



# Towers

A NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

07

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MARCH  
2018

# The Gift of Singleness

**Mohler's new book  
on The Lord's Prayer**

**Billy Graham  
Remembered**

**Stinson on Marriage  
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**The Gift of Singleness?**

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 7 that singleness can be a “gift.” But it doesn’t often feel that way. What did Paul mean when he encouraged the unmarried to remain that way, and what could that mean for us?



**FROM THE EDITOR**

Like everyone, I’ve been single. I felt it most profoundly during my four years at an evangelical

college and four years as a student at Southern Seminary. For almost a decade of getting few dates and almost no obvious interest, I spent a lot of time in introspection. *What’s wrong with me?*

Reflecting on that time now, I realize I dramatically underestimated the value of my singleness for ministry and deep, godly friendships. I got married in October of last year, at age 28, but before then I spent a lot of time feeling sorry that I wasn’t married yet. In other

words, I took my singleness inward — not outward.

Our feature contributors (Chris Smith, Provost Randy Stinson, and Jacinda Melson) each interact with students regularly for their jobs at Boyce College or Southern Seminary. Singleness is sometimes not fun, but as they point out — whether your singleness lasts a few more months or many years — it can be a powerful tool for the growth of the gospel, and an invitation to rich communal life, and a blessing in its own right.

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**Billy Graham’s 50-year influence on SBTS**

One of America’s greatest preachers and Christian figureheads died Feb. 21. His life and outsized influence intersected with Southern Seminary for a half century.

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**The Lord’s Prayer as manifesto**

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, says the Lord’s Prayer “turns the world upside-down” in his new book. Find out why.

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**John David Wilsey’s church history vision**

The new church history professor at Southern Seminary thinks a compass can teach a valuable theological lesson.

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**History of the Billy Graham School**

Hear the story of one of Billy Graham’s most enduring legacies at Southern Seminary.

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**Our mission is to use our time, resources, and talents to tell the Southern story in an accurate, timely, and creative manner to the glory of God.**

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# Newslog

## 'An epic era of evangelical history has come to an end'

By Aaron Cline Hanbury and James A. Smith Sr.

William Franklin “Billy” Graham, the Southern Baptist evangelist famous for his evangelistic crusades around the world, died Feb. 21 at his home in Asheville, N.C., a spokesman for the family confirmed. He was 99.

Graham, the internationally renowned evangelist and evangelical leader, preached during his ministry to nearly 215 million people in more than 185 countries, more than anyone else in history, according to his organization’s website. He reached incalculably more people through television, video, film and web.

“An epic era of evangelical history has come to an end. Billy Graham was not only a titanic figure in evangelicalism, but in world history and perhaps represents the last of a kind,” R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said in a statement.

“He dominated 20th century American evangelicalism and remained a major figure on the world stage throughout most of the 20th century in a way that we can envision no evangelical leader in our times. He was a man of deep conviction whose passionate heartbeat was for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Dean of Southern Seminary’s Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry Adam W. Greenway in a statement:

“The passing of Billy Graham marks the end of an era in American Christianity,” said Greenway. “He was incredibly passionate for evangelism and he influenced every level of American life. He was also passionate about theological education and the training of the next generation of evangelists and evangelistic pastors.

“That’s personified by his support for the creation of the Billy Graham School at Southern Seminary — the only graduate school to ever allowed to carry his name. I think his greatest legacy would not only be those whom he personally impacted through his evangelistic ministry, but the scores of pastors and evangelists who have been trained to preach the same gospel that he so faithfully proclaimed.”

Following his evangelistic crusade in Los Angeles in 1949, Graham was a staple in American public life. Through Graham’s ministry, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, innumerable people have heard and responded to the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

“In many ways, Billy Graham did not pioneer mass evangelism and crusade evangelism; he perfected it,” said Mohler. “What others had done on a smaller scale and infrequent regularity, he began to do in a way I do not think can be replicated or equaled.

Graham was born to Morrow and William “Frank” Graham, Nov. 7, 1918, near Charlotte, North Carolina, four days before the armistice that led to the end of the First World War and exactly one year after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

When Graham was six years old, his father took him to hear the former Chicago White Stockings centerfielder-turned-evangelist Billy Sunday. The young Graham absorbed the entire experience. The energetic Sunday would leave a lasting impact on Graham.

In college, while walking around an empty golf course near Tampa, Fla., Graham committed to becoming a gospel preacher. Following this first college experience at the Florida Bible Institute (now Trinity College) in Temple Terrace, Fla., Graham enrolled at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. There he met his future wife, Ruth Bell.

Following a long, uncertain engagement, Graham and Ruth married during the summer of 1943, two months after they both graduated from Wheaton.

During the early days of his marriage, Graham pastored a small church in Western Springs, Illinois. While there, an area pastor who preached over the radio asked Graham to assume his radio preaching. He immediately saw the vast potential of mass media evangelism and he readily accepted the offer.

In the interest of finding a musician who could add a worship dynamic to the program, Graham extended an invitation to radio singer George Beverly Shea to join him in broadcast evangelism. Graham and Shea formed a long-lasting ministry relationship.

In 1949, while Graham was the president of Northwestern College in Minnesota, and following his widely noticed work with Youth for Christ, a group known as “Christ for Greater Los Angeles” asked Graham to come preach at a series of evangelistic rallies. He accepted.

“A standing room only audience was on hand yesterday,” the Los Angeles Times reported. “At the afternoon service an estimated 1,500 persons of those converted during the revival walked forward to the preacher’s platform in response to the invitation.”

People around the United States and the world would increasingly come to know this young preacher who made an indelible mark on the American religious and cultural scene during his 1949 preaching in Los Angeles. Thus began Graham’s wide-reaching and famous evangelistic crusades around the country and world.

At various points during his ministry, from casual visits due to nearby crusades, formal engagements for Missionary Day, several chapel addresses and alumni events, Graham appeared many times on the campus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Just as he did for the rest of American evangelicalism, Graham left a mark on Southern Seminary.

Indirectly, Graham’s behind-the-scenes work promoting Christian intellectual and moral engagement in broader

culture, and his prodding of men like Carl F.H. Henry to defend a Christianity heavily affects the mission that Southern Seminary attempts to continue in the training of pastors, scholars, missionaries and counselors who will defend truth in a secular age.

Indeed, “Graham was the organizing center of evangelicalism in the 20th century, playing a significant role in the formation of key evangelical institutions. In addition to his Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Graham founded an entire constellation of evangelical ministries, most notably, Christianity Today magazine,” Mohler said.

“Surveying the list of major evangelical organizations, it’s difficult to imagine what many of them would be today (if indeed they would exist today) without the human agency of Billy Graham,” Mohler said.

In 1960, the seminary established the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism and

dedicated its Billy Graham Room in the James P. Boyce Centennial Library, where the seminary’s Archives and Special Collections houses its Billy Graham Collection.

The collection, recording approximately 30 years of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association’s crusade efforts around the world, contains information not readily found in books and other resources. In the Billy Graham Room hangs a painting of the evangelist by Aileen Ortlip Shea, the sister-in-law of George Beverly Shea, the music leader and soloist for the Graham association.

In October of 1993, Graham returned to the seminary and spoke at a worship service held the evening before Mohler’s inauguration as president of Southern Seminary. And during his inauguration, Mohler announced the establishment of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth in order to increase academic training of missions

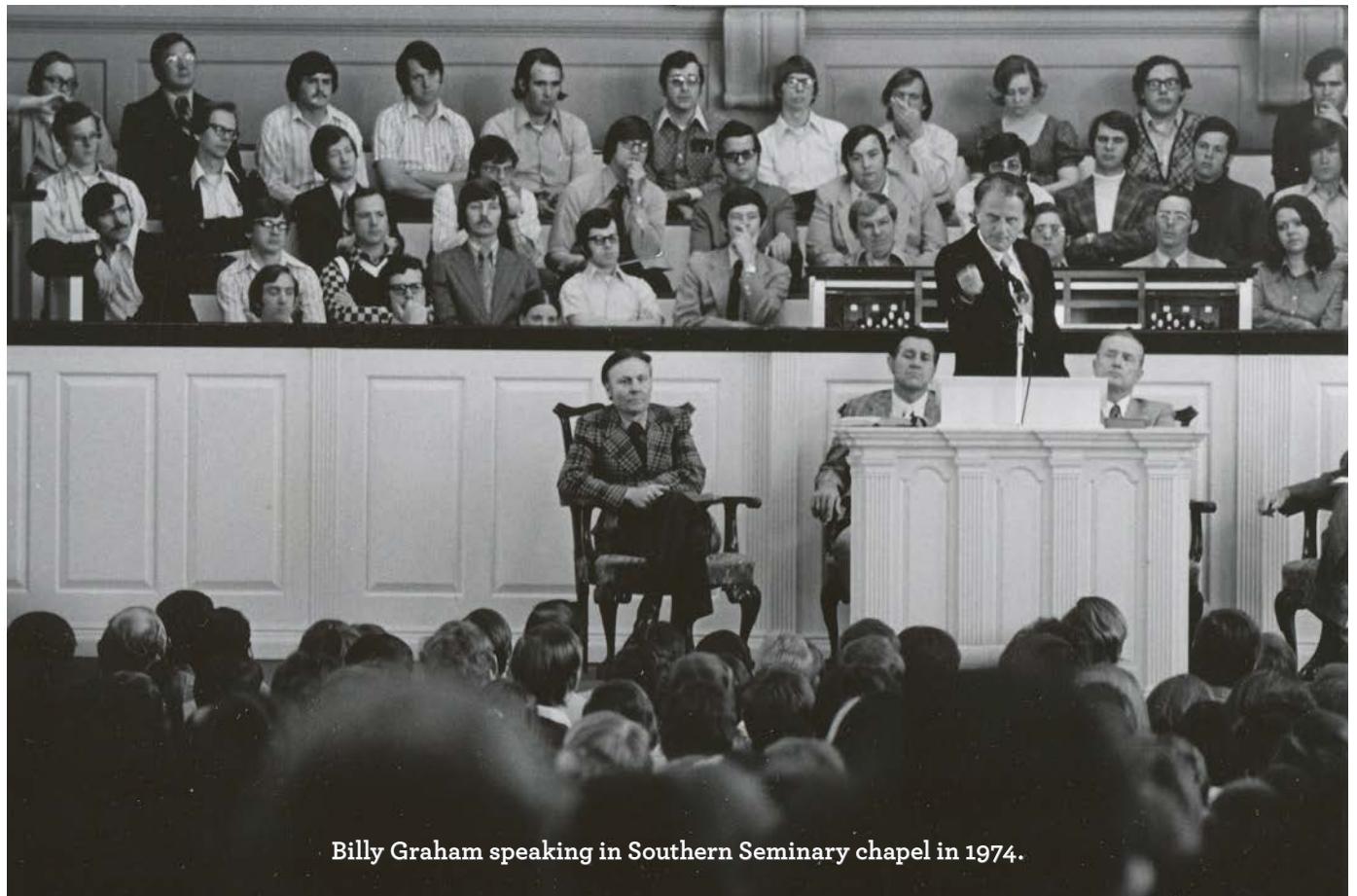
and evangelism at the seminary.

In October of 2013, Mohler reported to the evangelist about the progress of the Billy Graham School at the 20-year anniversary of its establishment and introduced him to the school’s new dean, Greenway.

Also in the meeting, Mohler asked Graham to offer advice for the students at Southern Seminary. In reply, according to Mohler, Graham spoke about the necessity of faithful devotional life in ministry.

“His advice on the importance of their devotional life and to ‘study more and speak less’ takes on incredible new poignancy these days,” Mohler said.

Graham leaves behind his children Virginia, Anne Morrow, Ruth Bell, William Franklin III, Nelson Edman, as well as 19 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren. Graham’s wife of 63 years, Ruth Bell Graham, died in 2007.



Billy Graham speaking in Southern Seminary chapel in 1974.



## Mohler answers 'any' question at University of Louisville

By Andrew J.W. Smith and Sarah Haywood

Students from the University of Louisville sat for an hour -and-a-half to ask questions of R. Albert Mohler Jr. They wanted to know about belief and Christianity — whether religion could still be reasonable. So hundreds gathered on Feb. 6 in the Margaret Comstock Concert Hall on the UofL campus for the first event of the Ask Anything tour, seeking answers from Mohler.

Mohler, president of Southern Seminary, answered questions on Christian views of science, history, politics, and theology during the open-microphone session.

“I am here tonight because I believe the most plausible, the true, and genuinely helpful answers to [our] questions come from biblical Christianity,” he said.

After addressing issues brought up by students, Mohler concluded with a gospel presentation, arguing that every human being is made in God’s image but deeply broken by the Fall, but that the God who created and judges is also the one who chooses to redeem through his son, Jesus Christ.

The event is the first of two scheduled so far in the Ask Anything tour, which will continue on March 2 on the campus of the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA).

## Boyce College holds first-annual Spirit Week

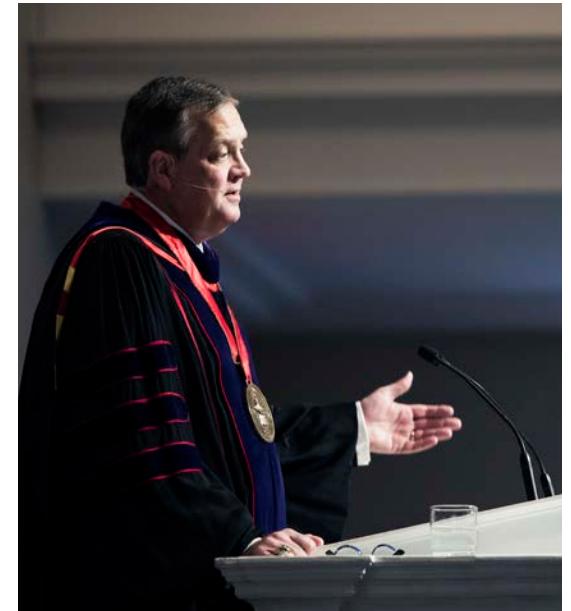
By Grant Mitchell

This month, Boyce College students celebrated their first-ever Spirit Week. The week consisted of team events and tasks designed to help halls win points in order to win the coveted Spirit Week trophy.

The idea was conceived by the student life team at Boyce College. The five theme days included dress-up days, competitive events, and decoration contests. Students dressed up for their reunions 50 years from now, held women-only and men-only dorm meetings, and competed in a tug of war tournament. Other events featured Jeopardy!-style trivia and games like “Rapture the Flag.”

“At Boyce, our halls are like our families, and I think Spirit Week really caused the halls to grow closer themselves, and with one another,” said Elliot Goldinger, president of the Boyce College Student Council. “Boyce Student Life played a critical role in facilitating Spirit Week, but really, it was the energy and competitiveness coming from the student body that made Spirit Week what I think will become a tradition eagerly anticipated every spring semester for years to come.”

The top three halls finished within 20 points of each other. Makarios was the first-place finisher with Aletheia and Apostolos finishing second and third, respectively.



## ‘A place for truth’: Mohler at SBTS spring convocation

By Andrew J.W. Smith

An ironclad commitment to truth is the defining quality of a faithful theological institution, said R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, during its spring convocation, Feb. 6 in Alumni Memorial Chapel.

In an address titled, “Recovering and Sustaining the Theological Mission of Christian Education,” Mohler stressed the centrality of the theological disciplines. Any educational endeavor must therefore emerge from a solid theological starting point, along with a robust epistemology, he said. If the church is going to grow, it must do the same.

“There is not going to be any non-theological Christianity,” Mohler said. “By definition, it won’t exist. There is not going to be a Christianity where theology is not central to the entire enterprise of the church.”

Theology is the natural extension of the embrace of truth, Mohler argued, and therefore there are no non-theological disciplines at a seminary resolved to know and teach the truth. Everything a student studies at such an institution — homiletics, evangelism, missions, exegesis, hermeneutics — emerges out of that theological commitment, Mohler said.

Audio and video of the convocation address are available at [equip.sbts.edu](http://equip.sbts.edu).



### THE GOSPEL IS ABOUT HIM

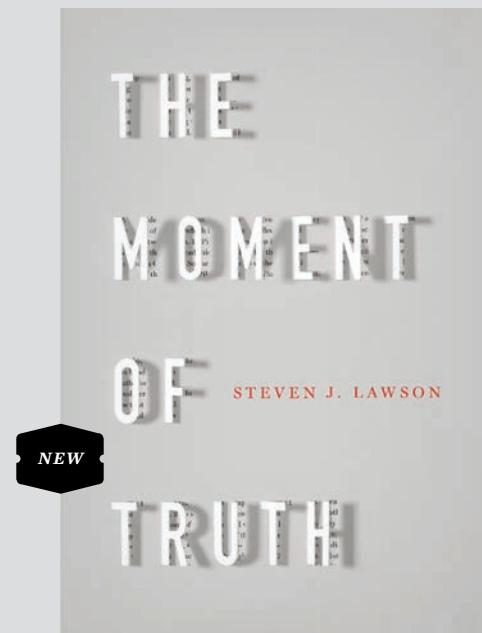
Everything the Bible has to say about the gospel is simply an exposition of its central message: Jesus Christ lived and died to save sinners. The gospel is about Him, and it answers Jesus' key question: "Who do you say that I am?" It is good news. In *Good News: The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Dr. John MacArthur examines the Bible's revelation of Christ and encourages Christians with the vast implications of all that Christ accomplished for them. This is a book to rekindle love and awe for the Savior.

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### WHAT IS TRUTH?

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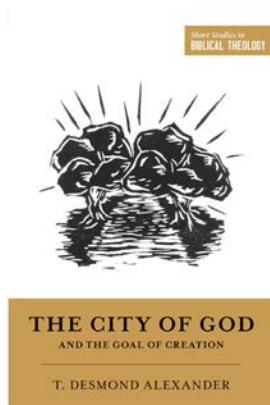
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# Book Reviews



(Crossway, 2018, \$15.99)

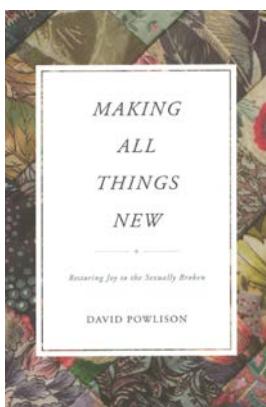
## *The City of God and the Goal of Creation*

**T. Desmond Alexander** Review by Sarah Haywood

“At the very heart of God’s plan for our world stands an extraordinary city,” T. Desmond Alexander writes. His new book, *The City of God and the Goal of Creation*, is the latest volume in the Short Studies in Biblical Theology series from Crossway. From the Garden of Eden to New Jerusalem, he explains, the cities of the Bible are linked. And they represent God’s work through history toward the creation of a unique, holy city.

This new city is New Jerusalem, illustrated in Revelation, and “its citizens enjoy an environment transformed by the radiant presence of God himself. ... This is a city like no other city.”

Alexander explains how each city, like Babel/Babylon and Jerusalem, displays human desire for authority but points to God’s plan for restoration, to reverse the consequences of sin and the alienation from God that began in the Garden of Eden. In spite of opposition, he says, God will build his holy city: “God and his redeemed people will live together in an extraordinary metropolis.”



(Crossway, 2017, \$11.99)

## *Making All Things New: Recovering Joy in the Sexually Broken*

**David Powlison** Review By Gabriel Reyes-Ordeix

“Both creation and salvation embrace human sexuality. Sex is an elemental good in God’s fruitful work in creation.” But all blessings have been marred by sin, and sexuality was no exception. Our world is filled with sexual brokenness — and so are we. Whether it includes wandering eyes, forbidden romantic attraction, or aggressive flirtation, we are all sexually broken.

This book’s purpose is to highlight God’s grace through Christ and his transforming message to both the transgressor and the victim. Powlison introduces the book with a threefold vision on the Christianity and sexuality: (1) Christian faith revels in sexual fidelity; (2) Christian faith is candid about sexual wrongs; and, (3) the Christian faith brings genuine transformation.

This process of renewal lasts a lifetime. Powlison stresses the importance of knowing the length of the battle: “God works step-by-step. He walks with you. He’s always interested in how you take your very next step. Walking through life with him feels right. You’re going somewhere.”

*Making All Things New* is a book full of poignant — and often hurtful — truths, but it is also full of the comforting hope that roots itself in the gospel that transforms and sanctifies sinners.



(Towhee Music, \$6.93 on iTunes)

## *Songs from the Valley*

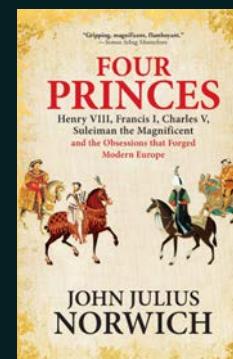
**Sandra McCracken** Review by Matt Damico

Sandra McCracken released her latest album, *Songs from the Valley*, on Ash Wednesday, a fitting occasion for a collection of laments.

The album fits comfortably in the strain of music McCracken has recently released, with *Psalms* in 2015 and *God’s Highway* in 2016. Most of the tracks on this project feature familiarly sparse instrumentation, with acoustic guitar, a few strings, and synthesized rhythm and effects that create a coherent, atmospheric sound across the album. And all the songs, which confess a commitment to the truth in the darkness, are authenticated by McCracken’s weathered, honest voice.

There are moments when melodies sound familiar, but at no point does the album come across as a predictable or as re-hashed material. The lyrics and the development in McCracken’s sound make it fresh.

We’ll never know what the psalms sounded like in ancient Israel. But if David, Asaph, and the Sons of Korah were writing laments today, they might sound a lot like those on *Songs from the Valley*.



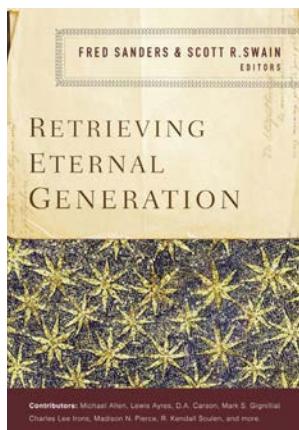
## *Four Princes: Henry VIII, Francis I, Charles V, Suleiman the Magnificent, and the Obsessions that Forged Modern Europe*

JOHN JULIUS NORWICH

By the time I read the subtitle of this book, I was already hooked. Why hadn’t anyone written a book like this before? It took John Julius Norwich, a skilled writer and historian, to bring these four great princes who dominated the sixteenth century together into one story. The cast of characters includes sultans and knights, multiple wives and warriors, a series of disastrous popes, and the reformer Martin Luther. Norwich, author of well-regarded books including *Byzantium*, summons the past and leaves the reader wanting to know even more.



**R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.**  
President, The Southern Baptist  
Theological Seminary



### Retrieving Eternal Generation

eds., Fred Sanders & Scott Swain

Review by Gabriel Reyes-Ordeix

The christological section of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381) is introduced with, “[We believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages.” The eternal generation of the Son is the doctrine that argues the Son is begotten from the Father in eternity. Since the pro-Nicene trinitarian movement and its resolutions emerged in the fourth century, nearly every ecclesiastical tradition has affirmed the doctrine of eternal generation. Nevertheless, this doctrine has faced increasing challenges in modern times. This becomes one of the big themes of this volume: the necessity to retrieve this foundational truth despite its unstable footing.

The authors describe the doctrine of the Trinity as a constellation of truths — hence, the cover picture. Without the doctrine of eternal generation, these truths are left as big truths of stellar

light failing to constellate; they are left shining by themselves, strangely isolated. Eternal generation is defended here as the one doctrine that cements and ties together the array of truths that we call the doctrine of the Trinity. The importance of this doctrine, the editors write, lies in that “It is not enough to say that the Son is God; we must say that he is God the Son, not just God in general ... Sonship, or eternal generation, is what gives both form and content to the relation between the Father and the Son ... Whenever the nature of the relation is left unspecified, any articulation of Trinitarian theology becomes brittle and disconnected.” Josh Malone, another contributor, writes, “God is a fountain of life, and the church confesses this mystery to entail that the Father begets, the Son is begotten, and the Spirit proceeds ... Before all ages, the Father has life in himself and grants the Son life in himself (John 5:26), and in creaturely time the Son gives life to whom he will (John 5:21).”

In an effort to explore and defend this further, *Retrieving Eternal Generation* makes three cases in detail: that this classic confession is biblically,

traditionally, and systematically satisfying. This threefold focus reflects the sections of this book and their approach to eternal generation.

*Retrieving Eternal Generation* is composed of 15 essays by an array of contributors participating through its three sections. Among them: Charles Lee Irons’ defense of John’s *monogenes* as “only begotten”, Lewis Ayres on the origins of eternal generation from Origen of Alexandria, Michael Allen on the doctrine after Karl Barth, Keith E. Johnson’s Augustinian eternal generation, and D.A. Carson on the *Crux Interpretum* of John 5:26. Other contributors discuss subjects like divine names, Proverbs 8, eternal generation from the Old Testament, the vocabulary used for the doctrine, eternal generation after the reformation, and philosophical and systematic contemporary statements of the doctrine as a conclusion.

*Retrieving Eternal Generation* is an incredibly helpful compilation of essays on a fundamental and very sensitive subject that comes at a crucial point.

(Zondervan 2017, \$34.99)

### The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down: The Lord’s Prayer as a Manifesto for Revolution

R. Albert Mohler Jr.

Review by Andrew J.W. Smith

The Lord’s Prayer is a revolutionary and earth-shattering manifesto for God’s eternal reign in heaven and earth, writes R. Albert Mohler Jr. in his new book, *The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down*, which released in January.

This famous prayer has a central message, according to Mohler: the Lord alone reigns. The words in the prayer call for God’s kingdom to come and for his will to be done on earth as in heaven — Mohler calls these the “most revolutionary words human beings could imagine.”

“This short prayer turns the world upside down,” Mohler writes in the introduction. “Principalities and powers hear their fall. Dictators are told their time is up. Might will indeed be made right, and truth and justice will prevail. The kingdoms of this world will all pass, giving way to the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.”

Most people recognize the familiar refrains of the prayer Jesus taught to his disciples in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. It’s recited at graveside services and before high school football games. But people often don’t understand the words they’re saying, according to Mohler.

The book is part of Mohler’s effort to teach on a popular level three of the most central texts in biblical Christianity. Historically, the church has stood on a three-footed stool of instruction: the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Apostles’ Creed. This book is the second in a trilogy exploring those three foundational texts, with his 2009 book, *Words From the Fire: Hearing the Voice of God in the Ten Commandments*, being the first installment. He plans to write a book on the Apostles’ Creed in the near future.

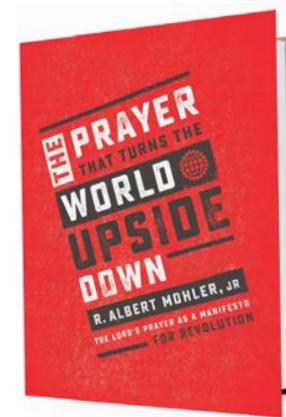
One of the dominant forms of prayer in American culture is that of supplication and intercession — asking God to use his power on the behalf of believers. Many Wednesday night prayer meetings become a laundry list of requests regarding the health of family members or for wisdom in decision-making.

That way of praying is not wrong, Mohler

said. God commands Christians to bring their concerns before the Father. But prayer is more than that. Prayer is oriented toward the kingdom of God. It is not merely supplicational; it is eschatological. It is motivated by a desire to see the world made right through the spread of the gospel, Mohler writes.

Commonly, evangelicals resist formulaic or premeditated prayers, but Mohler suggests the Lord’s Prayer provides a model for all believers to follow, just as the disciples did. Not all prayer has to be spontaneous, he said. Neither is it helpful to approach God in a conversational or relaxed way. Rather, the church should embrace established forms of prayer like those found throughout the Scriptures — the kind of prayer that recognizes God’s reign over all things and submits to him as both Lord and Father. The Lord’s Prayer is not innate, but taught to followers of Jesus by Christ himself.

“Every generation of Christians must learn to make the request, like the disciples before them, ‘Lord, teach us to pray,’” writes Mohler. “Every generation of Christians must also remember that Jesus’ response to that question now is the same as it was two thousand years ago. If we



would have the Lord himself teach us how to pray, then we must turn to the Lord’s Prayer for instruction.”

The book opens with an overview of the discipline of prayer in Chapter 1, then moves to a line-by-line exposition of the Lord’s Prayer in subsequent chapters. It concludes with an epilogue about the doxology (“For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen”), which is likely not original to the text of Matthew but is still right for worshipping Christians to pray, Mohler writes in the book.

(Thomas Nelson, 2017, \$19.99)



## ‘Revolutionary words’ HOW THE LORD’S PRAYER CHANGES EVERYTHING

By Andrew J.W. Smith

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** Below, R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, talks with *Towers* editor Andrew J.W. Smith about his new book, *The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down*.

### **AJWS: Why write a book on prayer now? Was there a motivating factor?**

**RAM:** There’s a motivating factor deeply rooted in history. There has been throughout the history of the Christian church the knowledge that there is a three-fold stool on which Christian instruction rests: the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Apostles’ Creed. So within a short amount of time, I will have written books on the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Apostles’ Creed. It is because I want to continue that tripod of historic Christian teaching. We need the law and we need prayer and we need the gospel in the Apostles’ Creed — the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

### **AJWS: What are some reasons it would be so hard for us to pray?**

**RAM:** We have expectations of prayer that involve some evangelical reflexes that are perhaps not the most healthy. We have some reflexes that are probably based in legitimate concerns, but they come out as distorted maxims. For example, Christians who are

resistant to any prayer that’s not spontaneous. Well, certainly in the Christian life there will be spontaneous prayer, but there’s an idea that if we premeditate what we’re going to say then it’s performance or it’s artificial. But I don’t think that’s always true.

Then we have the notion that our prayer is to be conversational in the same way we have other conversations. You even have very popular books with very problematic theology, which are supposedly made up of conversations with Jesus. It’s very interesting that throughout history Christians have prayed disciplined by particular forms of prayer. I think of the staying power of the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*, but even more importantly the prayers found in Scripture, most importantly the Lord’s Prayer.

We call it the Lord’s Prayer, but the quintessential Lord’s prayer in Scripture is John 17, the high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus. What we call the Lord’s Prayer is really a model prayer. It isn’t so much how he prayed. In John 17 we come to understand how he prayed. But he is the very Son of God, the Son in human flesh; his intimacy with the Father is different

than ours by definition. So we really need to learn, as Jesus taught his disciples, to pray. We might call it “the disciple’s prayer.”

### **AJWS: Prayer, as we experience in our homes and churches, is often need-based. But one of the things that sticks out from your book is how prayer is motivated by a desire to see the world made right, a desire for righteousness, that things will be on earth as they are in heaven. How do we balance need-based prayer with a more eschatological view?**

**RAM:** Intercessory prayer is certainly right and not wrong. But that is not all Christ taught his own disciples to pray. It is not where he taught his disciples to start to pray.

Remember how it came to us. In Luke we are told that Jesus’ disciples came to him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples to pray.” There are couple of fascinating things here. First, John the Baptist taught his disciples how to pray.

Secondly, the disciples of Jesus felt the need to ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. That's very reassuring to me. Because throughout my Christian life, my prayer life has been unsatisfactory, which I think should be true for every Christian. In a sense, we're never satisfied with our prayers. And evidently the disciples of Jesus after having been with him for some time, observing him praying, felt bold to ask him to teach them to pray.

**AJWS: We often pray in order to receive something from God. What is unhealthy about those ways of praying and how can we remedy that?**

**RAM:** Those ways of praying are not always unhealthy. Jesus said we are to bring our concerns before God. Paul says that we are to bring our supplications before God, and we're to do so, not merely by invitation, but even by command.

But, to put this in a different context, if we had a close friend, or if a parent were thinking of our children, and the only conversation we had from our children was a request or a want, even an urgent request, we would think that to be an unhealthy relationship.

The Lord's Prayer includes, "Give us this day our daily bread," a very humbling realization, deeply rooted in the storyline of Scripture. When you say, "Give us this day our daily bread," it makes very clear we're the creature, he's the Creator; we're the needy, he is the provider. It reminds us of Israel in the wilderness and the bread which came each morning in the form of manna each day. Give us each day our daily bread. So there's every reason every day to pray that God will meet our needs. There's every reason to bring our concerns before him. But in this prayer Jesus gave his disciples, that's just one clause in an entire prayer.

**AJWS: How do we cultivate a dependence on the Lord in our prayers when we live in an age of plenty?**

**RAM:** The argument I make in the book is that we need to read the Bible understanding how most Christians have. Right now, most Christians are in a situation of food insecurity. Christians have more often been hungry than well-fed. The Bible is primarily written to poor, hungry people. So "give us this day our daily bread" is an urgency. Bread is a metaphor. Perhaps it is helpful to think of it as: "Give us this day our daily oxygen" or "Give us this day our daily heartbeat." Our need is comprehensive; not one of us is self-sufficient.

**AJWS: There seems to be a communal aspect to that, too. We see that in the words "our Father in heaven."**

**RAM:** There's a strong corrective in the Lord's Prayer of the modern idolatry of autonomous individualism. We're a society that idolizes individualism, then becomes even more idolatrous in making the individualism autonomous of every other claim, every other relationship, every other truth or reality. The Lord's Prayer begins with, "Our Father, give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our sins." It's not wrong to pray in the first person singular. It's evidently wrong to pray mostly in the first person singular. Our reflex is the first person singular.

**AJWS: The prayer seems to be so culturally familiar. How do we break through some of that familiarity?**

**RAM:** Two things: Number one, that familiarity is not the curse many people assume it to be. A husband and wife who have been married for decades say, "I love you." There are only so many different ways to say, "I love you" with words. But those words are now accompanied by fidelity and relationship and love and raising children together and walking together and being Christians together. So should they stop saying, "I love you" because they've said it so many times? No. Do the actual words change from when they first came to know love for each another until now? No. But the words actually become more freighted with meaning. That's the way the Lord's Prayer should be.

I wrote the book because I don't want to leave it with familiarity; I want us to think about what we're saying. The whole point of the book is that the Lord's Prayer is actually as I call it, "the prayer that turns the world upside down." I think the greater danger is not familiarity. The

greater danger is not understanding what we're saying, no matter how familiar the text may be.

The most revolutionary words human beings could imagine are the words "your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." With those words every empire falls, every throne other than the throne of Christ is shattered. And we should understand what it means when we're praying "your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." That relativizes every earthly allegiance. It puts into context every political power, and promises the doom of every political power.

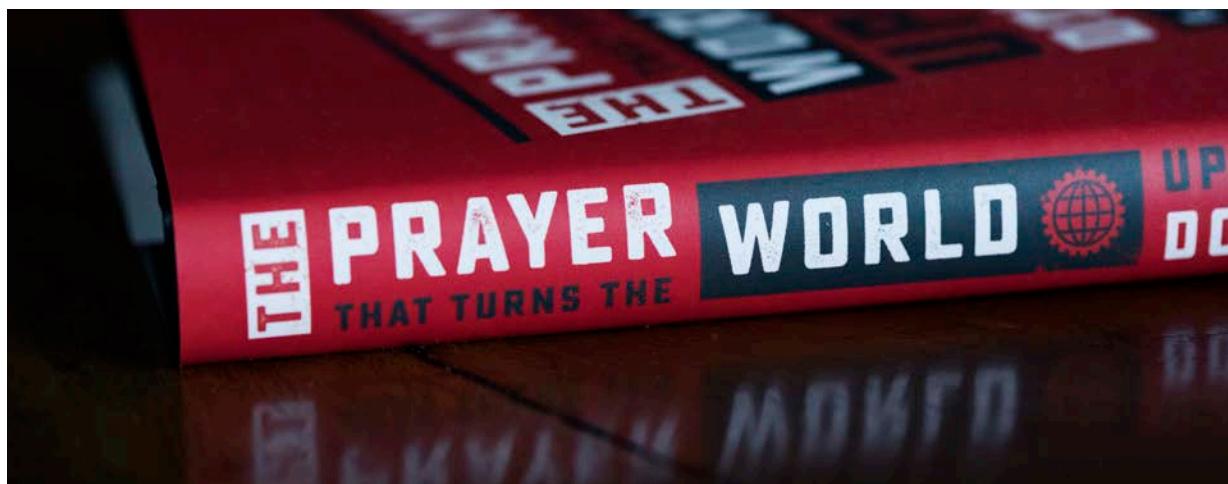
What we're saying is: "I'm praying that Christ's reign will be visible on earth right now, that the kingdom of God will show up right now. So take that, Moscow, Beijing, Washington or Ivy League or NCAA. There is no kingdom that can withstand his kingdom."

**AJWS: What are some practical ways we can cultivate a communal focus on prayer in our own prayer lives?**

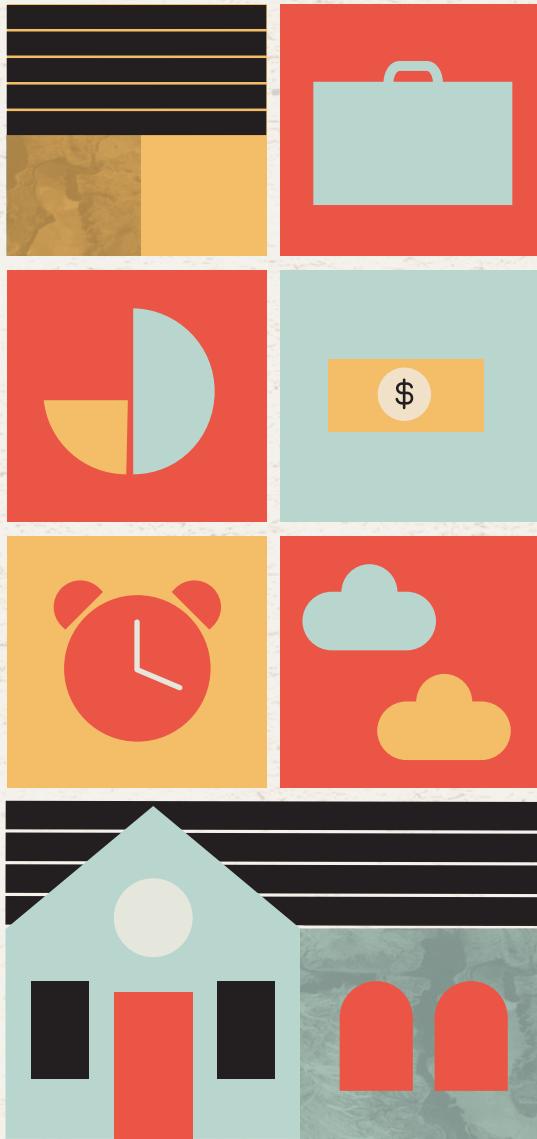
**RAM:** In the English language, you might think you're talking about two different things — "communing with God" meaning being relational with God, and "communion" as in communion with the saints. Both are true.

Communing with God means, first of all, worship. It's based on our understanding of who God is and who we are, and on our dependence upon God, his transcendence, our earthly reality, his infinity, our finitude.

The other communing, of course, the communion of the saints. We pray with the saints, which doesn't mean we pray with the cult of the saints as in the Roman Catholic church. It means we're always praying with fellow believers, even when we're not with them. It's important to recognize we are praying with fellow believers in Christ, by definition.



BY: CHRIS H. SMITH



The  
Gift  
of  
Singleness

**“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife,”**

**Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*.**

Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice* about and during a time when marriage was often a financial necessity for women and a social necessity for both women and men. There is little doubt, however, that Austen wrote that line with her tongue firmly in her cheek.

Cultural expectations have changed significantly since Jane Austen’s day. Just in the last few decades, the average age for a first marriage has risen to nearly 30 years old for both women and men in America. Delayed marriage, lifelong singleness, high divorce rates, and a rising population of widows from the Baby Boomer generation have combined to bring the percentage of unmarried adult Americans up to 50 percent, according to 2014 Pew data — the highest it has ever been.

While the number of single Americans has been growing quickly, the number of single people within evangelical churches has been growing much more slowly. According to a 2016 Barna Group study, 67 percent of evangelicals are married, compared to 52 percent of all Americans and only 36 percent of 20-somethings — an age group that has historically been less likely to attend church than older adults.

Anecdotally, it seems the more theologically and socially conservative the church, the lower the number of singles within the congregation. The high, biblical valuation of marriage leads many evangelicals to marry earlier, contributing to the

fact that singles do not always feel comfortable in our churches.

Beyond simply feeling uncomfortable because they are in the minority, single people are made uncomfortable by how often pastors, leaders, and fellow church members equate marriage and children with blessing or even Christian obedience. Conversely, many look upon single people with a mixture of pity and suspicion. How do we address the discomfort single people feel within our churches? A good place to start is the Bible.

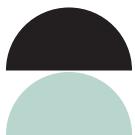
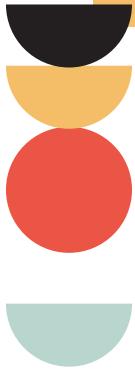
**“WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE GIFT OF SINGLENES?”**

Ask this question in a crowded room and you will quickly kill the mood. Not only is it an odd question that you’re only likely to hear on a seminary campus, but it’s also likely to touch a number of nerves. Some will tear up, fearing that the “gift” is a curse to a life of loneliness. Others will roll their eyes, assuming what some call a “gift” is just an excuse to spiritualize selfishness. A few will prepare themselves for battle, ready to defend single people everywhere.

Such an emotionally charged issue deserves long and careful consideration. I will limit myself to a brief answer to a single question — what is the “gift of singleness”?

Referring to singleness as a “gift” is drawn primarily from I Corinthians 7:7 and is commonly interpreted in one of two ways. In the first option, this gift is understood as the ability to remain free of sexual sin, temptation to sexual sin, or perhaps even desire for a spouse. This type of freedom is rarely granted and is usually given in light of a particular





to an intense time of persecution for the Corinthian church. Lastly, the call for “undivided devotion to the Lord” (v. 35) might suggest that Paul limits the gift to those who are called to an all-encompassing kind of ministry. Those who hold this view assume marriage is expected of almost everyone.

The second option is that singleness itself is the gift. Everyone who is single has the gift of singleness already and only needs to steward it well. This response leans more on Paul’s general endorsement of singleness in the chapter. The identification of the institutions of marriage and singleness themselves as gifts is the most likely reading of verse 7 (“Each has her or his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another”) because in the following verses Paul immediately begins to

is passing away”) as a way of saying that Christians live in the last days of salvation history. These benefits are available to all the unmarried, not just those with a specific set of gifts.

Keep in mind that Paul’s letter would have been read to the whole church, not just those in ministry or destined for mission work. These benefits constitute, among other theological and practical benefits to singleness presented in Scripture, the basis for calling singleness a gift. Therefore, in this view, since marriage and singleness are both gifts from God, the question facing the single person is not whether they have the gift of singleness or not, but what they are doing with the gift God has given them.

## Paul determines that singleness ought to be celebrated as a gift, and single people ought to be celebrated as uniquely gifted individuals for the advancement of the kingdom.

circumstance the believer is facing or calling placed on the believer’s life. This view of the gift leans on what appears to be a number of caveats to Paul’s wish that all could be single (v. 7).

Paul almost immediately admits that some will lack self-control and that for them, it is better to marry than to “burn with passion” (v. 9). Later in the chapter, Paul reiterates his desire for all to be single with what appears to be a second qualification — Paul thinks singleness is advantageous in light of “this present distress” (v. 26). “This present distress” is understood as a reference

to speak to two groups of people: those who are unmarried and those who are married.

Throughout the chapter, Paul’s praise of singleness is directed toward the inherent benefits of singleness, not the personal gifting of particular single individuals. Refraining from marriage spares the believer of worldly troubles (v. 28) and the anxieties that come along with a family (v. 32–33). These benefits are especially helpful in light of “this present distress” (v. 26), which should be read together with verse 31 (“the present form of this world

### TOWARD A HEALTHY VIEW OF SINGLENES

Thoughtful Christians can disagree on which view is more in keeping with Paul’s main concern. But in some sense, the answer to “What is the gift of singleness?” is: *Both*. Lifelong singleness is not for the faint of heart, and those who are single should utilize their situation for the good of the church and the growth of the kingdom. But we must remember that being single, even if temporary, is itself a gift. There’s no escaping Paul’s word choice. Paul argues that, as a general rule of thumb, it is good

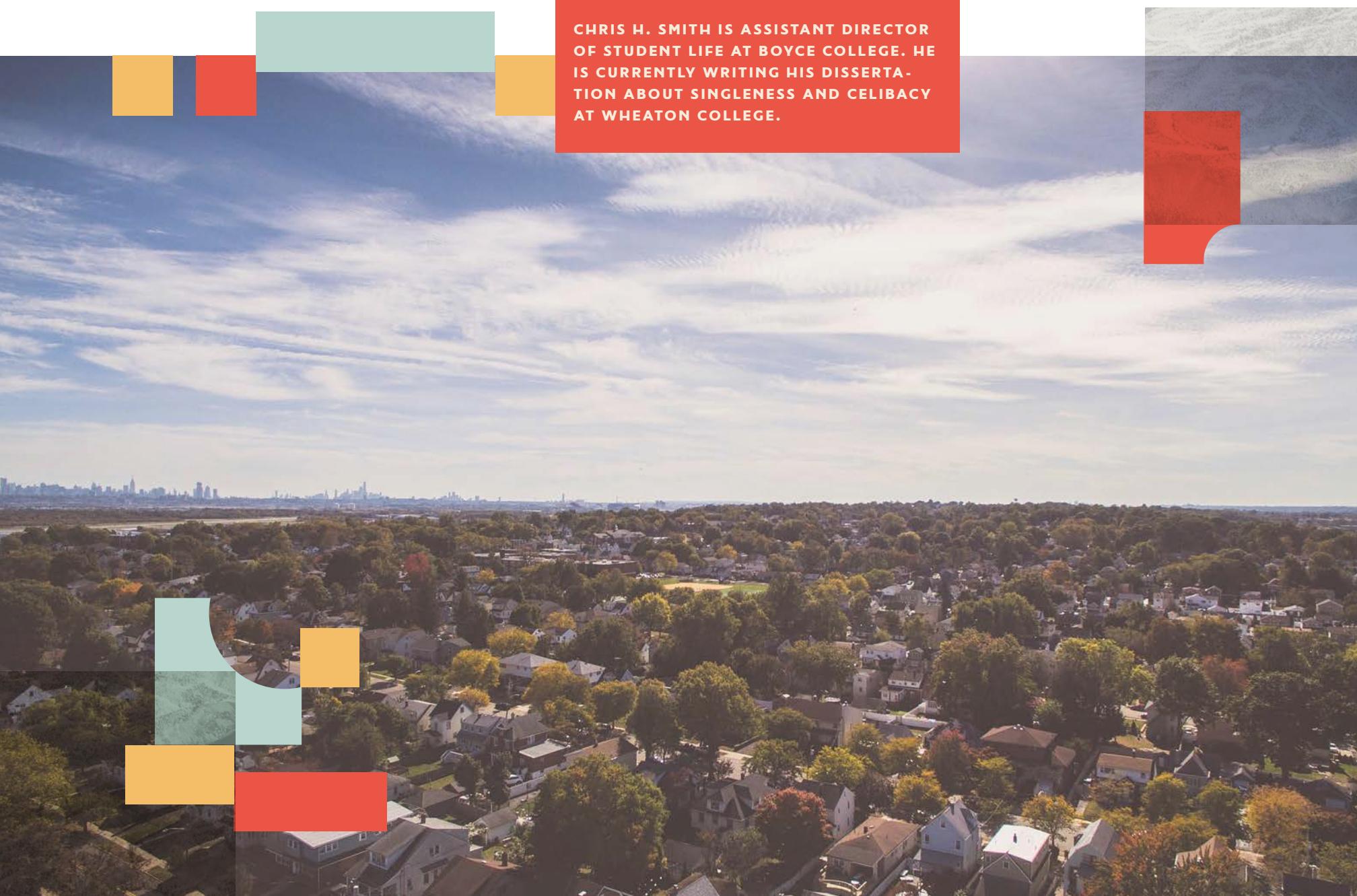
for those who are unmarried to remain single (v. 8). Going even further, Paul concludes the chapter by saying, “He who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do *even better*” (v. 38, emphasis mine). That argument sounds strange to us in Protestant churches, but we need to feel the weight of it.

In light of the New Covenant and for the Kingdom of God (and I think there’s a strong case to be made that Paul is referencing and expanding on Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 19 throughout 1 Corinthians 7), Paul determines that singleness ought to be celebrated as a gift, and single people ought to be celebrated as uniquely gifted individuals for the advancement of the kingdom. The key is: Everyone is given the gift of singleness in this general sense for some portion of their adult life, before marriage for all and after the death of a spouse for some.

Some Christians will experience the gift of singleness in the more personal and lifelong sense. For some, the gift of singleness will be marked by the beauty of a life within and in committed service to the kingdom. There will be others who desire marriage, but never experience it. If they persevere in self-control and use the gifts and opportunities the Lord has provided them for kingdom work, they too are experiencing the gift of singleness in the more specific sense, even if the unmet desires for marriage remain. Of course, the reality is that Christian singles will experience both the unique highs and lows of singleness at different points in their lives.

So, what is the “gift of singleness”? In short, it is singleness itself — a gift that is given to all for some time and to some for all time. And as with all God’s gifts, we should receive it, celebrate it, and steward it well.

**CHRIS H. SMITH IS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LIFE AT BOYCE COLLEGE. HE IS CURRENTLY WRITING HIS DISSERTATION ABOUT SINGLENES AND CELIBACY AT WHEATON COLLEGE.**





# Finding Your Place: A Conversation on Singleness

**JACINDA MELSON, WOMEN'S RESIDENT DIRECTOR AT BOYCE COLLEGE**, has spent time in South America as a journeyman for the International Mission Board and teaches Sunday School at Hunsinger Baptist Church. She is also single into her 30s. Below, she discusses singleness, ministry, and contentment with *Towers* editor Andrew J.W. Smith.

**AJWS: The idea of lifelong singleness: How can we learn to see that as a gift, as Paul seems to think it is?**

**JM:** As one of my friends told me once, “singleness is an opportunity to serve the Lord only.” Having a husband and a family is a good thing, and it is God-given. But when God doesn't give those things, what do you do? You still say, “I will follow you, Lord, and I will be guided and directed by you, for whatever you have for me.” A lot of times girls don't see the preciousness of singleness. It is a gift because you are single to serve the Lord during that time. We need to see that as good, because the Lord withholds no good thing from those who fear him. We can use our singleness for his glory.

**AJWS: What does contentment in singleness look like for you?**

**JM:** In college and high school, I saw a lot of friends pursuing relationships that I thought were unwise. So I had a close-fisted attitude about my own singleness — I wanted to show the world how to be a content single woman. But it was an overconfident contentedness, as I realized I wasn't compassionate enough toward the girls who struggled with their singleness and who really did want to be married. A few years ago the Lord began to open my hands and say, “I want you to give me your desire to be single.” There is an Amy Carmichael quote that has stuck with me through the years: “I wish thy way, and when in me myself shall rise and long for something otherwise, then, Lord, take sword and spear and slay.” And that's what he continues to teach me. It's still a journey to be content on a daily basis, no matter what my struggle is. It is a gift to be able to say that this is where the Lord has me. And as a single woman, I have the capacity to do a lot of really

## Singles can do much more than just serve in the nursery.

good things for him. And that's where my focus should be. It goes back to Christ: Is he enough in singleness and is he enough in marriage?

I certainly go through seasons in my struggle with contentment. It requires a heart check, a balance — remembering my desires and motives and casting them before the Lord. Today it may not be difficult. Tomorrow it could be. But I still can't work through it without the Lord and his grace. I'm thankful for the women of faith who have gone before me like Elisabeth Eliot and Amy Carmichael who have shown how to live in singleness, loneliness, and loss while serving the Lord. I'm thankful for them.

**AJWS: Are there unique challenges that single women face here at the seminary?**

**JM:** I think sometimes we come into seminary with expectations — whether that is to be married by the time we leave, or to have clear vocational direction by the time we leave. Sometimes women are somewhat forgotten in serving local churches or other kinds of ministry. Single women are a minority, especially at a seminary that is a training ground for pastoral ministry. It can

be challenging to find our place here. So in light of those challenges, I have sought to be intentional to get involved in my local church and local ministries.

**AJWS: What advice would you give to women facing those challenges?**

**JM:** Seek the Lord and trust him where he has you now. Be present. Put all of your effort and energy into your undergrad and seminary training and into your local church. We need to be able to say: “Lord, thank you for showing me where I can serve you now, and help me to be patient as I wait to see you work in the desires of my heart.”

**AJWS: What are some ways that a single woman in the church can be involved in ministry that a married person can't?**

**JM:** I personally have more time and flexibility — to reach out to people in my community group, to teach Sunday school. I'm not inhibited by having to meet the needs of a husband and family. Your time is opened up to care for the orphans and the widows, the sick, the hurting. You can be available — encourage moms, be diligent to pray for your pastor and church leadership, serve the church in ways that others who have more commitments can't. If you don't feel like you have a place, be bold and ask leadership: “Here are my gifts and talents. How can I use these to serve the church?”

**AJWS: What are some ways that married people in the church can encourage single people?**

**JM:** By encouraging their gifts and talents, spurring them on, being an advocate for them, and opening your home. Single people want to belong and feel like part of a family — especially if ours is hours away. We want to be part of your family too. We want to be able to speak truth in love to fellow Christians in the church. We are co-laborers, and we are also striving to glorify the Lord in our words and deeds. We can pour into the lives of fellow believers, teach the Bible to middle school girls, mentor younger members. Single people can do much more than just serve in the nursery. See our value for the kingdom and help us rejoice in it.

# Ten Recommendations for Navigating Singleness

## WHILE STILL PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

BY: RANDY STINSON

Randy Stinson has been at Southern Seminary for 21 years. During that time, he's seen a lot of students — single and married — come and go. As a professor of family ministry in addition to his responsibilities as provost, Stinson has watched students steer themselves through the often-rocky waters of seminary life. Here are a few of his tips for students who are also single, permanently or not:

1.

### Find your place in the family of God.

In the New Testament, the paradigm for the church is the family. Older men are called to be like fathers to the younger men; older women are to be like mothers to the younger women. There is brother-sister language throughout the New Testament. A single person can find their place in the larger family of God — a family in which they are a mother, father, sister, or brother. As important as marriage is, the church itself is a family to which all believers belong. We should avoid seeing a person's marital status as their most important, defining characteristic, and encourage them to find a home in the church.

2.

### Take advantage of your time in seminary.

I think it's rude when people on campus (nearly always men) imply that women are in seminary just to find a husband. That is not true. Seminary is a huge sacrifice — and a unique opportunity for ministry. You are here to get a degree in preparation for serving the Lord. Don't wait to get married before getting involved in the church and doing the ministry you're preparing for. Do the things God is calling you to do right now.

3.

### Be ready for marriage in the future, but don't forget about today.

Statistically speaking, the vast majority of single Christians will end up getting married. But many single people I know concentrate too much on preparing themselves for marriage. Of course, that is not a bad thing — everyone should consider whether they are ready to be a good spouse, and whether they have the discipline and thoughtfulness a healthy relationship requires. But don't bail on your relationships right now. Ask yourself: "Am I serving the Lord faithfully where I am right now?" Do you have relationships right now in which other Christians are holding you accountable and challenging you to grow? It is through those relationships that God will grow your character, sanctify you, and make you more Christlike.

4.

### Manage the time you have.

If you are single, you simply have more discretionary time than married people. Use it for the kingdom. At every stage in your life, you should maximize the time that God has given you. That extra wealth of time should prepare you for hard decisions you'll have to make in marriage.

That doesn't mean you have to spend every moment at church or in ministry. But the burden of extra time means the single person should thoughtfully budget their free time for the good of the kingdom. That will not only integrate you further into your local church community, but it will also prepare you to use your time wisely once it is more restricted.

5.

### Be on the lookout.

Most of the time when you serve, there are other people serving alongside you who are of the opposite sex. Now, don't get involved in ministry for the sole purpose of finding a husband or wife — that turns your service to the church into a hunting ground. But God will often use those ministry environments to introduce you to a potential spouse.



## A bonus piece of advice for the married people:

Trying to pair your friends together constantly might not always be healthy. Matchmaking is usually innocent and well-intentioned, but it can often imply that singleness is God's Plan B for someone's life. Married couples need to be more careful about how they highlight someone's singleness. If you're a pastor, preach more about singleness from the pulpit. Encourage the people in your church who have the gift of lifelong, permanent singleness that God has a holy purpose for their lives, and encourage those who don't have the gift to develop the disciplines necessary to get married.



### Don't let your singleness define you.

Singleness can feel like limbo, and sometimes well-meaning Christians can make you feel like a second-class believer. Try not to make too big a deal of any stage of your life — the Lord is sovereign. Don't be worried about people accusing you of only caring about finding a spouse.



### Avoid unreasonable expectations.

Everyone has their idiosyncrasies regarding the person they want to date — small “hang-ups” they can't get over (“I don't want to date someone taller than I am” is a common one for men). But try not to have too many of those. Don't let your expectations soar so high that you miss a potential spouse who is standing right in front of you.



### Be the person you're hoping to find in marriage.

When I was single, I had a friend who liked to talk about finding a Proverbs

31 woman. I would always say to him: “Are you the Proverbs 31 man the Proverbs 31 woman is looking for?” And, well, he wasn't. Spend more time during this season of singleness (however long it may last) ensuring your walk with the Lord is moving in the same direction as the person you're hoping to marry. Be prepared to grow together with your spouse. Find somebody who is growing spiritually in the same direction and at the same rate as you are, then get married and do that together.



### Serve.

When you're single, you have a unique opportunity to serve in ways that you won't later. My older two boys have done yard work off and on for various families in our church, and my oldest two daughters have regularly helped with babysitting (I don't think anybody wants my two boys to care for their infant). Those kinds of service opportunities are not small things. As someone who has been married for 27 years, I know what it means to have the burden of costly child care taken off my shoulders. You're not just providing free childcare — you're making an investment in someone else's

marriage that in turn builds up the body of Christ. Identify the most challenging things in the local church and resolve to help.



### Single Men: Develop your leadership now.

Let me speak directly to the men: A lot of the teaching in the Bible about manhood and womanhood is given in the context of marriage. But how a man treats his wife will be directly connected to how he treats all the women God puts in his life — mothers, sisters, friends, coworkers, and fellow students. One of the ways God measures whether a man is fulfilling his calling is how he treats women in general. So if you don't get married, those habits are essential for being a godly brother in Christ to everyone. If you do get married, those habits should be cultivated way before then.

Masculinity is not about athletic prowess, hunting, or how much you can bench press. Leadership and responsibility don't just “show up,” but they are rather cultivated over time. Invest in behavior now that will prepare you to be a good leader. Whether that calling includes marriage is irrelevant. Be a leader now.

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## Learning From History:

### PROFESSOR WANTS STUDENTS TO LEARN FROM THE 'INDISPENSABLE' PAST

By Myriah Snyder

One of John D. Wilsey's favorite hobbies is to go out into the woods with nothing but a compass and a map, and find his way to a destination with no trail. Sometimes he goes at night, sometimes during the day. It's called "orienteeing," and he's been doing it for years.

But one thing he especially loves is inviting students to navigate the woods with him.

"I've always taken students out to the woods to teach them how to use maps and compasses. Because in the learning of the maps and the compasses, you learn how to trust your compass," he said. "Even when you don't feel like your compass is leading you the right way, if you are diligent to follow the direction the compass is pointing you, even if you don't feel it, you see that it is right. There's a lot of spiritual application in that. The Scriptures are a lot like a compass."

Wilsey, new associate professor of church history at Southern Seminary, wants his students to have a deep appreciation for the sufficiency of Scripture. That's something he teaches both inside and outside his classroom.

He specializes in the history of ideas in the Christian West, especially the history of Christian nationalism, religious freedom, and the interaction of church and state in America since the colonial period.

As Americans, he said, "an awareness of our national history helps us to appreciate the liberties that we have, to be vigilant to protect those liberties and advance

them, and to extend them where appropriate."

Wilsey is the author of two books, *American Exceptionalism and Civil Religion: Reassessing the History of an Idea* and *One Nation Under God: An Evangelical Critique of Christian America*. He is also the editor of an abridged edition of Alexis de Tocqueville's classic work *Democracy in America*.

On a practical level, he thinks an understanding of history is crucial because history has "relevance on who you are today," whether it be on one's personal history, national history, or the history of Christianity.

He thinks that Christian history is even more foundational, because without some understanding of Christian history, one cannot even begin to understand and believe the gospel.

"Christianity is an historical faith. We believe in a risen Christ who was crucified by human beings in a real place with real nails and a real cross in space and in time," he said. "We look back in history to see the meaning and message of the gospel. It's fulfilled in Christ and is lived out in the experience of Christians who have gone on before us.

"History is absolutely indispensable for us as a church, for us as Americans, and for us as individuals."

His love for history and Scripture complements his passion for educating young people. His entire career has been spent investing in students.

Wilsey, who did not grow up in a Christian home, was converted as a freshman at Furman University. Right after receiving his bachelor's degree in history,

he became a Christian school teacher and a principal at the same school.

Even while attending Southeastern Seminary, where he met his wife, he taught school. His love for students carried over into his ministry as well, where he served as a youth pastor at First Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Virginia, before and during his time working on his doctorate of philosophy.

He took this passion for education with him to the seminary level when, in 2011, he started teaching at Southwestern Seminary. And in the fall of 2017, he began two new academic adventures.

He became an associate professor of church history at Southern and a fellow at Princeton University, where he is taking an academic year to research and write a religious biography of John Foster Dulles, President Dwight D. Eisenhower's secretary of state, for whom Washington D.C.'s Dulles International Airport is named.

Recently, he taught a few Southern J-term courses while living at Princeton. In the summer of 2018, he'll return to Southern as full-time residential faculty.

"I'm pinching myself for both getting to teach at Southern full-time and getting to be at Princeton," he said. "I'm pretty sure that somebody made a clerical error and somebody else was supposed to get these two wonderful opportunities. So far they haven't discovered their mistake and I'm the beneficiary."

## HISTORY HIGHLIGHT

## Luther Rice's Unrequited Proposal

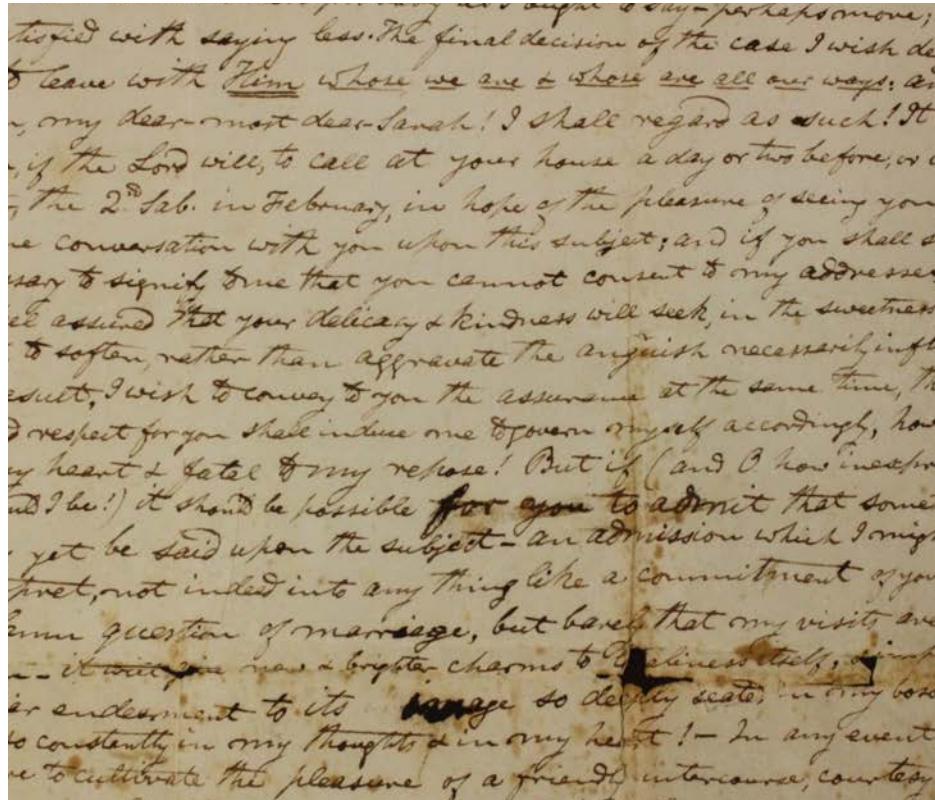
By Adam Winters

The origin of Baptist missionary organization in America owes to the labor of two particular men, Adoniram Judson (1788 – 1850) and Luther Rice (1783 – 1836). Both were appointed as Congregationalist missionaries who sailed from America to Calcutta, India, in 1812. Their conversion into Baptists resulted after conferring on the subject of baptism with English Baptist missionary William Carey.

After his baptism, Rice returned to America the following year in order to raise funding for American Baptist missionary and education efforts, a vocation which occupied him for the remainder of his life. Whereas Judson received immense aid in his missionary labors by three “until death do us part” marriages to capable Christian women Ann (1789 – 1826), Sarah (1803 – 1845), and Emily (1817 – 1854), Rice never married.<sup>1</sup> Though vigorously committed to his work, Rice also made intentional outreach to court godly women at various points in his life.

His romantic advances did not yield his desired results, yet it was not for lack of persistent effort. One such lady was Sarah Julia Myers, a widow whom Rice met while fundraising on behalf of Columbian College, which he helped establish. Rice wrote to her on multiple occasions, endeavoring to persuade her to accept his invitation to matrimony.<sup>2</sup>

One of Rice's handwritten letters to Myers dated January 21, 1831 came into the possession of Southern Seminary's library courtesy of a donation by Dr. and Mrs. John H. Haldeman in 1981. Having made prior attempts to woo Myers, his hopes were dwindling yet not exhausted. The text of the letter reveals both the tenderness of Rice's affections and the prudence of Rice's mind: “I hope you will not be displeased with



me for writing once more as I really feel myself compelled by an affectionate regard which I cannot resist! . . . why should I any longer linger about Sister Myers seeing there is no hope? Why not at once discharge from my mind all farther thought of her and keep away? But when I would think to do this, I cannot! My heart is still there—and when circumstances allow I invariably and unavoidably go there! O, Sister Myers! . . . Let me then, first of all, honestly declare that I do possess an indescribable, deep, personal attachment to yourself; and that on account of this love to yourself personally, distinctly and exclusively, it is my sincere and hearty desire to wed you to myself — to be my wife; will you consent to it?”

Rice labored to clarify that his interest in Myers was founded upon her personal character as a suitable wife for a minister, as opposed to any financial interest in her wealth and property. He praised her virtues as “a Lady whose piety, whose good sense, whose goodness of disposition, whose ladylike appearance and deportment, indeed whose every quality suites to happiness as the wife of a minister of the gospel, I never expect to find surpassed, if even equaled, in all those I might ever think of addressing. . . This is love! This is the affection, intense and pure, and strong, and constant, which my bosom bears for you — Sarah! Must I love in vain?” Though he even conveyed his attraction through poetry, Rice resigned himself to

respecting her wishes and the Lord's will: “I have now said as much probably as I ought to say — perhaps more; but could not feel satisfied with saying less. The final decision of the case I wish devoutly and sincerely to leave with Him whose we are and whose are all our ways: and your decision, my dear-most dear-Sarah! I shall regard as such! . . . and if you shall still find it necessary to signify to me that you cannot consent to my addresses . . . I wish to convey to you the assurance at the same time, that my unfeigned respect for you shall induce me to govern myself accordingly, however withering to my heart and fatal to my repose!”

Sarah Myers ultimately declined his persistent proposals. Despite a strong desire in his later years to cultivate a marriage and a home life, Rice remained a bachelor in declining health without permanent residence until his death on September 27, 1836.<sup>3</sup> Although Rice's life and work entailed many valleys of trial and sadness, his labor on behalf of Baptist missionary work remains an inspiration in the present day. Luther Rice's letter to Sarah Myers can be viewed in the Archives office of the seminary library, in addition to a full transcription prepared by former librarian Ronald Deering.

## FOOTNOTES

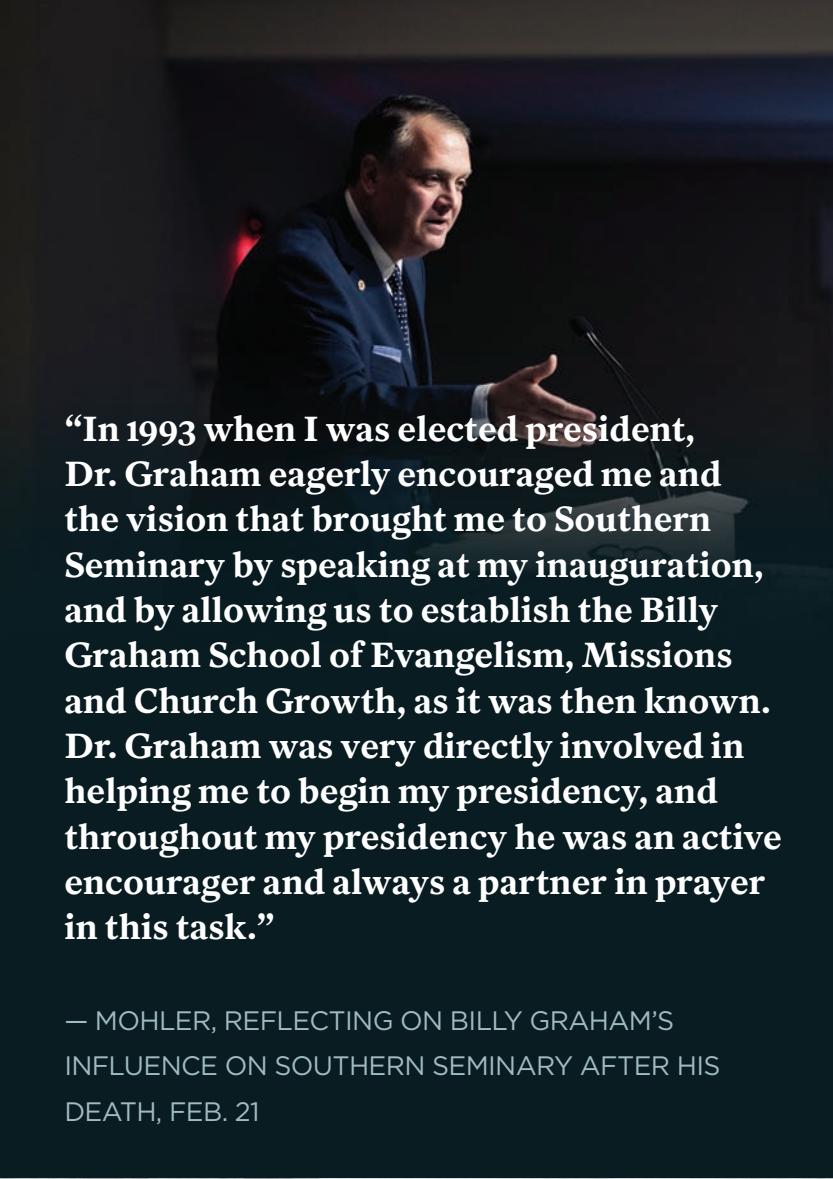
<sup>1</sup> Thomas J. Nettles, *The Baptists, Volume Two: Beginnings in America* (Scotland: Mentor, 2005), 187 – 219.

<sup>2</sup> *Dispensations of Providence: The Journal and Selected Letters of Luther Rice, 1803 – 1830*, ed. William H. Brackney (Rochester, NY: American Baptist Historical Society, 1984), 159 – 162.

<sup>3</sup> Elmer Louis Kayser, *Luther Rice, Founder of Columbian College* (Washington, D. C.: George Washington University, 1966), 29

# Southern Seminary houses the only school endorsed by Billy Graham

Billy Graham leaves behind a rich legacy not only in evangelism and American religious life, but in the history of Southern Seminary. In 1963, under the leadership of SBTS President Duke McCall, the school established the Billy Graham chair of evangelism, which became a position now held by Timothy K. Beougher. In 1993, Southern Seminary announced The Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry, which is the only school in the world to bear the name of America's most famous preacher. Below, trace long shadow of Billy Graham's influence on Southern Seminary.



**“In 1993 when I was elected president, Dr. Graham eagerly encouraged me and the vision that brought me to Southern Seminary by speaking at my inauguration, and by allowing us to establish the Billy Graham School of Evangelism, Missions and Church Growth, as it was then known. Dr. Graham was very directly involved in helping me to begin my presidency, and throughout my presidency he was an active encourager and always a partner in prayer in this task.”**

— MOHLER, REFLECTING ON BILLY GRAHAM'S INFLUENCE ON SOUTHERN SEMINARY AFTER HIS DEATH, FEB. 21

## 1993

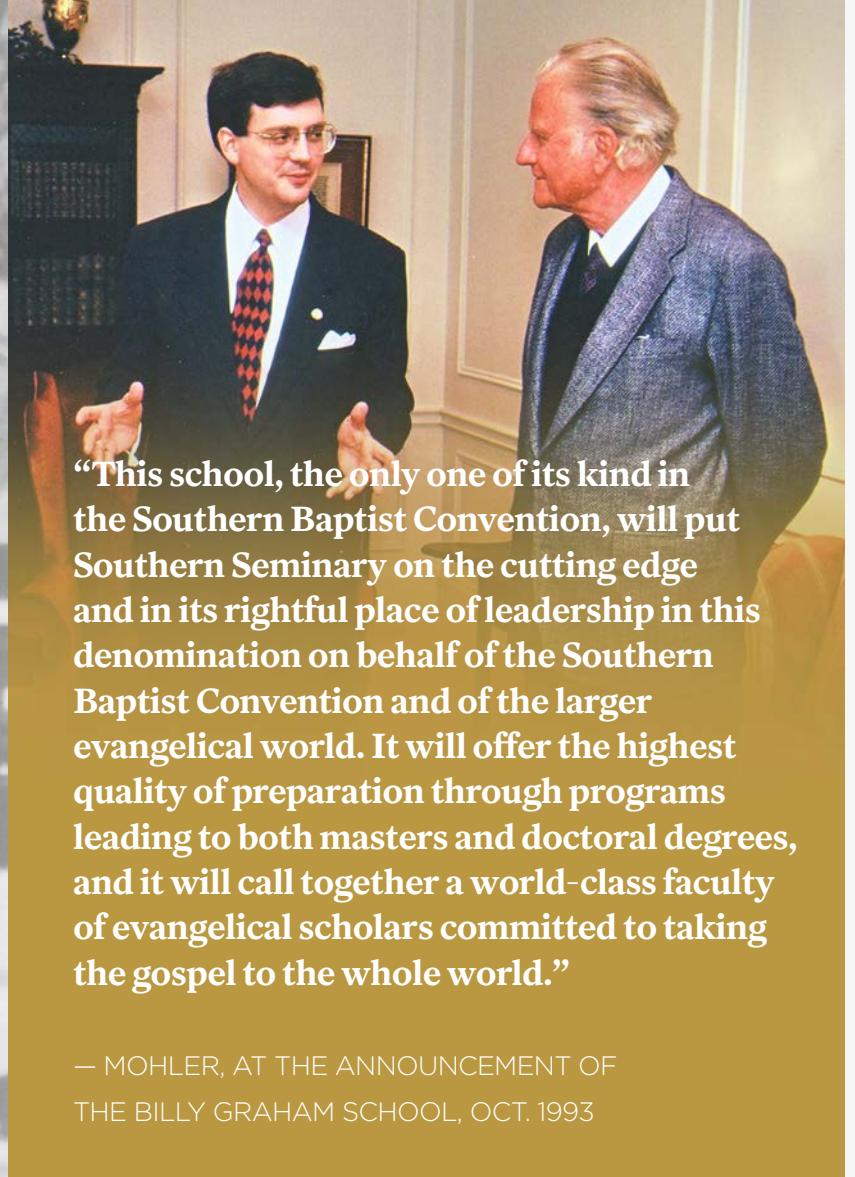
Legendary evangelist Billy Graham speaks at Louisville's Freedom Hall, Oct. 14, the eve of **R. Albert Mohler Jr.'s inauguration** as president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. That evening, Mohler announces the founding of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth.

## 1994

**Thom S. Rainer**, a two-time Southern Seminary graduate and pastor in Birmingham, Alabama, is installed as the **first dean of the Billy Graham School**. In August of that year, the school officially opens with 33 students.

## 1996

**Timothy K. Beougher** moves to Southern Seminary from Wheaton College to fill the **newly endowed Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth**.



“This school, the only one of its kind in the Southern Baptist Convention, will put Southern Seminary on the cutting edge and in its rightful place of leadership in this denomination on behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention and of the larger evangelical world. It will offer the highest quality of preparation through programs leading to both masters and doctoral degrees, and it will call together a world-class faculty of evangelical scholars committed to taking the gospel to the whole world.”

— MOHLER, AT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BILLY GRAHAM SCHOOL, OCT. 1993

## 2005

Rainer leaves the Billy Graham School to become the president and CEO of Lifeway Christian Resources in Nashville, Tennessee. **Chuck Lawless**, who had been serving as Rainer’s senior associate dean and associate professor of evangelism, becomes the second dean of the Billy Graham School.

## 2011

**Zane Pratt**, a veteran IMB missionary in Central Asia, becomes the third dean in the history of the Billy Graham School after Lawless assumes the role of vice president for global theological advance at the IMB.

## 2013

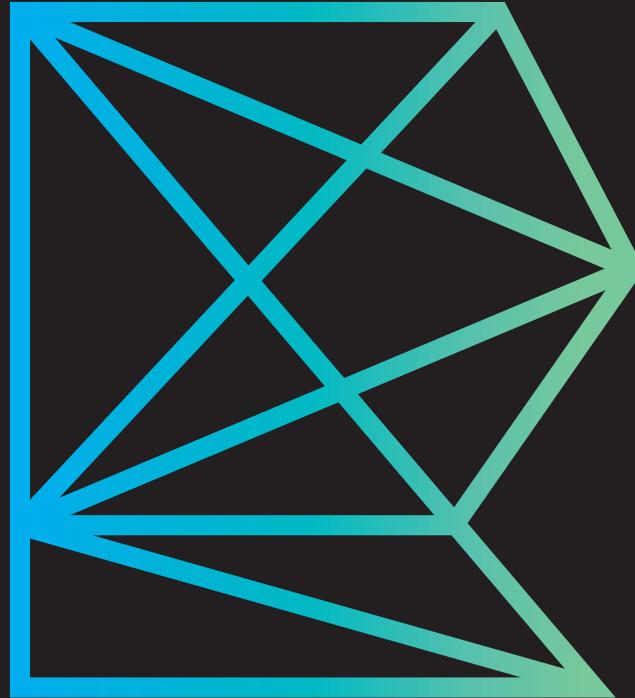
**Adam W. Greenway**, who had been serving as senior associate dean, replaces Zane Pratt, who resigned as dean to become the global theological education team leader with the IMB. The school is restructured to combine the School of Church Ministries, and is re-named the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Ministry.



SEEN AT SOUTHERN

## Billy Graham

R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.'S COMMENDATION, 1993



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# March 2018

## SEMINARY CLINIC HOURS

Staff, students, and their immediate family members are provided a health maintenance program through the clinic, located on the second floor of the campus center, Honeycutt 213.

*Monday-Friday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.*

More information and price listings are on the clinic website, [sbts.edu/clinic](http://sbts.edu/clinic).

## MORNING CHILDCARE

Parents can drop off their children at the Health and Rec Center (second floor of Honeycutt) for morning childcare up to three days per week, 9 a.m. – noon, per federal law. The cost is \$10 per child, ages 6 weeks – 10 years.

## SBTS LIST

SBTS Student Life, Campus Technology, and Communications are excited to bring you SBTS List, which allows students and student spouses within the seminary community to market items and services in a safe environment. Think Craigslist, but exclusive to the SBTS community. You must have either a student or faculty/staff email address or be the spouse of a student in order to create a profile and buy/sell items on SBTS List. Register at [sbtslist.com](http://sbtslist.com).

## SEWING CLASS

A sewing class led by Barbara Gentry is open for anyone connected to the seminary. The class meets in Fuller 34 every Monday from 6 – 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
4	5	6 <b>Chapel</b> 10 a.m.   Alumni Chapel Aaron Menikoff
11	12	13 <b>Chapel</b> 10 a.m.   Alumni Chapel Danny Akin
18	19	20 <b>Chapel</b> 10 a.m.   Alumni Chapel Russell Moore
25	26	27 <b>Chapel</b> 10 a.m.   Alumni Chapel R. Albert Mohler Jr.

MARCH 2018

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1</b> Chapel 10 a.m.   Alumni Chapel Juan Sánchez	<b>2</b> Counsel the Word Conference	<b>3</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Chapel 10 a.m.   Alumni Chapel Vance Pitman	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Chapel 10 a.m.   Alumni Chapel R. Albert Mohler Jr.	<b>16</b> Renown Youth Conference	<b>17</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Chapel 10 a.m.   Alumni Chapel R. Albert Mohler Jr.	<b>23</b> Boyce Preview Day 8:15 a.m. - 10:45 p.m.	<b>24</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Chapel 10 a.m.   Alumni Chapel Jason Allen	<b>30</b> Good Friday	<b>31</b>

# Towers

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary  
2825 Lexington Road · Louisville, KY 40280

NONPROFIT  
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US POSTAGE  
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# 3

## Questions

– with –



**BRETT MCCrackEN**

Senior editor at

The Gospel Coalition, author of  
*Uncomfortable*, regular film critic

1

**Your new book *Uncomfortable* explains the value of embracing flawed but essential local church communities. Why was that topic important to you?**

It was important to me because the local church is so incredibly important. I see many in my generation who are disenchanted with the local church or who prefer a more self-styled, DIY Christianity over one that is “institutional” or embedded in a community. And yet Jesus didn’t call us to individualistic, DIY faith. He called us into a family, a community, with each of us as living stones being built up into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5). It’s more challenging this way, to be part of this eclectic “house,” because it means we are being fit together with all sorts of other stones who sometimes rub us the wrong way. But it’s the biblical and more beautiful way.

2

**A lot of Christians have idealistic and sanitized theological views of community, but balk at the concept once theirs gets messy. How can believers cultivate healthy expectations about their own church communities?**

Community is all well and good until it isn’t. Invariably a community that is initially awesome will one day become not awesome. We get hurt. We feel misunderstood. We change or others change. And in our consumeristic society, the default response is to just leave. If it’s no longer “working for me,” whether in a church community or in a marriage, we bail. That’s why commitment is essential in a healthy approach to community. To be committed, whether in marriage or in a church community, is to stick with the relationship, the family, in good times and bad, even when it’s hard and messy and uncomfortable. It’s love based in sacrifice and covenant, not convenience or comfort.

3

**We live in a Rotten Tomatoes-saturated movie review culture, in which one’s opinion on a film must be distilled into a flat binary — “GOOD” or “BAD.” How can we engender more thoughtful discussions?**

I think we can do practical things like creating more space for discussion after we watch movies. Take your friends or church small group to a movie and then go to a coffee shop afterwards to have a discussion. Invite people over to watch a film at your house and then discuss it together. Too often our discussions are limited to a brief, “did you like it?” exchange as we walk out of the theater and to our cars. Resist this! In my own reviews I don’t give star ratings or anything like that, because I want to engage the film beyond the “is it good or is it bad?” question. Most films, even bad ones, present at least some interesting ideas worth discussing. As Christians we should respect the filmmakers enough to at least try to grapple with what they are attempting in the film, even if we might disagree with or dislike it.