Every tribe and tongue: The intercultural church
More Than “Whatever”

When Christian Smith and his fellow researchers with the National Study of Youth and Religion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill took a close look at the religious beliefs held by American teenagers, they found that the faith held and described by most adolescents came down to something the researchers identified as “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.”

As described by Smith and his team, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism consists of beliefs like these: 1. “A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.” 2. “God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.” 3. “The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about one’s self.” 4. “God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.” 5. “Good people go to heaven when they die.”

In sum, that is the creed to which much adolescent faith can be reduced. After conducting more than 3,000 interviews with American adolescents, the researchers reported that, when it came to the most crucial questions of faith and beliefs, many adolescents responded with a single word: “whatever.”

The casual “whatever” that marks so much of the American moral and theological landscapes — adolescent and otherwise — is a substitute for serious and responsible thinking. More importantly, it is a verbal cover for an embrace of relativism. Accordingly, “most religious teenager’s opinions and views — one can hardly call them worldviews — are vague, limited, and often quite at variance with the actual teachings of their own religion.”

The kind of responses found among many teenagers indicates a vast emptiness at the heart of their understanding. When a teenager says, “I believe there is a god and stuff,” this hardly represents a profound theological commitment.

This research project demands the attention of every thinking Christian. Those who are prone to dismiss sociological analysis as irrelevant will miss the point. We now face the challenge of evangelizing a nation that largely considers itself Christian, overwhelmingly believes in some deity, considers itself fervently religious, but has virtually no connection to historic Christianity. Christian Smith and his colleagues have performed an enormous service for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ in identifying Moralistic Therapeutic Deism as the dominant religion of this American age. Our responsibility is to prepare the church to respond to this new religion, understanding that it represents the greatest competitor to biblical Christianity.

That is why Southern Seminary has a confession of faith — so that the “whatever” is transformed into truths, principles and doctrines. Our mission requires us to invest in faculty, to have a strategic vision, to be very clear about who we are — so that we make certain that our student body is the right student body. We do not want students who are looking for an institution that represents “whatever,” serving “whomever,” “whenever.”

Southern Seminary is an institution serving the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a confessional institution that holds fast without compromise to the faith once for all delivered to the saints. This is an institution committed to the inerrancy and infallibility of Holy Scripture. This is an institution that understands that the truths of God’s Word are to be owned and relearned and re-taught in every generation and to be passed down to the generations yet to come.

The health of the local church must be our goal, and the pastor of the local church must be our focus. Even in our missionary vision and zeal, our vision is for the establishment of Gospel congregations of local churches all over the world to show God’s glory and to proclaim the Gospel.

“I believe in god and stuff” is not going to last. “Whatever” is just not enough. By God’s grace, may this be an institution that will not settle for that. May we be an institution that will not rest until we have far more to say, our churches have far more to say, our young people have far more to say than “whatever.”

R. Albert Mohler Jr.
President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
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God’s people and racial reconciliation
From a biblical view, racism is always wrong. As we shall see, Genesis 1:26-27 is absolutely clear on this point. Because all human beings are created in the image of God, no one race is superior either in terms of value or significance. Indeed, we can say it in even stronger terms: In light of God’s great work of new creation in Christ, which has purchased people from every tribe, language, people and nation (Rev 5:9), what is true in terms of creation is now doubly true in terms of salvation.

Sadly, sin has distorted and twisted God’s good creation, including racial relations, and it is only the power of the Gospel which can bring true healing and transformation. Unfortunately, it must be admitted that in regard to race relations the church has not always lived up to the truth of God’s Word. No doubt, this statement must be balanced with what Christians have done through the ages, particularly in the 19th century when the strongest voices in England calling for the end of slavery were Christian voices, and, as a result, the slave trade across the Atlantic was largely stopped. But even with that said, it must still be acknowledged that the church has not always been faithful to the Scriptures regarding the issue of race.

What many of us affirm in theory, namely the equal value of all people, is not always worked out in practice. We, as the church, have a long way to go. In fact, that is one of the reasons why the issue of race relations in the church needs to be addressed afresh. Outside Christ, in a fallen world that has no firm grounds for racial reconciliation as well as little desire to pursue it, the church, for the glory of God and the truth of the Gospel, must proclaim and live out the beauty and power of the Gospel in order to testify clearly that racial reconciliation is true in terms of creation, no one race is superior either in terms of value or significance.

Because all human beings are created in the image of God, no one race is superior either in terms of value or significance.

Stephen J. Wellum is associate professor of Christian theology at Southern Seminary.

Human beings, race and the doctrine of creation

The doctrine of creation is foundational to all of Christian theology and especially in regard to the issue of race. Why does the Scripture forbid any view that elevates one race as superior to or more significant than another? Because, as Genesis 1:26-27 makes plain: all human beings regardless of gender or race are created in the image and likeness of God. What is staggering about Genesis 1 is the contrast between fishes, birds and beasts that are made “after their kinds,” and human beings who are created after the pattern of God Himself.

In Christian theology, there is much debate regarding the meaning of the expression “image of God” as applied to human beings. At its heart, however, it simply conveys the idea that we are representatives of the Lord, finite replicas of God, little vice-regents — kings and queens — who were created to know and glorify God by ruling over the creation. This is certainly consistent with the idea of “image” in the ancient world. But what is unique about the biblical concept is that unlike the ancient world, which tended to apply the idea of “image” only to the king, thus reflecting a hierarchical view of society, the Scripture affirms that “man” (collectively) is the “image of God.” Thus, God’s creation of human beings, patterned after Himself, establishes not only the equality of the human race, but also its unity — genetically and genealogically — and hence any hint of racism is eliminated by this affirmation. This truth is borne out in the subsequent narrative and genealogies which simply reflect this fact (see also Acts 17:26; Rom 5:12, 19; 1 Cor 15:21-22).

Human beings, race and the impact of the fall

What impact has the fall had on the created order? Francis Schaeffer often summarized the implications of Genesis 3 in terms of a fourfold alienation. First, there is a vertical alienation between God and human beings. Due to Adam’s disobedience the entire human race by nature and choice have become enemies of God, under the sentence of death and, by nature, objects of God’s wrath (see Rom 3:23; 5:12-21; 6:23; Eph 2:1-3). Second, sin has produced a cosmic alienation in that the whole universe now lives under the effects of the curse. Paul emphasizes this precise point in Romans 8:22-25 where he speaks of the whole creation groaning as in the pains of childbirth as it...
awaits the consummation of Christ’s glorious work in the new creation (see also Rev 21-22). Third, sin has also brought an inward alienation in that we as human beings are schizophrenic at heart. That is why sin not only brings forth God’s judgment of us, it also leads to a failure to understand ourselves properly, with all of the disastrous ramifications this has for our lives (see Rom 1:18-32; 1 Cor 6:18; Eph 2:1-3).

Fourth, sin has also produced a horizontal alienation in this world, which is important to stress in regard to the issue of race. Due to sin, there are now horrible divisions between human beings — one of them being racial division. Certainly this awful effect of sin is graphically described, beginning in Genesis 3 and extending throughout the entire canon of Scripture. In Genesis 3 we first see it in regard to male and female relationships, then between brothers in Genesis 4, which then leads to alienation between people from every tribe, language and nation (see Gen 11:1-9). The Scripture is clear: the effects of sin are pervasive, both individually and corporately. In every aspect of our lives, sin has brought a terrible distortion to God’s creation, including the wrath and judgment of God.

Human beings, race and God’s glorious work of redemption

Thankfully, in Christ, the glorious news of the Gospel is that this fourfold alienation has been dealt with in the cross work of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has already won the victory and who will, in the end, consummate all things when He comes again in glory and power. In the meantime, between the comings of our Lord, we, as Christians, are to begin to live out the reality of sin’s defeat in a fourfold reversal of the effects of the fall. Thus, for example, before our great God, we stand justified and righteous in Christ. Our vertical alienation has been removed and through the cross we are reconciled to God (see Eph 2:14-18). In regard to the alienation that has resulted in the created order, we not only anticipate the fullness of the new creation, but even now, as the people of God, we begin to fulfill once again our creation mandate in the midst of this fallen world because Christ, the pioneer and champion of our salvation, has won the victory for us (see Heb 2:5-9). Even in our personal lives, as we are renewed and transformed into the image of Christ by the work of the Spirit, we discover substantial healing as we grow in grace (see Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18). And lastly, in the Gospel, we also experience reconciliation with one another, both personally and corporately.

Specifically, it is in this last area that the issue of race relations is important. Scripture is clear. Not only are all human beings created in the image of God, but in Christ, the ruinous effects of sin, which are at the root of racial alienation, are now removed, so that we are reconciled both to God and to each other through Christ who is our peace (Eph 2:14). Thus, in Christ, reconciliation has taken place, which entails that we, as the people of God, should now begin to live out what we are, namely “neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). In other words, in Christ, the truth of what we are in creation is now restored, but even in a greater sense. In Christ, we discover that the desperate plight begun in Eden now finds solution. In Christ, the promise that God Himself will be the Savior of His people is now realized, and the promise to Abraham that through him and his seed blessing will come to the nations now reaches its climax in the church. In Christ, the people of God are no longer merely ethnic or racial but international and trans-racial. And as a result of Christ’s great work, the church is not only commissioned to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth in anticipation of the climactic consummation of God’s promises in the new creation, she is also called to live out the truth of the Gospel in her daily experience, not least in the issues of race relations.

The church as God’s new humanity and racial reconciliation

It is the reality of the Gospel that the church is now called to live out both individually and corporately. This is certainly one of the implications of Ephesians 2-3. In Ephesians 2:11-22, Paul, after he beautifully contrasts at the individual level what we once were by nature in Adam and what we now are in Christ by grace (see vv. 1-10), begins to develop this same contrast at the corporate level, in terms of Jew-Gentile relations. Under the old covenant there was a God-given barrier, namely the law-covenant, that separated the Gentile from the Jew, thus leading to the awful reality that Gentiles were “separated from Christ,” “excluded from citizenship in Israel” and “foreigners to the covenants of promise” and thus “without hope and without God in the world” (see vv. 11-12). But now, in Christ and His cross, that barrier has been removed so that both Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God and to each other in the creation of “one new man” (see vv. 13-18). Consequently, in Christ, both Jew and Gentile constitute this “new humanity” as “fellow citizens,” “members of God’s household,” as they are being built into a “holy temple” in which God lives by His Spirit (vv. 19-22).

Obviously by these three images, namely that of fellow citizenship, members of one family and together constituting the new temple of God, Paul is stressing the utter newness of what has taken place in the creation of the church. In the church, Paul emphasizes, there are no second-class citizens, no insiders or outsiders. Regardless of race, all believers are full citizens with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereto — citizens by spiritual re-birth and citizens because the Lord of the Kingdom has laid down His life for the subjects of the Kingdom. In addition, picking up the family and temple imagery, those in Christ, regardless of race, are not only subject to a common Lord, they are also part of a common family — brothers and sisters in Christ — who are being built together into a holy temple unto the Lord. What, then, is true of us individually is also true of us corporately — we have been given the same Spirit to dwell in us as the dwelling place of God, with our Lord Jesus Christ serving as the chief cornerstone of the building.

Clearly, in the context of Ephesians and the entire New Testament, the emphasis on the same Lord who redeems us and
the same Spirit who dwells in us is not insignificant. It is evidence that now, due to Christ’s triumphant work, both Jew and Gentile have equal standing before God and that they are one in Him (see Acts 10:44-48). Thus, any hint of superiority of person, nation or race, in Christ, is utterly removed — removed in creation and now in the new creation by the blood of the Lamb. This is one of the reasons why in the post-New Testament era of the early church, believers were known by the descriptive phrase, “a third race.” To our ears, this might sound strange, but it really is not. It describes perfectly what Ephesians 2 and the entire New Testament is proclaiming: in Christ, both vertical and horizontal reconciliation has taken place, and what has now been created is a “third race” whose identity is not fundamentally tied to one race or people, but to Christ the Lord, who has given us access to the Father through Him, by the Spirit.

Certainly this is a glorious truth. In a world of divisions, separations and alienations due to human depravity; in a world where image-bearers who were created to know God are under God’s judgment and wrath; in a world where human beings were made to work together to glorify God in carrying out our creation mandate but who are now alienated from each other, the message of reconciliation is good news indeed! And, it must be stressed, that it is a message not based in some utopian dream or fantasy as we continue to hear promulgated by the non-Christian world, but upon the finished work of Christ. This message of reconciliation is rooted and grounded upon the true and living God who is there, as well as a real Jesus, God the Son, who took upon our human nature, lived our life, bore our sin, curse and alienation on the tree, in order to set us free from the dominion and power of sin and thus reconcile us to God and to each other.

But it must also be strongly emphasized that as glorious as this message is — this vision of a “new humanity,” “a third race,” a reconciled people, first to God and then to each other — it is not enough merely to talk about it; it must also be lived out before our poor, lost and alienated world. The church, as the new humanity, must become what we are in Christ, both individually and corporately. And as we do, we testify to our world of the greatness of our God, the glory of our Savior and the power of the Gospel in our lives. Is this not Paul’s point in Ephesians 3?

After describing the content of his preaching in Ephesians 3:8, namely the unsearchable riches of Christ, Paul goes on to explain how the “mystery” of the Gospel is now being put into effect (v 9) in very concrete terms. He states that as the Gospel is proclaimed, what we see occurring on the stage of human history is men and women, from every background and race, being reconciled to God and to each other through Christ. In this way, in the everyday life of the church, people see the sovereign God of creation and redemption at work. But it is even more: It is not only human individuals who bear witness to God’s reconciling work; it is also angelic beings — “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” — who see in the church the manifold wisdom of God displayed (v. 10). As the Gospel is proclaimed, it results in nothing less than the birth and growth of the church. The eternal plan of God, the “mystery” as Paul calls it, namely “to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ” (Eph 1:10) takes on concrete shape before our eyes, as this new multiracial humanity is formed and grows. And in so doing, the “manifold wisdom of God” is displayed for all to see. In this sense, then, the church is nothing less than a public demonstration of God’s power, grace and wisdom.

Does this vision of the church not give us incentive to be the church, especially in regard to issues of race? It certainly does! For if we take seriously what the New Testament teaches about the church, then how we treat one another as the church, especially in terms of race, ultimately bears witness to the truthfulness and power of the Gospel. For if it is in the church that God’s manifold wisdom and reconciling work is seen; if the very existence of church is supposed to be evidence that Christ has accomplished His sin-bearing work and that in Him God’s eternal plan is coming to pass; if the church is nothing less than a visible pledge that alienation has been removed, sin has been destroyed and horizontal divisions have been eradicated; if the church is a visible sign that it’s only a matter of time before all things are placed under the feet of King Jesus — which the church certainly testifies to — then certainly this should be incentive for us, as the people of God, to live out the truth of the Gospel, by God’s grace and for His glory!

In the end, the church is nothing less than the very demonstration of God’s redemptive plan, power, wisdom and glory. With every justified and transformed life, every kind word that leads to reconciliation and healing, where rivalries are buried — both the watching world and angelic hosts get a theology lesson.

They learn something of the incredible plan of God as centered in Jesus Christ. They learn that in this poor, lost world — this world reserved for judgment — the only hope for forgiveness and reconciliation is found in Christ and Christ alone. How, then, are we doing as the church, God’s new humanity?

In such a racially divided and fallen world, it is imperative for the church to be the church. Before a watching world and angelic hosts, we must live out the power of the Gospel, for the glory of God, as a testimony to all people of the truth of who we are, regardless of our race, by virtue of our creation, and, by God’s grace, what we may become by faith in Christ. The church, as a company of God’s people, the redeemed, must learn afresh how to live out now, even in imperfect ways, the partial reality of the triumph of our King that will be completely transparent in the new heaven and new earth, as people from every nation, people, tribe and tongue gather around the throne and give praise, honor and worship to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.
How can we bridge the gap?
The Southern Seminary Magazine asked pastor David Gill, pastor Charles Lyons, and pastor Robert Anderson to offer their insight and expertise concerning God’s desire for an intercultural church and the role we play in building that church.

The TIE: In your experience, what has been the most effective strategy for reaching other cultures?

David Gill: At our church, we have Korean Language School on Saturdays. Children of other cultures and races come to this school to learn the language. This became a good bridge to people from other cultures.

I believe churches can offer good children’s programs such as VBS, AWANA, children’s choir and other educational programs for the community. These will bring new immigrants to the church.

Charles Lyons: If we think of strategy as the hand, I would suggest the head and heart are more important because they will direct the hand. We need to get our heads straight. We need to think of ourselves as students and learners. Our hearts should be hearts of loving service. Service opens doors to relationship, and reaching other cultures is all about relationship. Relationship takes time.

The Gospel is transcultural. Our outreach should be cross-cultural. Then our churches would be multicultural.

Robert Anderson: A lot of it comes down to good biblical principles. For example, Paul said I have become all things for all men so that by all means I might win some. Paul understood how to make adjustments. A lot of times people want to reach other people that are different from them, but they don’t want to change.

It’s ironic that people want to reach people of different ethnic groups, but oftentimes they don’t fully accept them. They say, “I won’t fully accept you until you become fully like me.” That’s not what ministry is about.

Our strategy needs to be part of a vision based on the situation you are in. If you are in a community or neighborhood that is thoroughly mixed, I think it almost becomes incumbent upon you that you help create a vision within your church that is an “all peoples” vision. Then, you try to do some of the things that you need to do: bringing diversity to your staff, having diversity in your worship or your preaching or your music.

The TIE: How can seminaries better train ministers to reach different cultures?

Lyons: There must be a return to our biblical mission. Jesus wasn’t kidding in Acts 1:8 when He as much as said, “I expect you to expect to be supernaturally impactful in Samaria.” Samaria represents the people close at hand who are very much different from us, if not rejected by us.

Seminaries must address the issue of faculty. I know of an institution that deliberately determined to stay in its urban location. This in and of itself was wonderful except for the fact that, while they touted themselves as an urban school, virtually the entire faculty commuted, meaning they were isolated in some measure from the very center-city culture they said they represented. Their perspective, their biases, their application of Scripture all came from their white, middle class, suburban worlds.

If our understanding of Scripture is anywhere close to accurate, we see the church as existing in large degree for those who are not part of it. In reality, most churches seem to think they exist for themselves; including the sustaining and perpetuation of their own culture. What does this say about the pastoral leadership at these churches?

FUBU is a hip-hop clothing line raking in millions. It stands for “For Us, By Us.” Most evangelical churches seem to belong to the FUBU denomination.

The TIE: How might predominantly white (or predominantly black) churches make brothers and sisters in Christ of other races feel comfortable worshipping in those churches?

Gill: Invite speakers and musicians of other races to church worship and activities. At Easter we have a combined worship service with white, black, Spanish and Korean [believers worshipping] together. We sing and eat together. Music and food always bring people closer.

Lyons: A great starting place for helping a church become a place where people of other cultures might feel welcome and comfortable is with the pastor’s personal relationships. If he develops relationships with a pastor or pastors of another culture, he not only learns some things about the other culture, but he can share that relationship with the congregation.

The key to the success of this effort is culture, not skin color. For a white pastor to have a guest preacher who is African American, but who basically mirrors white culture, signals to the changing neighborhood around them that black people will be tolerated or welcomed if they are close enough to the white culture. This simply doesn’t cut it. We
should not be looking for safe people who don’t disturb our cultural comfort zone.

The church mission needs to be deliberately intercultural. A specific church culture needs to be pursued and nurtured so that the pieces, parts and elements necessary to an effective cross-cultural ministry are not shocking or surprising, but are embraced by the congregation.

**Anderson:** I think it starts when you drive on the parking lot. You try to communicate that your church is open to all by having parking spaces for your guests. The second step comes when you walk in the door. Your people need to be sensitized to smiling — smiling faces, warm handshakes and a spirit of “I’m so glad you’re here.”

When you reach out to people, do it equally. Churches can reach into different communities by their choice of speakers. You picture what you want by how you structure your programs, your worship. You can do this by fellowshipping with different churches that represent different ethnic groups, exchanging pulpits, having joint picnics, joint evangelism projects and mission trips. If your vision and your goal is to be more diverse, you need to reflect that in your church activities.

Remember, you can’t be diverse, if you are not diverse. However, you can model the Spirit of Christ and you can model love and acceptance and service to others.

**The TIE:** Do so-called “worship styles” really matter? Is this a cultural or biblical issue?

**Lyons:** Scripture trumps culture and tradition. That said, culture produces styles and forms of worship. There are biblical truths that can be expressed in ways familiar to a given culture. I think it would be rather hard to build a case that I should make a sinner climb over my tenaciously held cultural forms to get to Jesus. Knowing truth is what sets people free. Why should I let a style be a barricade between someone and the truth they need?

**Anderson:** I think it is both. It takes on a biblical mandate when you talk about reaching your Jerusalem. You need to make sure that you are diverse enough to reach your Jerusalem. If you are going after a diverse congregation and a diverse people, you cannot be overly ethnic to the exclusion of other types of music.

**The TIE:** How do we begin to make our churches, particularly those in transitional neighborhoods, more reflective of the community when that community has changed so much?

**Gill:** I think we need to constantly reach out to the community, try to meet the needs of the community and vigorously share the Gospel.

**Lyons:** The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus did not come for a weekend mission trip. Christ did not commute. There was not an ascension before supper every night. Incarnational ministry provides a platform for a congregation to be effective in a transitional community. When the pastor lives some distance away and the neighbors see strangers drive in to the church every Sunday morning, the church is doing negative advertising routinely. In some settings, geography and proximity become very important.

A church that meets real needs will build real relationships and will, in time, see real life transformation, and those transformed people will become part of that body.

**Anderson:** I think you do that with honest communication in your church and among your leadership. It has to be talked about. You have to put it on the table and give an opportunity for people to interact. You’ve got to know what you’re dealing with in your own church, to hear the attitudes, to hear the opinions about what’s going on, and see if everybody is on board.

You need to know who are the new people in your community. What is their makeup? What are some things that they do? Then you need to look at yourself and ask, are we willing to change? Are we willing to be flexible? Are we willing to make the necessary steps to be more inclusive?

You do that by getting involved in some of the community activities. You need to do the things that communicate to a given community that you recognize this change and that you are changing with them.

**The TIE:** What role does preaching play in building an intercultural church, overcoming race barriers, etc.?

**Gill:** The preacher must show concern. He must demonstrate his love for other cultures and races by including them in his prayer and his preaching.

Preaching can be provided in other languages, in manuscript and simultaneous translation. I preach in Korean at our church, but we offer a listening device with which people can hear [the sermon] in their language — in this case English. This offers not only an audio tool, but it also expresses the preacher’s heart as he tries to reach and embrace other kinds of people.

**Lyons:** Preaching is central. Biblical preaching creates a framework for, and an atmosphere of, expectation. Biblical preaching challenges unbiblical cultural values and traditions. Preaching helps create the vision as well as the practical challenge and direction for a congregation. Preaching provides the instruction, the explanation and the application people need. It provides the motivation. It provides the celebration.

**Anderson:** I think it plays a vital role because your preaching can be relational. The illustrations that you use can communicate to different backgrounds. When you are relating to different ethnic groups, it is extremely important that you are sensitive to what turns them off.

You want to talk about all races in a positive way because you know God is the God of all people and He has put some good things in all of our communities. Yet, at the same time, sin has corrupted things in all of our communities as well.

“[The preacher] must demonstrate his love for other cultures and races.”

— David Gill
It is important to keep expository preaching as the standard. When you preach expository sermons, the people understand that the Word of God is larger, bigger than any of our cultures. That’s where we find the common ground. That’s where expository preaching lifts us above our culture and says, “We are all one in Christ.”

The TIE: What tools are available to help pastors who recognize this need in their community and want to move forward but aren’t sure how to do so?

Lyons: While there is a growing body of literature on the subject, as a rule, more learning will be done more quickly from those who are doing it. Models are not plentiful, but they are out there.

Anderson: Check out the chamber of commerce. This will give you a feel for who is actually in your community. The local government, the state government, even the federal government can provide geographical and demographic information about your community. You can find out how many youth are in a given city. You can discover their ethnicity as well. Other books are helpful. There are a number of books now that deal with culture and diversity in ministry.

The TIE: How important is it that the composition of a church’s staff matches its cultural makeup?

Gill: I think it is very important to have ministers of other cultures and races in the church to reach different kinds of people in the community. At our church, although ours is a Korean church, we always have had one or two white staff members working with me.

When you have a staff person of another race, you have a good start on reaching other races. Have him or her to start a Bible study or a ministerial group in their particular racial group. This will give a new perspective and a new awareness of other cultures and races to the whole church.

Lyons: On a scale of one to 10, I would say it’s an eight. People are not going to be giving much weight to what you’re saying, if they do not see a multicultural leadership team. However, an affirmative action or a quota approach must be avoided. Spiritual qualifications must rule. I think that, with good teaching and communication of the long-range vision, people will exercise some patience. However, if multicultural progress is not being made on the church staff, people will begin to doubt the rhetoric.

Anderson: I think it can be very critical. You are to reflect the very people you are trying to reach. It says something to them.

When Paul was traveling with Timothy, he had Timothy circumcised so that he could relate to the Jews. Paul did something with his “staff,” with Timothy, to make him adjust to a circumstance.

We can do that too by creating an ethnically diverse staff. If we’re not able to do that, we can make adjustments with the staff that we do have to communicate that we want to be a part of the community. Remember, not all of your church leadership is on staff. Often your leadership can be reflected in the heads of ministries, those who are heading your evangelism ministry or your discipleship ministry. There are a lot of leadership positions in your church that can be used to demonstrate diversity. That can communicate as well.

The TIE: What difficulties await pastors and churches that become intentional about being truly intercultural?

Lyons: Several thoughts:

One, this is going to take time. All of us are in a rush. We want everything now. We want four steps and then success. If multicultural ministry is biblical, then we must give our lives to it. We must do it because it’s good and right; not because it’s a trend, a fad or looks cool.

Two, many look at the church as an institution to be protected against cultural change rather than an institution to be culturally expanded.

Three, the potential for conflict increases significantly. Four, people may have “affirmative action” expectations for church leadership roles.

Anderson: Traditionalism. Every community tends to have a tradition. Every church has a tradition and sometimes people don’t want to change. They don’t want to be flexible. They don’t want to adapt, and that can hinder that effort.

Here’s another danger. The cost of change can be very high. You may lose members, members who pay their tithes. It can cost the church in so many ways.

Honest communication is another concern. Oftentimes people will say that they go along with you or go along with the multicultural vision and multi-ethnic vision, and in reality they really don’t. They only pay lip service. Sometimes, you don’t really find that out until you really start to labor. You turn around and you find out nobody is really with you.

“Remember, you can’t be diverse, if you are not diverse.”

— Robert Anderson

David Gill immigrated to the United States from Korea 30 years ago. He is the founding and senior pastor of Concord Korean Baptist Church in San Francisco, a post he has held for 29 years. He also serves as second Vice President of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Charles Lyons has been the pastor of Armitage Baptist Church since 1974. Chicago mayor Richard Daley has called this urban church one of Chicago’s “most influential churches.” The congregation of Armitage Baptist Church represents 40 nationalities.

Robert Anderson is the senior pastor Colonial Baptist Church in Randallstown, Md., and serves on the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention.
A biblical model for Christian racial diversity
Christian racial diversity is a very important issue today for a number of reasons. First of all, it has to do with the credibility of the Gospel and the integrity of the church. We live in a world that struggles with racial and ethnic diversity. Television news reports of racial or ethnic conflicts flaring up at home and abroad are common. This issue has often been at the forefront of political and cultural transformations in our society. Racial segregation has played a large role in the history of the church in America. Christian racial diversity and intercultural ministry will probably be the most important issue facing the American church in the 21st century.

The demographic changes and transitions that are taking place within American society require that churches address the issue of racial diversity. No longer do churches exist in monolithic and monocultural communities. Now churches in America are facing demographic changes that are unlike anything they have seen in the past. As a result, many congregations have some very important decisions to make about whether they will choose to reach out and how they will reach out to the people in their community.

The landscape is changing. The playing field is changing. The players are changing. Christian pastors and leaders must be prepared to help the church in America deal with the realities of the 21st century. This is an intercultural century that requires intercultural ministry that is biblically-based and theologically solid.

It may seem the challenges confronting the church in this century are new but they are not. In fact, these challenges are as old as the first century church. This reminds us of Ecclesiastes 1:9: “There is nothing new under the sun.”

How did the Christians of the first century deal with the issue of racial diversity? What did they do, or what did they not do? How did the Lord work through them in the process of the expansion of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem, Palestine and into the uttermost parts of the world?

Jesus had already told his disciples that they were to preach the Gospel not only in Jerusalem and in Judea, but also to Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world (Acts 1:8). This included preaching the Gospel to non-Jews (i.e., Gentiles) as well as Jews. A theology of Christian racial diversity is inherent in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Commission and the Kingdom of God.

The God who equally created every race of people seeks to redeem them through the proclamation of the message of the Gospel of His Son. The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 is the way in which new disciples will be made from every racial background. This racial and ethnic diversity is a reflection of the Kingdom of God as spoken of by the apostle John in Revelation 7:9, which says, “After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.” It is God’s desire that all people should be saved (1 Tim 2:3-4). The Scripture means all people, regardless of race. God is creating a great multitude made up of every racial, ethnic and language background.

With this understanding, the church needs to become seriously intentional about making disciples of all people. Churches should seek to make new disciples of the people whom God has placed within their reach, even if they are of a different racial background. This is consistent with the biblical mandate to spread the good news of the Gospel to all people. Churches should never become isolated enclaves unto themselves.

The church at Antioch was the first recorded congregation to have been formed with both Jewish and Gentile converts. Acts 11:19-26 reports:

“Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

This passage gives a glimpse into how it was that the church at Antioch became a biblical model for Christian racial diversity.

Ken Fentress is dean of intercultural programs and assistant professor of Old Testament at Southern Seminary.
When the Jews were scattered from Jerusalem because of persecution, most of them went and preached the Gospel only to other Jews. They were only interested in proclaiming the message to people like them. However some men from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch and preached the Gospel not only to Jews, but also to non-Jews. These men were willing to preach the Gospel to whoever was receptive. God did a marvelous thing through their preaching at Antioch. A large number of non-Jews repented and believed the good news of the Gospel.

The church of Jerusalem decided to send a delegation led by Barnabas to inspect what was going on after they had heard that the good news had been preached to non-Jews and that they had responded in faith. Barnabas’ response to what he found at Antioch wasn’t exactly what some people in Jerusalem would have preferred. Instead of criticizing the situation he joined in the effort to help the new church at Antioch develop. He did not simply return to Jerusalem to give them a report of what happened. He became a part of what God was doing in Antioch. God was doing a new thing. This work was on the cutting edge. And Barnabas wanted to be a part of it. Not only did he join in helping the new church, he went and found one of the greatest minds that had ever been converted to Christianity, Saul, and brought him to Antioch to help. Together, Barnabas and Saul worked to develop a cutting edge ministry in the first century.

Barnabas and Saul are a perfect example for those of us who are in ministry in the 21st century. The men of Cyprus and Cyrene along with Barnabas and Saul were willing to overcome all barriers in order to spread the Gospel. They intentionally made disciples of Gentiles and Jews. They crossed racial boundaries in order to reach people whom the Jews considered off limits. They correctly understood the nature of the grace of God as extending to all people, not only to Jews.

When Christians of one race intentionally avoid people of other races, they fail to understand and practice the implications of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. Nothing less than the integrity of the Gospel and the credibility of the church are at stake in this issue.

The non-Christian world will take notice of our message when they see us reach out and reconcile with one another on the basis of the Gospel of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus. How can we convince lost people that reconciliation from God through Jesus Christ is real if they don’t see us practice racial reconciliation? If the non-Christian world sees racial bigotry, division and hatred in us why should they listen to our message? There is no question that they need to hear the message of the Gospel. But they also need to see the transforming power of the Gospel message in the way we relate to each other. The problem is that we, like ancient Israel, are profaning the name of the Lord among the Gentiles because of our racism — racism that is a sin of the human heart.

The Antioch example

There are several important things that we can learn from the church at Antioch. They were a church on the cutting edge. They did not sacrifice the essence of the truth of the Gospel. They were serious about intercultural ministry. They were serious about preaching the Gospel and making disciples of all people. They were the first Gentile congregation. They were the first to send out missionaries. They were the first to send relief to another congregation. They were also the first congregation where the followers of Jesus were referred to as Christians.

Acts 13:1-3 offers a portrait of the church at Antioch in which there are three character traits that emerge. They were a diverse church (v. 1). They were a devout church (v. 2). Finally, they were a diligent church (v. 3).

They were a diverse church

“In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul” (Acts 13:1). The leadership structure of the church consisted of prophets and teachers. There are several observations that could be made about the leadership structure, but for our purposes, we should focus on the names of the leaders. The names of the leaders reflect racial and ethnic diversity in the leadership of the church. If these names were representative of the leadership and the congregation, this would suggest that they were an intercultural church.

The order of the list of leaders in Antioch begins with Barnabas, an Aramaic name, and ends with Saul, a Jewish name. Barnabas, whose name means ‘son of encouragement’ (Acts 4:36), was a Hellenistic Jew. Saul (who is later renamed Paul) is derived from the Hebrew name. The name Simeon is a well-known Hebrew name. It is his surname Niger (which means ‘black’) that suggests that he may have been of African descent. ‘Niger’ may have been a nickname, in which case it would probably have been descriptive of the man. The name Lucius of Cyrene may have been a man of Jewish or North African descent. He may have been among the men mentioned in Acts 11:20 who preached the Gospel to non-Jews in Antioch. Manaen, who was most likely Jewish, was a foster-brother of Herod Antipas. The fact that Manaen was brought up with royalty indicates that there was diversity in the social status of the church’s leadership. The leadership of the church consisted of people who came from different socio-economic strata.

The racial diversity of the church at Antioch was no accident. It was intentional. The church at Antioch was intentional about its diversity and it intentionally reflected the diversity of the city of Antioch and the greater region. Pastors and their churches should be intentional about racial reconciliation and diversity today. If it is a core value of the pastor, it will become important to the church. It will also have an impact upon the community in which the church ministers. When non-Christians see us practicing biblically-based reconciliation — spiritual and racial — as an application of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection from the dead, they will be profoundly impacted by our message. Again, nothing less than the integrity of the Gospel and the credibility of the church are at stake in this issue.

I believe the list of men in Acts 13:1-3 is representative of the body at Antioch. This church reflected the glory of God as a racially-blended body. And once you’ve experienced the beauty of the blended body of Christ, you are never the same.

They were a devout church

Acts 13:2 begins, “While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and..."
Saul for the work to which I have called them.’”

There are two observations to be made about Antioch as a devout church. First, they were a worshipping church. Can you imagine the power of a racially diverse church that has learned to worship in the unity of the faith? I could imagine walking into the church of Antioch and seeing in that membership every imaginable race, tribe and ethnic background represented in that region. People of dark skin, people of light skin, people of different ethnicities, all together worshiping the one true God and Savior, Jesus Christ. This will become a growing reality for the church of the Lord Jesus in this society and throughout the world in the 21st century.

It is this kind of biblical reconciliation and diversity that will send the most powerful message of reconciliation to a world that desperately needs it. Our society has tried other ways to bring people of different races together, but only with limited success. Only the church can do this God’s way. Only the church can do this in a way that has eternal impact for the Kingdom of God in this world.

The Christians at Antioch worshipped and fasted together. They sought God as a unified body of believers. In doing so, they were able to put aside all differences. They viewed their racial diversity as a strength and not a weakness. The Gospel has the power to break down racial and ethnic barriers (Eph 2:11-22).

However, we should not be “color-blind.” I am not advocating a color-blind church; neither am I advocating a color-blind society. God is not color-blind. God made all people in His image. It was according to His divine purpose and intention to create the different races of people. That was no mistake; neither was it an accident. It is not something that should be ignored. But it should be celebrated. It should be celebrated because it is a reflection of the glory of God Himself.

Second, they were a Spirit-guided church. The latter part of Acts 13:2 records that the Holy Spirit set Saul and Barnabas apart for special missionary service. They were sensitive, as a congregation, to the guidance of the Spirit.

Let’s look more closely at the words of the Spirit, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” What exactly was the “work” to which they were called? Do we really understand some of the implications of this work? Of course, we understand that Barnabas and Saul became the first missionaries that were sent out from the church at Antioch. But what were they sent out to do? They were sent out to preach and proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, not only to Jews, but also to non-Jews. It may not be readily apparent to us that this was a radical departure from what the church in Jerusalem had been doing. They had been preaching to Jews only. In fact, it appears that some people in the church at Jerusalem were not even sure that the grace of God had been extended to non-Jews (Acts 14:27). Paul and Barnabas were sent to proclaim the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles.

The hallmarks of Paul’s ministry was to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles and to the world. In doing so, he broke down racial barriers and the dividing walls of hostility between peoples. Paul writes about this in Ephesians 2:11-22. The dividing wall of hostility between people of different races has been broken down in Christ. The barriers have been shattered by the death, burial, resurrection and eventual return of Christ. And He is creating for Himself a church, according to Revelation 7:9, that will be represented by every nation, every tribe, every tongue and every people group. God is interested in the salvation of all human souls. And so should we, whether it’s abroad, across town or across the street. We cannot talk about going to the other side of the world if we will not go across the street or across town. Everyone matters to God. We can see the words of the Spirit and the work of the Spirit through God having set apart Paul and Barnabas for the proclaiming of the Gospel to non-Jews.

God’s desire has always been that all peoples would come to know Him.

They were a diligent church

Verse 3 recounts the consecration and commissioning of Paul and Barnabas. It states, “So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” The church in Antioch consecrated themselves by prayer and fasting. They sought the Lord diligently in preparing to send Paul and Barnabas on their mission to the Gentiles. Fasting and praying was a first priority for them. They sought the Lord before they sent them out. They laid hands on Barnabas and Paul, and they sent them off as the first official missionaries sent from the church.

The church at Antioch reflects for us a biblical model of Christian racial diversity and reconciliation. They were consistent with God’s purpose of bringing salvation to the Gentiles. This was stated by the prophets of the Old Testament and acknowledged by James at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15:15-18. It had always been God’s purpose to reach all people with the truth about Himself. This is reflected in Ezekiel 36:23, where the Lord says: “I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show Myself holy through you before their eyes.”

God’s desire has always been that all peoples would come to know Him. His purpose remains the same in the 21st century. He has given us the message and the ministry of reconciliation. He has called us to model the power of reconciliation through intercultural ministry so that the barriers and baggage of racism and prejudice will not hinder the work and the witness of the Gospel.

Conclusion

In summary, the church at Antioch is a biblical model of racial reconciliation, intercultural ministry and Christian racial diversity that provides an excellent example for the 21st century church. Their diversity, devotion and diligence were consistent with the integrity of the Gospel and the credibility of the message of biblical, spiritual and racial reconciliation.

God is calling today’s church to follow this biblical model wherever it is possible. Second Corinthians 5:18-19 aptly says, “All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”
“I have a dream!” This declaration uttered by Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial was the defining phrase of perhaps the century’s most defining discourse. In his “dream,” King envisioned people of all races sitting down together “at a table of brotherhood.”

In a word, he believed that one day races, so long divided by disdain, distrust and discrimination, would be reconciled.

King’s vision was not a new one. Before time began, the King of the creation decreed that persons of all colors would one day gather unto His throne in His eschatological Kingdom. It will be a Kingdom of the reconciled — both to Christ and to each other.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary student Deric Thomas believes that God’s Kingdom vision can be achieved in part today, and he has dedicated his ministry to being about God’s Kingdom business — that is, the business of reconciliation.

“I think that Kingdom business is God’s business, and reconciliation is God’s business,” said Thomas, a master of divinity student from Birmingham, Ala. “… So I love being in the business of something that God’s doing.

“… I just want to see God reconciled to people and people reconciled to people as well.”

But for Thomas, reconciliation is more than just his passion — you could say it’s in his blood.

“What God ultimately wants me to do started from the very beginning,” said Thomas. “I grew up in a biracial family. My mom is white and my dad is black. I’ve always been a part of both cultures and both lifestyles.”

Though the seeds for Thomas’ future ministry of reconciliation were planted as a youth, they remained fallow in the soil of self-interest for most of his teenage years. In fact, Thomas only went to church when his grandmother took him. And though he knew of the Gospel, games and good times garnered most of his attention.

“My life revolved around sports for the most part,” Thomas said.
The change in his life occurred when Thomas went to college — the University of Alabama. The anonymity and loneliness of campus life ultimately drove him home after one year, but his experiences also drove him to search for answers and meaning.

“I was really walking in darkness,” Thomas said. “In high school, sports kept me from getting into too much trouble. The first year of college was different.”

After returning home, he turned to the Bible that he had neglected as a child.

“I picked up the Bible, and I remember somebody saying, ‘If you’re going to read the Bible, start from Matthew,’” Thomas said.

He got past the genealogy to the birth of Christ, and by the time he made it to the Magi, he was on his knees.

“I put the Bible down, cried myself to sleep, woke up the next morning and took my earrings out,” Thomas recalled. “… I always knew the Gospel, being from the South. And I would have told you I believed it in high school. But that night, the Lord opened my eyes to the truth that it was more than a story. Jesus was really alive. … That night really transformed everything about my life.”

Thomas had found what he was looking for. And after Jesus saved him, his only desire was to read the Bible. The New Testament was the only book in his life he had read completely to that point.

“All I did was go to work part-time, read my Bible, eat and exercise. … My mom was worried I was going through depression,” Thomas said.

The first two months Thomas was a Christian, he didn’t go to church; he didn’t know which church to attend. An all white church? An all black church?

On the news one night he saw a feature on the Church at Brook Hills, a Southern Baptist church that was rebuilding another church destroyed by a tornado.

“It showed a picture of the congregation there, and it was a diverse congregation,” Thomas said. “It ends up being right up the street from where I was living at the time. So I said, ‘That’s where I’ll go to church.’”

And Thomas went to everything — every service, class and event.

“That was my life,” Thomas said.

He also met his wife, Heather, there.

After seven months of being a believer, he began to feel the call to preach.

“God had already been stirring me,” Thomas said. “I was preaching in the shower already to myself. It was my only passion to seek Him, to read His Word and to share the Gospel with people.”

An opportunity to preach on a mission trip only confirmed this calling, and Thomas soon enrolled in Southeastern Bible College to pursue a bachelor of arts degree in biblical studies. He finished college after three years.

When he began to consider seminaries, he desired to find a place where he could gain the same vision for ministry as the pastor of his church, Raleigh Avenue Baptist Church. The pastor there at the time, David Prince, possessed “a God-entranced vision of all things, and [a view that] the preaching of God’s Word was central to the ministry,” Thomas said.

The place that fit this vision for ministery was Southern Seminary, he said.

Another reason for Thomas’ choice was Russell D. Moore, dean of Southern Seminary’s school of theology and senior vice president for academic administration, who led a few conferences at Thomas’ church.

“I just saw a love in him for the local church, and I knew that was my heart as well,” Thomas said.

He enrolled at Southern in the fall of 2003, and he is presently pursuing the master of divinity degree in the school of theology.

“To be a part of what God is doing here at Southern Seminary is a great blessing,” Thomas said.

Thomas plugged into Southern right away, serving as a seminary admissions counselor, and later becoming assistant director of admissions, his current position.

“God has developed [in me here] a greater passion for the church and love for the local church and greater passion and love for His glory and for the truth,” Thomas said. “That’s what I tell prospective students as well.”

But his work at Southern is not his only outlet for ministry. Thomas also pastors a rural congregation 90 miles from Louisville in Hartsville, Ind., a town of 375. His goal as pastor is to see every one of the 375, and the people in the surrounding area, reconciled to God and to each other.

“[The church] is really ideal for what the Lord has me doing at the seminary right now,” Thomas said. “I love God’s people, the church. That’s my passion — to preach, to teach and to love God’s people.”

His ministry commitments and his dedication to his family, which includes two sons, John Deric and Simon James, will probably slow Thomas’ progress toward his degree. But he doesn’t care.

“I’m not in a hurry to leave this place, because God’s allowed me to do what I love to do,” Thomas said. “I’m a flowing stream rather than a stagnant pool. Every day I get to take in God’s truth in the classes and chapel, but then I get to give it out.”

In fact, Thomas sees what he is doing now at his church as a model for what he desires to do in the future — the ministry of reconciliation and Kingdom work in the local church.

“Here’s what I want to do — to be a part of what God’s doing and His heartbeat. I’d like to pastor a local church that reflects the Kingdom — people from every tribe, tongue and nation.”

For Thomas, reconciliation is not just between two races. It reaches all peoples with the Gospel, in order that they might be reconciled to God.

“I think there is really a primary role for me that God wants me to do as far as black/white [reconciliation], because I’m kind of in the middle ground,” Thomas said. “But [there is an] even bigger [role] than that, because God’s Kingdom is bigger than that.

“... I think He has prepared me for this from birth — the home that I grew up in, the experiences that I’ve had, what He’s done in my life, what He brought me out of — all these things.”
God’s call to ministry has a pattern of taking Daniel Hatfield places where he never intended to go.

When he was 18 years old, Hatfield vowed that he would not stay in school for another 15 years. But God called him to study for the next 17 years in order to obtain master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

When he began his doctoral studies, Hatfield did not want to be a pastor. But God called him to pastor two churches in Kentucky.

When he became a pastor, Hatfield did not want to become a missionary. But God called him to spend eight years as a missionary in Panama with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Then while serving in Panama, he did not want to return to the United States. But, once again, God’s call trumped Hatfield’s own desires, and he became vice president for student services and professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern, where he serves today.

“For me the call to ministry has always sent me where I did not intend to go,” he said. “This has been very comforting because I’ve never confused my personal ambition with the call to ministry.”

Despite beginning his life with no intention of ministering in another culture, Hatfield has developed a zeal for cross-cultural ministry. Serving as a seminary professor in Panama from 1988-1996 and assisting Hispanic churches, Hatfield gained valuable insights that he now attempts to communicate to students at Southern.

“I am forever tinged by this yearning for cross-cultural missions,” he said. “I think about issues missiologically now. Doing missions is like catching an incurable disease. We’re never the same afterward.”

One of the most valuable lessons Hatfield learned on the mission field was how to communicate the timeless message of the Gospel in a manner that is sensitive to the cultural context, he said.

The culture in Panama was particularly open to door-to-door evangelism and public proclamations of the Gospel, Hatfield said. So some of the most effec-
tive avenues of cross-cultural evangelism were speaking in schools, singing in malls and visiting homes. Also particularly effective was a health fair hosted by Christians where Panamanians could obtain dental care, eye examinations and other basic medical procedures, he said.

“In cross-cultural missions, every ministry that is undertaken is exactly like one in the States,” Hatfield said. “The only difference is the cross-cultural dynamic. Ministry is ministry, and whether that be here or there, it’s still ministry. The only difference from a missiological standpoint is the cross-cultural chasm that is broached.”

One of Hatfield’s most memorable adjustments to culture occurred in the Darién province of Panama. Residents of the province had access to electricity for just three-and-a-half hours each night. So Hatfield was forced to wait until the electricity came on to begin services each night. Awaiting the electricity with flashlights and lanterns served as a reminder that communicating the Gospel in the rain forest culture required a unique approach, he said.

Perhaps the most valuable tool for penetrating a foreign culture with the message of Christ was speaking the language of the people, Hatfield said.

“The fact that I could speak their language gave me even more credibility and more viability as a speaker to them,” he said.

On one occasion while presenting a Bible study to Christian leaders in Darién, Hatfield remembers being struck by the impact his efforts at cross-cultural communication were making.

“I was giving a Bible study in the Sermon on the Mount, and I was sharing things that I thought were very summary and basic,” he said. “And I saw that the other lay leaders and pastors were feverishly writing notes about everything I said.”

“It was one of the most humbling moments I ever experienced. What I was giving almost ad hominem was so valuable to them that they would write it down. I couldn’t have done that if I had not been a cross-cultural agent.”

Reflecting on his experience as a missionary, Hatfield refers to himself as a “theological backpacker” who packs the items that are essential for his trip but leaves many items at home.

“A hiker takes what is essential to survive and what is useful in the environment, but he cannot take everything from his home that would make him comfortable,” he said. “So the missionary in that environment must take the essentials, and they are not to be compromised.”

Among the items all ministers must leave at home is the temptation to adapt the Gospel message so that it will not offend lost men and women, he said. While methods of presentation can be adapted to fit the cultural context, Christians must be cognizant of the inherently counter-cultural element of the Gospel, Hatfield said.

“They are familiar and inviting to people of different cultural backgrounds.

“What’s useful is when believers become mobile and can leave their host culture and can be comfortable in somebody else’s culture and share the worship,” Hatfield said. “I think that’s where the greatest joy occurs. It’s not when I, as a recipient, welcome someone from another culture into my group, but rather when I go to the other culture and participate with them united in Christ.”

Hatfield additionally cautions church-izes against thinking that racial and cultural diversity are the only types of diversity that enhance a congregation. Age and gender diversity also add a great deal to a body of believers, he said.

“One of the blessings of diversity is that we don’t just see ourselves in the mirror. The church gathering as the body of Christ sees itself truly as the body of Christ gathering across the globe and across the decades,” he said.

“We tend to see ourselves in isolation, not only regionally but also temporally. … We need to think of the faith once and for all delivered to the saints and how we connect through the ages.

“The church that has only one slice of humanity tends toward an unwitting isolation, and the remedy is missions.”

“The Gospel always will confront the culture and will always offend the sensibilities of the culture and the individuals within it,” he said. “The cross is a scandal. So we cannot compromise the Gospel in hopes that it will be inoffensive. It will always be a scandal, as Paul writes.”

Since returning to the United States in 1996, Hatfield has learned how to apply the insights he gained on the mission field to ministry in America. As pastor of Iglesia Bautista Nueva Jerusalén (New Jerusalem Baptist Church) in Louisville, Hatfield has attempted to build a culturally diverse congregation that reflects the diversity of God’s Kingdom.

“The reason diversity is meaningful is because it reflects the heavenly worship that we see in Revelation 4-5,” he said. “Every people group … is together, and we’re unified in the same worship. And that’s the reason why diversity is meaningful: not so we can feel better about ourselves but because that accurately reflects God’s purpose and God’s mandate.”

While diversity within local congregations is pleasing to God, churches should not seek to diversify their memberships by forcing people of other cultures to adapt to the established church culture, he said. Instead, believers must move out of their comfort zones and worship in ways that are familiar and inviting to people of different cultural backgrounds.

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“The church that has only one slice of humanity tends toward an unwitting isolation, and the remedy is missions, which the Bible mandates.”

Hatfield’s intercultural ministry experience has reminded him of the need for flexibility, communication and reliance on God in ministry. But supremely, it has helped him to realize the necessity of bringing every culture under subjection to Christ.

“Anthropologists seek to understand the culture, but the missionary seeks that those in another culture might understand the Gospel,” he said. “We want to understand them like good anthropologists would. But that’s secondary. The reason we want to understand them is so that they might understand the Gospel.”
Ben Merkle has to look no further than his own neighborhood to see syncretism’s silly side. On the shoulder of a main thoroughfare near Merkle’s Southeast Asia home sits a drive-thru Hindu temple where one may make a quick stop to have his new automobile ‘blessed’ by a great pantheon of pagan gods.

Such a blessing ostensibly frees participating vehicle operators from the curse of crumpled sheet metal and resulting bodily harm.

“People on the island who buy new cars stop there all the time to get the cars blessed because they believe it will help to protect them from automobile accidents,” Merkle said. “Most of them aren’t even a part of the Hindu religion but think, ‘If this works, then I want to give it a try.’”

Such is the spiritual environment where Merkle, who received his Ph.D. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2000, now serves as a professor of New Testament at a Baptist seminary in Southeast Asia.

Syncretism in both its strange forms — drive-through Hindu temples — and its serious forms — worldviews mixing Christianity with local naturalistic religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Animism — is a ubiquitous reality in the region in which Merkle and his family now labor and live.

“That’s the tricky thing about sharing the Gospel there,” said Merkle, who has returned to Louisville for a few months to teach classes at Southern Seminary.

“It is really easy to get them to add Jesus to the mix of gods they already believe in, especially if they believe Jesus can bless them. A lot of times the first response [to the Gospel] is, ‘Oh yes, Jesus is good.’ Because there are so many gods, they are not afraid to adopt another one. They may just try Jesus as well. Someone sharing the Gospel there has to be careful that they are not just affirming it and adopting another one of their gods.”

A native of Lodi, Calif., Merkle has been teaching at the seminary there since...
To teach an intensive course four hours a day in another language will just about kill you." The Merkles also faced a more immediate adjustment during their first term on the mission field when the size of their family doubled; Marian gave birth to two sons in a little over two years. The Merkles, married 11 years, now have three sons and a daughter: Brandon, 7, Mariah, 5, Jaden, 3, and Cameron, 2.

Merkle, who teaches New Testament and hermeneutics classes in both English and in the native tongue, says his approach must be somewhat different than in American seminaries because nearly all of the students are going to be pastors and many of them already are pastors.

"I'd say 90 percent of my students are already working as pastors," he said. "They are not there to someday become pastors if things work out; they are pastors. Most of them are in their early to late-20s, so many of the students are relatively young. Most of them have a lower education level and don't have any college background at all.

"We tend to make things very practical. We don't skimp at all on theology and doctrine — we have to make it practical because most of our students are going to use it immediately in their preaching."

There has also been the adjustment of learning the local language. Merkle and his wife, Marian, attended language school for eight months prior to beginning work in the seminary. While he has caught on to the language rather quickly, Merkle says he reads the Bible and practices the language aloud almost daily to help his classroom and pulpit communication.

Holding a Ph.D. Merkle says has made him an attractive pulpit supplier for local Baptist congregations, some of which have as many as 2,000 members. Though he is involved in a local church in his own community, he often preaches — both in English and the local language — in Baptist churches in the region in which he serves.

"Learning and getting used to using the language has been an adjustment, which is to be expected," he said. "To preach a 45-minute sermon in English is already a lot of work. To try and do it in another language is mentally draining. To teach an intensive course four hours a day in another language is mentally draining. It is already a lot of work. To try and do it in another language has been an adjustment, which is to be expected," he said.

"When you already have two children and you add two more, it is a challenge to try to keep everything balanced, especially for my wife who stays home with the children," Merkle said.

Missions work has been in Merkle's field of vision since his late teen years. He did not attend church until he was 10 and was converted at age 17. Once he became a Christian, Merkle developed an insatiable thirst for the Word of God and learning about theology.

"My pastor said, 'Wow, I've never had a high schooler ask for commentaries before,'" Merkle said. ""When I was first converted I had a great hunger for biblical truth because I didn't know anything.

"Shortly after I became a Christian, I realized I wanted to serve God in some way full-time and so started to pursue going to Bible college and seminary." He attended Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids, Mich., where he obtained a bachelor's degree. From there, it was on to Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido, Calif., where he graduated with a master of divinity.

In 1997, Merkle moved to Louisville to complete his theological education in the doctoral program at Southern Seminary. During his years at Southern, Merkle was able to hone his classroom acumen by teaching first-semester Greek classes.

While Merkle says he has learned much in his four years on the mission field, most of all he says that he has gained an appreciation for Paul's words regarding "becoming all things to all men that by all means I might win some."

"When it comes to bringing the Gospel to another culture, I favor keeping it in line with their culture as much as possible," he said. "Because, as far as the peripherals — the non-essentials — what sort of place you meet in, what sort of music you listen to, and this sort of thing, the Gospel is essential.

"I think the key is the Gospel message, the message of Christ, and that is obviously not going to change, but in these various cultures, you want to present the Gospel in a way that the offense is the cross of Christ and not something that is culturally conditioned."
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Who is the real Jesus Christ? Did He actually claim to be God? What did Jesus think about Scripture and is He really the only way to salvation? Also, if Jesus loved the church, must I also love it? These are among the questions a number of professors from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary addressed Feb. 18-19 during the school’s fifth annual “Give Me an Answer” Collegiate Conference.

The event drew nearly 1,300 attendees from 19 different states, setting a new attendance record. Attendees included students and ministers from more than 80 different institutions including churches, campus ministries, church-based college ministries and the Christian Medical and Dental Association, among others.

The purpose of the conference is to promote God-honoring, Bible-centered worldview thinking on contemporary issues facing the church. The 2005 conference dealt with the question that Christ posed for Peter in the Gospels: “Who do you say that I am?” “Our hope is simply to get God-centered, Christ-exalting, life-changing truth out as far as possible and allow it to do its work,” said Scott Davis, director of admissions for Southern Seminary.

“It was a busy weekend — but worth every minute of our effort. Jesus was lifted high and the students who attended learned how to love and serve Him better.”

The conference consisted of three general sessions featuring Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. and theology school dean Russell D. Moore along with 19 elective seminars. Each elective dealt with a different issue regarding Christ, ranging from His treatment of women to “Why was Jesus a man?” and “How would Jesus grow His church?”

“When this conference in particular has really helped me to see the importance of knowing Christ and how to apply Him in a worldview,” Webb said. “It is so important to have Christ at the forefront of everything that we do so we know what to look for and how to apologetically interact with the world.”

Megan Manzi, a student at the University of Evansville in Indiana, said the conference was spiritually uplifting. “It helps me coming here because it refreshes me and reminds me of what I do know,” she said. “It just refreshes me and strengthens me to tell them [unbelievers] the truth and to be more bold.”

The conference also presented a unique ministry opportunity. In conjunction with the international ministry of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, conference planners invited international students — many of whom were unbelievers — from local colleges to attend the event for free.

International students were then paired with seminary students who accompanied them throughout the weekend, making sure they understood what was being taught, answering questions, and simply acting as campus guides for them, Davis said. “The ministry leaders have indicated that was a tremendous event for these students,” Davis said. “The students were confronted with truth, the leaders had time to build relationships since the program was taken care of for them, and many Gospel bridges were built in their lives. We hope to hear of an evangelistic harvest from this event.”

By Jeff Robinson

Russell D. Moore teaches a collegiate conference audience about the importance of a proper understanding of Christ.

Attendee Nicholas Webb, a student at College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, Mo., said the conference aided his understanding of the practical importance of knowing Christ.
Churches must place greater emphasis on the discipline of biblical counseling in order to nurture believers to spiritual maturity, David Powlison said in chapel at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Feb. 3.

Powlison, who teaches practical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa., and serves as editor of the Journal of Biblical Counseling, delivered Southern’s annual Norton Lecture Series.

Churches that are focused on Jesus Christ naturally should become “communities of wise counsel,” but many churches inappropriately relegate the discipline of counseling to a secondary role, he said.

“When Christ lives in our midst, when He lives in our hearts individually and lives in our hearts corporately, of course what He creates is a community of wise counsel,” Powlison said. “It could be nothing else.”

The importance of disseminating wise counsel in the community of believers demands that biblical counseling be practiced in the church, he said.

“When you really think about it … is there any other place where it matters more what interpretations of life are being used, what advice is given, what ways of understanding suffering are communicated?” he asked.

In order to remedy the widespread neglect of biblical counseling, Powlison outlined a process through which churches and denominations can travel in order to develop a vision for the discipline.

The process must begin with believers recognizing that biblical counseling is important for the body of Christ, he said.

By David Roach

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Southern Seminary embarks on new vision for biblical counseling

Southern Seminary is taking its Christian counseling department in a new direction, one built upon the sufficiency of Scripture and designed to train pastors to deal biblically with the needs of hurting people.

According to Russell D. Moore, dean of the school of theology and senior vice president for academic administration, the seminary’s vision for counseling embraces a Gospel-centered and church-focused approach.

“This new vision for biblical counseling is historic and groundbreaking in Southern Baptist life,” Moore said. “It will mean moving beyond the clinical professionalism of what historically has been dubbed ‘pastoral care’ in the therapeutic guild, it will mean recovering true ‘pastoral care’ as defined by the Scriptures.

“The ramifications of this course correction will be felt in congregations throughout the Southern Baptist Convention and the evangelical world. It ultimately is not about curricular changes or faculty additions, but about the love of Christ for hurting people in the church and in the world.”

The new direction is not a new degree program. Rather, it is a wholesale change of emphasis built upon the view that Scripture is sufficient to answer comprehensively the deepest needs of the human heart, Moore said.

Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. said the program will center on teaching pastors and other church leaders how to apply the truths of Scripture comprehensively to the concerns and crises of everyday life.

“In this psycho-therapeutic age, it is really important that we think as Christians — that we employ authentically Christian thinking, biblical thinking, to human life; and that we do this in a way that, without apology, confronts and critiques the wisdom of the age and seeks the wisdom that can come only from God and from God’s Word.”

Southern has appointed two new professors to help carry out its renewed vision of biblical counseling: Stuart Scott, former professor of biblical counseling at The Master’s Seminary; and Randy Stinson, executive director for the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.

By Jeff Robinson

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Professors receive awards for course development

Two Southern Seminary professors were recently honored for excellence in course development by a Louisville-area educational awards program.

Esther Crookshank, Ollie Hale Chiles Professor of Church Music, and Robert Plummer, assistant professor of New Testament interpretation, were among seven professors who received $1,000 Kentuckiana Metroversity Awards for Instructional Development.

Crookshank was recognized for developing a hymnology course teaching students to analyze, evaluate and write Christian hymns. Plummer received an award for developing a curriculum to teach doctoral students about New Testament archaeology and multimedia teaching techniques.

The Kentuckiana Metroversity Awards for Instructional Development have been presented annually for more than 20 years to full-time faculty members at Louisville-area colleges and seminaries who develop creative educational plans.

By David Roach

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Crookshank

By David Roach

Plummer

By Jeff Robinson
SBTS to span the globe on summer mission trips

How can seminary students, faculty and staff use their theological knowledge to make an immediate impact throughout the world for Christ?

International teams will travel to South Asia, Guatemala, the Pacific Rim and East Asia. North American missions efforts will extend to Newfoundland and the Northwest Territories in Canada and several states across the U.S.

David Sills, director of Great Commission ministries and associate professor of missions and cultural anthropology at Southern, hopes the trips will cause some students to consider career missionary service.

“The Great Commission Center strives to guide students and faculty to consider the claims of God on their lives,” he said. “We know that many will stay and send others will go. For many students, the result of these trips may be hearing God call them to missionary service. Missiologist Ralph D. Winter has said, ‘God cannot lead you based upon information you do not have.’ We hope that on these trips some new information may open eyes to God’s call.”

Daniel Wiginton, a master of divinity student from Abilene, Texas, is scheduled to participate in the South Asia trip. He said he looks forward to engaging Muslim men and women in conversations about the Gospel and sharing the love of Christ by meeting practical human needs.

“It’s just about spreading the Gospel and getting God’s Word to people there,” he said. “We know that when God’s Word goes out, it does not return void. So it will be effective in that way.”

Mohler assured all the participants in Southern’s summer missions efforts of the seminary’s prayer and support.

“Where you go, prayer will have preceded you,” he said. “So we’re going to pray not only that the Lord would protect you, but that the Lord would prepare the way so that when you arrive where the Lord has sent you, there will be an amazing receptivity to the Gospel because the Holy Spirit has been working in hearts to prepare them for the very Gospel you will come to preach.”

By David Roach

More than 80 students and faculty members were commissioned for summer mission trips during the final chapel service of spring semester.

For nearly 80 students, faculty and staff at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary the answer is taking summer mission trips.

Teams from Southern will travel to six countries on three continents this summer spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The teams will engage in such activities as conducting cultural research, evangelizing people from other world religions, participating in post-tsunami cleanup efforts and planting churches.

“It’s an incredible thing to reflect on what God can and will do through these, our brothers and sister who are going to these specific places,” Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. said during a commissioning service April 28.

“We don’t know all you are going to face this summer,” he said. “... I think we have good New Testament authority for understanding that the path is not always going to be easy and the road is not always going to be smooth. I think you can expect some opposition to the Gospel. I think you can find some opposition directed specifically at you because those who would carry the Gospel also carry that burden. I pray the Lord will give you protection.”

Southern Seminary
Upcoming Events

August 15 — Fall semester begins

August 16 — Fall convocation

September 12-16 — Women’s Ministry Institute: Women’s Ministry in the Local Church

September 17 — Center for Youth Ministry Vision Conference

October 7-8 — Boyce College Preview Conference

October 14-15 — Seminary Preview Conference

Journal examines SBC Conservative Resurgence

The Southern Baptist Convention must continue to build upon the reformation that began 25 years ago with the Conservative Resurgence if the denomination is to have a healthy future, essayists argue in the latest edition of the Southern Baptist Journal of Theology (SBJT).

The Spring 2005 edition of the SBJT examines the Conservative Resurgence in the SBC and contributors chart a course for continued reformation that builds a comprehensive doctrinal structure upon the foundation of biblical inerrancy.

Book shows practical nature of Trinity doctrine

Do Christians really need to understand the doctrine of the Trinity to know God better?

In his new book, *Father, Son & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, & Relevance* (Crossway Books) Southern Seminary professor Bruce A. Ware argues that the Trinity is a doctrine that demands careful study by all Christians — from those with a seminary Ph.D. to the layperson — in order that they might better know and reverence the one true God.
Woman establishes scholarship to honor deceased fiancé

It was the summer of 2002, and life seemed to be working out perfectly for Andrea Hurdle.

A recent graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, Hurdle planned to marry her fiancé Kevin Todd in July and travel with him to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he would begin studying in the fall of 2003.

Todd had been diagnosed with a rare form of skin cancer several years earlier, but with regular treatments, doctors expected the Mississippi native to carry out his call to pastoral ministry for many years.

Then tragedy struck three weeks before the wedding as Hurdle and Todd visited relatives in Alabama. Todd went into cardiac arrest due to an undetected heart condition and died after a week in intensive care. “We were so close to being married that I almost felt like a widow,” Hurdle said. “I knew God had led me to him, and I knew He had led him to me. And that’s what I felt was right. But I know that God’s plan is much better than my plan, that He’s in control and He’s sovereign.”

Todd’s death was particularly difficult to accept because of his obvious passion for ministry and potential to impact lives for the Kingdom of God, Hurdle said. Todd’s potential for ministry became particularly apparent through his work teaching an adult Sunday school class. “A lot of people saw his testimony and faith through [his battle with cancer] because through everything that he had to deal with, he never let it get him down,” she said. “… His faith was just strong, and I think everyone could see that.”

As Hurdle searched for a way to honor Todd, God turned her mind to Southern Seminary.

“I began praying for a way to honor Kevin but to also glorify God and show Kevin’s passion for Christ,” she said. “And we began searching for what we were going to do, and it immediately came to my mind that we should call Southern Seminary and see what could be done there.”

After conferring with seminary administrators, Hurdle established the Kevin M. Todd Memorial Scholarship Fund to assist men from Mississippi who are studying for the pastorate at Southern.

“We decided that we were going to start a scholarship fund,” Hurdle said. “We just knew that was the best place to send the money just because of all the lives that could be touched.”

The scholarship was funded by donations from Todd’s friends and family and by proceeds from a series of benefit concerts organized by Hurdle. Beginning in 2006 the scholarship will be awarded annually to a student or students from Mississippi studying for the pastorate at Southern Seminary.

“In our culture, often a scholarship is just a scholarship,” said Russell D. Moore, Southern’s senior vice president for academic administration and dean of the school of theology, himself a Mississippi native.

“It helps one man or woman get an education, sometimes changing the life of a family but only rarely changing the life of the world. The Kevin Todd Memorial Scholarship is different.

“This scholarship equips a Mississippian to do battle with the powers of this dark age for the glory of Jesus Christ. This scholarship then fuels the passion of a young pastor who will proclaim to thousands, maybe millions, the Gospel of the Kingdom. This scholarship then will result in lives rescued, churches planted and the Kingdom breaking forth in some of the darkest places all around the world.”

Hurdle, who now lives in Nashville, Tenn., and works for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, says dealing with such difficult circumstances enabled her to minister to others experiencing trials.

“My passion right now is to encourage those people who are going through hard times and just let them know that there’s hope,” she said. “But the only way they can find hope is through Jesus Christ and just to put all their trust in Him because He’s the only one that’s going to help them come out of that.”

Hurdle particularly draws comfort from Romans 11:33-36, which speaks of the depth and the riches of God’s plan, she said.

“I think it’s so important right after something happens to you in your life that you just give all the glory to Him,” she said. “He’s going to show you the way and no one else can.”

By David Roach

AlbertMohler.com offers new weblog

Evangelical Christians have a new Internet resource to help them think through today’s critical cultural, theological and ethical issues. R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has launched a new weblog or “blog.” Mohler already writes a daily commentary on similar issues, but says the weblog provides an opportunity to respond to news as it breaks throughout each day. While his commentaries primarily deal with a single issue each day, Mohler says the blog may be updated several times per day when critical issues arise that demand analysis.

“I wanted to be able to give a quick response from a Christian worldview perspective of the issues that arise every day,” Mohler said. “The commentaries have been very successful and popular, and many people have found them to be a tremendous resource for research. Yet there are more issues than I can address in those daily commentaries.

“One of the greatest aspects of this is that it provides Christians and others a way around the monopoly of the mainstream media,” Mohler said.

Mohler’s commentary and weblog, along with resources from his national radio show are available at www.albertmohler.com

By Jeff Robinson
For the past eleven years Mark Terry has given students at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary a charge to follow God’s call on their lives regardless of where it takes them.

Recently, however, the tables were turned, and Southern’s former A.P. & Faye Stone Professor of Christian Missions and Evangelism found himself on the receiving end of a charge to follow God to the ends of the earth.

Terry began to consider the possibility of returning to the mission field in 2001 when he took a short-term trip to Southeast Asia. In 2003 he returned to the region on a second short-term trip to teach at the seminary where he will serve, and the Lord impressed upon him the need to return to the area full time.

“We had always intended to return to missionary service,” Jerry said. “The only question was when. … In 2003 it was my turn to go again. On the way home, I said [to my wife], ‘I feel that God may be calling us to serve at this seminary. Do you feel that way too?’ And she said, ‘Oh yes. Yes I do.’”

Terry began praying that God would open doors if a return to missionary service was His will. Within a few weeks he heard that a friend in Southeast Asia was retiring and that there was a need for someone to teach missions at an Asian seminary. The IMB agreed that Terry would be an ideal person for the job and appointed him to the post.

Although Terry has left Southern Seminary to serve in Southeast Asia, he will continue to be involved with the seminary through a partnership between the two schools.

“I challenge all of the students here at the seminary to be open to God’s leadership in their lives and not to put geographical restrictions on that,” he said. “We are bought with a price and we belong to the Lord. We should be responsive to His leadership forever, wherever it may take us.”

By David Roach

The response of King Jehoshaphat as the Ammonite and Moabite armies approached Judah would have stunned the authors of many contemporary manuals on church leadership, said noted pastor Alistair Begg at Southern Seminary on March 15.

As the enemy soldiers drew near, Judah’s king grew fearful, called a national fast, and cried out to the sovereign God who had made a covenant of redemption with Israel. God responded by destroying the enemy armies, setting off mass worship of the one true God throughout Judah.

Begg, pastor of Parkside Church in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, was the keynote speaker for Southern Seminary’s annual “Power in the Pulpit” preaching conference which drew more than 300 pastors from Kentucky and surrounding states.

In the same manner as Jehoshaphat, ministers in the 21st century will discover God’s power when they realize their own weakness and their utter dependence upon Him, Begg said.

“God’s purpose is that we might depend entirely upon Him,” Begg said. “Jesus didn’t say ‘apart from me you can do a few things.’ He said, ‘apart from me you can do nothing.’ We cannot do anything as we ought without the help that He gives.”

God often brings adverse circumstances into the lives of ministers to demonstrate their weakness, Begg said. Only when a minister sees, like Jehoshaphat, that “the battle belongs to the Lord,” will he be in a position to see lasting fruit born through his ministry, Begg said.

Ministers must articulate the weakness of human beings and the power of God, Begg said. And the antidote to human impotence is not found in anxious hand-wringing, but in the undiluted proclamation of the Word of God, Begg said.

“We need the Word of God brought home by the Spirit of God to the people of God in a way that addresses their circumstances,” he said. “[Ministers need to say] ‘This is what God says. What do we do now? Even the king (Jehoshaphat) says he is powerless and clueless. You need to know that the battle isn’t yours, but it is God’s. You need to learn what God does, and you need to know what you are to do.’”

By Jeff Robinson
Giving to Southern Seminary helps train pastors for the next generation, Hayes says

Who will pastor the church your children and grandchildren attend when they become adults? This is the question that motivated Jim Hayes to start giving his time, his prayer and his resources to Southern Seminary.

As a businessman in Memphis, Tenn., 10 years ago, Hayes was invited to a dinner where Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. spoke about the seminary’s passion for training young pastors. At that dinner God spoke to Hayes about how he should partner with Southern in that passion.

“God got a hold of my heart that night, began to talk to me about the fact of training preachers,” he said. “I had a brand new granddaughter, and the thing that God really began to put in my … heart was, ‘Who was going to be her pastor when she had kids?’

“I was really concerned about that because I felt like our seminaries … weren’t really training people to be expositors of the Gospel.”

With his newly discovered burden for training pastors, Hayes attended a meeting of the Southern Seminary Foundation Board. At that meeting Hayes felt a conviction that he should become a financial supporter of the seminary.

“I went to a meeting of the Foundation Board and really began to get convinced that this was where God wanted me to be and specifically that God wanted us to be contributors, which I never in my wildest dreams thought I would do,” he said.

In addition to contributing his own resources to Southern, Hayes felt a burden to find others who would partner with him in supporting the seminary. So he became a member of the Foundation Board in 1996 and went on to chair the Board from 1999-2000.

“I am convinced … that Southern Seminary is training preachers to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. And I’m not one bit ashamed to ask people to give money for that purpose.” — Jim Hayes

Hayes’ convictions about supporting the Kingdom of God have influenced not only his work at Southern, but they have also led him to start several businesses that are committed to supporting Christian ministries. After living in Memphis for many years, Hayes moved to Nashville seven years ago where he has developed several companies whose charters require that some of the profits be donated to Christian causes.

“What I’ve really devoted my time to the last few years and even now, along with some other partners, is building enterprise to fund ministry,” he said. “We believe that God has uniquely equipped men to build enterprise and use that enterprise to fund ministry. … Our companies by charter have to give away 20 percent of our money before we distribute any money at all.”

Unfortunately, very few businesses follow Hayes’ lead in donating their proceeds to ministry, he said. So in an effort to increase the number of businessmen committed to funding the Kingdom of God, Hayes has committed himself to training young businessmen to honor God in their financial dealings.

“I believe God honors when businessmen do it His way,” he said. “What we need to do is teach young men how to do it. So I and my partners have devoted whatever time we have left to create enterprise to fund ministry and to train young men to create enterprise to fund ministry.”

When Hayes is not working to fund ministry, he focuses on doing ministry at Judson Baptist Church in Nashville where he is a member.

“I’m most passionate about teaching the Bible,” Hayes said. “I have a men’s Bible study I teach on Wednesday evening. I teach a couples’ Sunday school class, and I currently serve as the chairman of deacons.”

In all his ministry opportunities — at work, church and Southern — Hayes is motivated by a desire to extend the love of Christ to as many people as possible. At Southern that means encouraging donors to help expand the work of the seminary.

“At Southern, [we] have the opportunity to train so many more young men and young women than most of the other seminaries because we simply have the facilities to do it,” he said. “What we have to have to be more effective are more resources to maintain those facilities and add to them.”

By David Roach
With your help we can continue to build on the legacy of Southern Seminary’s founding fathers. By investing in the work of preparing God-called men and women for ministry, you will play a vital role in advancing the Kingdom of God. You will build a legacy.

You may give to the Annual Fund or through trusts and annuities that offer tax benefits plus a lifetime income. Also you may give through your will so that your investment keeps on working for generations to come.

For more information on giving to Southern Seminary, contact the Office of Institutional Relations at 1-800-626-5525, ext. 4143, or visit online at www.sbts.edu.

Invest in tomorrow’s churches. Build a legacy today.
Harold Songer, Southern Seminary professor from 1962-1992, dies


Songer was perhaps best known for his work in New Testament scholarship, publishing numerous works in the field including the volume on James in the Broadman Bible Commentary series.

Born in Miami, Fla., Songer was a two-time graduate of Southern Seminary, receiving his Ph.D. and master of divinity from the Louisville seminary. He was also a World War II Coast Guard veteran and served as chairman of evaluation teams for the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities and the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

Songer began teaching classes at Southern as a doctoral student in 1958 when 13 professors resigned unexpectedly, creating a need for new professors. He was hired as a professor of New Testament interpretation upon his graduation in 1962 and later became the seminary’s vice president for academic affairs until his retirement in 1992.

“Dr. Harold Songer served many years on the faculty of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and had a tremendous impact on the lives of many ministers,” Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. said. “His love for the book of James was the hallmark of his teaching ministry. The Southern Seminary family extends its sympathy to the Songer family.”

Former professor of Christian theology Wayne Ward, who worked closely with Songer throughout his career at Southern, delivered a eulogy at Songer’s funeral Jan. 25 at Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville.

Ward called his friend a committed teacher, churchman and seminary administrator.

“Dr. Harold Songer served as president of The Southern Baptist Seminary from 1982-1993, died Dec. 21 from head injuries sustained the previous day in an accident at his home in Louisville, Ky. He was 78.

Honeycutt, Southern Seminary’s eighth president, guided the seminary through the initial years of the conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention and gained recognition as a significant voice in the denominational conflict.

Among Honeycutt’s major accomplishments at Southern were the construction of the main section of the Honeycutt Campus Center and a significant expansion of the faculty.

“Dr. Roy Honeycutt was a Christian gentleman,” Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. said. “He gave so much of his life to the Southern Baptist Convention and to Southern Seminary in particular. He led during difficult times and was not afraid of controversy. At the personal level he was as gracious a human being as you could ever expect or hope to meet.”

Born Oct. 30, 1926, in Grenada, Miss., Honeycutt was a two-time graduate of Southern Seminary, receiving his Ph.D. in 1958 and his master of divinity in 1952. He served as academic dean at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1971-1975 and chairman of Midwestern’s Old Testament department from 1963-1975 prior to joining the Southern Seminary faculty as a professor of Old Testament.


Honeycutt published numerous books and articles, including a volume of the Broadman Bible Commentary in 1970.

Mohler, who served as an assistant to Honeycutt from 1983-1989, praised Honeycutt for a strong commitment to his church, his family and Southern Seminary.

“He and his wife June were married for 56 years and were a model of commitment to each other and shared commitment to this institution,” Mohler said. “The entire Southern Seminary family grieves with June Honeycutt and the Honeycutt family and is praying for them at this time.”

Honeycutt is survived by his wife June and two children, Roy Lee and Mary Anne. Funeral services were held Dec. 23 in Louisville.

By David Roach
Henlee Barnette, former SBTS ethics professor, dies

Henlee Barnette, who served as full-time professor of Christian ethics at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1951-1977, died Oct. 20, at his home in Louisville. He was 93.

Born Aug. 14, 1911, near Taylorsville, N.C., Barnette was perhaps best known for his work on behalf of social and civil rights causes.

In 1937, he met with Soviet leader Nikita Krushchev at the Kremlin and helped establish a college student exchange program between the United States and Russia. In 1961, Barnette hosted civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. on the campus of Southern Seminary and later marched with King in Frankfort, Ky.

Barnette was a two-time graduate of Southern Seminary, receiving his Ph.D. from the school in 1948 and a master of theology in 1943. He taught at Howard College (now Samford University) from 1946-1947 and served as professor of sociology and religion at Stetson University from 1947-1951, before joining the Southern Seminary faculty. After retiring from Southern, Barnette served as clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Louisville from 1977-1992.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, served as one of Barnette’s teaching assistants in the mid-80s. He praised Barnette’s courage in working for civil rights and recalled his love for teaching.

“He took brave and courageous stands on behalf of civil rights when he knew his actions and words could put him in jail. He helped Southern Baptists understand the biblical imperatives for racial integration, and he had a passion for full civil rights for all citizens. In that sense, he was a powerful prophet in an age that had too few prophets.”

Barnette did not agree with the theologically conservative direction that Southern Seminary took under Mohler’s administration, but he continued to visit the campus. He took part in a forum on the Christian response to terrorism sponsored by the seminary’s Carl F.H. Henry Institute for Evangelical Engagement in February 2002.

“He was a personal friend to me for many years, and even as events and developments led to some distance between us, I always knew him to be a man of integrity and graciousness,” said Mohler.

Barnette is survived by four children: John, Wayne, Martha, and Jim. Funeral services were held Oct. 25 at Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville.

By Jeff Robinson

Southern alumnus named president of Simmons Bible College

Simmons Bible College, Kentucky’s oldest African-American educational institution, on Jan. 18 named Southern Seminary alumnus Kevin Cosby as its 13th president.

Cosby, pastor since 1979 of St. Stephen Church, Kentucky’s largest African-American congregation, plans to execute a five-year strategy that will, among other things, see the Louisville school change its name to Simmons Baptist College to more accurately reflect its expanded mission.

Cosby’s other goals include increasing student enrollment, renovating and expanding the campus and reconnecting the school to the community.

“Our focus will be to wed with integrity conservative orthodox theology with radical modern methodology,” Cosby said. “We want to do this while maintaining classical Reformation theology.”

Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. said the move by Simmons’ board of trustees elevates a gifted pastor and teacher who is well qualified to advance a Bible-centered agenda at the school.

“We congratulate Kevin Cosby on his election as president of Simmons Bible College, and we pray God’s blessing on his leadership there,” Mohler said. “He has demonstrated incredible leadership capabilities as pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church. He stands in a proud legacy, and I can think of no one better equipped to assume this challenge.”

By Jeff Robinson
NAMB appoints Missionaries with Southern Seminary ties

Thirteen missionaries with ties to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary were recently appointed by the North American Mission Board.

Ramy and Madia James serve in Riverdale Park, Md., where Ramy is a Nehemiah Project church planter, missionary and pastor of Faith Community Church.

A native of Liberia, Ramy is a graduate of Southern Seminary.

As pastor of Faith Community Church, James serves the communities of Greenbelt, Lanham, New Carrollton and Riverdale.

Madia James, also a native of Liberia, will assist in family ministries. The Jameses have two children: Elisha, 8; and Praise, 6.

Jay J. and Irene H. Kim serve in Torrance, Calif., where Jay is a Nehemiah Project church planting missionary.

Kim, a native of Korea, is a graduate of California State University-Pomona and Southern Seminary. A former aerospace engineer, Kim has served on staff in Korean Baptist churches in Louisville and Indianapolis, Ind.

He is working to establish a church to reach unchurched Korean-Americans in the South Bay area of California.

Irene Kim, a native of California, is a graduate of the University of California-Los Angeles and the University of Louisville. She is a middle school teacher.

The Kims have three children: Daniel, 14; Esther, 13; and Stephanie, 9.

Jason A. and Sarah J. Lee serve in Louisville, where Jason is a Nehemiah Project church planting missionary.

Jason, a Georgia native, is a graduate of Kennesaw State University in Marietta, Ga., and is currently enrolled as a master of divinity student at Southern Seminary.

Most recently, Lee served as missions activity coordinator at Southern Seminary and evangelism director at Immanuel Baptist Church in Louisville.

Sarah Lee is a graduate of the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, Ga. She works as a registered nurse at Baptist Hospital East in Louisville. The Lees have a daughter, Rebekah, 1.

Dustin L. and Laurie A. Neeley serve in Louisville, where Dustin is a Nehemiah Project church planting missionary.

A native of Virginia, Neeley is a graduate of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., and is currently enrolled at Southern Seminary.

Neeley serves as pastor of a new church start in east Louisville called Crossing Community Church. Before starting the new church, Neeley served as administrative pastor of Sojourn Community Church in Louisville.

Laurie Neeley, a native of Tennessee, is a graduate of Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tenn., and East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tenn. She helps lead the women’s, children’s and counseling ministries at Crossing Community Church.

The Neeleys have a son, Nathaniel, 1.

Jervis D. “J.D.” and Sarah S. Payne serve in Louisville, Ky., where J.D. is assistant professor and director of church planting at Southern Seminary.

A Kentucky native, Payne is a graduate of the University of Kentucky, where he earned master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees in missions, evangelism and church growth. He has served as an assistant professor at Southern Seminary since May 2002.

Sarah Payne is also a Kentucky native and graduate of the University of Kentucky, where she earned degrees in biology and doctor of medicine.

She practices medicine as a physician at the Family Health Center in Fairdale, Ky., specializing in internal medicine and pediatrics. The Paynes have two daughters: Hannah, 2, and Rachel, 6 months.

Jeffrey D. and Kimberly A. Pearson serve in Kent Island, Md., where Jeffrey is a Nehemiah Project church planting missionary.

A native of Massachusetts, Jeffrey is a graduate of Nichols College, Dudley, Mass., and is currently enrolled at Southern Seminary. Before enrolling at Southern, Pearson served as a military police officer in the United States Army and worked in the sales and marketing industry.

Kimberly Pearson, a native of Connecticut, is also a graduate of Nichols College. The Pearsons have three children: Griffin, 11; Monet, 9; and Silas, 1.

John D. Tolbert serves in Fenton, Mich., as associate state director of evangelism with the Baptist State Convention of Michigan.

A Michigan native, Tolbert is a graduate of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Mich., and Southern Seminary. Most recently he served as director of O.H. Pye III Funeral Home in Detroit, Mich., and associate minister at Springhill Missionary Baptist Church in Detroit.

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People and Places

Southern Seminary has a rich history of alumni serving Christ throughout the world. The intent of this section is to help the seminary family stay close — whether that be through the news of a new ministry position, a retirement, a birth or a death. To submit information to People and Places, call 502-897-4143 or e-mail irprojects@sbts.edu.

Ruth Rodgers Cavender retired from teaching after 34 years in 1997. Patrick Goodman and his wife, Janet, have been appointed by the International Mission Board (IMB) to serve in Central and Eastern Europe. John A. Gray and his wife, Joanne, retired from IMB in October of 2004. Each were appointed to the IMB in 1975. Steve McKinney will serve as the new vice-chairman on the board at the Rockcastle County Library. He is presently the pastor of Fairview Baptist Church. Ernie Moulton has a recently released book entitled The City Under the Sea. John Parker died at the age of 90 on Nov. 7, 2004. He was an emeritus Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) missionary to Chile. Jody Ratcliffe and his wife, Melanie, have been appointed as missionaries with the IMB. They will be serving in Central and Eastern Europe. Martha A. Rowlett died in May of 2004. Her husband died 10 days later.

Edward Boyd (’54) retired after 50 years in the pastorate. He has served the past 33 years at Chapel Park Baptist Church in Louisville. Chester L. Self (’54) mourns the death of his beloved wife, Rosalie. Billy J. Jones (’56) will be going to First Baptist Church of Rota, Spain, to serve as interim during pastor Robert Rogers’ furlough. Billy is a retired chaplain to the Mississippi Mighty Eighth Air Force after serving 15 years. James T. Melton (’58) and his wife celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 18, 2004. He will also be celebrating his 25th anniversary with AEF on May 5 as he works as a financial advisor. Vasten E. Zumwalt (’58) celebrated a marriage of 50 years in 2004 as well as 50 years in ministry. He also attended the 10th anniversary of a church he started in Las Vegas, Nev. J. Billy Graham (’59) is the interim director of missions for the Buncombe Baptist Association in Asheville, N.C.

Henry Langford (’45) recently celebrated the 65th year anniversary of his ordination by his home church in Florida. Charles W. Drake (’46) was chosen to be the pastor emeritus by the First Baptist Church of Cradock in Alpharetta, Ga. George Campbell (’49) is now the vice moderator of the Middlesex-Lambton-Huron Association of Baptist Churches in southwestern Ontario. When he becomes moderator this spring, it will be his third time serving, and at the age of 87, Campbell will be the oldest moderator in Canadian Baptist history. Sabin P. Landry (’49) was 87 years old in November 2004 and still teaches an adult Sunday school class at Madison Baptist Church in Madison, Ga.

C. Ed Schaible (’38) celebrated his 91st birthday and his 67th wedding anniversary in 2004. In August, Schaible visited his first pastorate in Mt. Pleasant, S.C. He was the church’s first full-time pastor. Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church is the largest in the Charleston Baptist Association. J. Chester Badgett (’39) is now retired. He is currently serving on the board of trustees at Campbellsville University. He is also pastor emeritus at Campbellsville Baptist Church. Ky.

Jerry W. Keese (’63) has been installed as pastor emeritus at the FBC of Flomaton, Ala., where he served as pastor for 20 years. He serves as interim pastor in south Alabama and northwest Florida. C. Roy Woodruff (’64) has been named the recipient of the Wayne E. Oates Award, which was established to honor those involved in pastoral care. Terrell E. Johnson (’68) retired from First United Methodist Church of Genesee, Ill., after 50 years in ministry.

Perry Carroll (’70) was ordained to the Gospel ministry by Boulevard Baptist Church, Anderson, S.C., and was appointed a chaplain in Civil Air Patrol by the CAP Chaplain’s Council. He will serve with the Greenville, S.C. Composite Squadron. Betty Mask (’70) became the coordinator of the Center for Students with Disabilities at Northeast State Community College. Its enrollment is approximately 5,000 students. Betty and her husband, Bert, have two children and reside in Bristol, Tenn. Gary Baker (’72) is now pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Lenoir City, Tenn. Samuel Akande (’73) was recognized in December 2003 by the federal government of Nigeria. He also received the National Honor of the Order of the Member of the Federal Republic, M. F. R. He has served as president of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, general secretary and chief executive officer of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, general secretary/treasurer of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship of the Baptist World Alliance, as a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, and as a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Samuel has published two books entitled The Courage to Live and Marriage and Family Life in the Nigerian Society: From the Beginning to the End, Volumes 1 and 2.

Byron J. Simmons (’80) was recently deployed to Iraq as the deputy multi-national force Iraq chaplain. Rickey Taylor (’80) has been called as minister of music and education to First Baptist Church of Bushnell, Fla. Jay Close (’81) is the director of the counseling...
ministry at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, as well as an adjunct faculty member. David Bates '83 has served in the Army as an active duty chaplain since 1986. He is currently stationed in Grafenwoehr, Germany, with his wife, Jane. Dave was promoted to colonel on Oct. 1, 2004.

Bill Gammon '84 is the associate pastor of education at First Baptist Church in Rincon, Ga., after serving for 18 years at Faith Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Fl. He is married to Lucia Elwood Foy '83. Lucia serves as a children's ministry specialist and Women's Ministry specialist. Melanie Nogalski '84 has been hired as the new director of the Lilly Ministerial Vocation Program for Youth.

Luke Day '85 is the pastor at the Dione Baptist Church. He is also the new branch manager of the Rebecca Caudill Library. Leo Percer '85 has accepted a position as assistant professor of biblical studies at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Va. Johnnie Ray Bailey '87 is now serving at Hillview Baptist Church as senior pastor.

James Furr '87 has been appointed the associate professor of Christianity at Houston Baptist University. Steven Fowler '88 and his wife, Alesia, recently moved to Billings, Mont., after serving 20 years in the Gospel ministry in Roscommon County, Mich. Chris Roberts '88 is minister of music at Mud Creek Baptist Church, Hendersonville, N.C., and served as worship leader for the 2005 evangelism conference for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina in Winston-Salem. Kevin Gibson '89 earned a doctor of ministry degree from the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lombard, Ill., in June 2004. He is currently serving as the minister of music/senior adults at First Baptist Church, North Kansas City, Mo. Randy Leon Haynes '89 married Teresa Carolyn Mathery '90 on Oct. 12, 2002. Mark Thames '89 received his Ph.D. in humanities-history of ideas, with a dissertation on the philosophy of Jurgen Habermas in the context of religious pluralism, from the University of Texas at Dallas in May of 2004.


2000s

Chris Carder '00 has been serving as worship pastor at Forest Park Community Church since 2001. He continues to travel throughout the world leading groups and mission agencies in praise gatherings. He and his wife, Leslie, are celebrating their first child, Elena McKenzie, who was born on Aug. 23, 2004. Robert McDonald '00 is director of major gift planning at Erskine College and Theological Seminary. Mark Shaw '00 is now serving as pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Vincennes, Ind. Daniel Calves '01 is the pastor of Cloverport Baptist Church and is celebrating his July 2004 marriage to Amy Chancellor. Michael E. Hunkes '01 and his wife, Candy, have completed the adoption of five children from the foster care system in Kentucky. Michael has been called as pastor of First Baptist Church, Summerfield, Fla. Jenny Hall Ledger '01 has been called to Second Memorial Baptist Church as the minister of music, youth and children. SMBC is a part of the Rehoboth Association in Georgia. Joel Rainey '01 began serving Jan. 1 as a church planting missionary with NAMB and the Baptist Convention of Maryland-Delaware. He oversees all church planting in the Baltimore-D.C. corridor. Previously, he was founding pastor of True Life Church in Taylors, S.C., and served as professor of evangelism at North Greenville College. Dean A. Delfosse '02 and his wife, Jamie, serve with NAMB in Seattle, Wash., where Dean is a member of a church planting team. Ralph Neal '02 is the pastor of Shawnee Run Baptist Church in Harrodsburg, Ky. Jason Gault '03 has been called to the Cedar Fork Church in Beulaville, N.C. He and his wife, Amanda, have moved to Beulaville. J. T. Kirkpatrick '03 is now serving as the pastor of Cecilia Baptist Church in Elizabethtown, Ky. Justin Krewatch '03 is pastor at the Reformed Baptist Church of Lewisburg, Penn., where he was ordained.

Nathan Ward '03 has been called to First Baptist Church in Mary Esther, Fla., as the worship leader. He and his wife, Wendy, and three sons moved to Mary Esther from Floyds Knobs, Ind. Travis Kerns '04 was recently called as senior pastor of Morningside Baptist Church in Louisville. He is married to Staci and they are expecting their first child in April. Travis is also a Ph.D. student at Southern Seminary.

DEATHS

• 1930's

• 1940s
  John Asa Hamrick '40 died Oct. 24, 2004, at his home in Charleston, S.C.; J. Frank Mitchell '43, an emeritus SBC missionary to Chile, died June 9, 2004, at the age of 89. Dorothy Long Parsons '48 died May 27, 2004, from breast cancer in Greenwood, S.C. She was the wife of A. B. Parsons Jr. '50 for 50 years. Florence Moore Pauk '49, former minister of music at Murray Hill Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fl., died Aug. 6, 2004, at the age of 82. She was a member of Island View Baptist Church, Orange Park, at the time of her death. She is survived by her husband of 48 years, Cameron.

• 1950's
  Leon Larimore '52 died Nov. 8, 2004; Arthur Walker '52 died Jan. 14, 2004, in Birmingham, Ala. He was 78. He was a former vice president for student affairs at Southern Seminary; Branson Isley Sr. '53 died Sept. 9, 2004; Delia "DG" Wilson '53 died Aug. 1, 2004; Ercil Barker '54 died Oct. 28, 2004. He is survived by his wife, Peach, three children, and five grandchildren; John R. Elliott '54 died December 20, 2004, in Sioux Falls, S. D.; William E. Mitchell '54 died May 9, 2003. He was in the ministry for more than 30 years. He pastored churches in Kentucky, Florida and Georgia; Robert Jackson "Jack" Napier '54 died July 28, in Marshville, N.C.; John Lee Pelham '54 died Aug. 2, 2004, after a long and difficult illness. He still had much enthusiasm for the furtherance of God's work through First Baptist Church of Palatka, Fl.; William David Field '57 died Sept. 10, 2004. He was

• 1960’s


• 1970’s

Alana J. Woolley (’78) died July 2, 2004, in Richmond, Va. She was employed by the IMB for 23 years. She was buried in Tuscaloosa, Ala., on July 7, 2004. Harold Malone (’78) died Sept. 17, 2004. He was a professor at Southern Seminary and also served with the IMB in 13 countries.

MISSIONS

James L. Adkins (’54) has served with the Home Mission Board (now NAMB) in West Virginia and with the Foreign Mission Board (now IMB) in Indonesia. He is retired and serves as the president of Retired Georgia Baptist Pastors. He and his wife, Bess, reside in Augusta, Ga. Leroy Albright (’56) and his wife, Jean, retired from the IMB in Sept. of 2003. They were stationed in Mexico at the time. Leroy K. Seat (’62) and his wife, June, retired from the IMB in October 2004. They were serving in Japan working in theological education and church and home outreach evangelism. Charles E. Buckner (’88) and his wife, Mary Ann, retired from the IMB in October 2004. They served as representatives to the Pacific Rim. Mark Whitt (’97) and family will be spending four months in Chiang Mai, Thailand on volunteer missions with the IMB working with Campus to Campus International. Mark serves as the Baptist Student Union campus minister at Murray State University in Murray, Ky. The Whitts will be in Thailand from April until August 2005.

BIRTHS

Terry Eddinger (’95) and his wife, Cynthia (’94), celebrated the birth of their new son, Hunter Levi, on June 30, 2004. Susan Hewitt (’95) announces the birth of her daughter, Ami Renee’ Byrne-Hewitt, who was born on April 1, 2003. Ami’s adoption was final on May 27, 2004. Hugh Norman (’95) and his wife, Kari, announce the birth of their son, Austin Hugh. He was born on March 31, 2004, in Marietta, Ga. He joins big brother, Jeff. Michael Julian (’99) and his wife, Jennifer welcomed their first child, Olivia Kate, born on Jan. 15, 2004, in Franklin, Tenn. Michael recently celebrated five years as minister of youth and activities at First Baptist Church, Mt. Pleasant, Tenn. He also published articles in the Spring 2004 and Spring 2005 issues of Leader Life Magazine. Michael Snow (’99) and his wife, Debbie, announce the birth of their first child, Michelle Anne, on March 18, 2004. Michael is minister of music at St. John United Methodist Church in Prospect, Ky. Justin Carswell (’00) and his family have moved to Pratt, Kan., where he is the vice president and dean at Barclay College. He and his wife, Mandy, celebrated the birth of a son, John Lyndon, on Sept. 22, 2004. John joins siblings Evie and Jack. Brent Raitz (’00) and his wife, Jen, announce the birth of their second daughter, Hailey Grace, born Sept. 2, 2004. Darren Malcolm (’01) and his wife, Amy, celebrate the arrival of their daughter, Amelia Grace, who was born May 29, 2004. Darren is also currently serving as worship pastor at Old Town Baptist Church. Brett Burleson (’03) is serving as spiritual maturity pastor at Valley View Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, Ala. His wife, April, gave birth to their second daughter, Olivia Joy, on Aug. 5, 2003. Mark Byars (’03) has just recently taken the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Ill. He and his wife have a new baby girl, Savannah Grace. She has an older brother, Tyler Chase, and an older sister, Brooklyn Nicole. Kevin Propes (’03) and his wife, Tina, announce the birth of their first child, Dawson Doyle, born on Sept. 17, 2004.
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