

October 13, 2015 • ISSUE 57

TEXAN★MAGAZINE



..... LOCALS FOR LIFE

DO

SOMETHING

Six 'average, everyday' women pull off community-wide pro-life rally

+ 300 COME TO CHRIST IN RIO GRANDE VALLEY

+ BIBLE CONFERENCE THEME: "MULTIPLY: MAKING DISCIPLE MAKERS"



Fixing America

It's predictable. When someone does something horrible in our nation, we are selectively compared with other countries that are based on very different understandings of man and liberty. In the wake of the murders in Oregon, pundits are still talking about what is wrong with our country—what attitude, what liberties we grant our folks that “allow” them to destroy others. Today, I heard a Brit who makes his living here lamenting that our nation had not evolved like his native England and his European neighbors. He seemed confident that “sensible” people will one day move the U.S. further toward Europe. Can we “fix” what offends those who disdain us, within and without, without breaking what is essentially and positively different about our culture? That's a question we should ask, even if our detractors will not consider it important.

I understand the subject is tricky when children have been murdered. It's tempting to quail at those horrible images and say, “Dump the whole Bill of Rights if that's what it takes to save one life.” And I have heard people say or imply that various amendments; the first (parts of it at least), the second, the fourth, the ninth, and the tenth are less important than security or political progress.

Liberty is basic to those rights and hard for some to understand. It is a perilous thing but also empowering. The most familiar words in our founding documents come from the

second sentence of our Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are, Life, Liberty and pursuit of Happiness.” Our more-evolved sister states don't have that language in their founding documents or, if they do, its imprint is pretty faint. Similarly, freedom of religion, of speech, of assembly and of the press mean something different in nations we might consider old, civilized souls.

But back to the Declaration. These rights, endowed by the Creator rather than by the community, are given to people individually, not merely as a corporate body. Newspaper editors as a class are free to say and publish what they will, but so am I on my own. Individuality has terrified liberals for decades. I had a social work prof sniff to our class 40 years ago that, “John Wayne' individualism is one reason America is a troubled nation.” I heard that same opinion expressed about the American West yesterday on NPR. I agree that individualism is scary but so are moving away from home, starting a business, deciding (without state permission) to have children and other things I'm free to attempt. I can make those decisions, and I can reap the fruit of what I do. It does sound a bit roguish doesn't it? The fact that we can move from place to place without papers, drive a two-ton vehicle 80 mph (legally in some of Texas!) and own a gun means that all of us bear some risk as a result of

the freedom of others. If we'd like to erase those risks, where do we start and how do we get to the root of the problem? I think my lefty professor was more right than those who want to nickel and dime personal liberty to death. If we are individuals with rights to pursue our own (possibly foolish) version of happiness, all of us will need to accept some level of risk in allowing that.

I'm not an anarchist. Good laws ensure liberty and justice to the greatest degree possible, but I'm first accountable to God for how I use that freedom.

I guess that's the bottom line here. The Bible says we bear God's image. That image means we are moral creatures with the ability to choose and that we will answer to God for those choices. Americans have traditionally preferred to depend on themselves, their families, their churches, their neighbors and God for their welfare and for their moral compass. A society that would fence us in ever more tightly so as to avoid even the risk of tragedy will soon come between man and God. The rest of the civilized world doesn't seem to mind that as much as we do.

God's Word has a lot to say about the nature and liberty of men. Pundits and politicians who proceed as if this is not true will be frustrated and frustrating all the days of their lives. Our churches, and the citizen Christians within, have a heavy responsibility to help our communities experience the hope and true liberty that only comes by the grace of the one who made us all.



Do Something:

SIX 'AVERAGE, EVERYDAY' WOMEN PULL OFF COMMUNITY-WIDE PRO-LIFE RALLY

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Hundreds gathered for a multi-church, community-wide pro-life rally in Fort Worth, Sept. 23, after six local women decided they had to “do something” tangible to stand for life. The event was hosted by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in its MacGorman Chapel.

11 Criswell board approves VP of Finance, policies



Criswell College trustees formally approved a vice president of finance for the institution, elected new board officers and approved various policies and administrative procedures during its fall meeting, Oct. 1.

14 'Bible conference to feature breakout sessions, 'less ceremony'



Organizers of the 2015 Bible conference preceding the annual meeting of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention have added a new feature to this year's gathering: breakout sessions. The sessions will center on discipleship and will be led by people from across Texas who have implemented discipleship-focused ministry approaches in their own churches and communities.

TEXAN MAGAZINE

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COLUMN: Why the IMB'S Missionary Reduction is a Welcome Wake-up Call for the Church

16 Jared C. Wellman, pastor of Mission Dorado Baptist Church in Odessa, explains why he believes the reduction of 600-800 missionaries should jump-start churches' recommitment to supporting international missions through Cooperative Program giving.

+ BAPTIST

FLOYD MAKES MULTI-LANGUAGE APPEAL TO SBC ST. LOUIS

Ronnie Floyd, in just over 3 and a half minutes, speaks volumes about ethnic inclusiveness within the Southern Baptist Convention.

Floyd speaks in English and, through a translator's voice, in Spanish and Korean in a new video to invite Southern Baptists to the SBC annual meeting next June in St. Louis.



Read the story [here](#).
Watch the video [here](#).

CP SURPASSES BUDGET PROJECTION FOR FISCAL YEAR

The Southern Baptist Convention ended its fiscal year \$1.1 million over its 2014-2015 budgeted goal and \$2.5 million over the previous year's Cooperative Program allocation budget gifts, according to SBC Executive Committee President Frank S. Page.

The SBC received \$189,160,231.41 in CP allocation gifts for the year. This amount is \$2,592,620.78, or 1.39 percent, more than it received during the last fiscal year, and is \$1,160,231.41, or 0.62 percent, more than its budgeted goal of \$188 million.

"We are grateful to every church and individual who believes in and supports the Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists," Page said. "We are particularly grateful for the 4,422 churches that increased their church contributions through CP by at least 1 percent of their undesignated tithes and offerings over the past year.

"We suggested last year that we may have reached the nadir, or lowest point, for national Cooperative Program gifts following the Great Recession. This positive report indicates that may indeed be the case," Page said. "It remains my hope and prayer that we can unleash more missionaries and church planters over the next decade than ever before and that our seminary students can graduate with minimal or no school debt as we move forward to the centennial celebration of the Cooperative Program in 2025."

Read the story [here](#).

STUDY RANKS SOUTHERN SEMINARY'S DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN TOP 5

The Association of Theological Schools ranks The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS) fourth in producing doctoral graduates who go on to serve as faculty in ATS member schools, according to a recent report. SBTS improved 12 spots on the list since the last report, released in 2001. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary came in 11th on the list, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary came in 16th.

SBTS President R. Albert Mohler Jr. called the report a "significant affirmation of Southern's leadership in preparing scholars for the church past, present and future."

"Southern Seminary established one of the first research doctorates in higher education in America and has been a pioneer since the beginning, preparing scholars for the church through the highest level of academic preparation," Mohler said.

Read the story [here](#).

The 25 schools where the majority of faculty in ATS member schools earned their doctorates (2001 and 2015)

2015	2001	NAME OF SCHOOL	Number of Faculty
1	4	Princeton Theological Seminary	120
2	2	Harvard University (82) and Divinity School (2)	114
3	15	University of Toronto (including TST schools)	108
4	16	The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary	103
5	1	University of Chicago (9) and Divinity School (1)	102
6	17	Fuller Theological Seminary	99
7	3	Yale University (92) and Divinity School (8)	95
8	8	Emory University and Candler School of Theology	94
9	9	Reinick Schools (Protestant Congregational) (not with 35*)	85
10	6	Union Theological Seminary (3) and Columbia University (3)	84
11	5	Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	81
12	11	Vanderbilt University (5) and Divinity School (1)	78
13	7	Duke University and Divinity School	77
14	12	Catholic University of America	68
15	18	Drew University	61
16	20	New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary	60
17	10	Graduate Theological Union	59
18	13	University of Notre Dame	55
19	19	Dallas Theological Seminary	52
20	22	Boston University and School of Theology	50
21	—	Trinity Evangelical Divinity School	48
22	24	Oxford University*	48
23	25	Cambridge University*	37
24	23	Aberdeen University*	36
25	—	University of St. Andrews*	33

*Note: Two schools on the 2001 list were Covenant (14) and Garrett-Evangelical (21) when they were faculty of (Baptist) respectively, with Covenant Graduate University and New Orleans. If those schools were still counted collectively, they would have ranked 16th and 24th respectively on the 2015 list. *Not an ATS member school.

Source: The Association of Theological Schools, "Survey and Order Faculty Service of ATS member schools" by Don Stover, August 10, 2015.

NEW NAMB LOGO ANNOUNCED

The North American Mission Board has introduced a new logo and messaging that reflects its goal to mobilize more churches and individuals to missional action in the effort to push back lostness and plant more churches in North America.



"Every Life On Mission" and "Every Church On Mission" are two phrases NAMB will use prominently to encourage individuals and churches to become more actively and personally involved in missional activity.

"In its simplest form, NAMB functions as a network that can help connect every Southern Baptist church to its next missional opportunity," NAMB president Kevin Ezell said. "We hope these steps lead churches to become involved locally in their communities, throughout North America and around the globe in evangelistic church planting. We realize that the first step for many churches is just helping them get their members out of the pews and into ministry action."

Read the story [here](#).
Watch a video about the new logo [here](#).

HENDRICKS NAMED DIRECTOR OF BP OPERATIONS

The Executive Committee has named Shawn Hendricks as Baptist Press director of operations. The new role will be in addition to his regular duties as managing editor.



Art Toalston

As managing editor/director of operations, Hendricks will assume additional administrative assignments while continuing to direct and edit content released by Baptist Press. Art Toalston, who has served as editor of Baptist Press for more than 23 years, will transition into a new role as senior editor. In his new position, Toalston, 65, will step aside from some of the daily administrative duties to devote himself more fully to the same editing, writing and mentoring tasks he has done since becoming editor.



Shawn Hendricks

Read the story [here](#).

+ DISASTER

CAROLINA FLOODS DRAW SOUTHERN BAPT. RESPONSE

Floodwaters from Hurricane Joaquin covered much of Columbia, Charleston and other parts of South Carolina Oct. 3-4, killing as many as nine people, shutting down interstates and spurring scores of evacuations. Southern Baptists are there to help.

Columbia suffered its rainiest 24-hour period in history Oct. 4, the weather service said, with reports of up to two feet of rain common across the state.

Southern Baptists can help now by providing funds for flood survivors. In partnership and support of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, NAMB will:

- ▶ purchase supplies and materials to clean out homes and churches
- ▶ purchase food, supplies and housing for volunteers mudding out homes and churches
- ▶ assist families with special needs and repair of homes
- ▶ purchase fuel and supplies to operate trucks and equipment
- ▶ assist churches with grants to clean their facilities or cover income losses



- ▶ provide for warehousing and transportation of supplies and materials
 - ▶ provide rental equipment to support mud-out operations.
- Those wishing to donate to South Carolina disaster relief can give [online](#) or mail checks to P. O. Box 212999, Columbia, South Carolina 29221-2999. Designate checks for "Disaster Relief."

Read the story [here](#).

+ ANIMAL CARE

ERLC, OTHERS ISSUE ANIMAL CARE STATEMENT

The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission has joined with evangelical Christian leaders to issue a statement on the biblically based treatment of animals.

Evangelical leaders unveiled the document—"Every Living Thing: An Evangelical Statement on Responsible Care for Animals"—Sept. 30 at a Washington, D.C., news conference.

The statement, which provides a set of biblical beliefs guiding consideration of the subject, calls for "compassionate care and responsible rule" of animals and for opposition to all cruelty toward them. Because God creates and sustains all animals, the document's signers resolve "to work for the protection and preservation of all the kinds of animals God has created, while prioritizing human needs."

Among the original signers of the statement are Southern Baptist seminary presidents Daniel Akin of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and R. Albert Mohler Jr. of Southern Seminary. Other signers include several Southern Baptist seminary and university professors, as well as David Crosby, senior pastor of the First Baptist Church in New Orleans.

Read the story [here](#).

STUDY ADDRESSES PASTORS' VIEWS ON ANIMAL WELFARE

Protestant pastors overwhelmingly agree humanity has a God-given duty to care for animals, a new study shows.

They just don't mention it much from the pulpit.

In a survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors, sponsored by Every Living Thing, a national campaign for the Evangelical Statement on Responsible Care for Animals, LifeWay Research finds a distance between pastors' beliefs about animal welfare and their church activities.

Two-thirds of pastors never preach about the treatment of animals or haven't brought it up for more than a year. More than 4 in 5 say their churches aren't involved in animal welfare issues in the community.

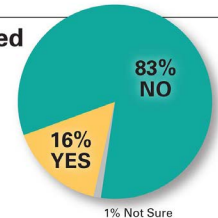
Nevertheless, 89 percent of Protestant pastors say Christians have a responsibility to speak out against animal cruelty.

Read the story [here](#).

Among Protestant Pastors

Animal welfare and the church

Is your church involved in addressing animal welfare at the local level?

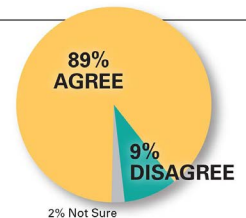


LIFEWAYRESEARCH.COM

Among Protestant Pastors

Beliefs about animal welfare

Christians have a responsibility to speak out against animal cruelty.



LIFEWAYRESEARCH.COM



LGBT PROTESTORS SPARK NEWS CONF. AT SBTS

Reparative therapy is a “superficial” response to homosexual and transgender change and Christian ministers must instead call all people to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, said leaders of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors in Monday (Oct. 5) news conference.

“We don’t think the main thing that is needed is merely repair but rather redemption,” said Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. “When it comes to sexuality, we do believe that

wholeness and holiness can come, and will come, to the one who faithfully follows Christ.”

Mohler and ACBC executive director Heath Lambert addressed local and national media to refute the claims of the Fairness Campaign, a Louisville LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) advocacy group alleging a conference being held this week at the seminary promoted reparative therapy, which is a secular method of converting sexual orientation and gender identity.

Nearly 40 LGBT activists stood on the sidewalk near the seminary’s Alumni Memorial Chapel in the first of two planned protests as a record 2,300 conference attendees registered for the

three-day conference on homosexuality and transgenderism.

“The Christian church has sinned against the LGBT community by responding to this challenge in a superficial way,” Mohler said. “It’s not something that is so simple as converting from homosexual to heterosexual, and from our gospel-centered theological understanding that would not be sufficient.”

He continued: “Our message is the gospel for all people and that means we call all people to be converted to faith in Christ and then as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to live in holiness and wholeness, which is defined by obedience to him, each in our own way.”

[Read the story here.](#)

FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS FACE LGBT DILEMMAS

In the months since the Supreme Court decided same-sex marriage should be legal throughout the United States, faith-based high schools have entered a new frontier. While some Christian schools are fighting to teach biblical views on sexuality, others have changed to fit in.

[Read the story here.](#)

CONF. ON TRANSGENDERISM RESPONDS TO CHALLENGES

The transgender movement presents an unprecedented theological and cultural crisis for the church, said Southern Baptist scholars at an Oct. 5 pre-conference event, “Transgender: Transgender confusion and transformational Christianity,” at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The preconference preceded the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) annual conference, which is being held at the seminary Oct. 5-7 in Louisville, Ky. The preconference, co-sponsored by ACBC and the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW), is believed to be the first time evangelicals have held such an event to discuss the transgender movement.

[Read the story here.](#)



Houston pastors voice opposition to controversial LGBT ordinance

By Bonnie Pritchett

HOUSTON

With early voting less than two weeks away about 200 pastors gathered at Second Baptist Church in Houston to demonstrate their united opposition to the city's controversial Proposition 1 and to call on Houstonians to vote "No" on the ordinance that threatens religious liberties and "the sacredness of a man being a man and a woman being a woman."

"We are not here in judgment. We are not here in condemnation. We are not here with any spirit except, we hope, with the Spirit of our Lord," Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church, told the gathering Oct. 7. "We live in a pluralistic America. Yet this

[ordinance] crosses a line that is absolutely deadly to the generations that are alive now and that will come."

For more than a year pastors and civic leaders have fought to repeal the Equal Rights Ordinance, a law championed by Mayor Annise Parker and passed by the city council in May 2014 that gives civil rights status to LGBT individuals in Houston. Court battles led to a Texas Supreme Court decision in July ordering the measure to be placed on the Nov. 3 ballot.

Seven pastors of different races and denominations emphasized the biblical, legal and logical reasons



Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, speaks against Proposition 1, also known as the city's Equal Rights Ordinance, during a press conference, Oct. 7. PHOTO BY BONNIE PRITCHETT

for opposing the ordinance. Gregg Matte, pastor of Houston's First Baptist Church, addressed the issue of "gender identity" as it is defined in the ordinance. Being male or female is not established by choice but predetermined by biology, he said.



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- Master of Theological Studies + Missions





Six-woman team holds community-wide pro-life rally to “do something” to end abortion

By Sharayah Colter

FORT WORTH

Hundreds gathered for a multi-church, community-wide pro-life rally in Fort Worth, Sept. 23, after six local women decided they had to “do something” tangible to stand for life. The event was hosted

by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in its MacGorman Chapel.

The group of women, led by Ella Bullock and Rachel Miller, both members of Birchman Baptist Church, includes stay-at-home moms, a first-grade teacher, a part-time political office employee and a writer.

The women call themselves a group of “average, everyday Americans” who want to put feet to their vocal stance for the sanctity of life.

The rally, for which several local churches canceled their mid-week services in order to attend, focused on praying for a revival in hearts that would

lead to a nation of people willing to protect life at all stages. Birchman Pastor Bob Pearle, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Professor Evan Lenow and Wedgwood Baptist Church Pastor Emeritus Al Meredith led the crowd in directed prayer times.

“Our Father, our hearts are broken over the callousness of our country,” Pearle prayed. “... Lord we pray for those in our elected offices. ... And where those officials have been cowardly and have not voted for life, Lord I pray that you would so convict them that they would not be able to rest until they get their hearts and lives right with you.”

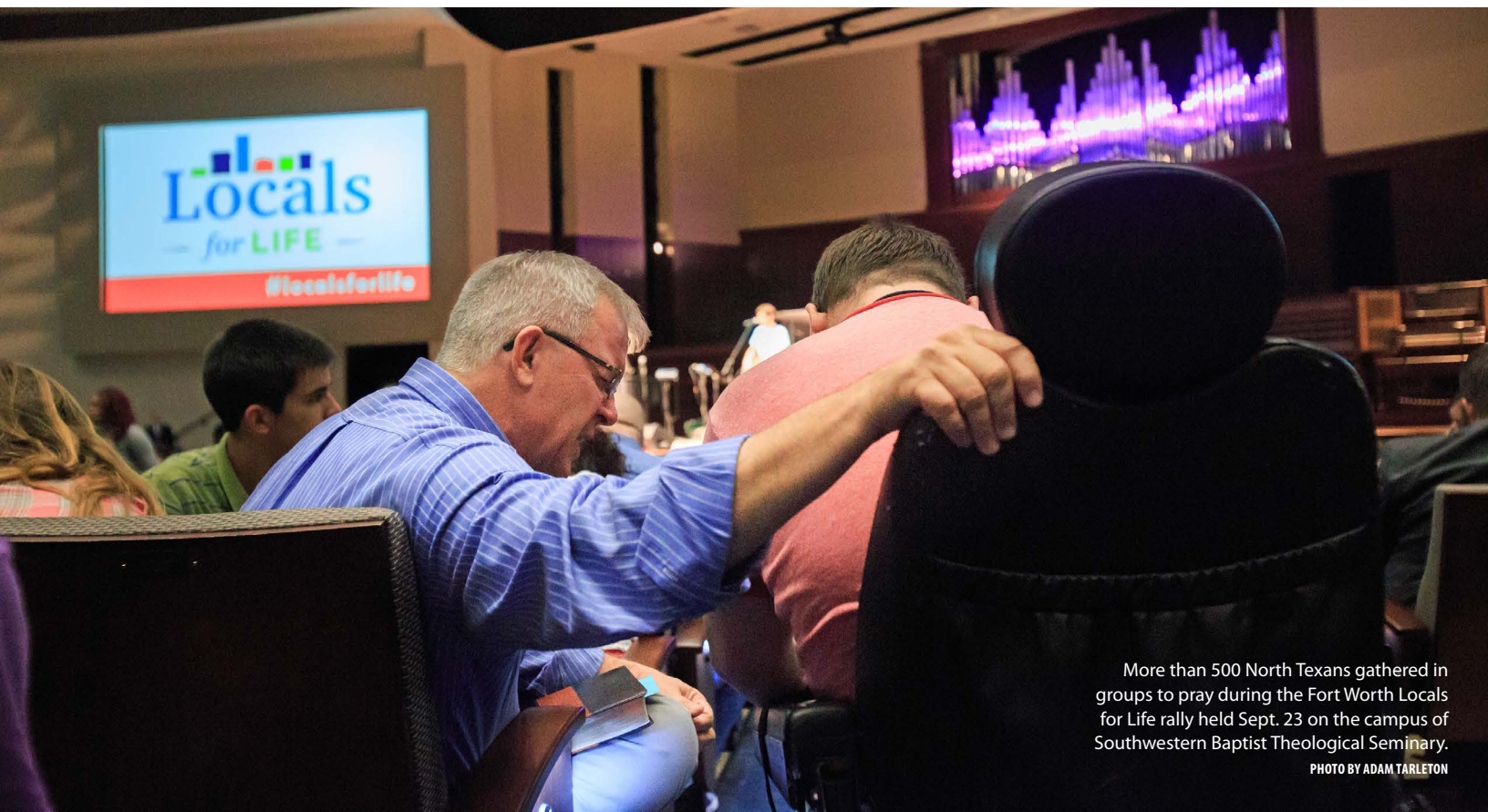
Lenow, who teaches ethics at the seminary and serves as director of the Richard Land Center for Cultural engagement, directed the crowd to pray for expectant parents.

“Oh, Father,
this is so egregious that it hurts to talk about, that we should snuff out the lives of millions of precious ones before they have a chance to take their first breath, and it happened on my watch.

Father, forgive the
silent Christians
who stand by and say
nothing while this
holocaust of infants

goes on. ... Change our hearts,
we plead in Jesus’ name.”

WEDGWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH PASTOR EMERITUS AL MEREDITH



More than 500 North Texans gathered in groups to pray during the Fort Worth Locals for Life rally held Sept. 23 on the campus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

PHOTO BY ADAM TARLETON

“Lord we pray for these mothers, these fathers, these families and extended families. We pray that their choices would be choices of life. We pray that you would direct their hearts to recognize your handiwork. And in places where they cannot provide for these children, may you bring others into their lives who can. We pray that ... our city be a city of life,” Lenow prayed.

Meredith confessed to the Lord that the rise in pro-abortion culture happened on his watch and asked the Lord to forgive the church for not fighting more diligently to protect life.

“Oh, Father, this is so egregious that it hurts to talk about,” Meredith prayed, “that we should snuff out the lives of millions of precious ones before they have a chance to take their first breath, and it happened on my watch. Father, forgive the silent Christians who stand by and say nothing while this holocaust of infants goes on. ... Change our hearts, we plead in Jesus’ name.”

In addition to the time of prayer, those gathered heard from Sen. Konni Burton (R-Colleyville); State Rep. Matt Krause (R-Fort Worth); and The Village Church Fort Worth Pastor Anthony Moore, a SWBTS doctoral graduate.

Krause, a politician who comes from a family full of Southern Baptist pastors, recalled a recent experience in which he walked out of the Capitol after having voted for life and was met with protestors advocating for abortion rights.



Texas Rep. Matt Krause (R-Fort Worth) speaks about pro-life issues during the Locals for Life rally at Southwestern Seminary, Sept. 23. PHOTO BY ADAM TARLETON



Anthony Moore, pastor of the Fort Worth campus of the Village Church, delivered a message from Genesis 4, reminding attendees that they “are their brothers’ keepers.” PHOTO BY ADAM TARLETON

“They were shouting, ‘Shame on you,’” Krause said. “But I hope my heavenly father is looking down saying, ‘Well done.’”

“It is never okay to end the life of an unborn baby on purpose. Am I right?” Krause asked. His comments were met with enthusiastic applause.

Moore, in a message from Genesis 4, reminded attendees that, yes, they “are their brothers’ keepers,” explaining that Christians must be willing to suffer with and help parents who cannot care well for the children they bear.

SWBTS President Paige Patterson shared his own testimony of choosing the life of his son in the face of what doctors told him was a hopeless situation. Choosing to give the child a chance despite the grim prognosis, the Pattersons’ prayers were answered



Texas Sen. Konni Burton (R-Colleyville) speaks during the Locals for Life rally at Southwestern Seminary, Sept. 23. PHOTO BY ADAM TARLETON

affirmatively, and their baby was born completely normal. Yet, Patterson noted, so many children do not get that chance.

“Just stop to think about it for a moment,” Patterson said. “Can you believe that we have aborted in the wombs of mothers probably eight or 10 of the finest preachers who might ever have lived? ... We may well have aborted somebody who would have discovered the cure for cancer. And yet we have gone on and on with this program. God forgive us for what we have done.”

Bullock shared a personal testimony as well in a moment that many called the most moving portion of the entire rally, evidenced by a standing ovation and teary faces across the auditorium. Standing on the stage with two women—her biological mother and her adoptive mother—Bullock and her mothers shared about God’s perfect plan for their imperfect situation. What was an unplanned, crisis pregnancy for Bullock’s biological mother allowed Bullock’s adoptive

“Just stop to think about it for a moment. Can you believe that we have aborted in the wombs of mothers probably eight or 10 of the finest preachers who might ever have lived? ...

We may well have aborted somebody who would have discovered the cure for cancer. And yet we have gone on and on with this program. God forgive us for what we have done.”

SWBTS PRESIDENT PAIGE PATTERSON

“To be surrounded by 500 people ready to stand for life was just another fulfillment of the perfect plan [God] put in motion 28 years ago when a 17-year-old found herself pregnant and chose life.”

ELLA BULLOCK, MEMBER OF BIRCHMAN BAPTIST CHURCH

parents’ desire to grow their family possible.

A visibly emotional Bullock told the crowd that in God’s economy, there is no such thing as an “unplanned” life.

“To be surrounded by 500 people ready to stand for life was just another fulfillment of the perfect plan [God] put in motion 28 years ago when a 17-year-old found herself pregnant and chose life,” Bullock said after the rally.

Locals for Life leader Rachel Miller reminded the audience of the reason for the gathering.

“Here we are tonight because our God is a God of life,” Miller

said. “He cares about each life because he made every one of them. We join him when we say what he did is good and worth fighting for.”

Just before leaving, attendees were asked to look under their seats. Those who found paper hearts taped to the seats were asked to stand. More than half of the people in the room stood up and held their pink and blue paper hearts in their air. Those standing represented the number of children who were aborted during the time the rally took place. The visual left the room sober, feeling

the weight and gravity of the representation.

That visual is what struck high school junior Melissa Manning the most poignantly and will spur her to do more to stand for life after leaving the rally.

“I feel more confident,” said Manning, who volunteered along with about 60 others. “I feel like I can go out, reach more people, and be educated about it. I want to go do something. I don’t want to just stand back. I want to do something and reach out to those girls who are my age and show them how important life is.”

In an effort to encourage people to “do something” to stand for life, more than a dozen pro-life organizations from the area were on hand to provide attendees with information on how to support pregnancy help centers, how to become adoptive parents and how to affect legislative change that will protect life in America.

The team founded Locals for Life in such a way that it can be reproduced in cities around the nation. Locals for Life will provide artwork files and other support to help any interested communities and can be contacted at fwlocalsforlife@gmail.com or through localsforliferally.org.

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TEXAN MAGAZINE  **Texan**

Criswell board approves VP of Finance, policies

By Keith Collier

DALLAS

Criswell College trustees formally approved a vice president of finance for the institution, elected new board officers and approved various policies and administrative procedures during its fall meeting, Oct. 1.

Trustees unanimously approved the naming of Kevin Stillely as vice president of finance and Chief Business Officer. Stillely, a Criswell graduate, worked for a decade in human resources and retail operations for Borders Group before joining the college in July.

“He is spiritually committed to exactly what the college is about; he’s actually a graduate of Criswell of College, he’s in ministry, but he’s also got significant business experience,” President Barry Creamer told trustees.

Trustees also elected new officers, effective Jan. 1, 2016. The board elected Tony Rogers, pastor of Southside Baptist Church in Bowie, Texas, as chairman; Chris Lantrip, CEO of CyberlinkASP, as vice chairman; and Jack Pogue, a Dallas businessman, as secretary.

The board approved eight new trustees for 2016. According to its

governing documents, the board is comprised of 40 percent from the Criswell College Foundation, 40 percent from the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and 20 percent at-large. New trustees approved to the board include Clint Pressley (at-large), Rod Martin (at-large), Adarose Jennings (at-large), Harold Rawlings (Criswell Foundation), Curtis Baker (Criswell Foundation), Jarrett Stephens (Criswell Foundation), Mack Roller (SBTC), and Anne Hettinger (SBTC). Roller and Hettinger’s approval to the board is pending the convention’s approval during its annual meeting in November.

Outgoing chairman John Mann expressed appreciation for his time on the board, saying, “Not only is the legacy of Criswell College strong, but the current state of Criswell College is strong and being strengthened through the work of the administration,

faculty and the board. The future of Criswell College is an exciting thing that is laid before us.”

As for administrative decisions, trustees unanimously approved an updated version of the institution’s conflict of interest policy as well as the presidential assessment policy. Additionally, they approved minor tuition increases to undergraduate and graduate programs—from \$315 to \$330 per credit hour for undergraduate courses and from \$415 to \$420 per credit hour for graduate courses.

Trustees heard reports from various departments as well as updates on the institution’s “Building on Legacy” capital campaign—a \$20 million venture that includes remodeling educational space and constructing student housing. They also approved a new vision statement and individually signed the school’s statement of faith.

**CRISWELL
COLLEGE**





Church planting network sees more than 300 come to Christ in Rio Grande Valley

By Alex Sibley

MCALLEN

Disappointment set in with Eliseo Arreguin's church planting team when no one showed up to their inaugural Bible study in the local library by the 2 p.m. start time. Though they were ready to begin the service, Arreguin instructed them to wait another 10 minutes. Fortunately, within that time, two women arrived, one of whom had been invited the previous day by a member of the

team at a nearby park. The service proceeded with this audience of two, and both women showed interest in the Word.

Following the service, one of the women asked if Arreguin's team could conduct a Bible study at her home the following week. Arreguin agreed to do so.

"When we went to the house," Arreguin says, "we were surprised to see that the house was full. There were 10 adults and two children. We had a time of music and prayer, and they were very

interested in us praying for them and the needs that they had. We also gave an evangelistic message. After that, we got to know each other and shared a meal."

Before they left, another woman asked the church planting team if she could host a Bible study at her house the following day. The team again complied, and the next day, they conducted another Bible study, this time to an audience of 16.

Thus, in a matter of one week, from two women came 30 people



gathering together in two different homes to study God's Word.

"None of these people have been saved," Arreguin says, "but little by little, with the relationships we are forming with them, we know that God is working and will continue to do so."

Arreguin's church plant is one of several currently being developed in the Rio Grande Valley by the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. Missions Associate David Ortega coordinates the SBTC's efforts in this area, working with local churches to reach the Valley through church planting.

Barna Research Group identified the Rio Grande Valley as the No. 4 most unchurched area in the United States, indicating the desperate need for new churches in this southernmost part of Texas. Ortega realizes the importance of cooperation between believers to overcome the challenges associated with doing ministry there, which led him to form a church planting network.

"I started casting vision with a number of pastors," Ortega says,

"THESE CHURCH PLANTERS HAVE COME AND HAVE DEVELOPED INTO COMPETENT PLANTERS, AND WE'RE STILL WORKING, BUT THAT'S BEEN EXCITING. I SEE A POTENTIAL THAT WE CAN REALLY DO SOME IMPACT HERE IN THE VALLEY."

"and I challenged them about coming together in a fellowship with the goal of church planting. We'd like to see 100 churches by 2020. And it's all of us working together to accomplish that goal."

This fellowship of pastors and church planters meets once a month to share needs, give praise reports, and determine ways they can work together.

The network now has nine church plants in early stages of development. Few have permanent locations, so their ministries mainly include evangelism and visitation as well as Bible studies in local parks and libraries. Even so, God is clearly at work among them.

"We've seen how God worked to prepare the people, and we've had

at least 300 people receive Christ since Easter of 2014," Ortega says. "These church planters have come and have developed into competent planters, and we're still working, but that's been exciting. I see a potential that we can really do some impact here in the Valley."

Ortega encourages his fellow SBTC churches to join in this effort, whether through prayer and financial support or through planting churches themselves.

"We're not going to reach our goal if we don't all have this vision of reaching the Valley; if we don't have this network," he says. "It's going to take pastors, laypeople and church planters. And I think that's the way the Lord wants it; so no one gets the glory but Him."

Bible conference to feature breakout sessions, 'less ceremony'

By Sharayah Colter

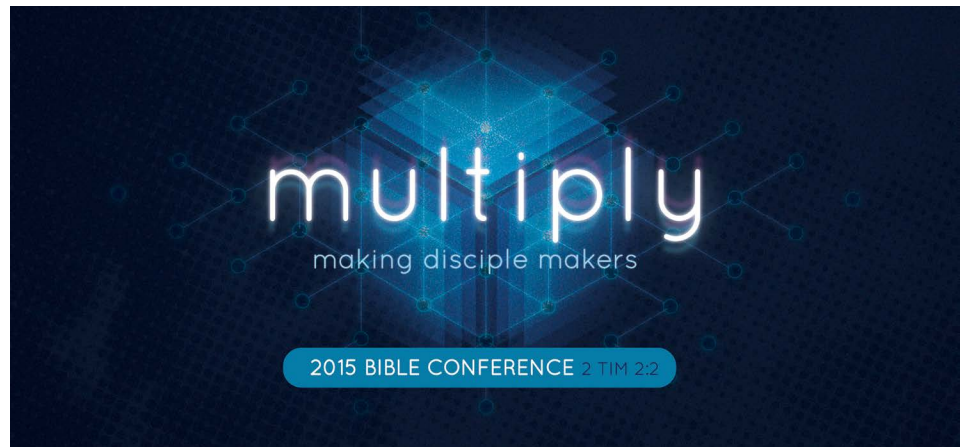
Organizers of the 2015 Bible conference preceding the annual meeting of the Southern Baptists of Texas convention have added a new feature to this year's gathering: breakout sessions. The sessions will center on discipleship and will be led by people from across Texas who have implemented discipleship-focused ministry approaches in their own churches and communities.

SBTC church ministries associate Lance Crowell heads the convention's work in discipleship ministries and explained what attendees can expect from the discipleship-focused breakout sessions held during the Nov. 8-9 conference at Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston.

"This event has been crafted to give pastors and leaders a clear understanding of what a multiplying disciple-maker is and how to develop that in your church," Crowell said.

SBTC pastor/church relations ministry associate Ted Elmore said the convention hopes the emphasis on discipleship will move churches beyond simply supporting the idea of "making disciples" to actual intentionality in making disciples.

Bible conference vice president and First Baptist Church of Beaumont pastor Chris Moody says to accomplish that, this year's two-day gathering, themed "Multiply: Making Disciple Makers," will be "an equipping conference with a best practices attitude."



Breakout sessions will cover a variety of topics under the discipleship umbrella, allowing attendees to choose sessions that best fit their ministries and that speak to challenges they face in their own spheres.

Among the sessions to be offered are "If First Baptist Beaumont Can Do It, Anybody Can Do It," led by Moody; "Pastor, Mentor Your Staff," led by Dante Wright, pastor of Sweet Home Baptist Church in Round Rock; and "How To Ignite A Movement of Multiplication" led by Craig Etheredge, pastor of First Baptist Colleyville. Tracks geared specifically for women and Spanish-speaking attendees will also be among the sessions offered.

Moody says a shift from a "feeding consumers" approach to an "equipping equippers" approach is critical to the furtherance of the gospel in America. He said such a transition is also essential in the quest to curb biblical illiteracy.

"If the church doesn't recapture the lost art of disciple-making, we will continue to go the way of

Europe where Christianity was once great," Moody said. "That's the kind of reformation we need to see in America so we can move forward."

Crowell said the SBTC wants to assist churches in this effort in any way possible and will have a special booth at the Bible conference where pastors and leaders can get next steps helps.

"We are providing trainings, additional conferencing and consultation to help churches and pastors who really want to take next steps after the Bible conference," Crowell said.

Crowell said the SBTC also has an eight-part video series available online for free to help churches with disciple-making. The videos are available at sbtexas.com, and Crowell welcomes churches to contact him for any additional help they may need in this area.

In an effort to pack as much useful and practical training as possible into plenary and breakout sessions, Moody said, Bible conference officers have decided to keep speaker introductions and ceremonial items to a minimum.



Why the IMB'S Missionary Reduction is a Welcome Wake-up Call for the Church

Several years ago I pastored a small church in East Texas. Our annual budget was slim, and we barely scraped enough together each week to pay the light bill. A stout conviction of our fellowship, however, was giving to missions. We designated 10 percent of our annual budget to it. The experience was difficult, one that made me wonder if our tiny church with our even tinier budget really made a scratch on the proverbial surface of the lost world.

One summer I found myself in Nazareth Village in Israel. I was on a tour of the country alongside several other pastors. While walking into a bookstore, one of the older pastors called me over and introduced me to an IMB missionary. I'll never forget how he did it: "Jared," he said, "come meet one of your missionaries." For the first time in my tenure as a Southern Baptist pastor, I genuinely felt connected to missions. I realized that my giving touched real people, even if I felt like a widow giving her final mite.

This illustrates the beauty of the Cooperative Program (CP), but it also showcases a glaring weakness. While it's true that every active CP church can say that they support international missionaries, it's also true that, sometimes, said missionaries are nameless numbers (as are the lost people they serve).

The CP is more than just sharing money to support missions. It's about sharing money to support missionaries. That is, the CP is about supporting living, breathing people who share the gospel with dying, breathing people.

Recently David Platt announced he is downsizing our international mission

brigade by 600-800 people. This means that we are losing 600-800 living, breathing people whose lives impact countless dying, breathing people. This is disconcerting news. I recently concluded my first SBC Executive Committee (EC) meeting. As you would imagine, this issue beleaguered the gathering. One major concern is how Platt's reset will impact CP giving, particularly the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO). This, however, is just the problem. That this concern is framed by the potential impact it can make on an offering is why the IMB is in its current predicament. The IMB isn't an offering, nor is it money. It's not a budget item nor is it, really, an entity of the SBC. It's people—living, breathing people. It's people with passions and aspirations and hopes and dreams and convictions and families and lives. But most importantly it's saved people reaching lost people with the gospel.

It's judicious to be concerned about the impact the reset can make on the offering, but this concern should segue to the real problem—lost people. When we express more concern over an offering rather than the lives the offering touches, we've lost touch. The Cooperative Program becomes just that—a program. We forget who and what we are as Southern Baptists because we think of missions as a cog of the church's machine rather than the church as a cog in the machine of missions.

This is all to say that, with all of our finger pointing, we ought to look at the four fingers pointing back at us. The present issue is not an IMB issue. It's an "us" issue. The IMB has, year after year (and with less than sufficient

resources) continued to keep and send missionaries, but the IMB can only operate within the confines of the financial assets it receives, and the average church isn't providing the necessary assets to keep these missionaries on the field, not to mention send more out.

This is why the IMB needs the church's support now more than ever. It would be a categorical atrocity if this year's LMCO dipped a cent lower than the \$153,002,394.13 it received in 2015. Not only this, but it should be the largest ingathering in history.

Southern Baptist pastors ought to teach their people that the CP isn't just a line item in the budget but a cooperation of believers to support other believers to create more believers.

Pastors also ought to begin thinking about how they can increase their annual CP giving. "Annual" is the key word. The IMB needs consistent gifts to keep missionaries on the field.

Finally, pastors ought to begin preparing their people for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering now by asking how we can strategically and creatively raise more money. What kind of event can we host? What corner can we cut? What face can we place beside the number?

More than ever, this is the time to come together as Southern Baptists. Let's turn the Cooperative Program into a Cooperative Initiative. Let's remember that our churches exist because of the Great Commission and not the other way around. Let's remember that there are faces behind the numbers.

—Jared C. Wellman is pastor of Mission Dorado Baptist Church in Odessa, Texas.



Walking in Unity

Ephesians 4:1-3

Annual Meeting & Bible Conference

November 8-10, 2015 Champion Forest Baptist Church

15555 Stuebner Airline Rd • Houston, TX 77069

Meals

Ministry Cafe

Monday, November 9

Reach Houston Dinner

Monday, November 9

President's Luncheon

Tuesday, November 10

Hotels

Comfort Inn

3555 FM 1960 W
Houston, Tx 77068
281.444.5800
Rate: \$115
Cut-Off: October 16

Residence Inn

7311 W Greens Road
Houston, Tx 77064
832.237.2002
Rate: \$120
Cut-Off: October 30

Holiday Inn Express

4434 FM 1960
Houston, Tx 77068
281.866.0500
Rate: \$120
Cut-Off: October 25

Candlewood Suites

8719 FM 1960 W
Houston, Tx 77070
832.237.7300
Rate: \$130
Cut-Off: October 9

Please specify SBTC for group rates when making any hotel reservations.

sbtexas.com/am15

Questions? Call 817.552.2500
or email sbtexas@sbtexas.com