

## CSP President's Report

I'm Albert Mohler and it is my privilege to bring you the report on behalf of the Council of Seminary Presidents. Since 1995 this council has existed and it has been my privilege to serve as its president. Going back to the year 1993, Southern Baptists began a process that became known as the Covenant for a New Century. We reduced the number of entities in the SBC from 19 to 12, and the Council of Seminary Presidents, made up of the presidents of your six seminaries, was assigned the responsibility for two very important dimensions of our work.

The first is Seminary Extensions now through the Seminary Extension program, over half a century old, Southern Baptists, wherever they may be, whatever their level of educational attainment to date, have access to truly creditable, truly conventional, truly wonderful theological educational programs. Seminary Extension under the work of Dr. Randy Williams has done an outstanding work. Over the past year they have continued that work and expanded it. And one of the things that should give Southern Baptist pride is the knowledge that there is no one in any of our Southern Baptist churches who is outside the reach of quality, convictional, faithful, theological education through the six seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention, and in particular, through Seminary Extension as well.

The second dimension of our assigned work is known as the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives. This also goes back far into Southern Baptist history, indeed that's the point. The Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archive, under the direction of Bill Summers, has been about outstanding work over the last year, continuing its mission of preserving the heritage of Southern Baptists. The words in the title of this program, and this library, are really important. It is the Southern Baptist Historical *Archive* and Library. That archival responsibility is really, really important.

Just a few days ago I was in Washington, DC, and one of the buildings that brings me the greatest joy is the National Archives. You can walk into that building and see the original signed documents that framed the very existence of our nation. Now if we were to lose the original copy of our Declaration of Independence, or the original copy of our Constitution, America wouldn't cease to exist, but a priceless part of our heritage would disappear. There is a reason why millions of Americans go into that building in Washington every year just to look on those documents. It's because even seeing them with our eyes reminds us of who we are and of our accountability – not only in the present and in the future, but also to the past. That's why the archival function of the historical library and archives is so important, and that's why we want to remind you that this archive exists to help you, your state convention, your association, your local church, to preserve your own history and heritage. And then it is a library. We collect materials related to Baptist history and the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives represents the most visited denominational archive in the entire world.

Once again, it is my privilege to bring you this report on behalf of, not just Southern Seminary, but all six of our seminaries through the Council of Seminary Presidents. And my word to you is simply gratitude, for what you make possible in preserving your own heritage. We know who we

are now because we know who we have been. And our investment now makes sure future generations of Southern Baptists remember the rock from which we are hewn.