

vision |



NEW ORLEANS
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Greenhouse Effect

Training 21st
Century Church
Planters

Inside

NOBTS dedicates Henry Hall

**Donor's gift provides year
of seminary for two families**

**Trustees approve M.Div.
track in women's studies**



BY DR. CHUCK KELLEY

If you find yourself wondering whether or not God is still at work in the world, come see us at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Living inside a miracle makes demands on a soul unlike those of normal life. Getting to see how God gets you through, however, more than compensates for the demands of faith. My focus here is on what God is doing and what He has taught us about how to do seminary. If you are in a hurry, I can sum it all up in one ancient Hebrew expression: WOW!

We had another great Trustee meeting in April. Just imagine what it has been like to be a Trustee of an institution facing the challenges we have faced. I am delighted to report they have been fully involved in our recovery. Here are some examples. Trustee Jim Davison provided transportation to bring our administrative team together three days after the storm for strategic planning and to get me in and out of New Orleans before the city or airport was open to the public. This allowed me to evaluate the damage and start the work of restoration with our contractor almost immediately. During the four days we gave our seminary families to come and salvage what they could, Trustee Mitch Hamilton came with donated four-wheelers for getting around the campus easily and quickly, and with a group of chaplains to comfort, encourage, and pray with our students, faculty, and staff. These were the toughest four days in the history of this institution. I cannot imagine what we would have done without that assistance. Trustee Mack Grubbs helped us replace some vehicles damaged by the floods. Trustee Tommy French drove over from Baton Rouge and personally cleaned toilets and changed sheets to make it possible for us to

house dozens of highway patrol officers from New York, who then provided security for our part of New Orleans as well as for our campus. These are just a few examples. As a body they also stepped up to the plate and helped us financially. WOW!

In this spring meeting they took important steps to strengthen our faculty and enlarge our curriculum. We are especially excited about the new certificate programs coming from our faculty that will allow students to get specialized training either before or after they get more broad-based traditional degrees. They also approved a new M.Div. in Women's Studies to further expand our training for the women God has called. A new Institute for Christian Apologetics was approved. How to explain and defend the faith in our increasingly secular and pluralistic culture is a topic of great interest to students and others. Dr. Bob Stewart will lead this program to help us address this crucial area with resources and training for both students and non-students. All of us were excited with the dedication of Jim and Jeanette Henry Hall, the newest addition to Providence Guest House. This beautiful facility honors one of the great pastors of this generation and adds to the number of hotel-style rooms with king-size beds for campus visitors and students from out of town.

Southern Baptist people and entities of every sort have made our recovery possible with sacrificial financial support. Thus far more than \$12 million in cash and \$3 million in volunteer labor have been given to NOBTS by Southern Baptists. We are profoundly grateful that this crucial financial support is continuing. Our greatest need is to replace the 92 apartments destroyed by the storm, but there are other important items on the list of post-Katrina needs. The Georgia and Louisiana Baptist Conventions heard of our unfinished list and graciously sent us some further help. With \$150,000 from the Georgia Convention and \$75,000 from the Louisiana Convention we are able to do some very important projects this summer. They include replacing laundry facilities destroyed by the storm, demolishing the last structure severely damaged in Katrina, further rehabilitation of the Sellers Music Building, replacing the dying HVAC system that serves the building housing almost all of our summer classes, and most importantly replacing the Swap Shop building, another casualty of the hurricane. The Swap Shop is the place we housed donations of clothing, dishes, etc. given by kind and generous people to help our struggling seminary families. It was an especially important resource for our international students, but a large number of students counted on it to fill in some gaps in establishing their households. I am especially excited about getting a building for this important function back on line!

For those of you who want to update your prayer list for our complete Katrina restoration, replacing the lost student housing remains at the top of our list. Other items still on the list include replacing the tennis courts (a favorite recreational activity for the adults on campus), replacing carpet and paint in some heavily used areas, a small metal-building warehouse to replace space lost to the storm, teaching and activity space for our significantly enlarged home school program, and various minor needs such as the last of the landscaping and other minor issues. WOW! We are deeply grateful to Georgia and Louisiana Baptists for making the Katrina list smaller.

One of the questions I frequently get is about the security of the campus. Is it possible to live on the campus in New Orleans and feel safe? Yes! Southern Baptist generosity made it possible to surround the campus with fencing and place a security station at the entrance to the campus. This spring we also created an

emergency alert text message system to let all faculty, staff, and students with cell phones know if there is any kind of emergency unfolding. But God decided to take things a step further. Our telephone rang one day and the New Orleans Police Department asked if they could station some officers permanently on our campus. There is that ancient Hebrew expression again: WOW! Crime can happen anywhere in the nation at any time, but God has given us a terrific environment to care for our precious student, staff, and faculty families.

Another common question is: Will students return to a place that has experienced such hardship? Yes! Our total enrollment for the year will be approximately 3,600 students, which is one of the four or five largest enrollments in the history of the school. Every type of student has returned to live and study on the campus: singles, young married couples, families with children, and older families. At this moment we have more students than housing. Thirty families are on a waiting list for housing for the fall. This is why replacing the student housing we lost is at the top of our list of needs. When we replace the housing we lost, we replace the students. God is calling men and women who are willing to storm hell with a water pistol. More than that, they are willing to come to an unfinished city for their education and help rebuild New Orleans along the way. We have the greatest employment opportunity for students in the history of the world. Every kind of business is hiring, and our students are getting out there to be "leaven in the lump," rooting the presence of Jesus in the soil of the new New Orleans. More than 60 percent of our churches were damaged or destroyed. Our students and faculty are helping many of them get back on their feet. They are also starting new churches in unreached pockets of New Orleans.

Now for a word about where I am personally as I think about where we are as a school. Finally some of the mist is beginning to clear, and although I do not yet see all things clearly, I am seeing enough to feel increasingly excited and intimidated. My excitement is growing because of an ever deepening conviction that there is not just a future out there for NOBTS, there is a future of significance. Apparently God, for His own purposes, has decided to put us on the point for discovering the future. Katrina forced us to discover you do not have to do theological education the way it has always been done. You do not have to have a campus. You do not have to have an office. You do not even have to have a permanent place to live. Katrina was far more than the one-time experience of a disaster. It was a window into the future of theological education. We are not the only ones who are willing to try something new or innovate some aspect of theological education. We may not always be the best at new things. Others may see what we are doing and find ways to do it better. We will never de-emphasize our traditional programs. Residential theological education will always be the foundation, the heart of everything we do. What I am saying is that our greatest Kingdom contribution is going to be making what is now a willingness to innovate, a passion to innovate. God used Hurricane Katrina to pull us out of the box. It has become quite clear that he does not want us to crawl back in that box. The growing certainty of this opportunity for significance fuels my excitement about who we are in this post-Katrina world, and where we are headed.

I will also confess that I feel intimidated as well as excited. Reinventing seminary is not a comfortable experience. We have been pushing our faculty to do things neither comfortable nor easy, and that many of their peers in other schools have not done.

I try not to talk about this much, but it hasn't been comfortable for me either. I have been attacked and scorned (which hurts more than getting attacked) for some of the things we do that are different. That's the easy part. Even harder, God has been taking more and more away of what I cherish in order to give me a grip on what I do not know and have not experienced, and that has not been comfortable at all. God has taken more away from me since I have been president than he ever took away when I was a faculty member. Being part of a miracle is both more exhilarating than I have words to describe, but it is also more costly for the participants than anyone but Paul ever discussed (see 2 Cor. 12).

The bottom line for me is a deep and profound sense of anticipation. What lies ahead are the greatest and most influential days of this seminary. We who are part of this seminary family have an opportunity to change the world. We will do it first and foremost through our students. If they leave here with the best of all of us embedded in their hearts and lives, they will leave with greater potential than any one of us. Along the way of serving our students, we will have an opportunity to make the world of theological education different and more accessible to a larger number of people. That too is a great thing.

How are we going to pull this off? How do we remain competitive with schools bigger or richer? We follow David's lead. He did not fight Goliath with Goliath's weapons or follow Goliath's strategy for combat. He used a different weapon and created a different strategy. The students we have tell us what matters. They tell us it is the personal touch that drew them, the greater access to faculty here than other places. It is what we do outside the classroom with students that will keep students inside the classroom. The other thing we do that tends to separate us from other schools is the effort we make to fit seminary into a life that does not allow participation in a residential program. What I often hear during the graduation reception is thanks from students for making it possible for them to get or finish a degree, when life intervened and a traditional class was not an option.

These distinctives are costly. It is tough living in a city being rebuilt with complex problems, uncertain schools and wacky political leaders. It is far easier for faculty to teach the way they were taught than to think through pedagogy and methods that are new and untested. The cost for being who we are is high. What we get in return is a front seat at a miracle and an opportunity for significance that many never have. That is what has me longing to see what tomorrow will bring! You can be a part of this magnificent story. Pray for us and through your prayers power the spiritual engine that will pull us forward. Consider a summer gift. Your financial support can put us over the top for the annual fund this year, and that helps every member of our seminary family. If your resources are such that you have discretionary income left after you take care of your family and take care of your church, consider helping us make our post-Katrina need list even smaller. It will be a glorious day when I am able to say by God's grace and for God's glory, the Katrina recovery plan is complete. Most importantly of all, be encouraged. Think of what you have read in this column and what you will read in this edition of Vision, and know that God does still move! He is doing mighty things in this place, and if He is doing it here, you can be certain He will do a great work in you as well. WOW! What a blessing to be in the hands of the God who loves us so!

Charles S. Kelley, Jr.

Reformation Study Tour

Visit sites in
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and the Anabaptists

Nine hours of on-campus Master's credit may be earned for coursework related to trip. Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Philosophy coursework is also available. The courses will be taught by Dr. Rex Butler, Dr. Bob Hall and Dr. Lloyd Harsch.

The cost of the Reformation Tour is \$3,599 with a rate of \$2,500 for a limited number of students enrolled in at least one trip-related NOBTS course (course tuition and fees are separate).

The trip is open to students, alumni and guests. For details, contact Dr. Lloyd Harsch at lharsch@nobts.edu.



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Greenhouse Effect

Training 21st-Century Church Planters

Greenhouse plants have it made. They're planted and nurtured in a controlled environment. They have a master gardener that prunes and shapes them. And by the time the plants are out on their own, they've got a fighting chance to make it.


In New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's church planting program, potential church planters find themselves in a type of greenhouse. From within the controlled environment of the seminary campus, students hone their skills before going to the field.

"Greenhouse Effect" refers to the training and equipping potential church planters receive while on-campus at New Orleans Seminary. What follows is a brief description of two of the innovative approaches to church planting training available at NOBTS, three snapshots of church planting work led by current and former NOBTS students, and a word of testimony from NOBTS Nehemiah Project Director Jack Allen.

Why plant new churches? Church membership has not kept pace with population growth. From 1990 to 2000, the United States saw a net gain of 4,600 churches. "To have kept pace with population growth during that decade, a net gain of some 39,000 new churches was needed," said former NOBTS professor and current NAMB strategist David Meacham in a Baptist Press article.

Why plant new churches? They more effectively reach lost people. "Newly planted churches also speak the language of the next generation," Meacham said.

Planting new churches is strategically and evangelistically indispensable. Read on for a taste of how it's being done.



Creative initiatives equip 21st century church planters for ministry

'Greenhouse' and 'Buzz Project' help provide skill-development opportunities for students

By Michael McCormack

Taken out of context “Greenhouse” and “Buzz Project” could mean anything. At New Orleans Seminary, though, the terms are tied to church planting.

At NOBTS, “Greenhouse” refers to a small group that meets on-campus throughout the semester at resident-church-planting-expert Jack Allen’s house.

“We’re trying to give students who want to develop their missionary calling, either here in North America or overseas, a place where they can develop their skills in a safe environment,” said Allen, who serves as Assistant Professor of Church Planting at NOBTS. “That’s essentially what a greenhouse is – a place where plants can grow in a safe environment.”

Allen, who has directed the Nehemiah Church Planting Project and the Day Center for Church Planting in New Orleans since 2004, launched Greenhouse in the fall of 2006.

“We meet as a group five times during the semester following a basic Acts 2:42 model where we eat together, pray together and study Scriptures together,” he said.

Greenhouse meets from 6 to 8 p.m. with fellowship, prayer and Bible study commanding about 45 minutes each. Members of Greenhouse, using *The One Year Bible*, study an excerpt from the

though, is what to do as the group grows.

“It needs to grow,” Allen said. “We want to reach New Orleans for Christ and not just 12 people.”

And the model has worked. At its largest, Greenhouse consisted of 11 people. Of those, eight are currently involved in church planting or other ministry endeavors.

While Greenhouse is essentially home-based, the yearly Buzz Project is a crucial component of the Strategic Church Planting for Multiplication class. The Buzz Project, which always falls during the spring semester, has a twofold purpose.

“From the academic end, I am using an event to teach students how to plan and implement a real event, using real money and with real consequences – grades – attached,” Allen said. “From the church planting side, students are the best recruiters of students, so the Buzz Project gives us a great way to attract people to pray about their involvement in church planting.”

This year’s Buzz Project coincided with North American Mission Board President Geoff Hammond speaking in chapel at New Orleans Seminary. Church planting students publicized and hosted an after-chapel question and answer time with the NAMB president. Afterward, Steve Reid, church planter

“We’re trying to create disciples who look to the Bible for guidance. Missionaries have to learn how to get people out there into reading the Bible everyday.”

- Dr. Jack Allen

Old and New Testaments, a Psalm and a Proverb each day. When the group meets, each member comes armed with questions and thoughts provoked by the week’s reading.

“Everyone comes prepared with what they’ve been reading during the week,” Allen explained. “From the most mature biblical scholar to the brand new Christian, they’ve all been reading the same stuff, so there’s always something to talk about.”

Greenhouse highlights three main disciplines that Allen says are keys to success for the church planter: prayer, a willingness to share the gospel with others and the ability to begin and lead a small group. Fellowship, prayer and small group Bible study are learned in Greenhouse. Then, members are expected to personally engage the New Orleans community and move toward starting a small group of their own.

For Allen, it’s a simple question of purpose.

“What are we trying to do?” he asked. “We’re trying to create disciples who look to the Bible for guidance. Missionaries have to learn how to get people out there into reading the Bible everyday.”

He admitted it may take a year or more to gather several new Christians into a discipling small group. The most crucial issue,

and assistant to Hammond, hosted an extended dialogue with students.

Connecting the Buzz Project to Hammond and Reid was a crucial element, Allen said.

“Dr. Hammond’s presence on our campus cannot be overstated,” he said. “When students meet our agency presidents personally and have a bit of time with them, it seems to solidify the level at which they will participate in the Cooperative Program in the future. Geoff Hammond and Steve Reid taking time with our students will go a long way toward keeping those future leaders in the SBC.”

Through online discussion forums and the question-and-answer time with Hammond and Reid, church planting students identified close to 40 students who expressed interest in church planting.

Through the Buzz Project and Greenhouse, developing church planters are continually emerging. Allen, then, works to ensure that students’ time on-campus, in the greenhouse, provides them with the best possible training for planting new churches throughout North America and the world.





Kelly O'Connor

“We feel like the area is primed for revival, a real movement of God.”

- Kelly O'Connor

Church Planting Spotlight #1

**Kelly O'Connor, Carver Baptist Church
New Orleans, Louisiana**

Kelly O'Connor is a lifelong New Orleanian. He's entrepreneurial. For many years, he owned his own business near the city's Central Business District. And he's engaging. When he speaks, he exudes wisdom, humility and New Orleans. He can often be spotted wearing a bright yellow LSU cap.

O'Connor is also one of New Orleans' post-Katrina church planters. O'Connor was discipled and mentored at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, is now hard at work pastoring a new church that is meeting some intense needs in New Orleans' Irish Channel neighborhood.

Carver Baptist Church, which meets at 3701 Annunciation Street, is about seven months old, but its foundation was laid long before that.

“It's been a long journey, but I feel like I've arrived at the place where God wants me,” O'Connor said. “All of it, as I look back, was for this purpose at this point in my life.”

In the late 1980s, O'Connor gave his life to Christ. While at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, he matured as a believer and began to feel a call to ministry. Over the years, O'Connor led anything from youth ministry to Bible studies. At the time of Hurricane Katrina, he was an associate pastor at Franklin Avenue's campus in New Orleans East.

O'Connor and his family landed in San Antonio after the storm. Immediately, he began ministering to other evacuees in the area, some of whom were fellow FABC members. At the first anniversary of Katrina, O'Connor helped organize an anniversary service at Grace Point Church in San Antonio. O'Connor said about 50 people gave their lives to Christ at the service.

As difficult as Katrina was, O'Connor found purpose in the storm.

“As God dispersed the church in Acts, he used Hurricane Katrina to disperse the church,” he said. “I was comfortable [at Franklin Avenue], but God had another plan.”

Shortly after that first anniversary, O'Connor began feeling pulled back home. He said he traveled regularly between San

Antonio and New Orleans for about a year and a half. Upon returning to New Orleans to stay, O'Connor began to talk with leaders at the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans about starting a new church in recovering New Orleans.

After some searching and after talking with fellow Baptists in the city, O'Connor and his ministry team settled on meeting at Carver Baptist Center – thus the name “Carver Baptist Church.” O'Connor sees the new church as a crucial blessing for the Irish Channel neighborhood, especially given the drug-related violence plaguing that part of the city.

“Because of the trauma associated with some of the kids [in the neighborhood], we feel like the area is primed for revival, a real movement of God,” O'Connor said.

One of the ways O'Connor hopes to impact the neighborhood is by ministering to the whole person and the whole family.

“One of the things we believe will be important for reaching our kids will be reaching the parents,” he said. “A lot can be done, but to solve the problem, we've got to get back to equipping the family.”

In addition to weekly worship, Bible studies and visitation, O'Connor said the church is planning to launch a family-focused ministry on Thursday nights to equip parents, children and young adults. He also envisions businesses, schools, churches and residents unifying to combat the violence problem as one community. The church is patiently laying the groundwork.

“We're getting the community to buy into what we're doing,” O'Connor said.

- Michael McCormack



Church Planting Spotlight #2

Osei May, Ethnē

Boston, Massachusetts



Osei May



**“This is
something
new. It’ll
take a
while.”
- Osei May**

Jamaica Plain, a neighborhood south of downtown Boston, Mass., has been home to a diverse lot over its 150-year history. Famous Jamaica Plain residents include patriots Samuel Adams and John Hancock, transcendentalist writer Ralph Waldo Emerson, Southern author and activist Helen Keller and, more recently, Joey McIntyre of the band *New Kids on the Block*.

In the early 20th century, Jamaica Plain – also called JP – attracted a wide range of immigrants. Irish, German, Canadian and Italian immigrants made up a significant percentage of the JP population around 1900. In the 1980s and afterward, affordable housing and nearby universities continued to foster diversity in Jamaica Plain.

Today, Jamaica Plain is home to a large number of artists, college-educated professionals, activists, homosexuals, young families and Hispanics.

And JP is also home to Osei May, a New Orleans Seminary graduate who is currently planting a church there. May moved to Jamaica Plain in September 2007. He graduated from NOBTS with a Master of Divinity in Urban Missions and a Master of Arts in Missiology in May 2005. He’s fast to describe the community in terms of diversity and acceptance.

“It’s a neighborhood where marginalized people and causes are accepted and celebrated,” May said.

That diversity inspired May to name the church Ethnē, from the Greek word for peoples or nations. The name comes from the Great Commission in the Gospel of Matthew, which calls Christians to make disciples of all *ethne* or nations.

In order to effectively reach his diverse neighborhood, May is taking some innovative approaches to discipleship and church planting. He raises support by way of the North American Mission Board’s Missionary Service Corps. He also works part-time at Starbucks. May’s job enables him to live and work among the very people he is called to reach.

Currently, May is focusing on building relationships, discipling believers and hosting a weekly worship time in his apartment.

“For about seven months, we’ve been worshiping on a weekly basis,” he said. “Our focus is on being simple and on fundamentals.”

The small group of believers meets for some food and fellowship. They sing a few songs and pray for one another. May then preaches a sermon. The fledgling church is a work in progress, and May admitted flexibility is key to effectiveness.

“I’m no hotshot,” he said. “I’m a continual learner. This is something new. It’ll take a while.”

May said he envisions a worship gathering where worshipers openly share what God has been teaching them that week. His role as pastor would be both as teacher and facilitator.

“If someone has scripture they want to read, I’ll encourage them,” he said. “Sometimes there will be moments of silence, which isn’t bad. Through this, our experience with the Lord will be a little more rewarding.”

May is also challenging new and maturing believers to identify people they, in turn, can disciple.

“Their personal discipleship will be hindered if they don’t learn to jump into the adventure of Jesus,” he explained.

May said his emphasis on discipleship and conversation-rich worship are meant to move the church toward easy multiplication.

“In five years, we’ll be planting other churches,” he said. “In five years, [Ethnē] will not be dependent on me. I will not be as essential to the church plant as I am now.”

His simple structure of personal discipleship and house church meetings could easily spread throughout Jamaica Plain and into other neighborhoods in Boston.

– Michael McCormack

For more information on Osei May and Ethnē, go online to www.ethne.info.



Church Planting Spotlight #3

Billy Mitchell, Whispering Pines Community Church
Port St. Lucie, Florida

“There is no industry – just houses. Because of that, there is no sense of community. That gives us a really neat opportunity to create that sense of community.”

- Billy Mitchell

Just as Kelly O’Connor did, Billy Mitchell began to sense clarity in God’s call on his life during a time of recovery. In April 2004, Billy, along with his wife Ellie and his daughter Elle, traveled to South Florida to stay with family and to recuperate from a wounding church experience. Billy, a 2007 graduate from NOBTS, had been involved in youth ministry at a church in Alabama, but that stream of ministry had suddenly dried up.

“We left that church wondering if we would ever be in vocational ministry again,” Billy said.

While there, the Mitchells took time to rest, recover, and seek God’s will. Billy also took time out to meet with the Director of Missions for that area.

“While I was there, I met with a Director of Missions,” he recalled. “We hung out for about an hour. After hearing my story and my personality, he wondered if I was being called to church planting.”

Billy was taken aback. Until then, he had assumed that pastors started churches only if they couldn’t get any other ministry job. Still, the thought stuck with him.

Also during the Florida trip, the Mitchells drove from Vero Beach south to Stuart. About half way between those two cities is Port St. Lucie. They’d already heard that Port St. Lucie was, at that time, one of the fastest growing communities in the United States.

“Ellie and I just looked at each other and said ‘There’s something about this town,’” Billy said.

Soon after returning to Alabama, the Mitchells decided to move to New Orleans so Billy could finish a Master of Arts in Missiology

degree. Billy said that within a month of moving to New Orleans they knew God was calling them to plant a church.

Billy said he had anticipated moving to Port St. Lucie in January 2006 after he finished his degree in December 2005.

“Then Katrina happened,” he said. “We were homeless and traveling. My job was gone. We knew our apartment was gone.”

And so he placed a call to a woman his family knew in Port St. Lucie. As providence would have it, the woman had an apartment that was vacant and available for the Mitchells. They moved to Port St. Lucie in October 2005. The timeline may have changed, but God’s provision hadn’t.

The Michells officially began developing a core group of believers in January 2006. After just over a year of developing leaders and building credibility in the community, that core group launched Whispering Pines Community Church on March 4, 2007.

Billy said the church’s main ministry focus is on connecting families and fostering a sense of community.

“This is really a bedroom community,” he said of Port St. Lucie. “There is no industry – just houses. Because of that, there is no sense of community. That gives us a really neat opportunity to create that sense of community.”

With that in mind, WPCC focuses ministry on three main community landmarks: the Whispering Pines Community Park (the church’s namesake), a nearby elementary school and a nearby high school. Ministry involves sponsoring teacher appreciation luncheons, supplying backpacks for students and participating in school and community events.

“Our real focus is to see people get to know their neighbors and their community and to build the church through that,” Billy said.

The church has also launched a program called IT – Intensive Training. IT involves one believer essentially discipling a younger believer through 12 conversations on the crucial elements of Christian faith. The topics of conversation are based on the characteristics of Christ outlined in Philippians 2:5-11.

“We look at verses that talk about who Jesus is and how we can apply that to our lives,” Billy explained.

IT is now in its second generation. Billy sees this as a method of making disciples through multiplication and not merely addition.

WPCC is currently meeting in a high school auditorium. Billy said he anticipates two more years of meeting at the high school before the church moves to a more permanent location. But as before, he puts God’s timeline first.



Billy Mitchell with his wife, Ellie, and daughter, Elle

- Michael McCormack



Reaching the unchurched is challenging, rewarding and necessary

By Dr. Jack Allen

How many church planters set out to reach the unchurched? How many Christians pray for revival and really want their church to reach the lost? All of them? Maybe.

But a few saints – most of them older and wiser – hesitate. They ask, Do we really want to tackle poorly parented children or smell fragrant cigarette butts steeping in a half cup of coffee? If your church starts to reach people who have never or rarely gone to church, the challenges and potential changes are great. Despite the challenges of reaching the unchurched, though, the rewards are priceless.

But it helps to know what to expect.

So brothers and sisters, this article is for you. Church planting is not *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. All of these tales are true, and they highlight why you should embrace the pains of working with the unchurched – whether that’s personally or by sponsoring a new church. Read on and be warned: everybody says they want to reach the unchurched, until they do.

I was standing in the foyer, greeting the 35 or so members of our church in Albuquerque, N.M., one Sunday. I was new and green. I did not realize what I was doing. I walked a man wearing a black t-shirt that sported a four-color press of Native American art. Black leather pants and Western footwear complimented his shirt, as did his cantaloupe-sized biceps. This cat was big.

He stuck out a hand and said, “I’m Sylvester, but you can call me Syl. I was driving by this church and something told me to come in here. When I was young, my grandfather told me that one day I would meet the Great Chief. Chief Cornerstone. When I rode by, my spirit told me to find the man who knows Chief Cornerstone. You are that man. So tell me.”

It took me about 90 seconds to find Matthew 21:42 and lead Syl to Jesus. Then the trouble started. During the pastoral prayer, Syl asked (very loudly) where the Bible directs Christians to close their eyes when praying. No one knew, so he told us we should stop that.

As it turned out, Syl was living with his girlfriend. Two of my deacons wanted him out of the church immediately because of that and his appearance. A third deacon disagreed. We then spent an hour deciding that we would wait seven weeks (I have no idea how we arrived at that number).

On the seventh week, Syl asked Amy to marry him. Amy accepted Christ, and we had our first Sunday morning wedding immediately after her baptism.

Unchurched people will challenge the norms.

Then there was Jacquie, a 17-year-old girl who Paul, our youth pastor, led to Christ. She came to church one day with her pet rat and sat down on the front row. This rat’s tail was at least 10 inches long. While I was preaching, Jacquie decided to let the rat out of its cage. I mean, of course she did, what else would you do with a hungry, gray, Norwegian rat? The rat needs to see Pastor Jack too, right? Monsieur Rat crawled up one of Jacquie’s arms and perched on her shoulder to watch me. It’s a miracle that the two ladies sitting behind Jacquie did not see the rat. I remember having more on my mind that day than just a sermon.

I could share exactly 14 more stories. One of my favorites was Glenn. He came to me strung out on a 15-year methadone habit. Jesus healed him immediately and he became one of my best prayer warriors.

Several people learned to change from living on 105 percent of their income to living within their financial means because they



Dr. Jack Allen

learned to trust the Bible. One guy hit his wife, but he came to Jesus and stopped. They’ve been married 30 years now. Another guy quit job-hopping and now manages a large, profitable restaurant.

A lady came to us for protection because her abusive husband had a contract killer after her. She came to Jesus for that “hedge of protection” her grandmother prayed about when she was a kid. We got her some help, and out of that situation.

One kid was into the occult but became Valedictorian. He led a girl to Christ who had come to the U.S. as an exchange student and Buddhist missionary. Instead, she found Jesus and returned to Thailand as a Christian missionary! She died in a fire back in Thailand, but only after leading her parents and half her friends to Christ. I still cry every time I think of her.

The people above are real and now serving churches as disciples. Making them into disciples, though, took impossible amounts of time. They asked ridiculous questions constantly and had no idea where to find stuff in the Bible. I thank God I knew them, but man they were a pain in the neck.

If you ever wonder why Southern Baptists need to plant more churches, consider this: every one of those people told me that they would not have ever attended the established churches in their area. They were invited. They knew where to go.

Somehow, God seems to use the attractational value of new churches to reach dropouts and copouts. I hope you will join me on this adventure of making disciples out of unchurched people. It’s changed my perspective on what God can do.

Right now, only about 5 percent of SBC churches sponsor new work. You’ve just read stories of how three guys are reaching their unchurched neighbors and friends. What can you do to reach yours?

Seminary dedicates Henry Hall guest house

BY PAUL F. SOUTH

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary recently honored Jim Henry, one of its most distinguished alumni, as well as one of the most influential pastors in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention. The school named a new guest house near the campus after Henry and his wife, Jeanette.

Jim Henry, a 1963 graduate of NOBTS, is the Pastor Emeritus of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla. He also served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1994-95.

“If I could pick one pastor I’d want every pastor who graduated from this school to be like, it would be Jim Henry,” NOBTS President Chuck Kelley said. “He has such great relational skills with people. He makes you feel like you’ve known him all of his life. He preaches like he’s your best friend sitting down to have a cup of coffee with you. He has had such a tremendous ministry.”

Kelley also praised Jeanette Henry as a great Bible teacher with a successful ministry in her own right. He called the couple “models and heroes for us all.”

Jim Henry has raised more money for the Cooperative Program than any other pastor in the history of the SBC, Kelley said.

The new 27-room facility was a celebration of three things: prayer, the ministry of Jim and Jeanette Henry and the generosity of the Davidson family of Ruston, La. The family has been faithful supporters of the seminary. Jim Davidson is a member of the NOBTS Foundation Board.

“This is a very special day for us in a lot of ways,” Jim Henry said. “To God alone are the glory and praise and honor and majesty. I feel so often like David, when he said ‘Who am in my Father’s house that you have set me in this place?’ That’s the way



PHOTO BY BOYD GUY

Jim Henry, left, and his wife, Jeanette, cut the ribbon on Henry Hall along with Clay Corvin and Dr. Chuck Kelley.

we feel about our life’s journey. But it’s all because of Jesus Christ and Him alone.”

Henry also praised his wife, Jeanette.

“In truth, her name should be up here by itself,” he said. “She has been steadfast, going with us through great times and valleys and mountains and storms and beautiful days. In all of it she has been consistent and steady. I couldn’t have been given any better for my life’s journey. “She has been a dream of a wife to me.”

Henry pastored for nearly three decades in Orlando. He also pastored churches in Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee. He was named Floridian of the Year in 1997. **V**

A word from Dr. Jerry Garrard: Foundation Board



PHOTO BY BOYD GUY

Dr. Tom Boone of Picayune, Miss., left, greets JoAnn Leavell at the Plimsoll Club in New Orleans. Also pictured: President Emeritus Dr. Landrum Leavell, Nancy Calhoun, Dr. Milton Calhoun and Wanda Gregg.

We are so thankful for so many who were here for our Foundation Board weekend March 14 and 15. More than 100 attended the Friday night event at the Plimsoll Club – the food was delicious and the setting spectacular. From the 30th floor we were able to see the twists and turns of the Mississippi River, Lake Pontchartrain, the Vieux Carre and much, much more – beautiful.

A special word of thanks to Gordon Campbell who served as president of our board for the last year. Gordon and Pat live in St. Petersburg, Florida and attend church at The Island Chapel, on Tierra Verde, Florida. Mike Wetzel, also a Foundation Board member, is the pastor. Thanks Gordon.

One of the ways we can help reach our financial goals and meet the needs of the seminary is by expanding the membership to the Foundation Board. Perhaps you have family or friends that would join you at our meeting next year. There is no obligation to support us financially; we would love the opportunity to let your friends get a small glimpse of NOBTS. The next meeting is set for March 13 and 14, 2009. **V**

2007-08 Annual Fund goal is within reach

BY BILL HUGHES

With only a few weeks until the 2007-08 fiscal year ends on July 31, the \$1,025,000 Annual Fund goal is within sight. Presently, gifts and pledges for this year's Annual Fund total more than \$865,000! At this point, less than \$160,000 is needed to achieve the goal.


Successfully meeting this objective by the end of July is a whole lot more than just a matter of dollars and cents that added up to a goal that looks good on paper. This achievement represents a major step toward the more crucial issue of helping God-called men and women obtain a quality seminary education that will generate rewards for the rest of their lives. The thrust of the Annual Fund is keeping




student tuition from rising to the point that a theological education becomes something only wealthy students can afford.

If you would like to help students by donating to the Annual Fund, your tax-deductible gift may be made online with your credit or debit card at the seminary's website

(www.nobts.edu). Checks may be mailed or given in person at the Office for Institutional Advancement.

For those who have given to this worthy cause, we thank you. Your generosity is a blessing not only to the seminary but, more importantly, to the students who are being obedient to God's call upon their lives. 

 For further information contact Bill Hughes, Director of the Annual Fund, at (504) 816-8435 or via email at bhughes@nobts.edu.

Top 5 Giving Needs

- 1 Student Housing**
Three two-bedroom apartment buildings are needed.
- 2 Reaching the Annual Fund Goal of \$1,025,000**
- 3 Completion of Katrina Restoration Work**
- 4 Increased Scholarships for New Students**
- 5 Launch of a Comprehensive Internet Curriculum**

 For details, contact the Office for Institutional Advancement at (504) 282-4455, ext. 3252.

God's timely provision

Donor's gift provides a year of seminary for two families

Talk to any student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and you will hear a testimony of God's provision. At just the right time, God meets the needs of His people. This was true before Hurricane Katrina, in the aftermath of the tragic storm and it remains true today.

God's great provision was evidenced in an extraordinary gift from an anonymous donor. The donor called the seminary and offered to pay for a year of seminary for two deserving families. With education and utility costs at record highs, the gift came at just the right time for these two families.

The donor paid for a year of tuition, on-campus rent, utilities and books for one student in Leavell College and another in the Doctor of Philosophy program at NOBTS. The result was a gift of \$25,890. (See graphs below)

"There are many students and families that must evaluate each semester whether they are financially able to continue to pursue their seminary education," said Cole Gilbert, Director of Financial Aid at NOBTS. "The generosity of this donor gave these two families the confidence that God has called them to NOBTS and that He still provides for His children in miraculous ways."

Yearly Cost (Undergraduate)


Rent (Oaks Apt.)	\$6,060
2008 Tuition	\$3,915
Utilities	\$1,800
Books	\$600
Total	\$12,375

Leavell College

Yearly Cost (Ph.D. Student)

Rent (Farnsworth Apt.)	\$6,720
2008 Tuition	\$3,995
Utilities	\$1,800
Books	\$1,000
Total	\$13,515

NOBTS

 To contribute to student scholarships, contact Institutional Advancement at (504) 282-4455, ext. 3252.

news briefs

Garrett named Dean of Students

NOBTS President Chuck Kelley recently announced the appointment of Craig Garrett as the new dean of students. A current Doctor of Philosophy student in psychology and counseling, Garrett came to NOBTS in 2006 after serving five years as chaplain for the Calder Woods Retirement Community in Beaumont, Texas. The retirement center is owned and operated by Buckner Baptist Benevolences.

Since his arrival on campus, Garrett has served the seminary in several roles, including a recent stint as managing director of the Providence Learning Center – the seminary’s conferencing and continuing education program. He also taught undergraduate courses in Leavell College.



Garrett

An ordained minister and licensed professional counselor, Garrett holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Texas A&M University and a Master of

Education degree from Lamar University in Beaumont. He has completed master’s-level work at Southwestern Seminary and NOBTS.

As dean of students, Garrett will provide pastoral leadership to students and oversee the student services area, including financial aid and campus life. Garrett also will be a part of the seminary’s administrative council along with the President, Provost and NOBTS Vice Presidents.

Board approves apologetics institute

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary trustees approved the Institute of Christian Apologetics April 15. The new Institute will equip Christians to give informed answers about the Christian faith, offer apologetics training through conferences and events, develop resources for churches and ministers, produce an online apologetics journal, and coordinate evangelism trips involving apologetics.



“Apologetics is one of the greatest interests of our students,” Provost Steve Lemke said. “The Institute will provide a vehicle for our faculty to address a variety of issues in apologetics in which they have great expertise, including dealing with the claims of the new atheism, defending the reliability of Scripture and confronting world religions and cults.”

NOBTS trustees approve initiatives with global reach

Online certificates take training to the ends of the earth

BY GARY D. MYERS

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary’s trustees have approved a number of academic initiatives likely to have a worldwide reach.

The board approved three online undergraduate certificate programs and four online graduate certificate programs. In addition, three new graduate certificates will combine online and traditional classroom training. One church-based undergraduate certificate program also was approved during an April 15 trustee meeting.

NOBTS Provost Steve Lemke said the online certificates were designed primarily for individuals who cannot attend a residential seminary campus, such as church planters and missionaries in both North America and internationally.

“Our aim is to make theological education accessible to anyone in the world, wherever God leads them to serve,” Lemke said.

The undergraduate online initiatives include certificates in Christian ministry, biblical studies and biblical ministry. Though designed for students not enrolled in other types of seminary training, the courses can be applied to later theological training. The courses in each of the 18-hour certificates are fully transferable into a Bachelor of Arts in Christian Ministry program available through the seminary’s Leavell College.


The four Internet-based master’s-level initiatives, meanwhile, include certificates in Greek studies, Hebrew studies, biblical languages and biblical studies. The certificates range from 17 to 19 hours of course work (six courses). Up to half of the Internet-based courses may be transferred into one of the seminary’s master’s degree programs.



The Greek and Hebrew graduate certificates provide an introductory language course, an intermediate language course and two advanced exegesis courses in the particular biblical language. The biblical languages certificate provides an introductory Greek grammar course, an introductory Hebrew grammar course and one exegesis course in each language. The biblical studies certificate focuses on biblical backgrounds and history and provides Old and New Testament exegesis courses in English.

In addition to aiding individuals who do not have access to theological training in their area, Lemke noted that the certificates in biblical languages can benefit individuals who have earned a seminary master’s degree without courses in biblical languages. The certificates also could help those who are considering entering seminary at a later date.

The additional graduate certificates in theological and historical studies, pastoral ministry and leadership, and practical church leadership combine online learning with training classroom learning in a “hybrid” program offering more flexibility than classroom-only programs. These certificates range from 17 to 28 hours of course work.

In addition to the online and hybrid certificates, trustees approved a church-based biblical ministry certificate on the undergraduate level to provide development of lay leaders. 

Trustees approve new M.Div. track in women's studies

BY GARY D. MYERS


Trustees at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary approved a new Master of Divinity degree track in Women's Studies during their April 15 meeting. The new degree track is set apart from the women's ministry specializations at NOBTS by the increased emphasis on biblical languages, biblical exegesis, theological and historical reflection and exploration of biblical gender roles. In addition, the degree track provides the same core ministerial competencies of the seminary's other Master of Divinity programs.

The 95-hour degree plan is designed to help women address the needs and concerns of women from a biblical basis. The program also includes a built-in internship component to provide women with supervised, practical experience ministering to the needs of women.

“This specialized focus in women's studies will provide our female students an excellent blend of both the classical theological disciplines and practical experience.”

– Provost Steve Lemke

“This specialized focus in women's studies will provide our female students an excellent blend of both the classical theological disciplines and practical experience,” NOBTS Provost Steve Lemke said. “Not only will it afford focused training in theology and the biblical languages, but it also has a practicum for a mentored experience in women's ministry leadership.”

NOBTS has been a leader and innovator in the area of practical women's ministry through programs on the certificate, undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels. NOBTS was among the first seminaries to begin training for women who minister to women. The new degree enhances the overall program by providing a rigorous degree for women who will be leaders in the biblical and theological formation of other women. 

N. Georgia Hub dedicates prison education initiative

BY PAUL F. SOUTH

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary officially dedicated its new educational initiative at Phillips State Prison in Georgia April 17.

Classes began at the Buford, Ga., facility April 2, said Dr. John Morris, director of the newest prison program. It is the third prison extension program initiated by the seminary. Undergraduate degree



programs are also in place at Angola State Prison in Louisiana and Parchman Prison in Mississippi.


The program, supervised by the seminary's North

Georgia Hub, offers a Bachelor of Arts in Christian Ministry degree, as well as a two-year Associate of Arts degree program.

Twenty-nine inmates, selected from a pool of statewide applicants, are part of the first class at Phillips, a close security facility in Buford, Ga.

“One of the challenges I face in teaching these guys is balancing the hideousness of their crime with the redemptive power of God,” Morris said. “I'm just awestruck by how God can redeem people.”

“My vision goes beyond the academic degree,” Morris said. “My vision is to totally change this prison through God's power, to take this prison for God. And then use the inmate ministers to go out and have an impact on the rest of the prisons in Georgia. I think that's possible.”

The Georgia Baptist Convention is a key partner in the program. The GBC helped fund the startup costs of the project, and have committed to help pay for program costs to support the ongoing program. 

Church-Minister Relations

The Church-Minister Relations office at New Orleans Baptist Seminary maintains a database of alumni and student resumés. These resumés are available to churches seeking to fill ministerial positions. To use this free service, call 800-662-8701 ext. 3291, or visit www.nobts.edu/cmr to complete the Church Resumé Request questionnaire.

Connecting Churches with Ministers [nobts.edu/cmr]

Seminary renews Moscow Partnership, plans trips

BY GARY D. MYERS

On a recent fact-finding trip to Russia, Drs. Joe Sherrer and Jake Roudkovski evaluated the current New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary partnership with International Mission Board representatives in Moscow and looked for ways to renew and extend the partnership.

During the week-long trip, Sherrer and Roudkovski met with IMB leaders and missionaries to evaluate needs and look for ways that NOBTS can utilize student trips to address those needs. As a result of the meetings, NOBTS has planned two mission trips to Moscow for the 2008-2009 school year.

In October 2008 Sherrer will lead a missions and ministry experience in Moscow for students in the Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Educational Ministry programs. The trip will focus on cross-cultural leadership



training as the students provide learning opportunities for Russian pastors, church leaders and church planters.

Roudkovski, a native of Kazakhstan, will lead an evangelism and church planting trip to Moscow in March 2009 for master's-level students. The trip will also include evangelism training opportunities for the Russian pastors and church leaders.

Both trips are in preliminary planning stages. The seminary will release additional information about the trips when details are available.


Reaching people with the gospel in Moscow is not an easy task. Roudkovski said that after an initial openness following the fall of communism, materialism has taken hold and people have become more resistant to evangelical witness.




PHOTO BY JIMMY COLE

Moscovites walk through Red Square near the Kremlin. NOBTS students will reach out to Moscow's vast population in 2008 and 2009.

"But God is moving," he added.

During their trip, Roudkovski and Sherrer heard the testimony of a former Muslim who came to faith in Christ just one week earlier. A small Baptist church that meets in a veterinarian clinic played a key role in her journey to faith. Three years earlier, students, faculty members and alumni from NOBTS and members of First Baptist Church in Ponchatoula, La, assisted with evangelistic activities for this church. 

 For additional information on the Moscow Partnership, view the Fall 2007 Vision at www.nobts.edu/Publications.html and click the "Vision" link. To order print copies of the edition, call (504) 816-8003 or email your request to pr@nobts.edu.

NOBTS mourns loss of Dr. Jeanine Bozeman's husband, Welby

Dr. Thomas Welby Bozeman, age 80, died Monday, March 24, 2008, of complications from pancreatitis. He was the husband of New Orleans Seminary Professor Dr. Jeanine Bozeman. Born Nov. 27, 1927, in Searight, Ala., Bozeman was the son of Exer Phillips and Alfred Bozeman.

Bozeman was a Chaplain's Aid in the U. S. Army in Hawaii from 1946-1948. He was a graduate of Dozier High School, received an A.B. from Samford University, and Bachelor of Divinity, Master of Divinity, Master of Religious Education, Specialist in Religious Education, and Doctor of Education in Psychology and Counseling degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Bozeman was married August 28, 1960, to Jeanine Cannon of Dozier, Ala. He was pastor of churches in Alabama from 1950-1967 while concurrently serving as Principal of Dozier




Bozeman

High School. In Louisiana, he was pastor of First Baptist Church of Chalmette and Tangipahoa Baptist Church in Tangipahoa Parish. He was Professor of New Testament and Religious Education at Louisiana College in Pineville, La., from 1982-2000.

After retirement, Bozeman served as interim pastor for numerous churches in Louisiana and was serving at Grace Baptist Church in Folsom, La., at the time of his death.

Bozeman had life-long interest in vegetable gardening, fishing and shrimping, reading biographies and maintaining physical fitness. And he never lost his love of learning.

He is survived by his wife, Jeanine Cannon Bozeman; a sister, Bonnie Wilks of Troy, Ala.; a brother, Ray Bozeman of Andalusia, Ala.; and numerous nieces and nephews.

The funeral service was held March 28 at Dozier Baptist Church in Dozier, Ala. 

“We Follow the Lord”


The Seminarians Spring Concert



Members of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's men's choir, The Seminarians, perform during their Spring Concert April 29 in the Sellers Music Building Recital Hall. The choir consists of 20 men and includes students, professors and staff members.

PHOTO BY BOYD GUY





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Greer-Heard '08 focuses on New Testament reliability

Scholar Daniel Wallace offers compelling evidence for the reliability of the New Testament

BY GARY D. MYERS

Thousands of manuscripts, produced between the 2nd and 14th centuries, provide evidence for the reliability of the New Testament text, said Daniel Wallace during the Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary April 4.

Wallace, an evangelical Christian and professor of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary, made these comments during his dialogue with New Testament scholar Bart Ehrman, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a self-described agnostic. And while both men agree that as many as 5,500 New Testament manuscripts exist, only Wallace views this as a positive development attesting to the reliability of the text.

Along with all of these copies come many variations or differences. New Testament scholars call these differences “textual variants.” Variants include differences in spelling and word order, omissions and additions. According to Wallace, variants outnumber total words in the New Testament as much as 2-1 or 3-1. But, Wallace noted, even “trivial” differences count as variants.

“If [the number of variants] were the only piece of data we had it would discourage anyone from attempting to recover the wording of the original, but there is more to the story,” Wallace said. “The reason we have a lot of variants is that we have a lot of manuscripts. To speak about the number of variants without also speaking about the number of manuscripts is simply an appeal to sensationalism.”

All together, the 5,500 ancient Greek manuscripts contain around 1.3 million pages of text. Again, Wallace insisted that even this statistic is misleading. In addition to these 1.3 million pages, thousands of ancient translations attest to the reliability of the New Testament, Wallace said.

Early on, the New Testament was translated into Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Georgian, Gothic, Ethiopic and Armenian. According to Wallace, scholars have discovered more than 10,000 Latin manuscripts and as many as 5,000 manuscripts in other ancient languages. In all, there are about 20,000 handwritten manuscripts of the New Testament in various languages.

Even if the Greek manuscripts and early translations were destroyed, Wallace said that other ancient documents would be sufficient to attest for the authenticity of the New Testament text. Ancient Christian leaders, “the Church Fathers or Patristics,” recorded more than a million quotations of the New Testament in their writings.

“The Patristic quotations would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament said Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman,” Wallace quipped citing one of Ehrman’s own statements. “These numbers are breathtaking.”



PHOTO BY BOYD GUY
Daniel Wallace of Dallas Theological Seminary presents a case for the reliability of the New Testament during the 2008 Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum.

Wallace said a dozen of the Greek manuscripts date to the 2nd Century, 64 date to the 3rd Century and 48 date to the 4th Century. More than 120 Greek manuscripts exist that were produced within 300 years of the composition of the New Testament.

“Most of these are fragmentary, but collectively the whole New Testament is found in them multiple times,” Wallace said. “In terms of extant manuscripts, the New Testament textual critic is confronted with an embarrassment of riches.”

Second Century manuscripts are fragmentary, Wallace said. However, 2nd

Century fragments attest three out of four of the gospels, nine of Paul’s letters, Acts, Hebrews and Revelation. Forty percent of the New Testament verses are found in manuscripts produced within a century of the originals, Wallace said.

“I think there is a way to be relatively confident that the text of the 4th Century, where we have our first complete New Testament, looked remarkably like the earliest form of the text,” Wallace said.

Ehrman agreed that copies abound, but found the evidence for a reliable text less convincing.


“We have a lot of copies of the New Testament,” Ehrman said. “Sometimes you will hear someone say, ‘the New Testament is the best attested book from the ancient world,’ and it’s absolutely right. But you need to realize these copies we have, by and large, are from later times – centuries after this process was begun.”


Greer-Heard Forum director and NOBTS professor Robert Stewart said he was pleased with the fourth installment of the Greer-Heard Forum. He hopes the event strengthen the faith of Christians in attendance.

“The thing that conference attendees should have come away with is that there is no good reason to lose you faith,” Stewart said. “It’s a matter of the heart.”

Stewart said the overwhelming testimony of conference presenters points to a New Testament text that is reliable.

“I feel like Daniel Wallace did pretty well in what he intended to do – defend the textual reliability of the New Testament,” Stewart said. “I think if people listened with their heads as well as their hearts, they would have been strengthened in their belief.”

Next year’s topic for the Greer-Heard Forum, set for March 27-28, 2009, will be on pluralism. Harold A. Netland of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill., will dialogue with Paul F. Knitter of Union Theological Seminary in New York, N.Y. 

 For an extended versions of this and other Greer-Heard articles, visit www.nobts.edu/Publications/Greer-Heard08.html. For information about the 2009 Greer-Heard Forum, visit www.greer.heard.com.

Morton teaches Ukrainian church planters in Kiev

Professor encouraged by God's work in Ukraine

BY GARY D. MYERS

God is moving in a dramatic way among young church planters in Ukraine, Dr. Rick Morton said. Morton, Assistant Professor of Christian Education Ministry at NOBTS, taught an introductory youth ministry class to a group of church planters at Kiev Theological Seminary (KTS) in March. It was the second time that Morton has taught in the undergraduate modular church planting program at KTS.

"It's just amazing to see what God is doing," Morton said. "God is showing favor on the church planting strategy there."

Church planting has flourished throughout the country since the fall of communism. According to Morton, Ukrainians enjoy a level of religious freedom unmatched in many other former Soviet republics. He sees Ukraine as a strategic hub for evangelicals seeking to reach former Soviet Bloc countries.



"It's just amazing to see what God is doing. God is showing favor on the church planting strategy there."


– Dr. Rick Morton

Morton said the church planters have found creative ways to start and fund new churches. One of these creative leaders is named Viktor. Saved out of the mafia, Viktor funds his church planting activities through pig farming. In all, Viktor has started 14 churches.

Another church planting student, a drug addict before he accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, has used drug rehabilitation programs as a church planting vehicle. He has used the strategy to plant three churches.

"I am convinced that God has given us an open window to strategically invest there for this season," Morton said. "The commitment that we make to them today will pay dividends for generations. The work that is going on is producing a ripple effect that will probably outlive the American presence there."

The driving force behind the church planting program at KTS is IMB missionary Joel Ragains and his wife, Mary Ellen. Morton said that the Ragains went to Ukraine after 30 years in local church ministry.

"Joel is the embodiment of the phrase 'don't waste your life,'" Morton said. "At an age when most people are thinking about retirement, he and Mary Ellen have answered God's call." 

 For more information the Ragains and the church planting program in Ukraine, visit www.kievkonnct.com.

faculty updates

Appointment

Dr. Kathy Steele

Director of Clinical Training



During the Spring trustee meeting Dr. Chuck Kelley, NOBTS President, announced that **Dr. Kathy Steele**, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Counseling, has been named Director of Clinical Training in the Psychology and Counseling program.

Tenure granted

The following professors were granted tenure during the Spring Trustee meeting:

Dr. Reggie Ogea

Associate Professor of Leadership and Pastoral Ministry.

Dr. Donna Peavey

Assistant Professor of Christian Education in Leavell College.

Dr. Ed Steele

Assistant Professor of Music in Leavell College. Steele also received a faculty rank promotion to Associate Professor.

Marvin Jones Faculty Awards

The following professors were honored during the Celebration of Excellence May 6 with Marvin Jones Awards of Excellence. Jones, an NOBTS graduate, served churches in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Oregon. He faithfully served his last church, Rock Corner Baptist Church in Ruston, La., for 29 years.

Dr. L. Thomas Strong III

Marvin Jones Award - Outstanding Churchman

Dr. Bill Day

Marvin Jones Award - Outstanding Researcher

Dr. Tim Searcy

Marvin Jones Award - Outstanding Classroom Teacher

Ola Lenaz Faculty Grant

The Lenaz Grant, established by Mrs. Ola Farmer Lenaz, was created to stimulate scholarly research at NOBTS.

Dr. Bill Day

Ola Lenaz Faculty Grant

HEARTS AFIRE

Before they fell in love with each other, Chris and Katie Nalls fell in love with Christ, and with sharing His word across the globe. Now they've packed their crate for Mozambique.

"All giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on His power and presence to be with them."

Hudson Taylor, missionary to China



By Paul F. South

Since 2004, change has swirled around Chris and Katie Nalls like a whirlwind.

Most of the changes were cause for rejoicing: their marriage, the birth of their first child Abigail, completion of their seminary training and their appointment as career missionaries to Mozambique. One did not bring rejoicing: Hurricane Katrina.

Like so many in the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary family, their material possessions were swept away by the storm. But like the legendary missionary Hudson Taylor, God has chiseled a powerful message on their hearts, a love letter of strength made manifest in weakness. The Nalls have "reckoned on His power and presence to be with them."

"The biggest thing we've learned is God's all-sufficiency to provide for us," said Chris, 29, of Tifton, Ga., in a phone interview before the couples' departure for Richmond, Va., and International Mission Board training. "In Katrina, we lost most of our stuff and were totally relying on Him during that time. When things are hard, we know that God will provide for us. It's a good lesson for us to learn as we go to the mission field, where things like that could happen again."

Like Hudson Taylor, Lottie Moon and countless others, the Nalls family has packed a crate and will depart for Mozambique next month. There, they will minister to the Nyungwe and Nsenga peoples.

But their journey of some 8,500 miles began long before they met. Earlier in both their lives, God lit a spark for missions and put them on a path that would lead to Southern Africa.

For Katie, the fire for missions first blazed after a summer visit to her uncle and aunt, longtime missionaries Maurice and Shirley Randall. He was a physician and medical missionary to Zimbabwe. Katie was only 12 years old.

Tete Province Mozambique

Population: **1.4 million** (2002 census)

Languages: **Nyungwe, Nsenga,
Portuguese & Sena**

The Zambezi River runs through **Tete**



Missions



"I was so impacted by seeing a different culture, seeing the people worship the Lord in their language. The Lord just gave me a real strong sense that I was going to live in a culture not my own, and that, hopefully, I could be a part of helping people sing praises to God in their language one day. He really used Zimbabwe to open my eyes to the world and to how much He loves the world."

As a college student, Katie returned to Zimbabwe to minister and disciple many of the women who had been childhood playmates on that first journey to the nation. Her heart was fixed on the missionary call.

That missionary heart also took her to Mozambique as an IMB Journeyman. There, she met a fellow Journeyman and fellow Georgian named Chris Nalls. Their love for each other, and their love for Southern Africa, blossomed.

"[Journeyman service] was a time for both of us to grow in our calls to missions and in our love for the people of Mozambique," Chris said. "After we finished our term, we never knew for certain that we would go back to Mozambique."

While the Nalls were open to wherever God called, their heart was for the people of Southern Africa. But as the months passed, God clarified and solidified their call back to Mozambique.

The Nalls are going to a nation still healing from civil war. Religious freedom is now part of the Mozambican constitution. And while the fields are ripe for the gospel, the couple will face a number of challenges, particularly from traditional African religions steeped in ancestor worship and spiritism. For those Mozambicans, God is seen as distant. Instead, they believe departed ancestors govern the events of their daily lives.

"That's the major hurdle," Chris said. "People there live in constant fear. They wonder 'Have I done everything I need to do to appease my ancestors?' Even after they've accepted Christ, that thought is always in the back of their minds."

"We teach that God is near to them, is interested in their daily lives and wants a relationship with them through his son Jesus," he continued. "We pray that the Holy Spirit will work and that the people will realize they don't have to worry about their ancestors."

The couple will use storytelling to share the gospel. They will also equip Mozambican Christians in small group ministry to help spread the gospel and plant new churches.

"We want to be a catalyst for planting churches, equipping the people of Mozambique to plant churches, not plant churches ourselves. I teach and disciple them, then they go on and teach someone else," Chris said.

Along with the spiritual obstacles, there are practical matters to consider. Only four paved roads course through the province where the Nalls will be based. Even though less than 5 percent of the nation is suitable for farming, the economy is agrarian, meaning that evangelism may literally take place in the fields.

For now, it's unclear what shape Katie's ministry in Mozambique will take. She will likely minister to women, many of them first-generation Christians, by discipling them as she did young women in Zimbabwe years ago.

Small group ministry will be critical in Katie's ministry to the women of Mozambique, whose lives are a matter of survival as they haul water and gather firewood from dawn to dusk.

"It just takes all day to survive and to take care of their children," Katie said. "It's a lot more difficult to have big meetings where the women are away from home for a long amount of time because they have big responsibilities. We want to invest in people in a way that they will pass it on to others."

She added, "There are so many areas in Mozambique where the women my age are first-generation Christians. They don't have an older example. They're going to be those godly women as they get older and as the church gains a second generation. I just hope to work with the women."

Katie's infant daughter, Abigail, will accompany her when she ministers to the women.

As new parents, and without medical care nearby, the couple will have to learn to recognize and treat illnesses. The nearest hospital is five hours away by car in Malawi. For major medical problems, the nearest hospital in Johannesburg, South Africa, is five hours away by air.

"As a mom, it puts a different perspective on it," she said. "Things can happen to a child anywhere. We can't control what will happen. We just need to make wise decisions. It's going to be different, but we're just going to have to trust the Lord that He will protect us where He's sent us to minister."

But not surprisingly, the lessons of Hurricane Katrina will come into play.

For the couple, it was like a refiner's fire, preparing them for challenges that may come.

"When hard times come again, we can persevere through those times because we've seen what God can do through Katrina," Chris said. "We know He's going to take care of us, no matter what happens."



alumni updates

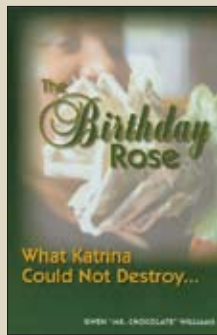
1960s

Eskew, Harry (1960) and Professor Emeritus at NOBTS, gave the annual Northcutt Lecture on Church Music at Baylor University April 1. His topic was "The Significance of the Fasola Folk Hymn for American Church Music." Eskew taught Hymnology in the spring semester at Mercer University.

1970s

Thompson, Larry (MDiv '79) recently began serving as pastor of East Gadsden Baptist Church, Gadsden, Ala.

Williams, Gwen (MCM '78), better known to many as "Ms. Chocolate," recently published a book, *The Birthday Rose: What Katrina Could Not Destroy...*



The Birthday Rose: What Katrina Could Not Destroy.

The book is a story of God's faithfulness to His promises.

For information regarding the book, contact Williams by phone at (601) 789-3548, or by email at CHOCOLATELAVERN@aol.com.

1980s

Hudson, Arthur (MDiv '86) is chaplain at Wiregrass Hospice in Cullman, Ala.

Births

Eastland, David and Jennifer (PHD '05, MACE '94) adopted a son, Andrew Charles Eastland on March 26, 2008. Andrew was born on February 15, 2008.

Grubbs, Norris (MDiv '97, PHD '02) Associate Professor of New Testament and Greek and Regional Associate Dean for Louisiana and Mississippi for NOBTS) and his wife, Kim, welcomed their third daughter, Cameron Sky, into the family on April 2, 2008.

Campbell, Jeannie (Mood) (MDiv '05) and her husband, Allan, welcomed their first child, Madelyn Paige on Feb. 17, 2008.

Deaths

Archord, Arthur T. (BDiv '57, instructor for NOBTS extension program at Angola) passed away March 30, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Edna Jones Achord, of Morgan City, La.

Bartlett, Walterene F. (Class of '89) passed away April 1, 2007. She is survived by her husband, Albert W. Bartlett, of Meridian, Miss.

Bell, Harold A. (DPM '74) passed away Sept. 2, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy, of Hamlet, N.C.

Bennett, Jr. Felix E. (DPCH '67) passed away March 31, 2000. He is survived by his wife, Janette Whittle Hart Bennett, of Zachary, La.

Billman, Evelyn R. (ADRE '86) passed away Nov. 15, 2006. She is survived by her husband, Dr. Jack Billman, of Covington, La.

Boone, Bennie H. (THM '71, DMIN '77) passed away Feb. 19, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Edith Marks Boone, of Meridian, Miss.

Bretz, Jane M. (BCT '33) passed away March 22, 2008.

Coleman, Jimmy W. (BDIV '56) passed away Dec. 25, 2005. He is survived by his wife, Lillian P. Coleman of Pell City, Ala.

Cothen, Martha E. (DCT '44) passed away Jan. 10, 2005. She is survived by her husband Dr. Grady C. Cothen of Miami, Fla.

Culver, Perry T. (DPCH '63) passed away Oct. 24, 2003.

Davis, Sr., Metz Leroy (AG '55) passed away Nov. 3, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Ruby Nix Davis, of Alabaster, Ala.

Dorris, William M. (BA '55) passed away Jan. 19, 2004. He is survived by his wife, Virginia Dorris, of Lakeport, Calif.

Edwards, Bruce E. (THM '74) passed away Dec. 30, 2006.

Fleming, Ervin M. (MRE '72) passed away April 15, 2005. He is survived by his wife, Ethel Morris Fleming, of Smithdale, Miss.

Fleming, Eugene M. (BDiv '51) passed away March 10, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Juanita K Fleming, of Knoxville, Tenn.

Fondren, Homer (ADPM '92) passed away June 18, 2006. He is survived by his wife, Joy McRae Fondren, of Leesville, La.

Forrest Roy O. (BDiv '62) passed away Feb. 10, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Martha Cobb Forrest of Taylors, S.C.

Fowler, B. Elmer (BDiv '64) passed away April 8, 2005. He is survived by his wife, JoAnn Blankenship Fowler, of Moulton, Ala.

Gray, Charles E. (BDiv '54) passed away March 18, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Ruth of Defuniak Springs, Fla.

Griffin, Jerry W. (ADPM '94) passed away June 6, 2005. He is survived by his wife, Marian Griffin, of Cumming, Ga.

Hatton, Jr. James W. (BDiv '53, MRE '53) passed away April 14, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Raye Barbour Hatton, of Salem, Va.

Hudson, Jr., Paul R. (BDIV '51) passed away May 8, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Louise McWhite Hudson, of Easley, S.C.

Johnson, Helen H. (MRE '45) passed away April 11, 2005.

Knapp, C.S. (MRE '68) passed away March 28, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Betty Knapp, of Chattanooga, Tenn.

Larrimore, Thomas A. (MRE '59, BSM '60) passed away Jan. 27, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Florence Ann Larrimore, of Jackson, Miss.

Marberry, Vance (BDiv '58) passed away Feb. 14, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Mardell Anderson Marberry of Olive Branch, Miss.

Mayers, Esther A. (DWMU '35) passed away Oct. 15, 1994.

McNiel, Patricia N. (MRE '70) passed away April 11, 2008. She is survived by her husband, Winston W. McNiel of Birmingham, Ala.

Meek, Jr. Jon F. (Class of '79) passed away Sept. 1, 2004. He is survived by his wife, Lola E. Meek of Oxford, Miss.

Middleton, Gwin H. (BDiv '58) passed away March 2, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Helen Kelly, of Jackson, Miss.

Moody, George N. (ADPM '84) passed away April 4, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Marcia Moody, of Vidalia, Ga.

Moore, Patricia P. (DPCH '65) passed away April 15, 2008. She is survived by her husband, Merrill D. Moore, of Knoxville, Tenn.

Moorfield, Claude (BDIV '57, MRE '59) passed away June 14, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Barbara Dye Moorfield, of Alum Bridge, W.V.

Morgan Edgar C. (THM '40, THD '42) passed away April 5, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Agnes McMahon Morgan, of Seneca, Calif.

Nail, William H. (ADRE '82, ADPM '85) passed away Oct. 7, 2006.

Oglesbee, Jr. Paul B. (MDiv '83) passed away May 15, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Mary Brand Oglesbee, of Hickory, Miss.

Perkins, Marjorie (DPRE '57) passed away March 24, 2008.

Ratcliff, Joseph W. (BDiv '60) passed away Dec. 19, 2007.

Robinson, Nathan L. (THM '35) passed away Feb. 1, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Jewell A. Robinson, of Baton Rouge, La.

Tawwatters, Betty J. (MRE '86) passed away Sept. 18, 2007. She is survived by her husband, Rick Tawwatters, of Brandon, Miss.

Scott, Odell (BDiv '55) passed away Feb. 10, 2004.

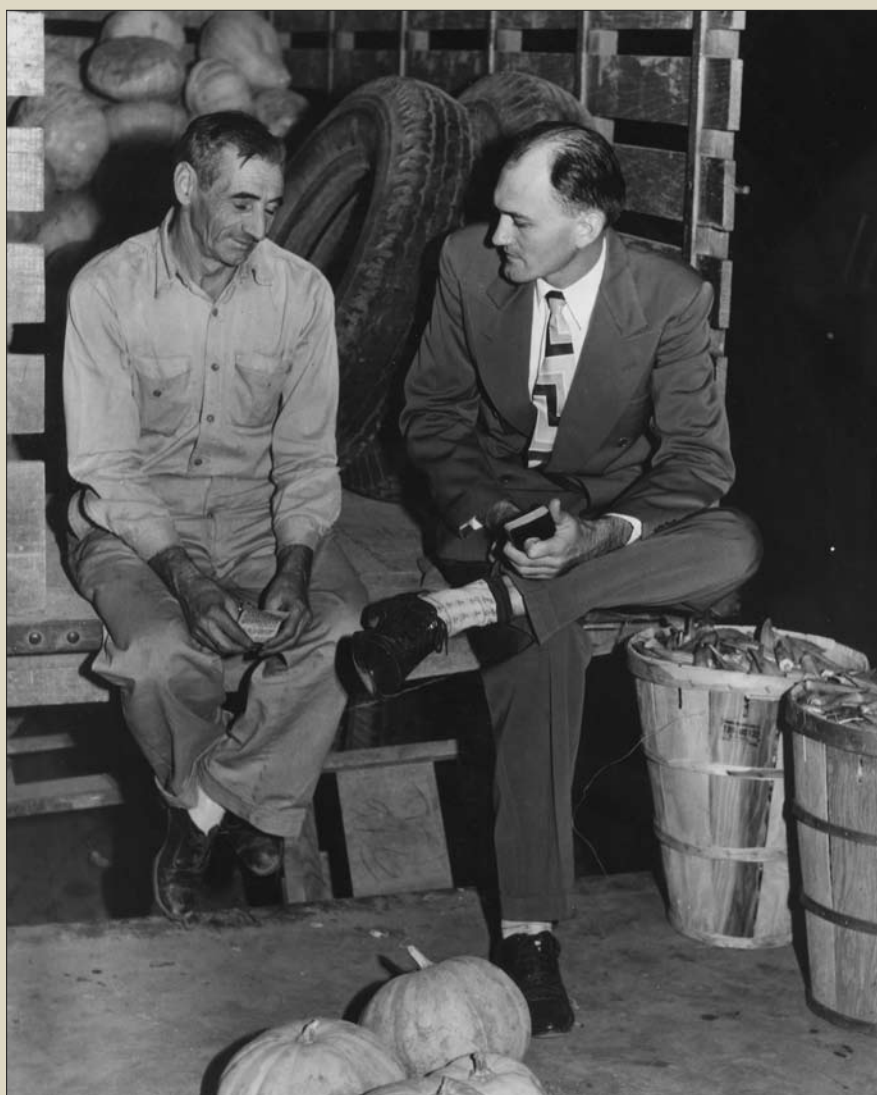
Shipman, Paul M. (BDIV '52) passed away June 12, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Lillian Shipman, of Mount Ida, Ark.

Simpson, Carolyn F. (BRE '63) passed away Feb. 13, 2008. She is survived by her husband Charles Simpson, of Mobile, Ala.

Smith, Edward (BDiv '58) passed away July 11, 2007. He is survived by his wife Jo Ann Smith, of Meridian, Miss.

Smith, Grace A. (BRE '57) passed away May 16, 2000.

Stout, Forrest E. (BDiv '65) passed away Oct. 6, 2002. He is survived by his wife, Elva Carolyn Stout, of Augusta, Ga.



looking back

A member of the seminary family, right, shares the gospel in the French Market. Do you know this person? Let us know at (504) 282-4455, ext. 3331 or alumni@nobts.edu.

Temple, Clarence (MRE '54) passed away April 10, 2006. He is survived by his wife, Mildred Temple, of Southside, Ala.

Thomas, William A. (MRE '58) passed away Dec. 28, 2006. He is survived by his wife, Veronica Thomas, of Lake Mary, Fla.

Thompson, John T. (BDiv '59) passed away Sept. 29, 2004. He is survived by his wife, Evelyn Majors Thompson, Gainesville, Fla.

Timms, Leo W. (BDiv '63) passed away Dec. 28, 2004. He is survived by his wife, Sherry Crawford Timms, of Nashville, Tenn.

White, Lillian J. (BRE '50) passed away March 18, 2008.

Winter, Jack E. (ACMN '01) passed away July 18, 2006. He is survived by his wife, Susan Winter, of Monroe, Ga.

“Where y’at” Alumni?

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

Fall 2008 Alumni Reunions

*"Join us for great
food, fellowship,
giveaways, and
updates from your
alma mater."*

- Florida Alumni: 11/11; noon; FBC Lakeland ("The Church at the Mall")
- Georgia Alumni: 11/11; 12:15 p.m.; FBC Jonesboro
- Kansas/Nebraska Alumni; 10/14; 7 a.m.; Perkins Restaurant, Lenexa
- Michigan Alumni: 10/30; 7:30 a.m.; Merriman Baptist Church, Garden City
- Mississippi Alumni: 10/28; noon; FBC Jackson, Fellowship Hall
- Missouri Alumni: 10/28; noon; 4th Street Grill, St. Louis
- North Carolina Alumni: 11/11; noon; Lone Star Steakhouse, Greensboro
- Oklahoma Alumni: 11/11; 4:45 p.m.; The Church at Battle Creek
- South Carolina Alumni: 11/10; evening meal
- Tennessee Alumni: 11/11; TBA
- Utah-Idaho Alumni: 10/21; noon; TBA

*Additional meetings will be posted on the NOBTS website as information is received.

FOR UPDATES ON ALL ALUMNI CHAPTER REUNIONS, VISIT
WWW.NOBTS.EDU/ALUMNI

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