

# SOUTHERN SEMINARY

**HOW CAN  
WE BE SURE  
THAT THE  
BIBLE IS  
INERRANT?**



# A Letter from the President

R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.

*The inerrancy and authority of Scripture is always the fundamental issue facing the church.*

While our denominations and churches in recent decades fought a war for the Bible, one that led to a reassertion of the absolute reliability and authority of God's Word, until Christ returns, the war will never completely subside. This much is clear from the issues facing the church today from feminism to "same-sex" marriage.

The most contentious debates among Christians are, at their most fundamental level, arguments over biblical inerrancy and authority. While Christians who accept the full authority of Scripture – even the inerrancy and infallibility of the biblical text – many debate issues ranging from baptism and church government to eschatology and spiritual gifts, the issues of greatest debate in our time fall along the fault line of biblical inerrancy and authority.

Perhaps the clearest example we have of this reality in recent history is the Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention. In the beginning, in the middle and in the end, the controversy in the SBC was about theology, which is to say, it was a controversy of Scripture. Even when those who denied it was theological made their arguments most vociferously, they did so in theological and biblical terms.

Undergirding every assertion, not only in the closet, but standing out in the forefront of every debate was theology. It is inescapably so because theology is the most fundamental issue



of our knowledge, of our truth claims, of our thinking. Theology is the essence of the church.

Theology comes, or must come, from Scripture. The SBC and its seminaries held to the inerrancy of Scripture without debate until the dawn of the 20th century. This began to change in the first half of the century when Enlightenment ideology began to exert an influence on the denomination's seminaries.

Enlightenment philosophy questioned the inspiration, inerrancy and authority of the Bible. Once these views took hold in the seminaries, the resurgence was necessary. For the first time Enlightenment ideologies and philosophies as a challenge to revelation itself came to southern shores, to southern states and into the bosom of the SBC.

If you accept the fundamental naturalistic and secular assumptions of the Enlightenment, then you can no longer think of Scripture as the revealed Word of God.

Instead, you see the Scripture as eloquent, articulate, moving and even consensually important documents that reflect how human beings have apprehended the divine reality. But you can no longer say 'as Scripture speaks, God speaks.'

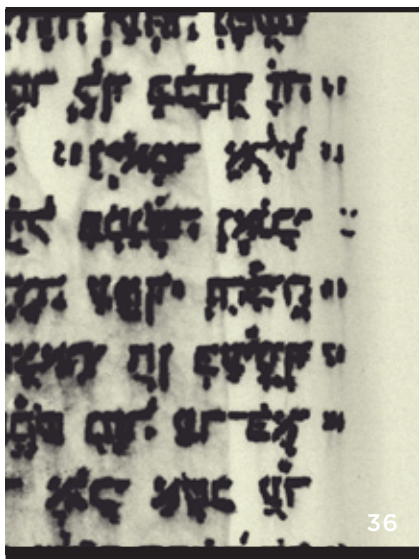
The Conservative Resurgence in the SBC is merely one point among many on the storyline of church history that demonstrates the fundamental nature of the doctrine of the inerrancy and authority of Scripture. It is true in our day on a host of issues, not the least of which are marriage, sexuality and gender. On these issues, as with all others, we must ask ourselves

the foundational question of the ages: How do we know what we know? Has God spoken? If so, then is that Word authoritative and utterly reliable? These questions will remain issues that underlie all the church's front line battles until Jesus returns and that is why it is at all times appropriate to address the issue of the inerrancy and authority of God's Word. ➤

R. Albert Mohler Jr.

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This image represents  
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## Mohler Steps Away From Live Radio Show for New Ministry Opportunities

By GARRETT E. WISHALL

*R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, announced at the end of his radio show June 21 that he needed to prioritize other ministry responsibilities and pursue “a different media platform.” The final live broadcast of The Albert Mohler Program was held July 2.*

In an official letter explaining his plans, Mohler expressed gratitude to his listeners, Salem Communications and others who

have had a hand in the radio program. Ed Atsinger and Stu Epperson, the founders of the Salem Radio Network and Salem Communications, were among those Mohler thanked for “believing in this program and for building a great Christian radio network that is not afraid to take on the issues and offer conviction.”

“I have had the privilege of talking to people all over the world each weekday through the medium of radio,” Mohler wrote. “I believe we have indeed developed a model that lived up to our promise of ‘intelligent Christian conversation about the issues that matter.’ I have been energized every single day by the experience of sitting behind that microphone and talking to people across the nation and around the world.”

Mohler cited the continually shifting medium of radio, ministry responsibilities at Southern Seminary and other media opportunities as reasons for ending the live radio show. While the radio program is broadcast on more than 100 stations in the United States, Mohler noted that taking the program to the next level would likely involve an expansion to a three-hour daily broadcast.

Mohler will continue to do national broadcast commentary for Salem Communications. Mohler expressed a measure of regret over the decision to end the live program that he knows had to be made.

“There is a sense of sadness in leaving this stage of ministry and media for another,” he wrote. “I need to be most available — at my best — for those who mean the most to me, to Southern Seminary and to the advance of Christ’s Kingdom.” Mohler, who also serves as Joseph Emerson Brown Professor of Theology at Southern, noted that removing the constraints of a radio schedule will allow him to be more present in areas of life and ministry.

“I need to be more present on the mission fields of the world, more present with our students and faculty and more present with friends of the Seminary.”

Digital files of The Albert Mohler Program will continue to be available at [www.albertmohler.com](http://www.albertmohler.com). ➤



# Southern Seminary Awards McCoy, Celebrates Wright's Presidency at SBC Luncheon

By EMILY GRIFFIN

*The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary honored Timothy A. McCoy with the seminary's distinguished alumnus award and congratulated alumnus Bryant Wright on his election as president of the Southern Baptist Convention during the Southern Seminary luncheon June 16.*

The luncheon, which hosted 600 guests, took place during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 15-16 in Orlando, Fla. Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr., presented the distinguished alumnus award to McCoy, senior pastor of Ingleside Baptist Church in Macon, Ga.

"Tim and I arrived at Southern Seminary in the same year — that was a very different hour in the life of Southern Seminary — and Tim McCoy stood out as a man with a mission. I have always admired and had great respect for him," Mohler said.

McCoy graduated with honors from Louisiana College and then earned a master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees at Southern Seminary. During his ministry, the Mississippi native has served as an officer in the Georgia Baptist Convention and as both a trustee and chairman of the International Mission Board. McCoy has served Ingleside since 1989.

Mohler also led attendees in a prayer for Southern Seminary alumnus Bryant Wright in recognition of his June 15 election to succeed Johnny Hunt as SBC president.

Wright, senior pastor of the Atlanta-area Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, said of the luncheon, "One reason I am so excited in being here and keeping up with what God is doing through the leadership, through the faculty, through the trustees, and through the key supporters of the seminary is seeing how God is working here."

Concerning his SBC presidency, Wright said, "I am absolutely passionate about people renewing their relationship with Jesus Christ, that individual relationship with God through Christ. I'm absolutely passionate about global missions and seeing what can



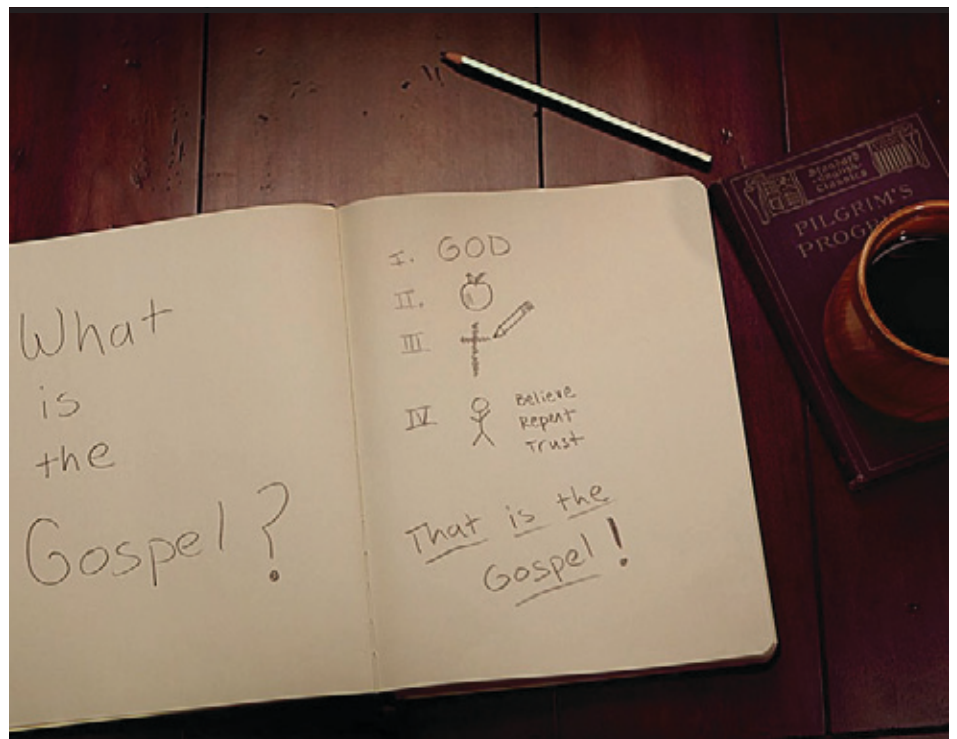
happen in the local church when people begin to not only give, and not only pray, but to go and develop partnerships around the world." ➤

## What Is the Gospel?

*The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary launched an original video, titled "What Is the Gospel?," in June 2010. Since its launch, the video has been viewed over 1,500 times and garnered a mention by The Gospel Coalition blogger Justin Taylor.*

Southern's communications department developed the video concept, which features the free-hand drawings of Dan DeWitt, vice president of communications at Southern. William Wallace, Southern's videographer, produced and edited the video.

"What is the Gospel?" is available for viewing at [www.sbts.edu/resources](http://www.sbts.edu/resources). ➤



## Liberty University Honors Southern Professor as Alumnus of the Year

By AARON CLINE HANBURY

*Liberty University named Dave E. Adams as an alumnus of the year during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in June.*

Adams, a founding alumnus of Liberty, is professor of youth ministry and executive director of the International Center for Youth and Family Ministry at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Boyce College.

"I [do] not know of any Liberty graduate [who] has excelled in a greater way than Dave Adams," Elmer Towns, co-founder of Liberty University said.

"Shocked, surprised and humbled," Adams said of his recognition. "There are many people more worthy of the award than I am."

Despite Adams' own sentiment, Randy

Stinson, dean of the School of Church Ministries at SBTS, said of Adams, "I'm personally not surprised that Dave Adams would have been given such an honor. Over the last several decades of his life, [Adams] has proved himself to have been an exceptional leader, a man of considerable influence and a man who has completely devoted his life to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Adams came to Southern in 1999 to establish and direct the Center for Youth Ministry. Since then, the Center for Youth Ministry has grown into an international organization, facilitating sites in several countries — some in closed countries. Adams also helped establish youth and family ministry degree programs for both Southern Seminary and Boyce College.

Previously, Adams spent 21 years teaching at Liberty University and serving as staff at Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va. Between his time at Liberty and his present post at Boyce and SBTS, Adams served as president of Lexington Baptist College in Lexington, Ky. ➤



## Vigilance Conference Examines Safety and Security

By EMILY GRIFFIN

*For believers in Jesus Christ, the local church is the spiritual ark of safety, but in this fallen world, the church is no longer a place of physical safety.*

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary played host to a conference July 20-22 designed to help local churches more effectively protect their members from both physical and spiritual threats. More than 100 church safety leaders from churches across the country attended Vigilance: Rebuilding Perspective on Safety & Security. The conference included numerous speakers addressing topics ranging from technology, the use of weapons and force to incident management.

Dan Dumas, conference host and senior vice president for institutional administration at Southern Seminary, delivered the opening address, "Living in Lion Country." Speaking from 1 Peter 5:6-11, Dumas emphasized verse 8, which calls us to "be sober-minded; be watchful."

Bob Vernon, retired former assistant chief of the Los Angeles Police Department, was also among the keynote speakers. He founded the Pointman Leadership Institute in 1995, an organization that serves the top leadership in more than 35 countries worldwide, including a host of government and private companies in the United States. He is author of the book "L.A. Justice" (Focus on the Family).

Vernon unpacked three character traits of a dynamic leadership, a kind of leadership that will be necessary for churches to provide safety for their members: integrity and not deception, courage and not cowardice, and loyalty and not unfaithfulness. ➤







**THEOLOGY MEETS TECHNOLOGY**  
**SBTS.EDU/RESOURCES**

## Students Hone Discipleship Skills at D3 Conference

By EMILY GRIFFIN

*“This week is about what it means to follow Jesus as a disciple,” Denny Burk, dean of Boyce College, told the nearly 100 students that attended the inaugural D3 Youth Conference on the campus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.*

“Our prayer is that this week will be one of those watershed moments in your life where God sets down some markers in your life about what it means to be a disciple and what it means to follow Him,” Burk said.

Dan Dumas, senior vice president for institutional administration at Southern, designed D3 for high school students wanting to grow in their discipleship and develop their understanding of Christian leadership, worldview and missions.

Russell Moore, dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern, spoke three times during the four-day event. Moore’s first message came from Matthew 3:16-4:4 and addressed temptation.

Moore implored D3 students to understand that no one is invulnerable to temptation, and Satan will appeal to the deepest urges and wants one has in their life.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, instructed students about developing a Christian worldview from Romans 12:1-2.

Mohler told D3 attendees it is going to take everything Christians have to be faithful to Jesus Christ in this fallen world. He drew attention to the apostle Paul, who said that faithful Christians are not conforming to the world but are transformed by the living God.

“The Christian worldview is not a mind game, it is not an intellectual exercise, it is not a course you can take or a seminar — it is a way of life that equals faithfulness to Jesus Christ,” Mohler said. “Without developing a Christian worldview you can never demonstrate what it means to be a living sacrifice to Christ because a living sacrifice is the one, who by definition on the authority of Scripture, is not conformed to the



world because he or she has a mind that is renewed.”

Dumas preached a message challenging D3 students to consider how they handle fear. Fearing things other than God is an unhealthy and unhelpful dimension of faith, Dumas said, but a fear of the Lord will serve you all the days of your life. Teaching from Psalm 139, Dumas said the text reminds believers of the awesomeness of God.

D3 youth structured their own experience by selecting one of three focus tracks: leadership, worldview and missions. Dumas led the leadership track, Burk led the worldview track and Eric Bancroft, senior pastor of Castlevue Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Ind., lead the missions track.

Southern Seminary announces all future youth events at [www.sbts.edu/events](http://www.sbts.edu/events). ➤



Visit us online at [boycecollege.com](http://boycecollege.com)

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COLLEGE

*"These are serious times and we're looking for serious students."*

Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., President

Boyce College is the Undergraduate School of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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## Mohler Emphasizes Inerrancy During Fall Convocation

By EMILY GRIFFIN

*R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, addressed students and faculty about the historic and future struggle to hold a commitment to biblical inerrancy during the annual Fall Convocation on Aug. 24, at Southern Seminary.*

Mohler's address detailed the historical significance of the term "evangelicalism" in reference to the fundamentalist-modernist

controversy of the early twentieth century. Mohler placed Southern in this historic context.

Fall Convocation marked the eighteenth time Mohler has welcomed a new academic term at Southern Seminary. During his address, "Which Way to the Future? Southern Baptists, Southern Seminary, and the Future of the Evangelical Movement in America," Mohler encouraged students about the year ahead.

Preceding Mohler's address, Southern

Seminary faculty members Timothy Paul Jones and Shawn D. Wright signed the Abstract of Principles, Southern's statement of faith which was penned by founding faculty member Basil Manly Jr. and adopted by the school when it opened in 1859. Professors must sign the document, agreeing to teach "in accordance with and nor contrary to" its doctrines.

Mohler's convocation sermon is available in video and audio format at [www.sbts.edu/resources](http://www.sbts.edu/resources). ➤

**PHOTO 1:** Timothy Paul Jones signing the Abstract of Principles. Jones serves as associate professor of leadership and church ministry for the School of Church Ministries, as editor of *The Journal of Family Ministry* and as family and children's ministry coordinator at Southern Seminary.

**PHOTO 2:** Shawn D. Wright signing the Abstract of Principles. Wright serves as associate professor of church history for the School of Theology and is also one of the pastors at Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky.

**PHOTO 3:** Marvin E. Tate, senior professor in the School of Theology, marked 50 years of service to Southern Seminary. To signify his golden anniversary with Southern, President R. Albert Mohler Jr., presented Tate with a brick from the original Norton Hall structure.

**PHOTO 4:** Gregory Brewton was installed as the Carolyn King Ragan Associate Professor of Church Music for the School of Church Ministries. Brewton also serves as coordinator for music and worship studies and department coordinator of music studies at Boyce College, a position he has held since 2002.





## Mohler Launches New Online Programming

By JOSH HAYES

*R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, reentered public dialogue in September with two new online programs.*

Earlier this summer, Mohler announced that he would be ending “The Albert Mohler Program,” a daily national radio program. At the time, he told listeners that he would soon be back with programming in a new format.

On Sept. 7, Mohler returned to public conversation with not one, but two new programs — “The Briefing” and “Thinking in Public.” These new programs will serve as platforms for intelligent Christian conversation, Mohler said, explaining the nature of the new online programming.

“Just as leaders around the world receive daily briefings on the important issues of the day, I want to provide Christians with a daily briefing to ensure they are ready to confront the events the world is talking about from a Christian perspective. ‘The Briefing’ will be available Monday through Friday and will provide Christian worldview analysis of the news of the day,” Mohler said.

“The Briefing” will enable Christians to think biblically about the leading news headlines and cultural conversations.

“Thinking in Public,” a longer weekly program, will feature an interview forum for intelligent conversation about frontline theological and cultural issues.

“One of the urgent needs in the lives of most people is carving out time to think,” Mohler said. “‘Thinking in Public’ will meet

this critical need. As an extended-format interview program, ‘Thinking in Public’ will allow for in-depth discussion about frontline theological and cultural issues with the people who are shaping them.”

Mohler not only seeks to inform listeners about the issues but also wishes to equip them to explain the issues from a Christian worldview to those in the surrounding culture.

“I hope thinking Christians will not only listen, but use these programs to better engage the world with the Gospel,” Mohler said.

More information on “The Briefing” and “Thinking in Public” can be found at [www.albertmohler.com](http://www.albertmohler.com). Also, the programs can be found by searching the Apple iTunes page at [www.apple.com/itunes](http://www.apple.com/itunes). ➤

## NAMB Nominates Southern Alum for New President

By JOSH HAYES AND  
AARON CLINE HANBURY

*Kevin Ezell, alumnus and adjunct professor of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, was elected to the presidency of the North American Mission Board in September.*

“This is tremendously good news for Southern Baptists, and for our mission together to reach North America and the world,” Russell D. Moore, senior vice president for academic administration, dean of the School of Theology and professor of Christian theology and ethics at Southern Seminary, said.

In his new position, Ezell will seek to focus NAMB more on planting Gospel-centered churches around the country.

“Our primary focus will be transitioning NAMB to focus on church planting. We will strive to build the greatest church planting network in the world,” Ezell said. “Our vision is to lead Southern Baptists into a golden age of church planting — and to more efficiently and effectively use our resources to reach North America with the Gospel.”

Since June 1996, Ezell has been the pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky. In his time there, Ezell saw the church grow into six campuses in two states and three counties. In addition to his excitement about his opportunity with NAMB, Ezell feels a great deal of gratitude for his time at Highview.

“It is the hardest thing about leaving — because we love serving this church. Some of the finest people in all the world worship and serve at Highview,” Ezell said. “Highview is one of the finest churches in the SBC. They have faithfully stepped out in creative ways to reach people.” ➤



## SBTS Archives Adds First Edition of Monumental Missionary Book by Fuller

By JEFF ROBINSON

*Andrew Fuller could not escape the question: Does every man have a duty to repent and believe in the Gospel?*

Fuller, a young British pastor at the time, wrestled with this critical conundrum for more than a decade. His study, which landed on the answer “Yes, all men have a duty to repent and believe,” became a famous work “The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation” that provided a theological framework that sparked the modern missions movement that sent William Carey to India and Adoniram Judson to Burma.

Recently, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary acquired Fuller’s first draft of “Gospel Worthy,” a work now on display in the school’s archives and special collections.

Michael Haykin, professor of church history and biblical spirituality, and head of the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies at Southern, bought the rare manuscript for \$900 from the Philadelphia Rare Book and Manuscript Company.

To find an early manuscript of such a famous work is incredibly rare, Haykin said, especially to find it in good condition and to be able to buy it at such a low price. The first draft entails 60-plus pages. Fuller published an expanded final version of “Gospel Worthy” in 1785.

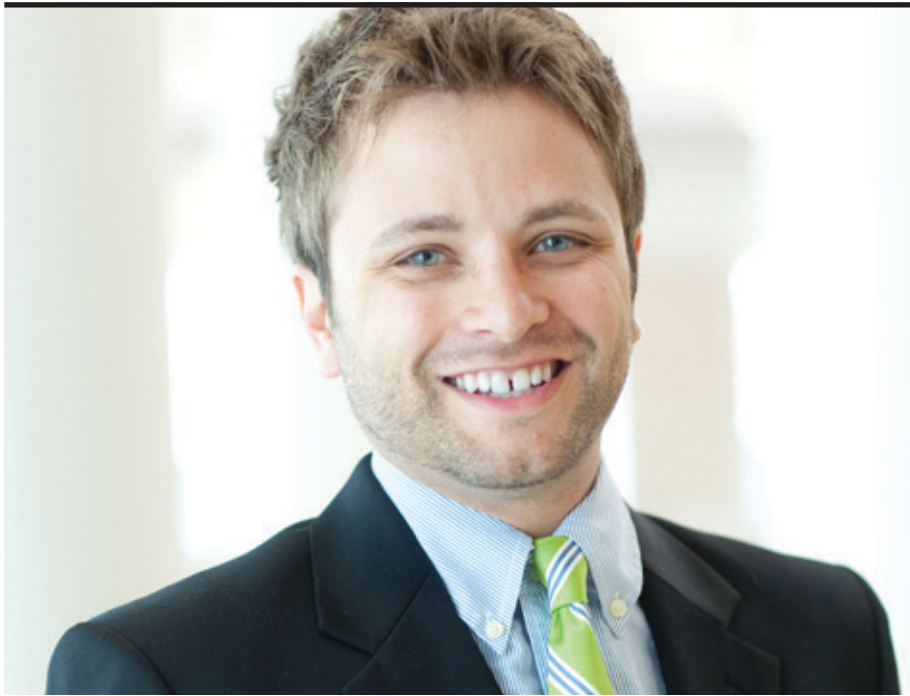
“It is very unusual for two reasons: number one, this is America and to have the document in America rather than in the United Kingdom is very unusual because Andrew Fuller was a Baptist minister in the United Kingdom and never came to America,” Haykin said. “The document actually came here through (Fuller’s) son who made a trip to New York around 1860.

“Secondly, it is very rare to have this sort of thing because normally it would be destroyed by the author upon the writing of the second draft, if there was a second draft. Generally, these drafts don’t exist from the 18th century because these drafts would be taken to the printer and unless the author requested that the draft be returned to him, the printer would end up keeping them and usually most printer records would be thrown out and destroyed after a number of years. So, to have this is a tremendous find in terms of the rarity of this sort of thing, but also in terms of who it is and what the book is.”

The document will be available in PDF format for researchers in Southern Seminary’s archives and special collections library and the manuscript itself will be rebound and made available for perusal, Haykin said. ➤







## Strachan Adds to Boyce Vision

By AARON CLINE HANBURY

*Boyce College hired Owen Strachan as instructor of Christian theology and church history. Strachan's position became effective with the fall 2010 term.*

"[Strachan is] a first-rate preacher and churchman who shares our vision for Gospel-centered, bible-focused ministry. Moreover, he shares our passion for instilling this vision in the students of Boyce College," Denny Burk, dean of Boyce College, said.

"I see such health at Boyce and at Southern: there is a heart for Scripture, there is a heart for God, a heart for His sovereignty; there is a clear understanding of the centrality of Christ in all things. That is all very exciting to me," Strachan said.

Moody Press recently published a book series co-authored by Strachan. The series seeks to summarize a scholarly collection of Jonathan Edwards' works and give its theology and doxology to the local church.

"We tried to boil down the really important ideas of Edwards' life and ministry... so that people [can] get into Edwards' material...but do so with some guidance and some application even," Strachan said.

Strachan is also the son-in-law of Bruce A. Ware, professor of Christian theology at SBTS.

"Not since A. T. Robertson became the son-in-law of John Broadus have we had a father and son-in-law serving at the same time on the faculty of Southern Seminary," Burk said.

Strachan is married to Bethany, with whom he has a daughter, Ella Rose.

Strachan came to Boyce, having recently completed course work for a doctor of philosophy degree at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He also holds a master of divinity degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a bachelor of arts from Bowdoin College.

## FLAME Launches New Record Label

By AARON CLINE HANBURY

*Hip-hop artist and student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Marcus Gray, known as FLAME, launched his own record label Aug. 1. The Grammy-nominated rapper started Clear Sight Music to fill a void in the Christian hip-hop industry, and to provide an opportunity for new, like-minded artists.*

"I'm excited about [Clear Sight Music] because the heartbeat of it is holistic," FLAME said. "We want to see people converted, we want to see people disciplined, we want to see people enjoying good art, and then we want to see people join the local church."

Clear Sight Music will seek to produce quality art that edifies believers and speaks the Gospel to unbelievers. FLAME is adamant about the theological and missiological nature of his new label.

"Thinking about the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations ... taking that concept and thinking through the way God has shaped me and the circle of influence he placed me in growing up; thinking about that people group, sometimes called 'hip-hopppers,' it's a culture. The Lord has saved me out of that culture, but I've submitted my life to Christ, and now my goal is to be missional, to be on duty as it relates to sharing the Gospel," FLAME said.

"[The label] is unique because it's not just a business, not just a label. It's a ministry that can serve alongside the local church.

"Primarily God's means of [spreading the Gospel and discipling] is the local church. Nevertheless, as a member of the local church, God has equipped me with certain skills and talents to come alongside [the church] with a record label that actually perpetuates the Great Commission," FLAME said.

For more information about FLAME and Clear Sight Music visit [www.clearsightmusic.com](http://www.clearsightmusic.com)



## Review of “40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible”

By JEFF ROBINSON

*What is the Bible and how should we interpret it? What determines the meaning of the text and can it have more than one meaning?*

Have you ever been asked these questions? Or perhaps you have wondered about these issues yourself. If so, Robert L. Plummer, associate professor of New Testament interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has provided a new book that will answer all these and many more fundamental questions about God’s Word.

The book, “40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible” (Kregel), was released in May and has already begun making a major impact in the publishing world: it jumped to No. 1 among hermeneutics books sold on Amazon.com during its first few days of publication.

“I envisioned the book as an introductory textbook for a hermeneutics class,” Plummer said. “In my hermeneutics class at Southern, I use a variety of texts that seek to answer a number of important questions, but I wanted to get all that into one book.”

Plummer’s book is divided into four parts and each deals with a major issue of Bible interpretation, including:

- Text, cannon and translation. Here, the book deals with basic issues such as how the Bible is organized and the inerrancy of Scripture.
- Approaching the Bible generally. Here, the author provides helpful sections on how the Bible has been interpreted throughout the history of the church and gives some basic principles on how to interpret Scripture accurately.
- Approaching specific texts. Key questions in this section include those dealing with different literary genres in both the Old and New Testaments.
- Issues under recent discussion. The author concludes his survey of Bible interpretation by dealing with current issues ranging from biblical prophecy, biblical criticism and “Speech Act Theory” to theological interpretation of Scripture.

Plummer’s work is the second volume in the “40 Questions Series” published by Kregel. Upcoming volumes include works by two other Southern Seminary faculty members: “40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law” by Thomas R. Schreiner and “40 Questions about Election and Atonement” by Bruce A. Ware.

Plummer has more than achieved his goal of providing a clear, compelling and accessible volume on understanding God’s Word more accurately. “40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible” is worthy of occupying a place in every thoughtful Christian’s library. ➤



### 40 QUESTIONS ABOUT Interpreting the Bible

Robert L. Plummer

Benjamin L. Merkle, Series Editor





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## The Power of Expositional Preaching

By HERSHAEL W. YORK, VICTOR AND LOUISE LESTER PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN PREACHING AND ASSOCIATE DEAN OF MINISTRY AND PROCLAMATION AT SOUTHERN SEMINARY

*Every Sunday finds many well intentioned pastors standing in front of their congregations desperately trying to deliver sermons their congregations will recognize as relevant, timely, insightful and poignant. These pastors often talk about meeting the “felt needs” of the people in the pew.*

After spending a great deal of time trying to determine what needs their folks are feeling, pastors preach sermons with keys to successful living, hints for a happy home and recipes for romance. With passing

references to biblical passages, they urge their congregations to rise above their circumstances, to stand firm in their faith, to make Jesus their best friend.

While usually true, often inspiring, always helpful, such sermons begin with the congregation rather than the canon. While such sermons may share great hints for living, devoid of the Word of God and the Gospel, they only make the world a better place from which to go to hell.

No preacher can possibly comprehend the vast array of needs in his congregation. The single mom struggling to raise her children alone, the lonely widower, the recent retiree whose mother has Alzheimer’s disease and requires constant care and the worn-out business owner who feels the weight of all his employees depending on his success — each has a different set of needs. How can any preacher tell what they are feeling? More significantly, since their own hearts are deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9), even they can’t know their true needs. The single mom may think her deepest need is a husband. Death may seem the only answer to the lonely widower. The businessman may think scheduling and time management is his real problem. What they need is something

much deeper, more fundamental, and far more personal than any preacher can divine.

On the other hand, the Holy Spirit knows their necessities precisely and at the deepest level, and He has inspired the Word to give them everything they need for life and godliness through all of its exceedingly great and precious promises (2 Pet 1:4). When the man of God will saturate himself with a text of Scripture, exegete it according to the author’s original intent, live and breathe in its truth throughout the week and come to the pulpit with a burden, the Holy Spirit will apply that word more intimately than any human ever could.

When the preacher lays bare the meaning of the passage to the congregation, the Holy Spirit will lay bare the thoughts and intentions of their hearts. The potency and vigor of his preaching will be directly proportional to the confidence he has in the sufficiency of Scripture and the Gospel to meet women and men in their lives and situations and point them to Christ.

This is the power of expositional preaching of the Bible. The preacher’s task, therefore, is to expose that power through faithful and accurate presentation of the Word, as relevant today as the day it was written. ➤





# The Perennial Challenge to Inerrancy

By MARK T. COPPENGER, PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS AT SOUTHERN SEMINARY

*Whenever I read that someone like Freud or Feuerbach says that God's a comforting figment or projection of our imagination, I wonder if they've ever read the Bible. For our God is not prone to indulge earthly conceits and agendas. Rather, He is insulting, intrusive, inconvenient and insistent – not the sort of divinity one would sketch if left to his own devices.*

Because this is so, biblical inerrancy is a challenging, even embarrassing, doctrine. So many forces conspire to undermine devotion to the Bible, and many people defect, whether through downright denial or hermeneutical chicanery.

Before long, the new pastor discovers how offensive the text he's called to preach is, not only to the surrounding culture, but to many people in the pews. Just let him draw biblical lines on divorce and remarriage, and he'll hear from the party of the affronted, wounded, nonplussed and indignant as they depart the church rolls or arm for a season of back-stabbing. Let him preach complementary passages and the egalitarians will howl. Let him declare The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints a cult and congregants will defend the honor of their Mormon in-laws or fellow Rotarians.

One group wants no talk of hell, another wishes a safe zone for evolution. Apply Psalm 139 to abortion and you're told to stay out of politics. Touch on the rules in Leviticus or the killings in Joshua, and some will proclaim that "their god" would never have directed such things. Address homosexuality, and tender souls will insist you be more loving, like God.

They want to hear the happy texts, and you begin to wish there wasn't so much negativity in the Bible. For the sake of congregational equanimity, you shun the prophets when making up your preaching schedule. You may still be an inerrantist, but you become a *de facto* liberal through willful

neglect of tough passages.

And pity the poor scholar who hopes to impress non-inerrantists in his field. If he puts his full weight on clear teachings deemed politically incorrect or academically unfashionable, his career may crash to the ground. He may well sit lonely by the phone, waiting for the calls that never come, from editors and publishers, from program committees and search committees.

In the April 12, 2010, issue of "Newsweek," Robert Samuelson wrote on the "politics of self-esteem," noting that voters like to "feel good about themselves" and that it's hard for them to vote for someone the culture has declared "scummy" or "stupid." In a similar vein, many Christians are eager to distance themselves from such social pariahs as so-called homophobes, creationists, teetotalers, revivalists, hellfire-and-brimstone

preachers, bibliolaters and chauvinists. But in so doing, they often throw good people and sound teachings under the bus.

Longtime Oklahoma pastor and Southern Seminary graduate Herschel Hobbs once told of a fellow who whistled nervously as he walked rapidly through a graveyard. His friend asked if he was afraid the dead would hurt him. "No," he replied, "I'm afraid they'll make me hurt myself."

There's a lot of spiritual deadness in the world and in the pew, and we must be careful not to let the dead make us hurt ourselves by lessening our reverence for every word of the Bible. ➤



## Evidence Isn't Just Local; It's Global

By PAUL H. CHITWOOD, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH AT SOUTHERN SEMINARY

*“Was the chicken in the box?” That’s a strange question in most any setting. In the courtroom, it sounded really strange. A teenage kid had turned into the pathway of my father’s truck, sending my stepmother into the windshield. An ambulance trip and several surgeries later, the medical bills were mounting.*

Insurance companies were holding out and lawyers were arguing. Dad was asked to explain exactly what happened on the day of the accident. He shared the details of how he and his wife had been through the KFC drive-thru and were on their way to the farm. In a desperate attempt to create a “gotcha!” moment and prove Dad was too distracted by his chicken leg to handle the steering wheel, a red-faced attorney for the kid’s insurance company jumped from his chair and shouted the question, “Was the chicken in the box?!” Surprisingly, Dad was more than a mile from the KFC and the chicken was still in the box. Case closed. The insurance company paid.

Any lawyer worth his salt will search high and low for the least sliver of information that could help him make his case. The discovery of truth can hinge on the smallest details.

When it comes to the question of inerrancy, one does not have to look far to begin to see evidence, overwhelming evidence. In my case, and probably in your case since you are reading a seminary magazine, look no further than the mirror. The evidence of transformed lives is undeniable. That evidence isn’t just local; it’s global. For 2,000 years, all over the world, people have been hearing, obeying and propagating the Gospel. The evidence points to the truth of that Gospel and the truth of the book containing it. One significant piece of evidence is obedience to the Great Commission.

Can obedience to the Great Commission be trustworthy evidence in the case for inerrancy? Indeed it can. Consider just a few of the facts. First, obedience to the Great Commission indicates that the Gospel is

believable. The claims of Christ have been under vicious scrutiny from the moment he made them yet no historical, scientific or anthropological discovery has yet to disprove any of those claims. So people keep obeying the mandate to share Christ’s claims.

Second, the Gospel is believed. The claims of Christ continue to be embraced by billions of people all over the world. While a few rival faiths could make the same claim, the sheer number of adherents remains one piece of evidence among many that supports the truth of the Gospel.

Third, the high price of believing and preaching the Gospel is willingly paid. Believing is one thing. Willing martyrdom is clearly something more. As another piece of evidence among many, this willingness of believers to die for their faith, versus to die killing for their

faith, lends support to the truth of the Gospel.

Fourth, the Gospel turns our attention to the needs of a lost world. The teachings of Christ are unique in their call to sacrificial love, service and selflessness. We cannot embrace those teachings and be left without compassion for those whom are destined for hell. The transforming teachings that drive a persecuted believer to love his persecutor and share Christ with him or drive a slave to willingly submit to her master in order to model the Gospel would only transform if they were true. Though free and unpersecuted, the burden in my own selfish heart for those who do not know Christ further convinces me about the truth of the Gospel.

The Gospel is true. The Gospel is out of the book. Case closed. The book is true. ➤





# Inerrancy Timeline: Battle for the Bible

In many ways, church history is nothing more than a battle for the Bible. The accuracy, trustworthiness and authority of Scripture have existed at the heart of most of the major Christian controversies from early formulations of the doctrine of the Trinity in the first four ecumenical councils to the challenge of feminist theology in the 1960s and 70s. But, as this timeline depicts, the doctrine of inerrancy became a front-burner issue in the church during the 17th century when Enlightenment philosophy elevated reason and experience to the place of authority instead of God's special revelation. Over the past 200 years, the battle has become a full-fledged war as illustrated by the reformations that unfolded within both the Southern Baptist Convention and her flagship seminary. Until the Lord returns, the front line battle in the church between heresy and orthodoxy will always be the inspiration, inerrancy and authority of Scripture.



**TRUE:** The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author; salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. (From the Baptist Faith & Message 2000)

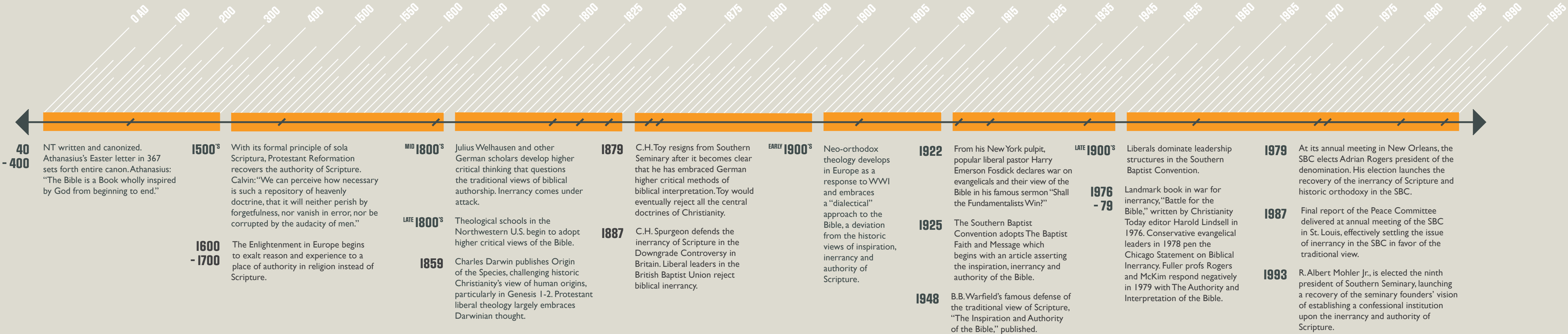


**FALSE:** The Bible is a collection of ancient writings from which humanity may glean wisdom and moral inspiration, but is filled with errors and inconsistencies. Its teachings are irreconcilable with the discoveries of modern science, it reflects the superstitions of a pre-modern patriarchal culture and should not be interpreted literally as an authoritative and divinely-inspired work. (Summarized from essays at Infidels online)

## WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR US?

The inerrancy of Scripture is absolutely vital for numerous reasons. Primary among them is Scripture's claim for itself: within the Bible, we find numerous claims and assumptions that it is God's Word and that it is utterly truthful. Thus, the Bible is its own self-attesting authority. For example, in Numbers 23:19, Moses writes under the inspiration of the Spirit, "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should change his mind." And in 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul writes, "All

Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." If we deny the inspiration and inerrancy of God's Word, we impugn the very character of God Himself, and we leave ourselves without any form of trustworthy information about the character of God and the nature of man. Worse, we are left without any reliable account of how sinful man may be reconciled to a holy God.



# Inerrancy Timeline:

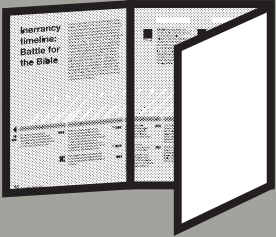
## Battle for the Bible

“Those who don’t know history are destined to repeat it,” Edmund Burke stated. These words hold as true for the church universal as they do for the local churches that make up the Southern Baptist Convention. This “inerrancy timeline” presents readers with a brief yet robust overview of important moments throughout church history related to the doctrine of Scripture. Since receiving the corpus of revelation by the close of the first century, the church has been left with the enormous task of formulating and applying the words of Scripture to emerging theological and cultural challenges. This timeline will help readers continue in that strain by understanding that the battle over the truthfulness of God’s Word is nothing new. In fact, it’s as old as Eden.

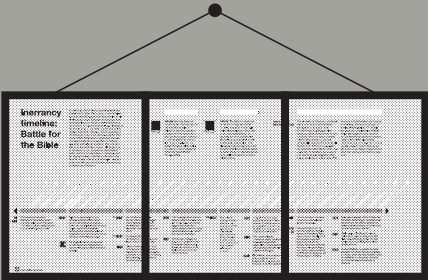
### Instructions :



Peel timeline  
from magazine.



Carefully unfold  
timeline



Hang timeline in  
appropriate place and be  
reminded of the goodness  
of the word of God.





**MISQUOTING**

**TRUTH**

**CORRECTING**

**CONTENTIONS**

*By* EMILY GRIFFIN

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*Dan Brown's 2003 release, "The Da Vinci Code," is a fiction thriller that leapt to the top of "The New York Times'" bestseller book list. Brown's conspiracy theory novel is engaging, suspenseful and, most alarmingly, heretical.*

"The Da Vinci Code" inspired hours of thoughtful conversations, television specials and books refuting its assertions. Timothy Paul Jones, associate professor of leadership and church ministry and family and children's ministry coordinator at Southern Seminary, co-authored one such book. Jones released the pamphlet "Answers to The Da Vinci Code" (Rose Publishing, 2005) and then "The Da Vinci Codebreaker: An Easy-to-Use Fact Checker for Truth Seekers" (Bethany House, 2006).

"In the midst of researching for the pamphlet and the book I read Bart Ehrman's books 'Misquoting Jesus' and 'Lost Christianities.' To me, Ehrman's work is far more problematic than anything in 'The Da Vinci Code' because 'The Da Vinci Code' is riddled with all sorts of laughable factual errors. In Ehrman's work, the facts are right, for the most part, but the problem is how he twists those facts to reach some very wrong conclusions," Jones said.

Jones commented that Ehrman, distinguished professor at the University of North Carolina, contends that because there were errors in the copying of Scripture, the Bible cannot be inerrant.

"Ehrman is, of course, correct that

differences exist between copies of the New Testament, but what he concludes from this fact is completely overstated to the point of presenting a false conclusion," Jones said. "So I marked in my mind that I wanted to write something on Ehrman's book."

The other aspect that drove Jones to pen "Misquoting Truth" was remembering his own crisis of faith that came as he started his undergraduate studies.

"I had come into undergraduate studies without a well developed doctrine of Scripture; my sole bibliology was that the King James Version was the only Bible. When I saw the fallacies in that perspective, I started reading all sorts of different things, from many different perspectives and many were slanted towards unbelief," Jones said. "In the midst of this reading I had a real crisis of faith and I struggled with what to believe. It occurred to me that Bart Ehrman's book 'Misquoting Jesus,' at that time, would have been precisely type of book that would have struck me as completely believable."

Jones recognizes Ehrman's status as a world-renowned scholar, but refutes the conclusions Ehrman has drawn about the nature of faith, the nature of



“Once you cast doubt on the integrity of Jesus, you have undermined the very essence of what it means to be evangelical.”

Scripture and the nature of inerrancy.

Jones’ “Misquoting Truth” challenges Ehrman’s “Misquoting Jesus” on the accuracy of ancient scribes, the significance of changes in the New Testament copies, the reliability of oral history, the authors of the Gospels, significance of eyewitness testimony and how the books of the Bible were chosen.

“I did send him (Ehrman) a manuscript while it was in the editing stage. I don’t know how much he read of it, but he did point out some of the things that I factually misstated – which were mainly in reference to his personal biography. I really wanted to approach his claims in a way that was firm, clear and yet gracious,” Jones said.

In, 2008, after the release of “Misquoting Truth,” the UNC chapter of InterVarsity Fellowship, an evangelical and interdenominational campus ministry, invited Jones to present the content of “Misquoting Truth” on the university campus. Jones spoke with 900 students, including students under the instruction of Ehrman, who was out of town at the time.

Jones recalled a moment on that trip when a student engaged him in a conversation about Ehrman’s agnosticism. The student contended that since Ehrman is an agnostic, he is unbiased, but since Jones is a Christian he is biased. The student concluded that what Ehrman argues should carry more weight than what Jones argues because agnostics are unbiased.

“I found that to be a fascinating and revealing statement,” Jones said. “To her, it somehow made perfect sense to assert that agnosticism is unbiased. What she didn’t see was that agnosticism is a bias — it is a bias about the nature of

revelation.”

After leaving UNC, Jones fielded questions from some of those students.

“I don’t pretend that I somehow completely refuted everything that Ehrman was telling them, but I wanted to challenge them to recognize that, particularly for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is credible evidence for believing that this is something that is believable historically,” Jones said. “The other goal I had was to demonstrate that the notion of inerrancy is not toppled by the fact that there were differences in the copies of the Scriptures, those are different issues.”

Ehrman has asserted that if we do not have a copy of the New Testament that agrees with every other copy, then Christians cannot reasonably claim that the Bible is inerrant. Jones contends that this is a false line of reasoning on several levels, because God indeed did inspire the inerrant word and He has protected it sufficiently.

“God conveyed a Word to the original authors that was inerrant, which they wrote with unerring accuracy, and then it has been copied sufficiently,” Jones said.

“The Bible is inerrant in its inspiration, it is sufficient in its preservation,” Jones added. “It is preserved with sufficient accuracy for us to receive the words and message that God originally spoke.”

Jones commented that some persons try to argue against inerrancy by trying to find contradictions in the Bible rather than starting with trying to understand what is truly meant by inerrancy.

“We have to articulate a winsome and intelligent definition of inerrancy,” Jones said. “In the Scriptures, God told the truth in the normal conventions of human language, without any mixture of error.”

For evangelicals, inerrancy is becoming perceived as an option as opposed to something that is at the essence of who we are as evangelicals, Jones said.

“Ultimately to disbelieve inerrancy is to disbelieve Jesus Himself,” Jones said. “Jesus said Himself that Scripture cannot be broken. Jesus perceived Scripture as something that tells the truth in an unbreakable way. And so, to deny inerrancy is to cast doubt on the integrity of Jesus. Once we cast doubt on the integrity of Jesus, it is ultimately to open ourselves to deny the exclusivity of Jesus and ultimately to step away from anything that should be termed ‘evangelical’.”

Jones noted that the word “evangelical” is rooted in the word that means the Gospel. The Gospel is rooted in the truthfulness and the efficacy of what Jesus did and said.

“Once you cast doubt on the integrity of Jesus, you have undermined the very essence of what it means to be evangelical. For evangelicals inerrancy must not be seen as one option among many, inerrancy should run through the very core of who we are as evangelicals,” Jones said.

“There was a time when what we are currently teaching students about inerrancy and Scripture was not assumed for Southern Baptists. We are always only one generation away from losing every gain on the issue of inerrancy. The battle over inerrancy may metamorphose into different forms in each generation, but it will never go away.” ➤

# The Truth about Eyewitness Testimony

By TIMOTHY PAUL JONES, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LEADERSHIP AND CHURCH MINISTRY AND FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY COORDINATOR AT SOUTHERN SEMINARY

*The following is an excerpt of "Misquoting Truth: A Guide to the Fallacies of Bart Ehrman's 'Misquoting Jesus'."*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF EYEWITNESSES

The first followers of Jesus also understood the importance of reliable eyewitnesses—especially when they began to claim that Jesus had returned from the dead. This claim is, after all, quite incredible. As a result, early Christians cherished eyewitness testimonies about the resurrection.

Two New Testament Gospels specifically claim that eyewitness reports formed the foundation for what they had to say about Jesus. "These things were handed down to us," the preface of the Gospel According to Luke declares, "by those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning" (Luke 1:2; see also Acts 1:22). And the writer of John's Gospel announced with utmost sincerity, "The one who saw this has testified—his testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth" (John 19:35; see also 21:24). Around A.D. 160, an unknown writer in Rome recorded an oral tradition that backed up these claims. According to this author, Luke based his Gospel on personal interviews, presumably with eyewitnesses, and the Fourth Gospel represented the eyewitness testimony of the apostle John.

The other two Gospels don't specifically claim to come from eyewitnesses, but early

Christians believed that these writings represented eyewitness testimony. Writing from Asia Minor in the early second century, Papias of Hierapolis affirmed that Mark's Gospel preserved Peter's eyewitness testimony and that the apostle Matthew was responsible for the Gospel that bore his name. A few years later, Irenaeus of Lyons—the leading pastor in an area known today as northern France—linked each New Testament Gospel to an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord. Justin—a defender of Christian faith, writing from Rome in the mid-second century—referred to a quotation from Mark 3:16-17 as coming from the "recollections of Peter." Around A.D. 200, Tertullian of Carthage put it this way:

*We present as our first position, that the Gospel testimony has apostles for its authors, to whom the Lord himself assigned the position of propagating the Gospel. There are also some that, though not apostles, are apostolic—they do not stand alone; they appear with and after the apostles. . . . So, John and Matthew, of the apostles, first instill faith into us while the apostolic writers Luke and Mark renew it afterwards. . . . Never mind that there occurs some variation in the order of their narratives, as long as there is agreement in essential matters of faith.*

From the first century onward, a consistent strand of Christian tradition tied the truth of the New Testament Gospels to eyewitness testimony.

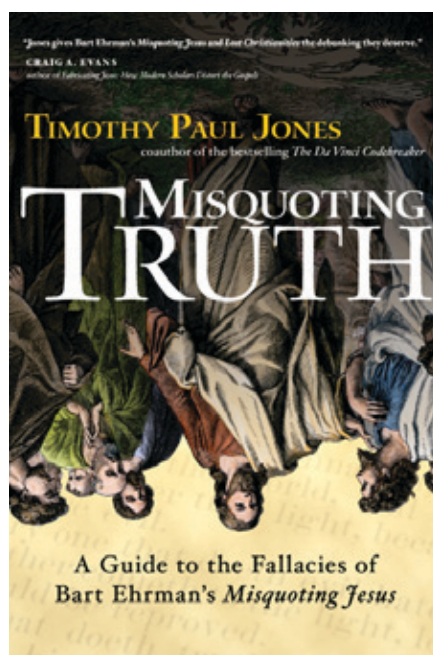
## NOT BY PEOPLE WHO WERE EYEWITNESSES?

Despite the consistent testimony of Christian writers throughout the first and second centuries, Ehrman flatly denies that the New Testament could have been written by eye witnesses:

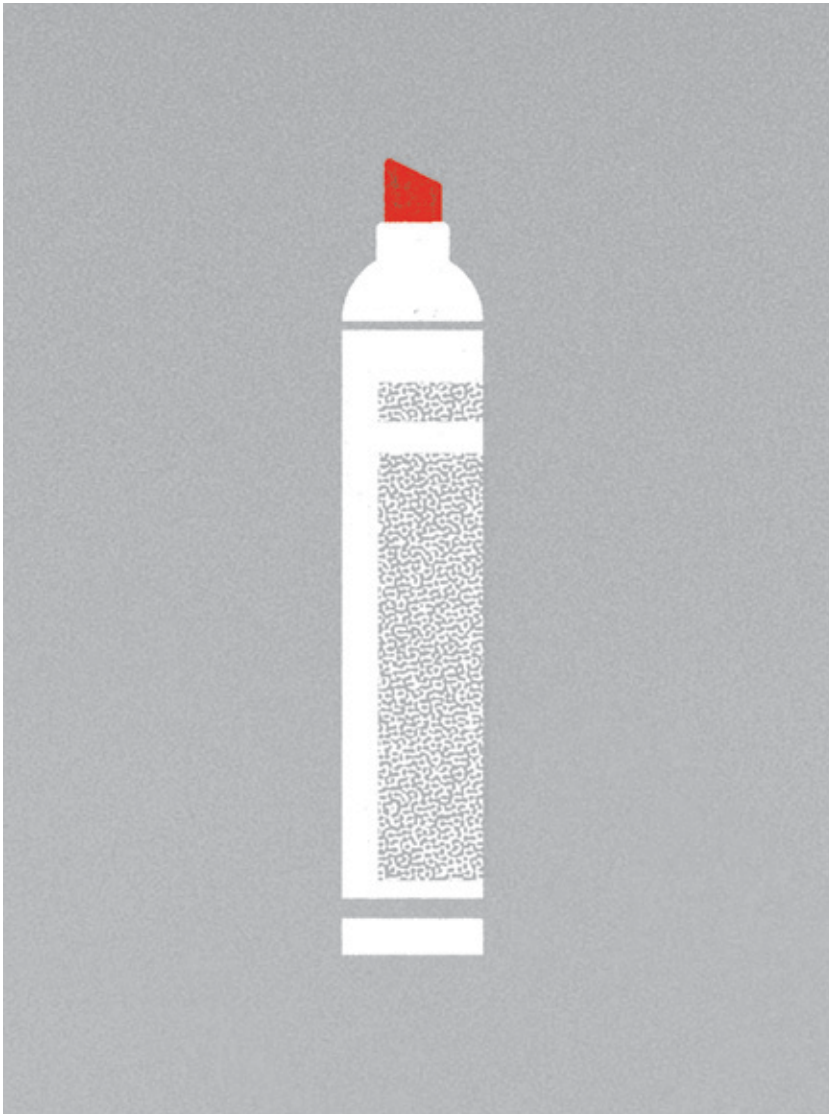
*[The Gospels] were written thirty-five to sixty-five years after Jesus' death, . . . not by people who were eyewitnesses, but by people living later. . . . After the days of Jesus, people started telling stories about him in order to convert others to the faith.*

Even though the first copies of the New Testament Gospels may have been anonymous, these Gospels circulated with consistent oral traditions about their authors.

Now, it's time to ask the next >







“Is it possible that the traditional ascriptions are true? Or is Ehrman correct when he declares that the Gospels must be the result of tales told later by people who never actually saw Jesus of Nazareth?”

logical question: Were these oral traditions true? And, supposing they were true, how likely is it that what stands behind the New Testament Gospels is eyewitness testimony? Is it possible that the traditional ascriptions are true? Or is Ehrman correct when he declares that the Gospels must be the result of tales told later by people who never actually saw Jesus of Nazareth?

It’s important to note at this point that the truth of the four New Testament Gospels doesn’t depend on the accuracy of the traditional ascriptions of the books to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. In other words, the Gospels might represent historical truth even if these four authors didn’t write the books that bear their names. At the same time, if the traditional ascriptions are correct, the likelihood that the Gospels were based on eyewitness testimony becomes more probable.

#### WHO WAS STILL ALIVE?

So, what are the chances that eyewitness evidences formed the foundations of the four New Testament Gospels? Most scholars admit that all four New Testament Gospels were written sometime between A.D. 50 and 100. Based on the content and language in each Gospel, the majority of New Testament scholars would agree with the ranges that Ehrman assigns to the emergence of the Gospels: The Gospel According to Mark came into existence between 65 and 70, the Gospels According to Matthew and Luke emerged a decade or so later, and John’s Gospel was completed sometime before A.D. 95.

When I look at these dates, here’s what I find interesting: Some of the people who walked and talked with Jesus must have been alive when the first Gospels were written. Writing a letter to the Corinthians two decades or so after Jesus trudged up the Hill of the Skull, the apostle Paul could say, “[The Lord] was seen by more than five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:6). If Mark’s Gospel first began to circulate around A.D. 70, it’s virtually certain that some of these people who had seen the risen Jesus would still have been alive. A few years later, when clusters of Christians throughout the Roman Empire began

to read the three later New Testament Gospels, it's not at all unlikely that at least a few acquaintances of Jesus were still breathing.

Thus it's a bit of a stretch to state, without qualification, that the four Gospels were penned "not by people who were eyewitnesses, but by people living later," as Ehrman does. If the Gospels began to circulate three or four decades after Jesus walked this earth, it is at least possible that the sources of these books were eyewitnesses of Jesus. The emergence of Mark's Gospel only thirty years or so after Jesus' death makes it difficult to deny that eyewitness testimony, at the very least, was available to the authors of the Gospels.

#### HOW DUMB WERE THE DISCIPLES?

So what proof does Ehrman offer for his unreserved claim that the New Testament Gospels were not based on eyewitness testimony? Simply this:

*Jesus' own followers . . . were mainly lower-class peasants—fishermen and artisans, for example—and . . . they spoke Aramaic rather than Greek. If they did have any kind of facility in Greek, it would have been simply for rough communication at best (kind of like when I bungle my way through Germany, to the general consternation of native speakers). Even more strikingly, the two leaders among Jesus' followers, Peter and John, are explicitly said in the New Testament to be "illiterate." [Acts 4:13] . . . In the end, it seems unlikely that the uneducated, lower-class, illiterate disciples of Jesus played the decisive role in the literary compositions that have come down through history under their names.*

At first glance, Ehrman's reconstruction is convincing. After all, he is correct that some members of the Judean ruling council pointed out that Peter and John were *agrammatoi* or "unschooled" (Acts 4:13). How, then, could such testimony—stories that may have circulated first in coarse Aramaic—have turned into the Greek documents found in the New Testament Gospels today?

The first difficulty with Ehrman's interpretation is that the word *agrammatos* does not necessarily imply that Peter and John were illiterate. In the context of the Jewish council, *agrammatos* likely meant "untrained in

the Jewish law." If this is the case, the council members were pointing out that, despite their boldness in interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures, Peter and John had not been schooled as rabbis.

So, were the traditional authors of the four New Testament Gospels "illiterate," as Ehrman claims? Were they really incapable of creating works of literature? Or, was there something more going on in the first century than Ehrman has revealed to his readers?

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# Hymn Book.

Compiled by  
F. R. GOULDING  
Macon, Ga.

MACON, GA.:  
J. B. Boykin & Co.  
1863

## PRAYER BOOK.

Diocesan Missionary Society  
Of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia



# His Excellent Word

By THOMAS J. NETTLES, PROFESSOR OF  
HISTORICAL THEOLOGY AT SOUTHERN SEMINARY

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*“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord.”*

In John Rippon’s “Selection of Hymns,” developed as a supplement to Isaac Watts’ “Psalms and Hymns,” this hymn’s author is listed as “K.” “The Baptist Hymn Book” published in England in 1962 goes no further and simply notes its origin from “K” in Rippon’s “Selection,” and the date as 1787. Convention Press in Nashville completed the indignity in its “Baptist Hymnal” of 1975 and 1991 by dropping the “K” and simply stating its derivation from Rippon’s “Selection of Hymns.” The Gadsbys asserted the hymn was written by “Kirkham” but furnish no information about this figure nor any evidence of his authorship. Edward Bailey with tentative step proposed “Keen” as the author, a name suggested in 1822 by Alexander Fletcher, since “R Keene” was the precentor in Rippon’s church and wrote tunes for some of the hymns sung there. Nettleton in “Village Hymns” suggested a Kennady as the author. Spurgeon’s “Our Hymn Book” puts George Keith in the author slot.

How strange we do not know who wrote such a great hymn. This bit of trivial pursuit, however, points out that the fidelity of the text and spiritual concentration of its ambience serve as far greater witnesses to a hymn’s usefulness than its author. Others may differ, but, in my opinion, this is one of the most satisfying hymns possessed by the Christian church. For both structure and content, I would note it as a “Hymnus Hymnorum.” Its composition is paradigmatic; it is an instruction book for its word-centered power, poetry and redemption focus. When sung to the tune “Foundation” or “Adeste Fideles” the power and cumulative impact of its

truth is magnified. It truly meets the New Testament standard of a hymn in which the entire congregation may “teach and admonish one another.”

It draws us to Scripture as the fountainhead of all saving truth. To those who have fled for refuge to Jesus, “What more can he say than to you he hath said” in his “excellent word?” The constant theme of the Psalms, the Prophets and the New Testament is concentrated in the poignant words, “who for refuge to Jesus have fled.” The next verses, through a synthesis of biblical passages, report directly from this firm foundation the covenantal promises of God to his people. Pity the hymn amenders that eliminated the divine speech for third person report and lost the immediacy of power, promise and security embedded in the original idea!

Space forbids a search of Scripture promises and assurances that permeate each verse. One, however, seldom sung in the churches, will suffice to illustrate. “Even down to old age, all my people shall prove my sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love. And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn, like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.” Now see the verses on which these solemn promises are based. “And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” (Isa 46:4) “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.” (Isa 40:11). May we be determined to sing so as to give scriptural admonition and instruction. >■



# Does God still speak?

By RUSSELL D. MOORE, DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION AT SOUTHERN SEMINARY

*I wish someone would finally make an honest Bible.*

Some of you have red letters in your Bibles. Come to think of it, I have them in mine. They're supposed to indicate when Jesus is speaking in the text. And that's why I'm looking for that honest Bible, a true red letter Bible – a copy of God's Word that has letters in red from Genesis' first "In the beginning" (Gen 1:1) to Revelation's final "Amen" (Rev 22:21).

Our brother Peter knew the sound of Jesus' vocal cords. He probably could have even imitated some of Jesus' mannerisms, and done a nearly perfect imitation of Jesus' accent while cooking fish around the fire with the other disciples.

And yet this same Peter, the one who knew Jesus face-to-face, refers to the Bible you now hold in your hands as a word "more sure" than even those words spoken by men who heard the voice of God on the mountain. That's because the Word you hold in your hand was written down by men carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:16-21).

That means that when Peter speaks – along with all the apostles and prophets – he is speaking the words of the Spirit. And where the Spirit is speaking, Jesus is speaking.

The Spirit, who is the Spirit of Jesus, gives us these words in our Bibles. That means that every word of the Scripture is true and profitable and is coming to you with the very same authority as if Jesus of Nazareth were to split through these walls and speak the Bible's words to you face-to-face.

That is the authority of Scripture. That is its power. And that's what it means to truly believe the Bible – that is, to love and obey our Christ. ➤





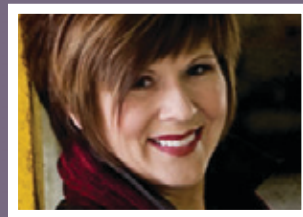
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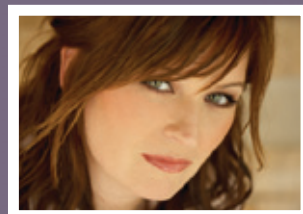
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# The Inerrancy of Scripture: The Fifty Years' War ... and Counting

By R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.,  
PRESIDENT OF SOUTHERN SEMINARY

*We are entering a new phase in the battle over the Bible's truthfulness and authority. We should at least be thankful for undisguised arguments coming from the opponents of biblical inerrancy, even as we are ready, once again, to make clear where their arguments lead.*

**B**ack in 1990, theologian J. I. Packer recounted what he called a “Thirty Years’ War” over the inerrancy of the Bible. He traced his involvement in this war in its American context back to a conference held in Wenham, Mass., in 1966, when he confronted some professors from evangelical institutions who “now declined to affirm the full truth of Scripture.” That was more than fifty years ago, and the war over the truthfulness of the Bible is still not over — not by a long shot.

From time to time, the dust has settled in one arena, only for the battle to erupt in another. In the 1970s, the most visible battles were fought over Fuller Theological Seminary and within the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. By the 1980s, the most heated controversies centered in the Southern Baptist Convention and its seminaries. Throughout this period, the evangelical movement sought to regain its footing on the doctrine. In 1978, a large number of leading evangelicals met and adopted a definitive

statement that became known as “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.”

Many thought the battles were over or at least subsiding. Sadly, the debate over the inerrancy of the Bible continues. As a matter of fact, there seems to be a renewed effort to forge an evangelical identity apart from the claim that the Bible is totally truthful and without error.

Recently, Professor Peter Enns, formerly of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, has argued that the biblical authors clearly erred. He has argued that Paul, for example, was clearly wrong in assuming the historicity of Adam. In “Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament,” published in 2005, he presented an argument for an “incarnational” model of biblical inspiration and authority. But in this rendering, incarnation — affirming the human dimension of Scripture — means accepting some necessary degree of error.

This argument is taken to the next step by Kenton L. Sparks in his 2008 book,







“God’s Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship.” Sparks, who teaches at Eastern University, argues that it is nothing less than intellectually disastrous for evangelicals to claim that the Bible is without error.

His arguments, also serialized and summarized in a series of articles, are amazingly candid. He asserts that Evangelicalism has “painted itself into an intellectual corner” by claiming the inerrancy of Scripture. The movement is now in an “intellectual cul-de-sac,” he laments, because we have “crossed an evidential threshold that makes it intellectually unsuitable to defend some of the standard dogmas of the conservative evangelical tradition.” And, make no mistake; inerrancy is the central dogma he would have us let go.

“God’s Word in Human Words” is an erudite book with a comprehensive argument. Kenton Sparks does not misunderstand the evangelical doctrine of biblical inerrancy — he understands it and sees it as intellectually disastrous. “So like any other book,” he asserts, “the Bible appears to be a historically and culturally contingent text and, because of that, it reflects the diverse viewpoints of different people who lived in different times and places.” But a contingent text bears all the errors of its contingent authors, and Sparks fully realizes this.

The serialized articles by Sparks appear at the BioLogos Web site, a site with one clear agenda — to move evangelicals toward a full embrace of evolutionary theory. In this context, Sparks understands that the affirmation of biblical inerrancy presents a huge obstacle to the embrace of evolution. The “evidential threshold” has been crossed, he insists, and the Bible has come up short. The biblical writers were simply trapped within the limits of their own ancient cosmology and observations.

But Sparks presses far beyond this argument, accusing the Bible of presenting immoral teachings, citing “biblical texts that strike us as downright sinister or evil.” The Bible, he suggests, “exhibits all the telltale signs of having been written by finite, fallen human beings who erred in the ways that human beings usually err.”

When Peter Enns and Kenton Sparks argue for an incarnational model of inspiration and biblical authority, they are continuing an argument first made long ago — among evangelicals, at >□





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least as far back as the opening salvos of the battle over biblical inerrancy. Sparks, however, takes the argument further. He understands that the incarnational model implicates Jesus. He does not resist this. Jesus, he suggests, “was a finite person who grew up in Palestine.” While asserting that he affirms the historic Christian creeds and “traditional Christian orthodoxy,” Sparks proposes that Jesus made routine errors of fact.

His conclusion: “If Jesus as a finite human being erred from time to time, there is no reason at all to suppose that Moses, Paul, [and/or] John wrote Scripture without error.”

That is a breath-taking assumption, to say the very least. But, even in its shocking audacity, it serves to reveal the clear logic of the new battle-lines over biblical inerrancy. We now confront open calls to accept and affirm that there are indeed errors in the Bible. It is demanded that we accept the fact that the human authors of the Bible often erred because of their limited knowledge and erroneous assumptions about reality. We must, it is argued, abandon the claim that the Bible is a consistent whole. Rather, we are told to accept the claims that the human authors of Scripture were just plain wrong in some texts — even in texts that define God and his ways. We are told that some texts are just “down-right sinister or evil.”

And, note clearly, we are told that we must do this in order to save Evangelicalism from an intellectual disaster.

Of course, accepting this demand amounts to a theological disaster of incalculable magnitude. Rarely has this been more apparent and undeniable. The rejection of the Bible’s inerrancy will please the evangelical revisionists, but it will rob the church of its secure knowledge that the Bible is indeed true, trustworthy and fully authoritative.

Kenton Sparks and the new evangelical revisionists are now making some of the very arguments that earlier opponents of inerrancy attempted to deny. In this sense, they offer great clarity to the current debate. Their logic is clear. They argue that the human authors of the Bible were not protected from error, and their errors are not inconsequential. We are talking about nothing less than whether the Bible truthfully reveals to us the nature, character, acts, and purposes of God.

The rejection of biblical inerrancy is bound up with a view of God that is, in the end, fatal for Christian orthodoxy. We are entering a new phase in the battle over the Bible’s truthfulness and authority. We should at least be thankful for undisguised arguments coming from the opponents of biblical inerrancy, even as we are ready, once again, to make clear where their arguments lead. ➤



**“INERRANCY IS THE VIEW THAT  
THE FACTS BECOME  
DEMONSTRATE THAT  
ORIGINAL AUTOGRAPH  
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FALSE IN ALL IT AFFIRMS  
RELATES TO DOCTRINE  
SOCIAL, PHYSICAL, OR**

Paul D. Feinberg, 'Bible, Inerrancy and Infallibility of' in "Evangelical Dictionary of Theology"

**VIEW THAT WHEN ALL  
KNOWN, THEY WILL  
THE BIBLE IN ITS  
PHS AND CORRECTLY  
RELY TRUE AND NEVER  
IRMS, WHETHER THAT  
E OR ETHICS OR TO THE  
LIFE SCIENCES.”**



# The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: A Conversation with Greg Beale

*On the Sept. 4, 2009, broadcast of his radio program, R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, interviewed Greg Beale on his latest book, “The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism.”*

**B**eale formerly served as New Testament professor at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill., and now serves on faculty at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa. The following is an edited transcript of the conversation between the two theologians.

**R. Albert Mohler Jr.:** The title of your book, “The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism,” really does encapsulate the case or the thesis of your book. Let me ask you to review your own experience in the evangelical academy as a professor, in your lifetime are you surprised that this issue has come up again and again and again?

**Greg Beale:** No, I mean anyone who knows much about church history knows that the same things keep coming up again and again but they come up

in different forms and from different angles, so we’ve got some new angles and new forms that are arising, but I think still pertain to the same basic issues of whether the Scripture is fully reliable or not.

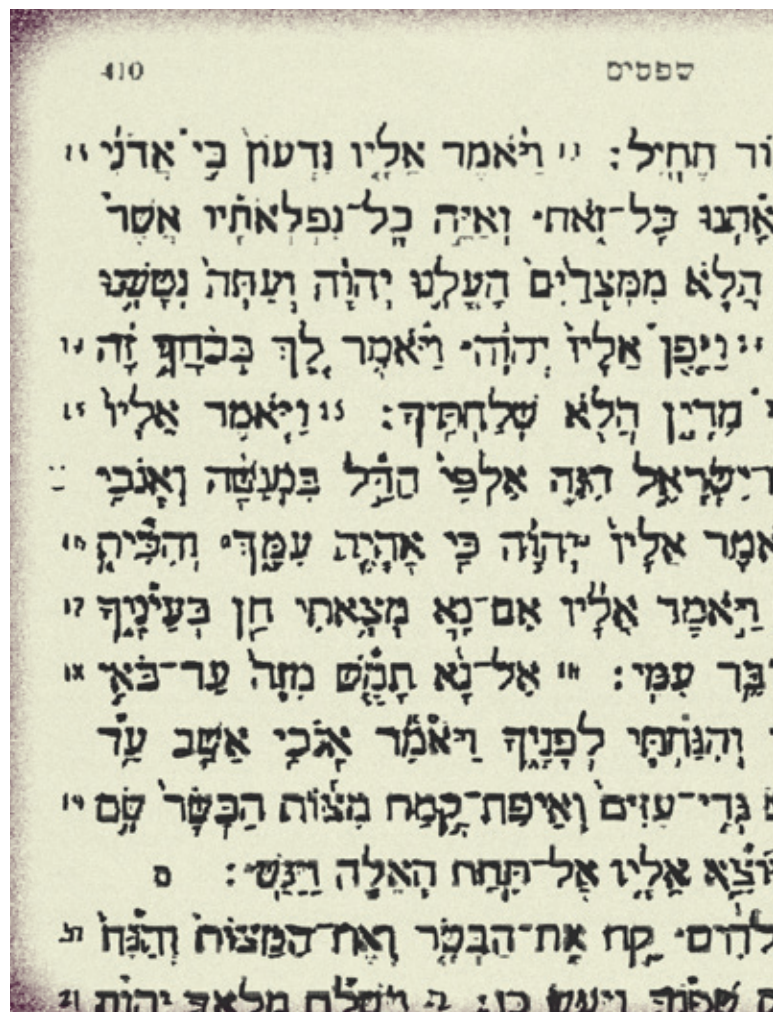
**Mohler:** Now let’s talk about the term just for a moment because some may be unfamiliar with the term “inerrancy of Scripture.” Define that for us.

**Beale:** It’s when all the facts are in, that the intent of the biblical authors as God was inspiring through them is fully true and has full truthful impact and so one has to interpret the Scriptures rightly, you don’t interpret a poetic section as if it were recording literal history and so forth and so on, so you have to respect the authors’ intention and the way he is conveying things. When Christ spoke parables, he was not giving an actual

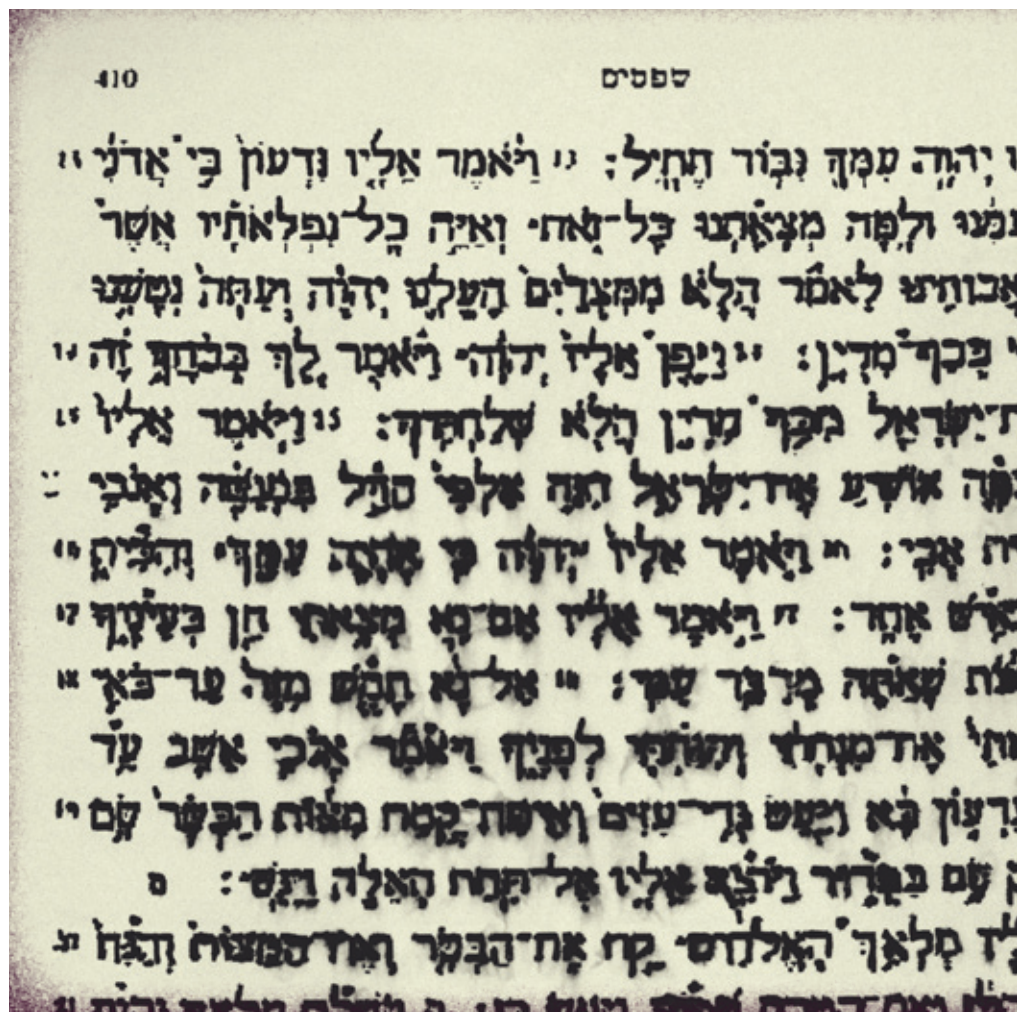
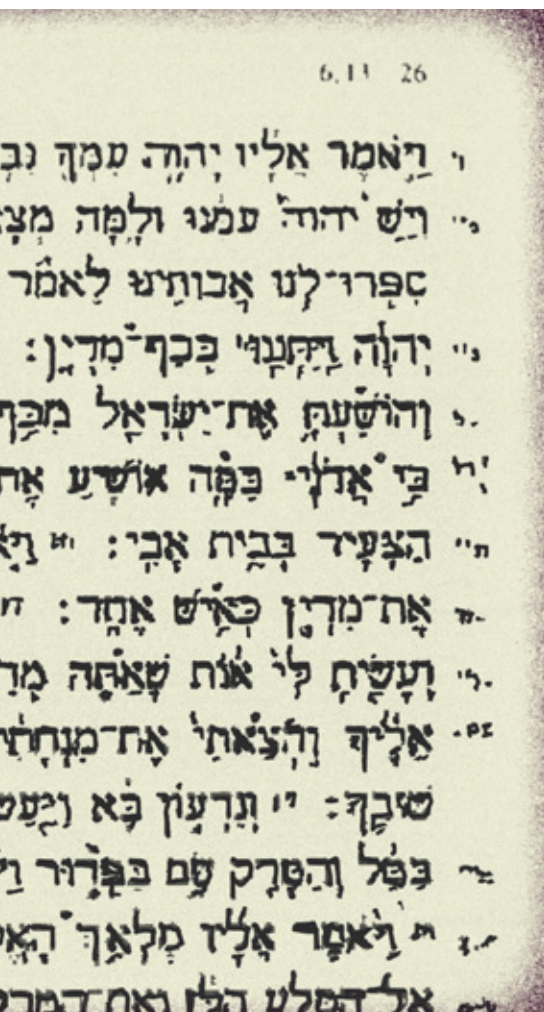
history lesson at that point. He was speaking in pictures and so one has to understand that inerrancy has to do with the author’s intention, when rightly understood, and that an author says in the Scripture has full truthful effect.

**Mohler:** And that covers all that the scriptural writer, the inspired writer, writes. And you know just getting back to the title of your book, “The Erosion of Biblical Inerrancy,” where do you see this erosion?

**Beale:** You’ll find people saying they believe in the full inspiration of Scripture and even the inerrancy of Scripture, but then they will say that there are errors in the Scripture. One way that this occurs, for example, is to say that there are actually myths in Scripture. For example, Genesis 1 sometimes is said to partake so much of Ancient Near







Eastern mythology about the origins of things that the Genesis 1 writer has imbibed these ideas perhaps even unconsciously. But he has expressed mythical ideas, and yet these are inspired by God. This is a new wrinkle because in the old discussions in the 70s and 80s and earlier, people would be saying, well, this part is inspired but that part isn't. The new wrinkle is it's all inspired but its myth, and that myth is inspired.

**Mohler:** You know it's very interesting that in this kind of newly formulated argument, you hear people say such things as this: truth is a socially constructed reality. You see the real influence of postmodernism creeping in that since truth is socially constructed that the biblical authors just basically had to deal with the inherited intellectual framework of their day. And so since they inherited an intellectual framework,

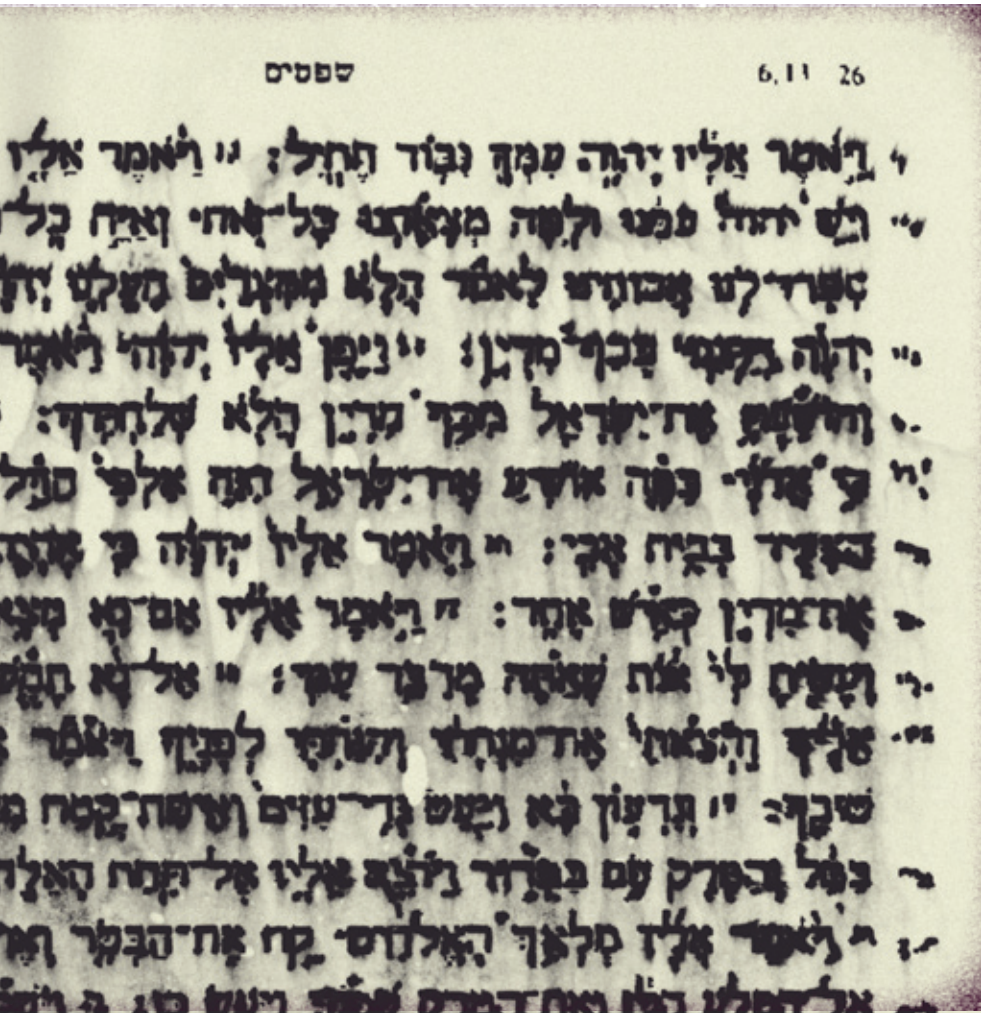
the available intellectual concepts were those supplied by Ancient Near Eastern mythology, the biblical authors just picked it up and were inspired to do the right thing with them.

**Beale:** That's exactly right because the point that's argued is that God communicates with people in different ages according to their language and according to their thought

structures, and of course the thought structures of the author of Genesis 1 would have been Ancient Near Eastern mythological thought structures. Really what this implies is that God can't break through those wrong thought structures by His Spirit even for ancient people, and I think that this is something that isn't considered enough by some of these commentators who argue in this way and your comment about >

"You'll find people saying they believe in the full inspiration of Scripture and even the inerrancy of Scripture, but then they will say that there are errors in the Scripture."





postmodernism is very good because even though we don't believe in myth today, we are told by some of these who argue in this way that this is all that the ancient biblical authors had access to and for them this was true. We need to respect their truth and not impose our understanding of truth on them. This is a very postmodern thing to say.

**Mohler:** How do we make certain that when we affirm the authority of Scripture, we are not merely giving lip service to some claim of inspiration that rises above the level of other available literature? But rather what we are talking about here is the Word that is inspired by God Himself, and that means that you have to take the product of revelation very seriously. To fail to do that is to begin to unravel the rug of any conflicts in revelation at all.

**Beale:** Today, some of these postmoderns, if I may call them theologians, they will not call themselves systematic theologians, for them that's church history — they don't believe you can systematize Scripture. They call themselves constructive theologians — at any rate, these theologians would say, "No, let's not emphasize the propositions, because then it becomes a dead letter. We need to stress the living presence of God and His Word, and we encounter God and His Word."

Acts 7 says that the Scripture that Moses delivered was the living word of God. Yes, its true propositions but we do at the same time encounter God through the Scripture, speaking. And to err on one side or the other, I think, is a mistake.

**Mohler:** I appreciate very much your affirmation there, but you know when

you start to talk this way and you are rightly summarizing some of what folks are saying out there, this isn't even new. I wrote my doctoral dissertation 20 years ago on Karl Barth, and that's exactly the argument he was making and at least it was known then that that wasn't an evangelical option.

**Beale:** Well Barth is the darling boy still. He is the darling boy of many of the evangelical theologians.

**Mohler:** He gives you the escape hatch from having to take the propositions of Scripture at face value, and that's the bottom line. Let's get to the truth question for just a moment. The publication of your book is worthwhile over and over again, but would have been worthwhile for just about a page and a half, and that page and a half has to do with your taking apart the argument of those who suggest that only modern people are really concerned with historical accuracy or with what we might call a correspondence understanding of truth, that a proposition corresponds to reality. You just take that apart. Explain that, I think folks will want to follow that argument.

**Beale:** Essentially, if you do a basic word study on truth, on "to know," throughout the Scriptures it's used again and again and again. They understood certain historical events to have happened and that they could understand that those events happened. Today it's often said, "Oh we think of history much differently than the ancients. We think of history as being recorded in chronological order for example, but the ancients didn't think that way." Well today we don't always think of history as chronological. We can organize history topically, so that when we go to the Gospels and we see that the Gospels are not in chronological order, a particular Gospel, that's not much different than the way we do things today. But there is this attempt, and it's because of postmodernism, to say that modern people think much differently than ancient people, and that the ancient people could embrace what we consider falsehoods, but in fact for them they were true and somehow we need to respect that. But when you start looking at how they understood history, I don't think it's that much different than how we

“Acts 7 says that the Scripture that Moses delivered was the living word of God.”

understood it. How do they understand truth? For example, some would say, “Well they could hold to myths and believe they were true, we can’t do that today.” Well, read Paul and the pastoral epistles, and read 2 Peter, they don’t believe these mythologies that Judaism produced. “We saw Jesus, we felt Jesus,” and so forth and so on. I think that this is just actually bad history and bad philosophy to say that we are totally different from ancient peoples. Yes, we are different; we have certain scientific elements of advancement that cause us to differ.

**Mohler:** It is also an insult to those who came before. You look to the church fathers, you look to someone like Luther. To suggest that those theologians/preachers were unconcerned with whether historical events actually happened and whether we can know they happened is to insult their conviction, their preaching, and their theology. It doesn’t make any sense.

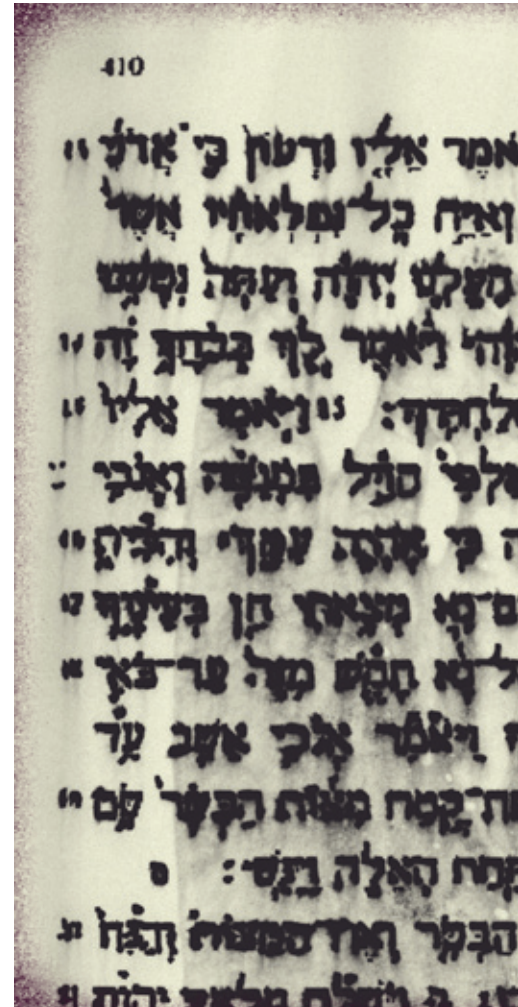
**Mohler:** I recognize that this is a somewhat scholarly discussion, but it’s on an issue that must be close to the heart of any believing Christian. What are the kinds of arguments that an intelligent, thoughtful evangelical should be listening out for to recognize where the authority and inerrancy of Scripture are being subverted?

**Beale:** Well if you read the very beginning of my discussion[in the book], I talk about a hypothetical dialogue between “traditionalist Tom” and “progressive Pat.” People begin to say, “Oh, Isaiah did not write all of

Isaiah, and Moses didn’t write all of it (the Pentateuch), but it’s still inspired.” Now such a person can have a very high view of Scripture, but I think there is a crack in the foundation at the point and when people begin to allow that sort of thinking to continue, it festers until you can come to the point [where you say], “Well of course, if Isaiah didn’t write Isaiah 40-66, then those prophecies weren’t really prophecy, they were history written to appear like prophecy.” Well now we really run into some problems even though we seem to start with a somewhat innocent statement, perhaps, that Isaiah didn’t write all of Isaiah, and so the domino goes in that regard. If you hear people saying, “Well, you know I believe Ephesians and the pastoral epistles were inspired, but you know, Paul couldn’t have written them. The vocabulary is just so completely different in the pastoral epistles.” Well that’s a real problem because it says Paul wrote it, and I think we are faced squarely with a problem of inerrancy at that point. Now some would say, “Oh well, this was a way of writing in the first century to take on your master’s name.” Paul is very specific, he says I am writing this in my own letters at various points, and with my own hand to show it wasn’t written by someone else. I don’t think any disciples of Paul would touch with a 10-foot pole imitating Paul and playing like their writing was from Paul. These are the kinds of arguments, this is how they begin, and people who hold to these views still say they hold to the inerrancy of Scripture.

**Mohler:** You make in your book a statement I want to read to you. You pose a question, let me read the question: “What has happened in the last 30 years to cause such a desire to revise what had been considered the standard North American evangelical statement on Scripture?” Now that standard North American statement on Scripture refers to the Chicago Statement which was developed by evangelical scholars, but you really do very clearly state that there was a standard understanding. So, let me ask you to answer the question you ask in your book, you answered there as well, but for us, what has changed?

**Beale:** Well, what we discussed earlier, this notion of postmodernism, that



people even in our modern world can differ about what they believe is truth, and we just have to agree to disagree and truth can be relative. ➤





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# The Mission of Southern Seminary

*As we begin the 2010-2011 academic year, I am pleased to report The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary campus is alive with eager new students and the entire seminary community pulsates with the same evangelical fervor that compelled James P. Boyce to found Southern Seminary more than 150 years ago.*

**S**outhern Seminary's mission remains fixed. Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the mission of Southern Seminary is to be totally committed to the Bible as the Word of God, to the Great Commission as our mandate and to be a servant of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention by training, educating and preparing ministers of the Gospel for more faithful service.

If you have opportunity to visit campus this fall, you will witness classrooms packed with students and you will sense Gospel enthusiasm at 2825 Lexington Road. You likely will overhear conversations about Hebrew syntax, early church history or a student's plan



for urban ministry. If you visit a campus worship service in Alumni Memorial Chapel you can join the thundering voices of men and women on mission for God. It is a joy to serve in a place that is animated by Gospel issues and Kingdom consequences, and, once again, I am reminded that we cannot effectively accomplish all that God has called us to do without ministry partners like you standing with us.

We recently closed the books on our 2009-2010 fiscal year in which friends and alumni like you invested heavily in young men and women training for ministry at Southern Seminary. Each gift represents decisions of individual sacrifice, and for each gift know that we are grateful for your commitment and God's faithfulness.

Each year Southern Seminary graduates several hundred students who disembark to serve as pastors, ministers and missionaries all over the world. Not only is Southern Seminary sending students to the nations, but the nations are coming to this campus. We have 160 international students from more than 30 nations represented among our student body.

Each student on this campus is a story of God's saving work and Gospel call, and each student is a testimony to God's goodness and providential care for his church around the world. By God's

grace students will continue to receive teaching, training and preparation for faithful Gospel service.

We are grateful that we can keep tuition affordable for anyone wishing to prepare for ministry. It is my desire to continue this stewardship, but we cannot do it without your partnership. I ask you to join me by investing in the work of Southern Seminary. For your convenience, visit [www.sbts.edu/giving](http://www.sbts.edu/giving) to make a secure online donation.

Your partnership is urgently needed and deeply appreciated. On behalf of the students, faculty and staff, I thank you for your continued support. May God bless you as we seek to serve Christ and His church together until Christ returns. ➤

Sincerely,  
R. Albert Mohler Jr.



# McGills Honor Wallace with Gift to Seminary

By JOSH HAYES

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*“For me to live is Christ.” These well known words of the apostle Paul were inscribed on the memoriam of martyred missionary Bill Wallace when his remains were buried beneath Chinese soil. For many years following his death, nothing existed to recognize the burial place of Wallace except for this simple, visually unimpressive grave marker with the words noted above.*

Thankfully lack of memorial is no longer the case for Wallace and others like him as seminary donors such as John and Joyce McGill are able to give funds to Southern Seminary in honor of such servants of Christ. Interestingly enough, McGill and his wife live just within three miles from where Wallace’s remains currently reside in the Greenwood Cemetery in Knoxville, Tenn.

“Bill Wallace is a Southern Baptist icon,” said Jason Allen, vice president of institutional advancement and executive director of the Southern Seminary Foundation. “He gave his life to the cause of Christ literally as he was martyred for his faith in the Lord Jesus and for preaching the Gospel of Jesus.”

Wallace spent the last 15 years of his life as a medical missionary in Wuchow, China. He conducted his ministry there during seasons of great political duress and severe conditions, including the Japanese invasion of China, World War II and the nation’s conversion to communism. Known for his humble yet unwavering witness for Christ, Wallace died on Feb. 10, 1951, at the age of 43 while inside a Chinese prison cell where he was being held on the false charge of being an American spy.

Southern Seminary’s Legacy Donor option allows for donors to present the seminary with monetary gifts in the name of any Christian known and beloved to them—whether it be a pastor, missionary, a loved one, or past hero like Wallace. In recognition of such gifts, a Legacy Center suite will be named after those who are being honored.

“The naming opportunities associated with the Legacy Center suites give us a unique combination to support students through the monetary contribution and also honor a donor, a pastor, a missionary, or other servants of Christ,” Allen explained. “The entire emphases is taking shape in a way that is enabling us as an institution to honor those, and loved ones of those, who are giving generously to stand with the students at Southern Seminary.”

The McGills’ relationship with Southern Seminary dates back to the early 1970s during the days of former seminary president Duke K. McCall. While working as a mechanical engineer for General Electric in Owensboro, Ky., McGill said he had the opportunity to sit under McCall’s preaching when the then-seminary president would fill in as pulpit supply for area local churches. For



Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives,  
Nashville, Tennessee

the past decade, the McGills have been generous donors to the seminary, setting up the appropriately titled Bill Wallace Scholarship designated to assist Southern students from the Knoxville and East Tennessee area.

“John and Joyce McGill are salt of the earth Christians. They have been faithful friends of Southern Seminary now for many years and they give generously to further the work of Southern Seminary and to support students studying for ministry,” said Allen. “In particular, the McGills have a deep love for missions and for the legacy of Wallace. Thus, it is a poetic thing that the McGills would be able to fund a Legacy Center suite in honor of Wallace. I pray through the McGills’ sacrificial giving that the legacy and mission of Wallace will be more clearly understood and more deeply embraced amongst the Southern Seminary family, and I also pray the McGills’ generosity would inspire others to give to support students at Southern and also to further the witness of a missionary such as Wallace.”

McGill explained that his past employment with

General Electric has afforded him the opportunity to bring in additional funds to the seminary, noting that the company will match his donations since he is giving to an educational institution.

“I would encourage anyone who doesn’t want their name associated with their donation to give in honor of someone else. I would suggest they pick a local hero,” McGill said. “I encourage anyone with a connection to Southern Baptists to be part of the Southern Seminary family, and I encourage everyone to join the Foundation Board, to step foot on campus, sit in classes and attend chapel.”

After retiring in 1994, the McGills moved to Knoxville where they attend Wallace Memorial Baptist Church. They have been married for 50 years and currently serve as members of the Foundation Board for Southern Seminary. McGill has served as a deacon at local churches in Utica, Ky., Murfreesboro, Tenn., Mt. Vernon, Ind., and presently Knoxville, Tenn. In addition, the McGills have provided funding for several missionary biographies and autobiographies. >|



**“I encourage anyone with a connection to Southern Baptists to be part of the Southern Seminary family, and I encourage everyone to join the Foundation Board, to step foot on campus, sit in classes and attend chapel.”**



# Reynolds Backs Southern's Commitment to Scripture and Theology

By JOSH HAYES

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*The Lord has blessed The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in many ways. Among those ways are the institution's world-class faculty, its thriving student body and even its beautiful, lush campus.*

Nevertheless, perhaps the seminary's greatest blessing is that the Lord has raised up an administration, faculty and other leadership who are committed to the authority of Scripture and the theology of the Bible. And it is specifically for that reason that John Reynolds supports Southern Seminary.

"There are many reasons to love Southern Seminary—from what the Lord is doing in the life of the students, to the beauty of the campus, to the incredibly talented faculty the Lord has assembled here," Jason Allen, vice president of institutional advancement and executive director of the Southern Seminary Foundation, said. "But I believe Reynolds has bought into the mission of Southern Seminary for what is the most quintessential reason, the fact that the Lord is raising up a generation of students who are drinking from the pure milk of the Word at Southern Seminary and who want to be infused with a full body of theology undiluted, unadulterated and robust in its commitment."

Reynolds explained that his commitment to Southern is for its uncompromising stance upon biblical truth, something that is not too popular in today's broader culture.

"I am committed to supporting Southern Seminary because it is a rare institution that holds to the truths of Scripture and boldly proclaims God's Word in an increasingly secular, godless, antagonistic and anti-theistic postmodern culture," Reynolds said. "Southern Seminary has a commitment to the authority of the Word of God and, in general, is not blighted by empty liberal theology.

Southern has an administration and faculty that is not succumbing to the latest fads and trends of watered-down Christianity or political correctness but instead seeks to train a new generation in the truths regarding the Bible with particular emphasis on the Gospel (i.e. Christ's substitutionary sacrifice on the behalf of undeserving sinners)."

According to Allen, Reynolds supports Southern for "all the right reasons," namely for its training of students under the authority of Scripture.

"It's been a great joy of mine to get to know John Reynolds this past year," Allen said. "Reynolds is a man who supports Southern Seminary for all the right reasons. Most especially, Reynolds gives generously to support students training for ministry at Southern Seminary because he knows at Southern Seminary students are being taught the truth of Scripture and are being equipped to preach, teach and defend the truth of Scripture."

Reynolds became aware of Southern through his friendship with Russell Fuller, professor of Old Testament interpretation at Southern Seminary. While Reynolds was attending the University of Cincinnati, Fuller was pursuing doctoral studies at Hebrew Union College. The two men attended the same church in northern Kentucky, and after becoming acquainted, they discovered they had much in common, according to Reynolds. Having remained friends ever since, Reynolds learned of Southern Seminary when Fuller joined the faculty in 1998.



Furthermore, Reynolds has not only supported the seminary as a donor, but he has taken classes both online and on-campus that have, in his estimation, deepened his understanding of God’s Word and enriched his walk with Christ.

“[Reynold’s] study began as a child by memorizing the Shorter Catechism,” Fuller explained. “Now, when his schedule allows, he takes courses at Southern Seminary. He especially enjoys the theology classes – and Hebrew, of course. Reynolds appreciates the theological direction of Southern Seminary. This is why he faithfully and generously supports [the institution].”

In addition, Reynolds says he greatly enjoys the “wholesome atmosphere” the campus gives him. In his words the campus is, “a welcome respite from the worldly and sometimes crude environment of [his] workplace.” As a result of his time on Southern’s campus, Reynolds has been able to maintain friendships over the years that have come to be precious sources of fellowship, spiritual encouragement and godly counsel.

Regarding Reynolds’ personal devotion to Christ, Allen said, “Reynolds is one of the most pious individuals I have ever gotten to know. He is a student of Scripture in every way, he is deeply committed to his local church, and he exudes maturity in Christ.”

Receiving his undergraduate and medical degrees

from the University of Cincinnati, Reynolds currently works as a pulmonologist and critical-care physician at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, Ind., focusing on lung transplantation and serving as the hospital’s director for the program. Although he is not always able to share Christ in every circumstance he would like, Reynolds has experienced opportunities to minister to patients who are believers.

“Most of my opportunities to share Christ in my workplace have been that of encouraging believers in their time of sickness as opposed to sharing the Gospel with someone who does not know Christ,” said Reynolds. “This is an often overlooked service in our day but I can say without reservation it is very [much] needed and is a great blessing to those who reach out to those who are ill and suffering.”

As a physician, Reynolds sees his calling to give to Gospel-centered institutions such as Southern.

“As long as God sees fit to allow me to be employed as a physician, I will consider part of His will for my life in serving Him to involve support — prayer and financial — of an institution such as Southern Seminary,” Reynolds said. “In this way, I can help Southern equip godly men to serve the Lord in sharing the good news of Christ to a lost and dying world.”

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**“Southern Seminary has a commitment to the authority of the Word of God and, in general, is not blighted by empty liberal theology.”**



# Will You Stand with Us?

*Theological conversations often occur in the most unlikely settings.*



In the fall of 1994, as a 17-year-old aspiring college athlete on a recruiting visit to a college I was considering, I found myself thrust into a theological conversation that I did not anticipate and for which I was not equipped. There I was, seated on a stool in a dark, mildew-encrusted locker room receiving theological instruction from another gentleman many, many years my senior. This elderly gentleman was in charge of basketball recruiting and he sensed I might be reluctant to sign with his college since I was a Southern Baptist and the college he represented was far left on the theological spectrum.

Playing the sage, the gentleman leaned in close to me and, peering laser-like through his glasses, uttered words I still remember. “Jason,” he said, “I want to talk with you about religion. I understand that you are Southern Baptist and that might be an impediment in our efforts to recruit you. What you need to understand is that you should think of your religion as one of many roads that can lead you to God. You should think of God as on the top of a mountain. Your religion is one road that will lead you up the mountain to God. My religion is another road that will lead me up the mountain to God. There are many roads that lead up the mountain, but they all arrive at the same God who is on top of the mountain.”

Though I was ill-equipped at the

time for a theological conversation, I was confronted that day with religious pluralism - the idea that there are many ways to God. Religious pluralism is hatched in the incubator of biblical doubt. That is to say, if one denies the inerrancy and trustworthiness of God’s Word, it follows suit to deny Scripture’s truth claims, most especially the claim that Jesus is the only way to salvation.

On the contrary, though, the Bible is full of assertions about its own truthfulness and it places priority on the notion of truth as a whole. Indeed, truth claims are ubiquitous in Scripture. Jesus refers to the Word of God as truth (John 17:17). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (John 14:17). Believers are called to meditate on that which is true (Phil 4:8) and to speak the truth to one another (Eph 4:15).

Jesus declares himself to be the truth (John 14:6), and all those who come to know Christ, know the truth and thus are set free by it (John 8:31-32). What is more, with ongoing consequence the church is called to be “a pillar and support of the truth” (I Tim 3:15).

Believing the truth, teaching the truth and defending the truth should be a priority for every Christian, at both the lay and ministerial level, and it is the *sine qua non* of faithful theological education. Truth is nonnegotiable.

The Southern Baptist Theological

Seminary stands unambiguously as an institution committed to the proclamation and defense of the truth of Scripture. This stand is a public stand, as codified in each professor’s signed pledge to teach in accordance with and not contrary to the historic Abstract of Principles and the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Southern Seminary has a sacred stewardship – to train ministers of the Gospel capable to teach, preach and defend the truth of Scripture, thereby ensuring that each local congregation is indeed “a pillar and support of the truth.”

The charge to be faithful to Scripture is a sacred charge, but it is an unpopular charge. When juxtaposed to our current age of skepticism, doubt and disbelief, Southern Seminary, and evangelical Christians as a whole, are situated in the cultural minority. Yet, we are buoyed that Christ will prove our strength. To paraphrase Martin Luther, we must take confidence in the fact that come what may, that God’s truth will triumph through us - indeed his truth abideth still.

Whether the arena is a dank locker room, a confused local church or the secular public square, Southern Seminary is training students to stand for the truth. Will you stand with us? ➤

Jason K. Allen



# CHECK

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# EVENTS

*Coming attractions below! Check out  
SBTS.EDU/EVENTS for details about the annual  
events on the campus of Southern Seminary*

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- Southern Seminary Preview  
Oct. 15, 2010 and April 29, 2011
- Boyce College Preview  
Oct. 22, 2010 and April 15, 2011
- W Conference Nov. 19-20, 2010
- Give Me An Answer Collegiate  
Feb. 11-12, 2011
- Give Me An Answer Student  
Mar. 18-19, 2011
- D3 Youth Conference  
Jun. 27-30, 2011



***SBTS.EDU/EVENTS is your primary resource for information on all of  
Southern Seminary's upcoming events***





The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary  
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This is a QR Code. Mobile phones and smartphones, such as AT&T's iPhone or Verizon's Droid, can read and process QR codes through the device's camera. Within this QR code is encoded information that, once scanned, will direct you to more audio, video and text resources on the topic of Biblical inerrancy and Southern Seminary.

Instructions:

1. Using your mobile device, download a QR Code reader application – which is free.
2. Once your phone is equipped with the correct reader app, scan this image to display text, video and audio resources related to the inerrancy of Scripture.
3. Enjoy Southern Seminary's original video "Sweeter than honey."