



THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Office of the President

Hello, I am Albert Mohler and once again it is my privilege to bring you a report on behalf of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. My first word and my last word are always the same: thank you. That's the first expression on my heart when I think of speaking to Southern Baptists and bringing a report about your seminary, established in 1859. Here we are, looking back at the year 2015, it hardly seems possible. But in 2015 some milestones were reached that are far beyond anything the founders of the Southern Baptist Convention – or of Southern Seminary – could have imagined.

This past year Southern Seminary and Boyce College enrolled over 5,000 students. That's over 5,000 young people, training and studying and preparing for ministry. When we look at the world around us, we see so many troubling headlines. Frankly they are coming at us even faster than we can imagine; sometimes the next more horrifying even than the one that came before. And yet, in a world of such horrifying bad news, with very real dangers all around us, with the secularizing culture that is growing increasingly hostile, here is the good news: God is raising up a generation of young people who are and have been swimming against the tide; who are ready to come to Southern Seminary because they know of our convictions. They know where we stand without apology for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. They understand that we affirm, without reservation, the total truthfulness and authority, the inerrancy and infallibility of the Holy Scripture. They understand how committed we are to the Great Commission, and they are coming because they too share that passion. They are looking forward to being deployed into the world as ambassadors for the gospel of Jesus Christ. The passion on their heart is to see the nations become glad in Christ and they are grounded in that passion here at Southern Seminary. This has been one of those years we will look back to in terms of history being made. This is the year we launched Southern Seminary's global campus, and as of this year, there is no one, anywhere, 24/7, outside the reach of Southern Seminary's most excellent and wonderful academic programs – and they are all designed for ministry and missions.

This year also saw Southern Seminary recognized in our PhD program as the top 5 in the world in terms of academic placement. That is really something of tremendous importance. It is an exercise of our stewardship and our academic responsibility, but it is also a sign of the excellence to which this institution is committed.

Southern Baptists make all this possible. You make possible the largest group of young men in one place studying for the Christian ministry that have ever been together in the history of the Christian church. You make possible all this incredible growth, all these young people coming, ready to swim against the tide, because of your generous support through the Cooperative Program. Southern Baptists and Southern Baptists alone have created a network of seminaries and have given birth to seminaries such as Southern that lead the nation, not only in terms of enrollment, but in terms of theological leadership and Great Commission passion.

We look around us and we see so many of the mainline liberal denominations not only hemorrhaging when it comes to members, but frankly they are closing down churches and trying to figure out what to do. Their seminaries are being depopulated and they're closing. Here is good news for Southern Baptists: your seminaries are growing. There were more students at your six seminaries in the year 2015 than have ever been in any network of seminaries like this in the history of Christianity. And it all began right here, in 1859 at Southern Seminary. And as I said, we had more than 5,000 students enrolled in this institution just in 2015.

That's an incredible stewardship. It has been made possible by Southern Baptists. You are the reason why we are able to offer this kind of theological education to students, at this quality, in order to train this generation for deployment in Christian ministry without this generation being saddled by debilitating debt. Debt is one of the greatest enemies of the Great Commission and that is one of the reasons why I am so thankful – and thus I come back where I began – my first word in this report is always thank you, my last word is the same, thank you. And thank you, not only for what you made possible in the year 2015, but thank you for what you will do and what your churches will mean to the work of Christ around the world and on this campus in the year 2016. Lord willing, I will look forward to speaking to you then. My first word and my last word then will be the same as now. Thank you.