “Tolerance is beginning to overtake conviction as growing numbers, particularly of younger Southern Baptists, are less comfortable with taking a firm stance on moral or doctrinal issues. Our behavior, the way we live our lives, is blending more and more with our culture.”

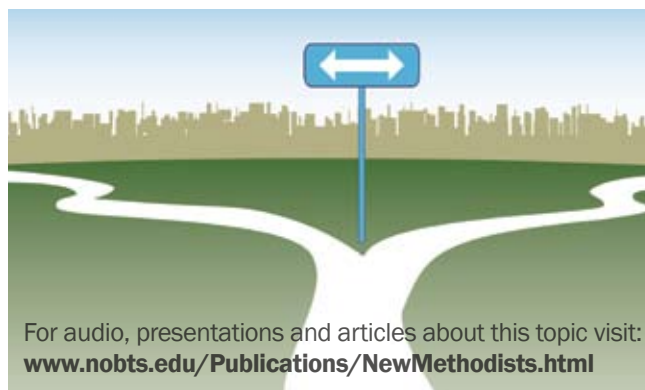
By way of illustration, Kelley played samples from recordings of three well-known musicians whose voices are distinctive: Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan and Kanye West, as well as an unknown “one-hit wonder.” The voice of this largely unknown artist, Kelley said, lacks the distinctives that make the other three memorable. Baptists are not losing their voice, but they are losing the distinctiveness of their voice in the culture, he said.

“Today, we do not know who we are,” Kelley said. “The world does not know who we are. Our lost friends and neighbors do not know who we are. In the New Testament world, believers lived differently than their neighbors. That is how they came to be called Christians, a term of derision, not respect. Our problem is not that more of us don’t witness to our neighbors. Our problem is that more of us do not look like and live like Jesus.”

Southern Baptists are no longer anointed, Kelley said.

“The conversion of a soul to Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit. The stirring of a church and community in revival and awakening is a work of the Holy Spirit. Neither of these works of the Spirit is typical in SBC churches today. We are not anointed. That ‘we’ would be you, me and all of us at work in places with little evidence of the activity of the Holy Spirit. We are so not anointed we have come to accept not being anointed as normal.”

At the close of the service, Kelley wept as he called his audience to repentance. As the campus prepares for its annual revival, Kelley showed his audience a picture of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. Only a portion at the base of the wall, a piece of the wall’s former architectural majesty, remains from Jesus’ day.



Said Kelley: “In times past God has worked through our Southern Baptist churches in a mighty way. In times present God is not working in a mighty way through our churches. Is this acceptable to you? To me? How are you going to respond to this? How am I going to respond to this?”

He added, “If we as a people do not repent now, only one question remains: To what wall, will our children return to weep and remember the glory of what the SBC was?”

Kelley encouraged those who may wonder what difference one person can make, given the momentous challenges facing the SBC.

“Only one river carved out the Grand Canyon, only one river makes the most magnificent waterfall in the world. Only one Savior died for our sins,” he said.

He added, “I don’t know what God will do with any one of us. But I know that all God needs is any one of us to make a great difference.

Kelley closed with a story from the Normandy invasion. On June 6, 1944, a descendant of Theodore Roosevelt led troops who landed on the wrong beach on the French coast. When asked if they should recall the boats to reach the planned landing area, Roosevelt said no.

“For us,” Roosevelt said, “the war starts here,” Kelley said. “Finding someone to blame is a waste of time. Wishing things were different and better is a waste of time. As for me, the war starts here.” 📌

## Accident recovery fund established to help Dukes

### Retia Dukes awakes from coma

**N**ew Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has established a fund to help Jimmy and Retia Dukes with recovery and rehabilitation costs. The couple sustained severe injuries when they were struck by an automobile near the seminary campus April 4.

Dr. Jimmy Dukes, Professor of New Testament and Greek since 1984, serves as the Director of Theological Education/Distance Learning for the Florida Baptist Convention. In an arrangement with the Florida Baptist Convention, he also serves as Associate Dean of the seminary's Florida extension centers and Director of the seminary's Orlando hub.

The couple's injuries are significant and they face a long, expensive recovery. Seminary President Chuck Kelley created the Jimmy and Retia Dukes Recovery Fund to offset the many rehabilitation costs that will not be covered by insurance. These costs include treatment costs, as well as, travel and lodging expenses incurred by the Dukes' two sons, Erik and Jason, who are making frequent trips to New Orleans. Erik is a physician in Booneville, Miss. Jason is Co-pastor of Westpoint Fellowship Church in Windermere, Fla.

"Many of us who have been blessed and helped by the Dukes ministry through the years and want to help," Kelley said. "We know that the recovery will take months and they will be away from their home and family."



Retia and Jimmy Dukes with granddaughter, Ella Faith


"This fund will be for expenses not covered by insurance. It offers a way for any who want to help to be able to help in a way that greatly assists them and their family," he continued.

Jimmy received treatment for multiple fractures and injuries including two broken legs, a broken arm, broken ribs, a cracked vertebra and a collapsed lung. Retia suffered a brain hemorrhage in the accident and was in coma for three weeks.

As bad as things were for Jimmy, doctors and family members were most concerned about Retia's "deep" coma. For three weeks she was unconscious. Family members and seminary administrators urged churches and individuals to pray diligently about her situation. On April 24 Retia awoke and responded to commands and questions from doctors. Now the couple is braced for months and months of rehabilitation.

Contributions may be made to the fund by calling (504) 282-4455, ext. 3252, or sending gifts to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Office for Institutional Advancement, 3939 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70126. Please

note "Dukes Fund" on checks intended for the fund. Online gifts may be given by selecting the "Click to Donate" tab at [www.nobts.edu](http://www.nobts.edu). Once in the online giving area, select the **Jimmy and Retia Duke Recovery Fund**, before submitting a gift.

The Dukes family is maintaining a Caring Bridge website with recovery updates for friends of the family. The site is free, but requires registration: <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/jimmyandretiadukes>. 

## Dr. Stevens receives prestigious Lilly Research Grant

BY MICHAEL McCORMACK

**I**n March, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Professor of New Testament and Greek Gerald L. Stevens was awarded a theological research expense grant from the Lilly Foundation. The \$5,000 grant, administered by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and funded by the Lilly Foundation, will underwrite the research/travel portion of Stevens' upcoming sabbatical.

His destination: Western Turkey.

For Stevens, the grant proved both a surprise and an affirmation. The surprise springs from the fact that this was Stevens' first grant proposal.

"I had never written a grant proposal," Stevens admitted. "I saw the Lilly grant for this upcoming year and the deadline requirements and thought I'd take a stab at grant writing. It was to be a practice proposal to learn the ins and outs of grant writing."

Stevens sought some wise counsel, namely from NOBTS Provost Steve Lemke and NOBTS Associate Professor of Church History Lloyd Harsch. Lemke served four years on the ATS committee that awards the research grants, while Harsch is, besides Stevens, the most recent NOBTS professor to receive the grant.

Even with their help, Stevens said he was "thinking that I was just getting my feet wet and learning how to do this thing." He sent off the proposal in early January. Then in March he received a congratulatory call from a Lilly Foundation representative.

**ats** The Association of Theological Schools  
The Commission on Accrediting

**2009-10 Lilly Research Expense Grant**

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**Dr. Gerald Stevens**

*"Investigating Holdings and Historical Artifacts of Selected Museums of Western Turkey for Their Pedagogical and Illustrative Value in the Classroom for New Testament Backgrounds"*



"I was blown out of the water," he said.

But surprise was only half of Stevens' reaction. For him, the successful proposal also brought a sense of affirmation.

In 2002, Stevens spent part of his last sabbatical traveling in Turkey, the modern day home to all seven churches addressed in

See **GRANT**, page 19



## Carver appointed to Louisiana commission on women's issues

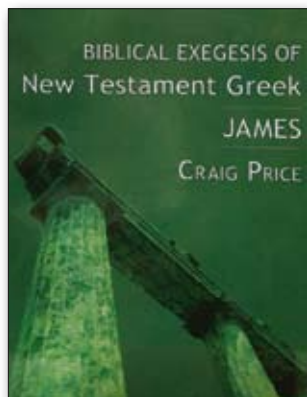


Carver

**L**ouisiana Governor Bobby Jindal has appointed Dr. Kristyn Carver, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Counseling at NOBTS, to the state Women's Policy and Research Commission.

The Board advises the governor, through the special assistant to the governor on women's policy, on the particular hardships, concerns, and needs that challenge women in Louisiana and possible solutions.

## faculty book



■ **Biblical Exegesis of New Testament Greek: James**  
 Craig L. Price  
 Cascade Books; Eugene, Ore.

The new workbook is designed to guide the beginning- to intermediate-Greek student through the process of biblical exegesis of the text of James. The workbook leads the student through a comprehensive process of grammar review, translation, exegesis, and application of

the Greek text. It is based on a deductive pedagogy for learning Greek but follows an inductive approach to grammar review. Students review grammatical, morphological, and syntactical issues arising in the text of James.

**Dr. Craig L. Price** is Associate Dean of Online Learning and Associate Professor of New Testament and Greek.

## In Memory



Yarbrough

### Dr. Leroy Yarbrough

Dr. Leroy Yarbrough, after a valiant battle with lymphoma, passed away on Christmas Day 2008. He was born in Rome, Ga., Aug. 23, 1934.

Dr. Yarbrough served 21 years as Chairman of the Division of Church Music and Professor of Choral Conducting and Music Theory at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Yarbrough is survived by his wife of 52 years, Edwyna Yarbrough; daughters and sons-in-law, Melody and David Macaulay of Houston, Gina and Danny Howell of Dallas; grandchildren, Ciara and Lindsay Macaulay, Arden, Jake and Grant Howell; and brother, Dale Yarbrough.

## faculty promotions

During the April 15 Trustee meeting eight professors received rank promotions; four were granted tenure.



Allen



England



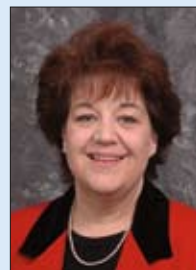
Griffin



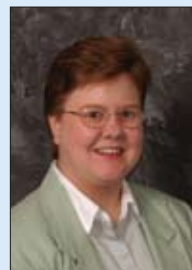
Morton



Nave



Peavey



Rivers



Ogea

**DR. JACK ALLEN** is now Associate Professor of Church Planting. He is the Director of the Cecil B. Day Center for Church Planting and the Nehemiah Project professor. Allen was also granted tenure

**DR. ALLEN ENGLAND** is now Associate Professor of Church and Educational Administration. He also received tenure.

**DR. JEFF GRIFFIN** is now Associate Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew. He serves as Dean of Libraries. Griffin was also granted tenure.

**DR. RICK MORTON** is now Associate Professor of Christian Education, Ministry-based Faculty.

**DR. JEFF NAVE** is now Associate Professor of Psychology and Counseling. He also serves as Director of Testing and Counseling. Nave was also granted tenure.

**DR. DONNA B. PEAVEY** is now Associate Professor of Christian Education in Leavell College.

**DR. LORETTA RIVERS** is now Associate Professor of Social Work.

**DR. REGGIE R. OGEA** is now Professor of Leadership and Pastoral ministry. He also serves as Associate Dean of Professional Doctoral Programs.

# Multi-talented McKeever transitions to new ministry

*Former pastor, BAGNO Director of Missions to focus on writing, drawing, preaching*

BY GARY D. MYERS

**J**oe McKeever (ThM '67, DMin '73) has spent his life ministering to others. No matter what changes life brings his way, ministry is not an option – it is a continuing call from God.

After 42 years as a pastor and five years at the helm of the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans (BAGNO), McKeever transitioned into a new phase of ministry in May. Anyone who knows him, knows “retirement” is not the right word to use for this transition. Ministry will continue. He’ll be busy preaching, writing, drawing cartoons and ministering to people, all in the name of Christ.

McKeever now has a new place to work and his desire to help churches and pastors keep him busy. First Baptist Church in Kenner, La., a church he pastored for 14 years, has given him an office in their library. There, McKeever will begin writing three books – the books will focus on prayer, fellowship and leadership.

According to McKeever, he plans to accept every speaking opportunity that comes his way – especially if it is a chance to speak to pastors. And he’ll be blogging his pastoral thoughts at joemckeever.com.

## Ministry at BAGNO

When the McKeever was asked to serve as Director of Missions for BAGNO in 2004, he offered to do the job for three years. The committee pressed him for a five years commitment and he agreed. Little did he know what the next few years would bring.

Just six months into his new role, McKeever was diagnosed with tongue cancer. That was late 2004. Surgery and radiation treatments followed. Through the early part of 2005, McKeever began the difficult recovery.



Recent Joe McKeever cartoons

“Just about the time I had recovered is when Katrina hit,” McKeever said. “Then life changed forever for all of us.”

## Post-Katrina Ministry

Katrina ushered in a significant change in McKeever’s role at BAGNO. The scale of the disaster and the number of churches devastated was initially overwhelming. But God soon gave McKeever clarity about his role.



Photo by Boyd Guy

“We all have definitive moments in our ministries,” McKeever said. He distinctly remembers a moment that came as he visited the BAGNO office for the first time following the storm.

Though the office did not flood, the area was cut off by severe flooding in Gentilly. It was at least a month after the storm before McKeever could get to the BAGNO office.

“I’m driving up Elysian Fields Avenue ... not a vehicle in sight ... and I’m crying,” McKeever said. “I said, ‘Lord, it’s not just this house or that house or that Burger King ... it’s the whole business and I don’t know what to do about it.’”

McKeever clearly remembers the message from God, “This is not about you, this is about Me. I cannot tell you how liberating that was. So many times since then I have been reminded that it’s not about me, it’s about the Lord.”

McKeever focused his post-Katrina ministry on being a pastor to pastors and connecting area churches with resources for recovery. Both roles came naturally for McKeever.

Pastors turned to McKeever for support and encouragement and he gave it freely. Churches outside the region were calling him to offer support and he directed the help to hurting people.

“I was connecting people with one another, sort of a middle man,” McKeever said. “I was not gutting out any houses.”

McKeever commended BAGNO staffer Freddie Arnold (ADiv '82) for his work after Katrina. Arnold carried a heavy load following the storm directing disaster relief and rebuilding efforts.

“If I had not had Freddie, I wouldn’t have known what to do,” McKeever said. “I was like a pastor and he was like the world’s best assistant pastor. I got the credit, he did the work.”

To build a support system for pastors, McKeever started a weekly pastors meeting. These weekly meetings, reaching 80 to 100 pastors and church staff members, continued for two years. He also started two small mentoring groups comprised of young pastors.

See **McKEEVER**, page 19



## McKeever's blog was a vital pipeline of information following Katrina

**McKEEVER**, from page 18

"That's been fun ... sitting down with three or four pastors on a weekly basis and getting involved in their lives," he said.

For his service after Katrina, McKeever was given a special Outstanding Service award from NOBTS during the Southern Baptist Convention in 2006. NOBTS administrators created a special award for a special situation – McKeever had already received the Alumnus of the Year in 1988.

"Dr. Joe McKeever has held our association together," Chuck Kelley said at the time. "He has done everything he could possibly do to reach out and encourage the congregations of the Greater New Orleans area that were under his responsibility."

### Blogging

A gifted writer, McKeever's blog played a significant role in the area's recovery. His frequent updates kept pastors and displaced New Orleanians informed and shared the story of the recovery with a wider audience.

McKeever started blogging a few years before Katrina. At first he posted occasional pastoral articles and cartoons. On September 1, 2005 the blog's purpose changed – both in frequency and message. Staying with his sister during the immediate aftermath of Katrina, McKeever sent emails to his son who would then post the messages.

He provided information that proved vital to the early stages of recovery. The archived messages and the comments are preserved, giving a record to the emotions people were facing after the storm.

### Cartooning

For many, McKeever is best known through prolific cartoon ministry. His works have appeared in many state Baptist papers and in a 1980s church clip art book that sold over 300,000 copies.

Whenever McKeever draws, he draws a crowd. He often shares

his gift at schools and Baptist gatherings, making free sketches of all who ask. Most of McKeever's work, however, focuses on the church and its ministries.

McKeever began drawing at age 5 and took a mail-order drawing course as a teen. He has been drawing ever since. His "big break" came in the 1970s when Alabama Baptist editor Hudson Baggett started running his cartoons. He was paid \$1.50 per cartoon.

Cartooning is just one of the ways McKeever ministers to people. Each drawing serves as a reminder of his interaction with others and the resulting cartoons are often treasured by those who receive them. This was evident during last year's SBC Annual Meeting in Indianapolis.

The closest eatery to the convention hall was a small, constantly packed Steak 'n Shake. The massive grills where cooks fry burgers and cook grilled cheese sandwiches were stationed directly behind an old-fashioned lunch counter. Proudly displayed on one grill was a caricature McKeever had drawn for a hard-working cook named Luis.

Some would be tempted to retire after 47 years of ministry, but not McKeever. He'll be busy with ministry. Whether it is through his writing, drawing, mentoring or preaching, one thing is for sure, he will continue touching lives for the Kingdom. **V**



## Stevens to study museums in Western Turkey

**GRANT**, from page 16

the book of Revelation, as well as other biblical sites. Stevens and his wife, Jean, were not part of a tour group, which afforded them the freedom to explore some of the more off-the-beaten-path sites in Turkey.

"We rented a car, got some maps of Turkey and just started driving ourselves around," Stevens recalled. "That gave us the freedom to do things that are not on the typical tourist venue, which meant we got to go to museums."

And therein lies his research proposal. While in Turkey in 2002, Stevens came upon a little-known museum in Pergamum that offered a look at burial practices, everyday home life and the life of children in ancient Pergamum.

When he returned from Turkey, Stevens began to wonder what other little-known museums had that would be useful for teaching in the classroom and in the church.

"I discovered to my dismay, as I kept reading more, that there were other museums that I didn't know about," he said. "I was thinking, 'Gosh, what am I missing? What could I find in this tiny museum over here that I could use in my class to illustrate something I'm talking about?'"

He suspects those little-known museums have holdings which could have a huge impact on Bible backgrounds knowledge, classroom instruction and church teaching.

"You never know what will strike you until you're looking at something and, all of a sudden, you think of a New Testament verse," Stevens said. "You say, 'Wow, that's exactly what Paul was referring to.'"

"There's more to a place than what the tour buses show you," he continued. "I'm

just thinking there are nice little, illustrative things tucked away in various museums in and around Western Turkey that New Testament scholars would love to know about and use as illustrations in their classes."

And so he wrote the grant proposal based on that longstanding desire to seek out little-known museums in Western Turkey in order to analyze their holdings for new information useful for teaching in the classroom and the church. He takes the success of his proposal as affirmation that he may be on to something.

Researching in Western Turkey is just one item on Stevens' sabbatical calendar. He will be changing all of his well-known multi-media presentations to a new software platform. He is also publishing two books in the upcoming year. One will be a Greek syntax co-authored with fellow NOBTS Professor Bill Warren. Stevens will edit another book of essays on how to appropriate the message of Revelation for today. **V**

# alumni updates

## 1960s

**Martin, Hugh A.** (ThM '67) resigned as pastor of Laurel Hill Baptist Church in Neshoba County, Mississippi. He is now available for preaching appointments. Contact him at (601) 656-9713 or hughmart3@bellsouth.net.

**Shofner, David** (BDiv '65) retired after 50 years in the ministry. Shofner and wife will continue to participate in short term mission trips.

## 1970s

**Gibson, Jim** (MCM '70) has been named Vice President for External Relations at Mid-Continent University in Mayfield, Ky. He will give leadership and oversight to public and media relations, external publications, marketing, church relations, alumni support and denominational relations.

## 1980s

**Hill, Mary "Janet"** (MRE '84) retired in February after 25 years as Director of Vocational Services at a rehab facility. She is currently the Director of Singles Ministry and Divorce Care with Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens, Ala. She is working toward a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Biblical Counseling.

**Sylvest, Kathy L.** (MRE '80) retired after 28 years of service to Southern Baptists through the Louisiana Baptist Convention, NOBTS and as Librarian of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

## 1990s

**Lorenzini, Massimo** (BA '98) graduates from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary May 15 with Master of Divinity in Great Commission Ministries. He also has an internet ministry at www.frontlinemin.org.

**Phillips, William David** (MDiv '95) completed a Doctor of Ministry degree in Leadership in the Emerging Culture at George Fox Seminary in Portland, Ore., where he studied with Dr. Len Sweet. His dissertation is entitled, "Understanding Behavioral Change Through the Integration of Emerging Sciences and Theology."

## Births

**McAlpin, Justin** (MDiv '04); and wife, Amanda, welcomed their first baby on Nov. 9, 2008.

## Deaths

**Ammari, Sami F.** (THM '72) passed away Oct. 15, 2008. He is survived by his wife.

**Bennett, Mary F.** (MSM '54) passed away Dec. 15, 2005.

**Brackin, Richard C.** (BDiv '67) passed away Oct. 9, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Alec G. Brackin.

**Cole, Frank J.** (DPCH '69) passed away Nov. 2, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Irene Cole.

**Davis, Mertie B.** (BRE '49) passed away Dec. 18, 2008.

**Draughon, Walter D. Jr.** (MRE '53) passed away Nov. 3, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Jacqueline Perry Draughon.

**Eckman, Edward E.** (BDiv '54) passed away Feb. 14, 2009.

**Ellis, Dr. Curtis R.** (THD '68) passed away Nov. 15, 2008. He is survived by his wife Jo Waxmunski Ellis.

**Gray, Bobby W.** (MRE '60) passed away Nov. 3, 2008. He was preceded in death by first wife Christine Cole Gray. Gray is survived by his wife, Sue Gray.

**Hudson, John D.** (MDiv '78) passed away March 10, 2009. He is survived by his wife, Mary Hudson.

**Hughes, W.J.** (BDiv '58) passed away March 14, 2009. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy.

**Lee, Paul O.** (AX '60) passed away Aug. 4, 2004. He is survived by his wife, Dolores S. Lee.

**Leo, Hebert A.** (BDiv '81) passed away Sept. 22, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Ruth Hebert.

**Lowe, William H.** (THM '64) passed away Feb. 2, 2009.

**Meggison, Mitford R.** (BDiv '52) passed away Jan. 5, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Cleo Ruth Faggard Meggison.

**Miller, F. Ory** (BDiv '56) passed away Dec. 30, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Ethel Laird Miller.

## Acclaimed preacher, former GGBTS president Frank Pollard dies

SAN ANSELMO, Calif. (BP) – **Frank Pollard** (DMin '84), longtime preacher on the former "Baptist Hour" radio broadcast and president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary from 1983-86, died Nov. 30 at his home in San Anselmo, Calif.

Pollard, 74, had suffered from Parkinson's disease in recent years, according to news reports.

In 1986 Pollard returned as pastor of First Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., where he previously had served from 1974-80. He retired from First Baptist Jackson in January 2002.

Included in his 40-plus years in the ministry were the presidency of the Mississippi Baptist Convention from 2002-04 and his




**Pollard**

selection by Time magazine in 1979 as one of the seven leading Protestant preachers in America.

Pollard was the weekly voice of "The Baptist Hour" for more than 20 years, beginning in 1976, and also was featured on a TV version of the program and on another TV program, "At Home with the Bible," produced by the former SBC Radio and Television Commission.

A native of Olney, Texas, Pollard is a graduate of Texas A&M University. He later earned a divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and a doctor of ministry degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

In addition to First Baptist in Jackson, Pollard's pastorates included First Baptist Church in San Antonio and Shiloh Terrace Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara Jane Pollard, two children and one grandchild. 



**Mitchell, Wallace P.** (MDiv '58) passed away Nov. 27, 2008.

**Nazary, Jack D.** (BDiv '51) passed away Feb. 1, 2009.

**Nelson, Arnold F.** (THD '51) passed away Jan. 25, 2009.

**Nelson, Donnie C.** (BX '47) passed away Jan. 29, 2006.

**Padgett, David S.** (MRE '77) passed away Jan. 30, 2009. He is survived by his wife, Diane Lang Padgett.

**Posey, Jesse E.** (THD '68); passed away March 9, 2009. He is survived by wife, Mamie Lou Eubanks Posey.

**Rinehart, Kevin M.** (MX '00) passed away Nov. 4, 2008. He is survived by his wife.

**Sherard, Valeria,** (MRE '52) passed away March 17, 2007. The State Mission offering in Alaska is named after Sherard.

**Soileau, Robert R.** (THD '55) passed away Oct. 29, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Lola Fonville Soileau.

**Terraglio, Robert** (AX '97) passed away June 27, 2003.

**Thrash, Coral L.** (AX '78) passed away Feb. 22, 2006. She is survived by her husband, Jim Thrash.

**Truehill, Marshall** (DMin '90, MDiv '86) passed away Dec. 25, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Miranda Farr Truehill.

**Womble, Freddie W.** (MDiv '70) passed away Jan. 12, 2009. He is survived by his wife, Karen Rodden Womble.

**Woodard, Joe P.** (ADPM '82) passed away Jan. 21, 2009. He is survived by his wife, Paulette Davis Woodard.

**Zimmer, Dwayne Bruce** (AX '49); Passed away Nov. 3, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Mary Sunshine "Sunny" Baxter Zimmer.

## Mission Appointments

### International Mission Board

**Lowe, Jeffery** (MDiv '00); is an International Mission Board missionary serving in Zambia. His focus is evangelism and church planting.

**Moffett, Christine** (MA '07); is an International Mission Board missionary serving in Argentina. Her focus is church planting.

### North American Mission Board

**Loggins, Bob** (MDiv '85) and his wife, Cassandra, are serving in St. Louis, where Bob has been named as an evangelism specialist.

Loggins will focus on assisting Missouri Baptist Convention churches,



**The Loggins**



**The Rohners**

associations, pastors and lay leaders in effective resources – equipping, discipleship, structuring, training and prayer – for spiritual awakening.

**Rohner, Jerrid** (BACM '85) and his wife, Tammy, will serve in Roseland, La., where Jerrid has been named as a church planting missionary pastor.

He will continue to serve as lead pastor/planter at Cross-Point Church in Roseland. He is also owner of R & R Lawn Care in Roseland.

The Rohners are the parents of two children: Carla, 17, and Devin, 11.

## Register for Alumni Online Community

1. From [www.nobts.edu/alumn](http://www.nobts.edu/alumn) click on the link for the online community and directory. Select the "first time visitors" link. **Click enter.**
2. In the boxes requesting information, enter your first and last name only. Leave the box for your class year blank. **Click enter.**
3. Select your name from the list of alums who share your last name.
4. Enter your date of birth in this format: m/dd/yyyy
5. If the system rejects your date of birth as your security information, it is because we do not have your date of birth listed in our records. You will need to use your NOBTS ID number instead. Click the "go back" arrow at the top of your screen. In the box for your date of birth, enter your **NOBTS ID number** instead. **Your NOBTS ID number can be found above your name on the mailing label of this magazine. Click enter.**
6. This page will ask for your user name. It's usually the first initial followed by your last name. No spaces between.
7. The next box wants you to choose a password. Use one that is common to you or that you will remember.
8. Continue with the registration process as prompted.

## Southern Baptist Conv. Crossover leader, Don Smith, dies at 72

SUWANEE (Christian Index) -- The thousands of individuals who came to faith in Christ during the past 13 Crossover events most likely never heard the name Don Smith. And to be honest, that's just the way he wanted it.

Smith preferred to remain in the background at the annual evangelistic extravaganza, directing up to 13 simultaneous outreach events at a time.


The soft-spoken Suwanee resident brought the event to new heights beginning in the mid-1980s. He oversaw every Crossover until this past summer, which he had to miss due to treatment for pancreatic cancer.



**Smith**

Smith, affectionately known as Mr. Crossover – died on Nov. 29, 18 months after his diagnosis. He remained active and had preached, in good health, in late October at Bridgeway Church in Alpharetta and observed his 50th year in the ministry in November.

Smith, 72, left his position as associate director of the Georgia Baptist Convention's evangelism department in 1995 to join the Home Mission Board in Alpharetta. He quickly assumed responsibility for coordinating the Crossover events that are held in conjunction with the SBC annual meeting.

He was a graduate of Bob Jones University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. 

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