



SOUTHWESTERN

BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

January 12, 2016

Southern Baptist Convention
Executive Committee Members
901 Commerce Street
Nashville, TN 37203

Dear SBC Executive Committee Members:

In 2 Timothy 2:2 Paul instructed his protégé, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” The six Southern Baptist Seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention continue on a course to transmit the great doctrines of the faith to those who will, in turn, transmit these doctrines to others on two levels. First, our determined effort is to see that tomorrow’s pastors are fully prepared for the assignments that they will face in their congregations. Second, through our PhD programs, we fully intend to prepare a generation of professors who will continue the task of transmitting these doctrines to the next generation’s instructors of pastors.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary does this with a complement of rather traditional programs and an array of unusual programs, some of which are found almost nowhere—even in other evangelical institutions. An example of the latter is our program of Biblical Archaeology, which trains students on both masters and doctoral levels for the defense of the gospel through the study of archaeology. We have professors of New Testament archaeology, Old Testament Archaeology, Egyptian Archaeology, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. This ministry of Old Testament students developing their study of the Hebrew text, working with actual Dead Sea Scroll texts, and the earliest forms of the Hebrew language constitutes a unique opportunity that is seldom available to students of Old Testament. On the same token, the digs at Kourion on the Island of Cypress and at Tel Gezer, not far from Jerusalem, give our students the opportunity for hands-on experience that few can match.

Southwestern continues to provide a bridge between the new generation and the older generation through its free-standing School of Church Music, which has as its goal to preserve the best in church music from earlier generations, while at the same time focusing on the best in contemporary music for the purpose of preparing our congregations to worship God in hymnody and song.

The decision to establish a college some years ago at Southwestern is a result of the constant barrage of Southern Baptist parents deeply desiring a place where they could send their children

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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for college education and know that they would not be harmed. Southwestern was well aware of the fact that it could not be anything other than what it was founded to be, namely, a place where people prepare for various kinds of ministries. Therefore, there is no thought here to establish a law school or a medical school, but there has ever been consideration for the basic studies that are needed by a student to serve God wherever he may go. Our Great Books Program has proven itself vital in all kinds of ministries. Nearly five hundred students now study in this program.

Recently, we have established a school of text-driven preaching – as a matter of fact, the entire institution has taken the moniker of text-driven and applied it to all of our programs. Every focus of our hearts needs to be on the text of Holy Scripture and how that impacts our lives and ministries. The text-driven preaching school, with its dean Dr. David Allen and a coterie of remarkable preachers, is unique in all of the world – seven outstanding pulpiteers teach these young people how to become text-driven preachers and patiently explain the word of God to His people. The opportunities available to these young men as they attempt to lead their congregations through the preaching of the Word are those that draw the focus of our attention most decidedly.

Of course, this text-driven focus also informs our evangelism and missions program. We are grateful to God that not a day goes by when I do not receive emails informing me of someone led to Christ that day – oftentimes several led to Christ that day – by our students and faculty. This has also spread to our global missions effort, which we call Global Theological Innovation. The innovation of this ministry is that, starting with ninety-three affiliated seminaries all around the globe, the emphasis of that seminary is focused, as we are at home, on reaching people for faith in Christ. There are many emphases that a school can legitimately have but none as important as leading men and women to faith in Christ.

At this time, may I also express my deepest appreciation to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and to the people of our Southern Baptist Churches for their faithful support through the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention? What this has actually accomplished in days gone by and will accomplish as long as it exists may only be measured in eternity. I personally was the beneficiary of an education provided by the Cooperative Program. No semester did I pay more than \$200 for tuition. How that came to be is solely a result of the faithfulness of the people in the Southern Baptist churches. For all of them, I say, “God be praised forever!”

Paige Patterson, President
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary