

THE SENTINEL





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About us

The Bible Seminary (TBS) is an independent, nondenominational, 501(c)(3) charitable institution of higher education incorporated in Texas in 2010 to offer training for laity and vocational ministry professionals. On-campus and Distance Education programs include a Certificate of Theological Studies non-degree program, as well as Dual Degree Completion, Master of Arts, and Master of Divinity degree programs.

Vision: The Bible Seminary (TBS) exists to glorify God by impacting multitudes of souls for Christ and to help fulfill the Great Commission by the power of God's Spirit.

Mission: Our mission is to foster biblical literacy through studies of all 66 books of the Bible, cultivate professional and lay leadership skills, and deploy trained Christian disciples in service worldwide.

Key Verse: "They read from the book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read." – Nehemiah 8:8

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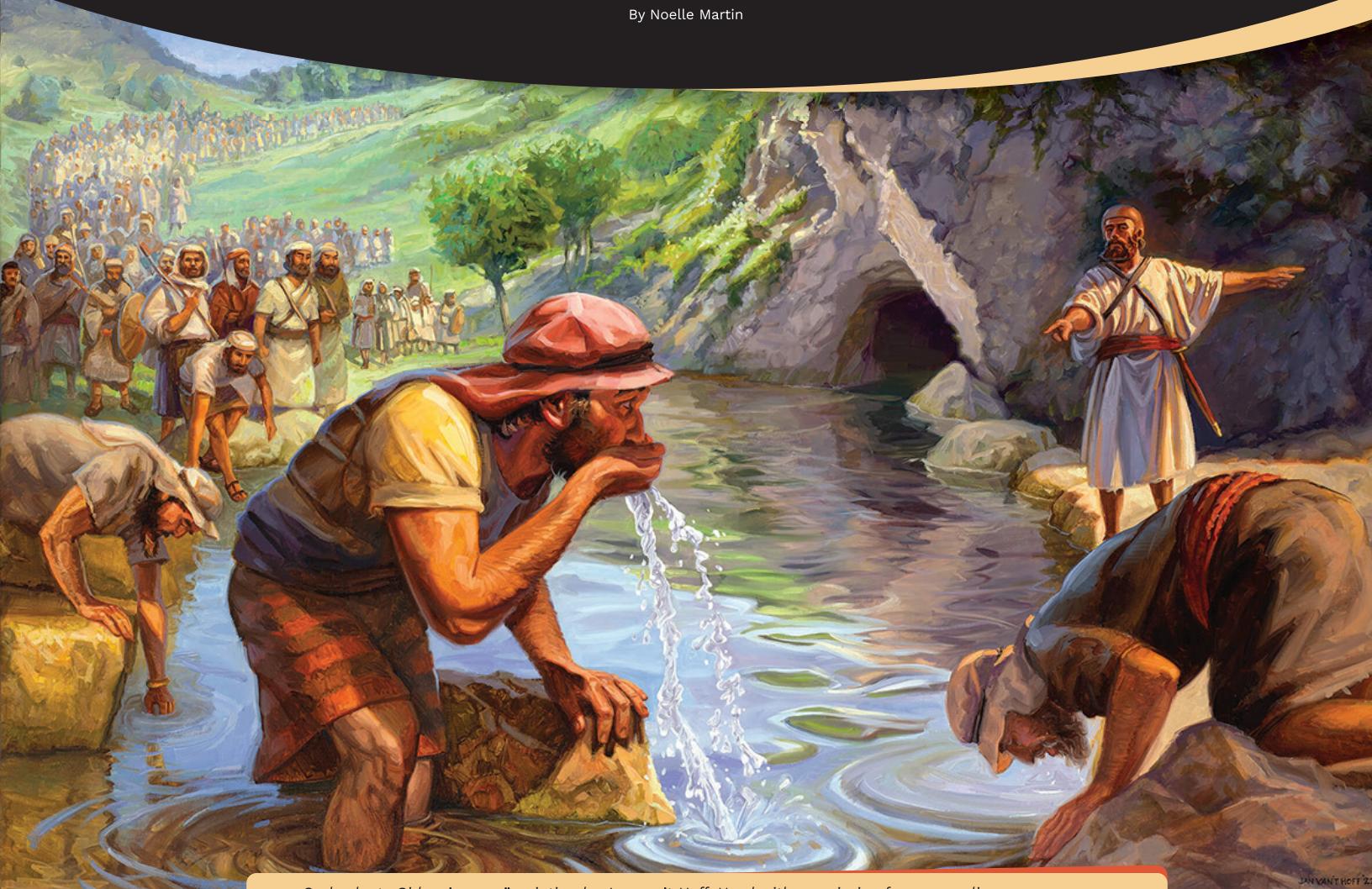


About the Cover

Composite of TBS indoor and outdoor classes and seminars, commencement, Holy Land tours, and archaeological excavations.

A *Different* KIND OF WAITING

By Noelle Martin



God selects Gideon's army painting by Jan van't Hoff. Used with permission from gospelimages.com.

My pastor once spoke about different concepts of sacrifice. While some associate waiting with statically “letting time pass,” there is a contrasting concept of “a living sacrifice” that implies that, well, there’s living to be done!

Consider Psalm 27:13-14, “I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!” Repeating “wait for

the Lord” helps drive the point home, but also notice the reference to living in the waiting. This kind of waiting requires strength and courage, like warriors ready for battle.

Remember Gideon in Judges 6-8? His family boasted no privilege or great family name. In fact, when God called, Gideon protested that he was the smallest of the small; neither he nor his family retained much importance in a nation whose significance was dwindling so rapidly that

they were scrounging out a living in caves and cliffs. Constantly harassed, every time they planted a crop, Midianite raiders rode in and trashed any bounty prior to harvest. Life was hard.

In His grace, the Lord calls Gideon to first, go burn his father’s idolatrous tools, and then go fight for Israel. Yet, Gideon is afraid. Though he doesn’t initially seem to reflect the moniker “mighty warrior” (6:12), he does eventually rise to his calling and face the enemy.

WAIT for the LORD



○ PSALM 13: 5-6 ○

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.



○ PSALM 27: 13-14 ○

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!



Noelle Martin lives in Katy, Texas and is a Dual Degree Completion student enrolled in the Master of Divinity program at TBS.



Gideon begins with 32,000 men (nearly twice the seating capacity of the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in The Woodlands, Texas), but the Lord sifts them. “You have too many warriors for Me to allow you to defeat the Midianites. As it is now, the people of Israel would just deny Me the credit and claim they had won the victory on their own” (Judges 7:2). He directs Gideon to allow any who are fearful to go home, at which point 22,000 depart the ranks.

God sifts the remaining 10,000 by observing their drinking habits. He keeps those who stand to drink with cupped hands and releases everyone who kneels to drink. Isn’t that the image of a watchful soldier? Drinking in a ready position while looking out, rather than to surrender watching to become totally immersed in satisfying thirst?

Gideon ultimately ends up with 300 men. With his soldiers positioned in the hills surrounding the enemy camp, God drives the Midianites to destroy themselves in a desperate free-for-all that drastically decreases their numbers and sends the rest fleeing.

But here’s the deal: God asked Gideon to completely destroy the Midianites. So, Gideon goes after the stragglers. In an exhausting journey, their tiny army passes through two towns who refuse to provide aid, yet they trudge on and eventually completely defeat the 15,000 remaining Midianites in keeping with the Lord’s command.

Gideon’s waiting was anything but passive. His was taut, bowstring-ready-to-fling-a-deadly-arrow kind of waiting. So, while Gideon waited for the Lord to bring mercy to Israel, God worked in the hearts of the Israelites. In light of this, the call for courage in Psalm 27:13-14 makes a lot more sense.

Remember Russell Crowe in the movie *Gladiator* (2000)? The movie begins amidst the final battle of Caesar Marcus Aurelius. Although successful, the music cues in this bloody, brutal battle indicate that the General, framed center screen, is terribly tired of the business of war.

Following the battle, this sentiment becomes clear. When Caesar asks how he can reward Rome’s greatest General, Maximus plaintively requests leave to return home.

“Ah, home,” echoes Caesar. It is not an answer.

Fast forward in the movie: the General becomes a slave, then a gladiator, and pretty much behaves like a General again while leading gladiators in a staged Battle of Carthage in the Roman arena.

Before the mock battle begins, the General directs the gladiators to behave like soldiers who want to survive. They stand tightly together, knotted in the center of the arena with shields out as chariots armed with deadly spikes race in ever-tightening circles about them and quickly kill any stragglers. All the while, the General is yelling, “Hold! Stand as one – HOLD!”

The waiting is intense. A dangerous enemy with real weapons aims to hurt; aims to destroy peace, security, and a sense of purpose; and ultimately aims to destroy LIFE from the living.

Similarly, in times of intense waiting for the Lord, be strong, let your heart take courage, and wait for the Lord! Stand tightly with the Psalmist who shouts from the center, “I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning” (Psalm 13: 5-6). Even as forces come against us, at the appropriate time, and with the power of divine armies, our God who calls us will not disappoint. ☩



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ARCHAEOLOGY AND RETIRED LAW ENFORCEMENT

By Janet Fischer

A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP

Janet Fischer lives in San Jose, California and is working on her Master of Arts degree in Biblical History and Archaeology at The Bible Seminary.



Throughout my 27-year career in law enforcement, people repeatedly informed me that law enforcement officers (LEO) only lived an average of 5-years after retirement. Early deaths by several LEO in my agency and the surrounding area seemed to confirm the claim, including one former colleague who didn't even live long enough to collect her first pension check.

Those who did "beat the odds" often engaged in secondary employment, recreational activities, hobbies, and volunteer opportunities. While some distance themselves from law enforcement culture, others seem to enjoy activities utilizing skills developed in their careers. At first glance, although archaeology may seem very different from law enforcement, both fields require organization, investigative, logistical, and communication skills.

(L-R) Retired Houston Police Sergeant and Robbery Detective, Gary Urie (MABA 2022) and TBS Provost and Tel Shiloh Excavation Director, Dr. Scott Stripling, with Janet Fischer working together in an excavation square at Tel Shiloh in June 2024.

SHARED SKILLS

BETWEEN ARCHAEOLOGY
AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

1

ORGANIZATION

2

INVESTIGATION

3

LOGISTICS

4

COMMUNICATION

5

SYMBIOSIS

I first experienced archaeology in June 2023 at Tel Shiloh. I received a square assignment (the green square) and watched as square supervisors distributed necessary equipment and assigned tasks. LEO agencies are similarly divided into categories – precincts, teams, beats, and functional assignments. Crime scene investigations even use the square concept. LEO understand the necessity of making daily action plans and conveying instructions and priorities from higher ups.

1

Our daily dig routine began with breakfast at 4:00 AM, leaving on buses at 4:59 AM, and enjoying devotional messages while traveling from Jerusalem to Shiloh, somewhat similar to LEO briefings at the start of each workday. Throughout the day at Shiloh, finds of interest were reported to square supervisors or assistant supervisors, and items determined important were documented and reported to dig leaders. Similarly, LEO are required to report specific types of events up the chain of command and write reports as necessary or directed.

Our dig days at Shiloh ended with reporting to square supervisors, storing tools, washing pottery, enjoying beverages and/or ice cream at the visitor center, and riding back “home” to our hotel while comparing notes about our experiences. LEO similarly often gather after shifts for “choir practice” (debriefing and decompression).

This is perhaps the greatest area of convergence between archaeology and law enforcement. Archaeological excavations involve detailed examinations of sites to determine who was there, when, what they did, even where “there” is (original site names are sometimes disputed), why, and how the site was abandoned/destroyed. Similarly, LEO collect evidence to determine who was involved in an incident, when it occurred, what occurred, how events unfolded, why, and where those involved may have gone. Then, collected information must be reported, cataloged, further examined, and written up. Dr. Scott Stripling, Shiloh Director of Excavations and Provost of The Bible Seminary, likes to emphasize, “The goal of archaeology is to publish.” Similarly, successful prosecution of criminals or clearing suspects of charges requires accurate, detailed, often extensive, and timely reports from LEO.

2

As Dr. Stripling reminded us, archaeology is destructive. To get to the lowest levels of occupation, upper level(s) must be removed. Thus, written, photographic, and video documentation are essential since they are the only means by which future researchers can “visit” the layers of a site. For example, Danish archaeologists labeled a ceramic item found at Tel Shiloh in the early 1900’s a “stopper.” However, when current archaeologists reviewed the old report, they noticed a distinct similarity to a more recently discovered ceramic pomegranate. Further investigation indicated that the “stopper,” although now significantly damaged, is most likely another pomegranate, which further supports the opinion that Shiloh was a cultic site (i.e. the location of the tabernacle during the period of Judges). Similarly, LEO interventions sometimes destroy evidence, so audio, photographic, and video documentation often contribute significantly to investigations.

One distinction is that LEO, like Joe Friday in Dragnet, want “just the facts” without opinions. Presuppositional opinions can cause bias in interpreting collected data and result in prosecutions and even convictions of innocent people because investigators who find evidence to support their opinion may overlook exculpatory evidence. While archaeologists must similarly refrain from prematurely stating opinions, dig reports do include suggested interpretations and conclusions.

3

Archaeological excavations require money and volunteers. Excavations at Tel Shiloh require a large hotel willing to open hours earlier than most hotels, chartered buses and vans, portable toilets, lots of onsite and offsite storage, tables, tents, food, and a wide variety of excavation equipment (dry sifting racks and stations; a wet sifting station with plumbing, pumps, water reservoirs, hoses, sprayers, and buckets; sand bags, shovels, picks, axes, trowels, brushes, brooms, picks, rubber buckets, and more; cameras, drones, microphones, lights, video screens, iPads, and computers). Similarly, LEO agencies must budget for and acquire office space, vehicles, personal protective equipment, lethal and non-lethal weapons, safety equipment, and more for both routine and emergency operations.

Well before a dig starts or officers hit the streets, leadership must engage in logistical planning, purchasing, and preparations. While the dig season at Shiloh only lasts four weeks per year, logistical planning and follow-up happens all year long. As one of the largest excavations in the Middle East for the last few years, these logistics involve coordinating the activities of hundreds of people. Also, both my archaeological and LEO experiences included unexpected challenges that required immediate logistical adjustments and problem-solving actions.

4

LEO communicate using a wide range of modern technology – iPads, drones, and body cameras; radio terminals, multi-channel radios, dash cams, computers, phones, and GPS locators; live video feeds and recorded data; written logs (hard copy and electronic), investigation reports with physical evidence, photographs, and videos. Similarly, Shiloh square supervisors and assistants record data on iPads in real time, photographers and drone operators document daily progress in each square, the dig director meets together with the key leaders after the dig each day, and they all work together to publish final dig reports, sometimes in multiple volumes corresponding to one or more dig seasons.

5

Excavations can benefit from volunteers and retired LEO like myself who are seeking opportunities to continue to make positive contributions to society. Such symbiotic relationships can be win-win situations where people like me are able to repurpose the applicable mindset, skills, and experiences learned through years “on the job” in exciting new ways. ☺

BIBLICAL MINIMALISTS VS BIBLICAL MAXIMALISTS

By Brent Hoefling



Brent Hoefling lives in Texarkana, Texas and graduates from TBS in August with a Master of Arts in Biblical History and Archaeology (MABHA).

While researching and writing for my TBS coursework, I noticed some authors avoid using the Bible as a primary source of information. Whether due to concerns about academic reputation or other reasons, there seem to be far more minimalist scholars than maximalist scholars. Secular archaeologists and minimalist scholars may find the Bible suitable for literature or other purposes, but they generally avoid using it in historical context. Meanwhile, many others hold that the Bible contains historical information.

Hershel Shanks, former editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, questioned the use of the Bible in 1976 based on the idea that theological orientation could bias scholarly work. It is true that pursuing archaeology to “prove the Bible” is not an objective approach to scholarly work. I don’t believe the Bible needs to be “proven,” nor am I afraid of scientific endeavors that at some levels may appear to contradict the Bible. At the same time, I believe that archaeological academics should use biblical citations and allusions as primary research sources.

Historically, the “Copenhagen school” of minimalists seek to eliminate ANY historicity of the Bible based on their opinion that the document is unreliable. Meanwhile, biblical maximalists consider the Bible a unique, historical collection of writings documenting the life and times of ancient Israelites and early Christians, and therefore capable of use as a primary source of information. Thus, minimalists and maximalists continue to emotionally debate the validity and reliability of the Bible as a primary source. While minimalist scholars have dominated the last

half-century, maximalists are regaining ground, I believe partly due to the high quality work of archaeologists, authors, researchers, and scholars in places like TBS.

Archaeological academic scholarship should accept biblical citations, just as they utilize citations from other historical manuscripts. Citing the Bible is not exclusively a matter of faith or ideology, but evidence of scholarly rigor and respect for diverse sources. Biblical texts are among the most ancient, documented, and researched literary artifacts in existence. Thus, despite contradictory perspectives, Scripture can and should be considered a valuable source for attempted reconstruction of ancient historical chronology. Since bias goes both ways, a more nuanced approach to biblical interpretation is to allow erudite scholarship to uncover the latest information about the ancient world and the people who inhabited it, while also allowing data gleaned from archaeological endeavors to illuminate the Word of God. ¶



DANGER NEVER SLEEPS

By K. Lynn Lewis



Dr. K. Lynn Lewis serves as President of The Bible Seminary and may be reached at Lynn.Lewis@TheBibleSeminary.edu. *Plight: Revised Edition with small group study guide* is available online and in the TBS bookstore on campus.

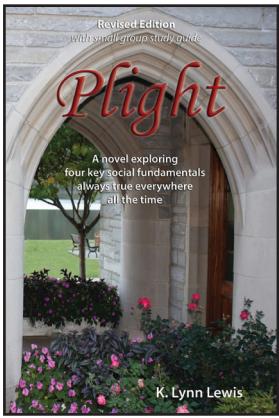
Treachery, lies, jealousy, and murder. Arrogance, debauchery, and sexual deviancy. Disasters, political intrigue, social chaos, and war.

These headlines from Genesis – like today's headlines – remind us that, from Adam and Eve through the time of Jesus and over the past two thousand years, history is filled with similar stories, similar sins, and similar solutions.

My earliest memories include watching nightly news broadcasts filled with images of war, protests, and assassinations on our black and white, and eventually color, TV. I also grew up reading and discussing books, newspaper and magazine articles, and exploring questions about life and death, sin and salvation, and society and justice. My curiosity eventually led me on a seventeen year adventure researching and writing a fiction novel, *Plight* (2010) and later *Plight: Revised Edition with small group study guide* (2015). The book's preface summarizes my experience.

- ! treachery
- ! lies
- ! jealousy
- ! murder
- ! arrogance
- ! debauchery
- ! sexual deviancy
- ! disasters
- ! political intrigue
- ! social chaos
- ! war

PREFACE



The seeds of this prose were planted in the early 1990's amidst constant and repeated cries for "Justice!" relative to various events that dominated America's national consciousness around that time.

Robert Bork's contentious nomination to the Supreme Court, the Iran-Contra affair and Oliver North's trial, the Lyle and Erik Menendez trials, the O. J. Simpson trial, the Michael Fay caning, presidential culpability, abortion, gun rights, the institution of state lotteries, evolution versus creationism, the separation of church and state, and many other incidents and issues saturated public discourse and private conversations.

Since then, additional events garnering our attention have included acts of terrorism, kidnappings, bombings, mass shootings, and assaults and murders at the hands

of terrorists, gang members, immigrants, mentally ill individuals, police, family, and friends.

In the aftermath of some of these, anger, frustration, and rage have manifested themselves in a sweeping array of movements, riots, articles, books, movies, speeches, and proposed legislative actions from coast to coast and in our nation's capital.

Commonly repeated is a demand for "Justice!" But, what is justice? Would any of us even know justice if we saw it? Is there anything that objectively defines justice?

Thus, intrigued by a concept so widely used, but difficult to define or corporately agree upon, I began seeking to understand the essence of justice. Guiding questions for me included, "Are there things always true everywhere all the time?" and "If so, what are they?"

During my quest, I reviewed the Judeo-Christian scriptures, other religious texts, various cultures and history (African, American, American Indian, Asian, Australian, Aztec, European, Greek, Middle Eastern, Roman, tribal groups, and more). I looked for commonalities and took note of repeated distinctives that seemed true always and everywhere. Ultimately, a set of eight principles emerged that seemed foundational – four to society in general, and the other four to justice in particular.

After completing my initial research, I was encouraged to integrate these principles into a fictional literary adventure to serve as an entertaining educational tool. The result is a virtual society of citizens that have embodied the research and development of people, principles, policies, procedures, priorities, and plans in the life of their community. During their journeys, they have explored childhood, adolescence, dating, love, marriage, parenthood, infertility, adoption, divorce, education, careers, community, success, failure, sports, handicaps, health, aging, death, bullying, discrimination, war, immorality, criminal behavior and consequences, and more.

Plight introduces the reader to the first city established by this community, and a sequel explores their second city more in depth. Although the places, plot, and characters are fictional, many of their experiences are real and even historical, as are their feelings and fancies, joys and sorrows, trials and triumphs, standards and principles, and hopes and dreams. Through immersion in this planned community – and further examination via the study guide included in this revised edition – *Plight* offers opportunities for reading pleasure, education, inspiration, reflection, guidance, and, hopefully, more informed decision-making in day-to-day living, as well as appropriately seeking and rendering justice.

THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES ARE OUTLINED BELOW

1 SOCIETY AUTHORITY

Who is in charge? What basis, document, person, group, etc.? Does everyone agree, or are there competing authorities? For example, if one group upholds Jesus Christ and the Bible, another upholds Mohammed and the Koran, and another claims themselves as their own authority, agreement on the next seven keys is less likely, but at least everyone will know where everyone stands while making their claims.

2 SOCIETY DIFFERENTIATION

Parent or child? Officer or citizen? Military or civilian? Spouse or not? Different rules apply in different situations. For example, parents have the authority to tell children what to do, like when to go to bed, whereas children don't exercise similar authority over parents. Officers have authority to arrest unruly citizens, soldiers have authority to conduct warfare, and spouses have authority to engage in sexual relations with each other, but applicable rights and rules can vary. Differentiation helps categorize and frame situations.

3 SOCIETY STANDARDS

What are the relevant rules and values? Metric system or Imperial system? Values defined in the Bible, the U.S. Constitution, a state, or another country? For example, the clinical definition of death varies around the world, around the country, and even among different hospitals and physicians (see “Public Understandings of the Definition and Determination of Death” at [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8989773](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8989773)). Determining a date and time of death requires knowing what rules define death in that location, the time zone, date, and calendar standard. Similarly, what standards define life, male and female, right and wrong, monetary value, and so on? Defining standards is crucial to productive communication and positive action.

5 JUSTICE BALANCE

What evens or tips the scales? The very concept of justice involves finding appropriate balances between everyone involved. In the book of Esther, evil Haman treacherously sought to kill righteous Mordeci and annihilate the Jewish people. However, King Xerxes ended up publicly honoring Mordecai for his faithful service, executing Haman on a pole Haman had built to kill Mordeci, giving Haman’s estate to humble and righteous Queen Esther (who then transferred it to Mordecai), and overruling Haman’s genocidal decree with a decree of balanced, limited punishment against antagonistic enemies of the Jews (Esther 1-10).

7 JUSTICE INTEGRITY

Is everyone and everything open and honest, or some hidden and dishonest? Lacking integrity, some things seem fair, but turn out extremely unfair when everything is revealed. Solomon’s ruling between two women fighting over a baby included him wisely discerning truth from lies (I Kings 3:16-28).

4 SOCIETY ACCOUNTABILITY

Who makes the rules? Who enforces them? What happens when rules are broken, lines are crossed, and standards are violated? For example, when my car was stolen out of my parsonage driveway in the mid-1990’s, it was one of 400 cars stolen locally by a gang of four teenagers over a six-month period. Since my car was the fifth car with one 14-year old boy’s fingerprints on the steering wheel, he was sentenced to juvenile prison for two years. Stealing only four cars didn’t meet the criteria to trigger a prison sentence, but five did. When all four boys were finally arrested and punished, the series of car thefts abruptly ended. Accountability helps protect society and maintain orderly, safe communities.

6 JUSTICE DUE PROCESS

What are the appropriate processes and steps? Are they followed equally, procedurally, and according to established standards under legitimate authority in due time? When Adonijah sought to usurp King David’s throne, he claimed the throne on his own authority and hosted a private party with select co-conspirators. However, King David responded by privately naming Solomon his successor with his faithful leaders as witnesses, and then publicly and properly anointing, blessing, and enthroning him in full view of the citizenry (I Kings 1).

8 JUSTICE RECOMPENSE

This final step is the determination, considering all the other fundamentals, where punishment, reward, and sometimes restitution is warranted. When King Nebuchadnezzar selfishly prided himself for all his accomplishments, the Lord punished him, yet when he repented, the Lord rewarded him such that he became even greater than before (Daniel 4). Jesus and Paul affirmed rewarding faithful workers, including food and wages (Luke 10:7; I Timothy 5:18). Ancient recompense for theft or other sins included full replacement plus 1/5 of the value to repay victims for their troubles (Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers).

With a little practice, these principles can help provide clarification and guidance in many situations. To further explore the framework of society and justice in an engaging, enlightening, and stimulating journey to a place where learning never ends and danger never sleeps, read *Plight: Revised Edition with small group study guide*, and consider using the study guide with your class, club, family, small group, or staff. ♦

EXPRESSION for IMPACT

By Jennifer Bartlett

Jennifer Bartlett lives in Palm Coast, Florida and is a Dual Degree Completion student in the Master of Arts in Biblical Languages and Culture degree program. Fascinated with the Septuagint and with communicating “boring” parts of the Bible in dynamic and innovative ways, she and her husband, Brett, are homeschooling the last three of six children. She founded Alpha Women’s Center in Palm Coast in 1999 and now works independently as a content creator, manager, and editor for various Christian businesses and individuals, including the Christian tour agency Living Passages (2019-23), the late Dr. Michael Heiser (2020-21), and TBS’s own Shelley Neese (2023-24). Contact Jenni at jenni@gracetruthandlove.org.



FOOTNOTES

1. K. Lynn Lewis and Beau McBeth, *Boss Like God: A Blueprint for Elite Workplace Performance* (Sugar Land, Texas: KL2, 2018), p. 17.
2. BLG, pp. 8-9.
3. BLG, p. 19.
4. BLG, p. 10.

Barlett family (L-R, Front) Heather, Jenni, Alyssa, and Daniel; **(Back)** Brett and Alan. Not shown: Jeremy and Jeff.

Our children, who were seemingly babies so recently, are growing up. In fact, some already have. Brett and I have six children, and a couple are now parents themselves. I’m homeschooling the last few, always hopeful for their nebulous future ministries

and vocations. Among their prospects, nothing ignites them like the arts!

We just finished our busiest time of the year: culminating months of practices preparing for a year-end county strings concert and a first place-medal-winning regional fine arts competition in Orlando

(a couple of hours away). Our church hosted a repeat performance for friends and family that was even better than the competition performance because they were bringing it for an audience of One, and it was worshipful!

I share this because we have

a Great Commission to fulfill that can be accomplished through myriad forms of expression for impact. Youth don’t need to wait until they’ve graduated from college to start being used by God, and perhaps they shouldn’t have to stop being artists to “make it” in the world.

I wonder, what if they could do what they love to do and get paid to do it? What if they could honor the Lord with their talents and He sustained them through their artistry? What if a team of talented people helped open wallets to fund nonprofit Christian organizations that are fulfilling the call? What if their artistry included actively taking the Gospel into the nations? What if the message isn't just GIVE, but GO? Or better yet, "COME UNTO ME"? What would that look like?

I am so thankful for The Bible Seminary and the resources God has opened to me through my degree program. Through the "PAS 511: Pastor-Leader I" course and using guidelines from the book *Boss Like God* (2018) by TBS President Dr. K. Lynn Lewis

and Beau McBeth, I jumped on the opportunity to crystallize my ideas into a plan!

Allow me to paint the picture, beginning, as the BLG authors do, with an introduction to the idea that God is the ideal boss. Throughout the Bible, God demonstrates various methods of relating to His "employees" and similar practices and principles can be implemented in the workplace. The book's four sections address aspects of serving as boss in a business or ministry context: hiring, managing, firing, and leaving well. In keeping with one of the first steps in hiring well, allow me to cast vision by addressing the problem (opportunity), the solution, and the roles needed to fulfill the mission.¹

ROLES NEEDED TO FULFILL THE MISSION

PROBLEM *opportunity*

A lost and needy world needs the gospel, discipleship, and a demonstration of the love of God through the good works and generosity of those who follow Jesus Christ. Many ministries engage in meeting these needs. They usually rely on financial donations, often solicited through audience-engaged events, and their audiences need information and encouragement to support ministry endeavors.

SOLUTION

Offer media resources that can help deliver both illustrative and compelling performances that effectively communicate ministry needs and dramatic expressions of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Options are virtually limitless: from 2-D drawings and paintings that can be auctioned and/or used to promote a cause; to original songs and videos; to dramatic and evocative, staged drama and human video presentations.

ROLES *who's doing what?*

Job descriptions define roles by addressing purpose(s), resource and opportunities available, and specific freedoms and boundaries.² According to BLG, job descriptions should be clear (straightforward and unambiguous), complete (the whole job and associated tasks), compatible (matched to the strengths of the individual), complementary ("we work together" = teamwork), and consensual (everyone understands and agrees upon their roles).³ Roles in our organization might include the following:

- » A **board of directors** who design, define, and refine the solution and the roles needed to accomplish the mission (for example, and subject to revision): To provide a fundraising resources to Christian organizations using an array of fine arts as compelling media designed to glorify Jesus Christ and elicit a generous donor response. The Board establishes organizational goals as reflected in the mission statement and sets bylaws that define how the organization operates. All of this is in preparation for the execution of the plan.
- » **Executive Director(s)** – chief talent scout/agent and client liaison – who will engage with other employees, volunteers, and clients to pursue the mission and goals. The Board equips the Executive Director with a clear job description, resources, and ongoing feedback, so that adjustments can be made to achieve the desired results.⁴
- » **Performers and support team members** such as coaches, instructors, set designers, and tech operators who help write, choreograph, set up, and perform or present at fundraising events; as well as business, communications, and marketing personnel who help produce and manage productions.



Oli and Alyssa playing their violins during a Flagler Youth Orchestra performance.

Because our chief aim is to glorify Jesus Christ, we will acknowledge our dependence on God for favorable outcomes – for safety, peaceful interpersonal relations, successful performances, and effective messages – by making prayer a priority. We will create a Statement of Faith consistent with conservative Christian doctrine, standards, and behavior. Hiring parameters will include seeking persons committed to living these out as organizational representatives and, ambassadors who represent Jesus Christ in all things, at all times, and in all places.

In closing, I love TBS! I love the FLEXIBILITY that has allowed me to earn a degree online while working around my children's busy schedule. I love the CONTENT because, in many different classes, I have been equipped to directly connect verifiably historical biblical accounts with currently relevant theological principles. I love the RESULTS as I've grown in my understanding of God's word. By exploring both good and bad examples of leadership through the choices of prophets, priests, and kings throughout 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings, I have been encouraged to implement wise leadership with a servant's heart. I'm so grateful for the instruction I receive through The Bible Seminary, and I pray that these valuable lessons will become a legacy that manifests in the lives of my family members, other ministry leaders, and future members of the Body of Christ worldwide. 

HESED HANDS

By Richard James



Richard James, along with his wife (L-R) Becky, and daughters Jordan and Brooke (Little).

HESEDHANDS.COM

“HESED” ALSO “CHESED”

seems to express a sense of love
that inspires caring behavior
towards our fellow human beings

Richard James lives in Katy, Texas and graduates in August with a Master of Arts in Christian History and Theology (MACHT). For more than two decades, Richard has worked with Medtronic, Boston Scientific Neuromodulation, RadiaDyne, Johnson & Johnson, Nevro, and Abbott as a national award-winning sales leader in the medical industry.

A week-long adventure with TBS President Lewis during a March 2012 ski trip with our church was my first real introduction to The Bible Seminary (TBS). His passionate description of the newly launched graduate program rooted in studying all 66 books of the Bible and training believers for life and ministry leadership seemed intriguing, even exciting, and I began observing TBS from the fringe.

Fast forward eight years and I dove into the center of TBS education. I had a high heart knowledge of Christianity but increasingly felt a stirring desire to bring my head knowledge up to the same level. I am task-oriented and know that I work better when I am held accountable. So I enrolled as a degree student, and the course agendas and requirements culminating into grades is exactly what I needed to stay on task. Life happens and is far too easy to get distracted and procrastinate. For me, TBS has been perfect and I am very thankful for the program.

My full-time work requires travel, and the flexibility TBS offers has allowed me to satisfy the requirements to graduate

with a Master of Arts in Church History and Theology. During my journey, I have enjoyed the opportunity to focus on every book of the Bible, including times of intense focus on specific topics while writing research papers and preparing projects. Though difficult at time, the tasks have proven exceptional for me. I have learned more from these papers and project than from the readings alone.

I also had the opportunity to participate in the archaeological dig at Tel Shiloh, Israel led by TBS Provost Stripling. I will forever cherish my Holy Land experience and cannot adequately express my gratitude for the TBS professors and staff. Their subject knowledge and level of personal support is incredible, and I count myself fortunate to know TBS leaders and students as friends.

My capstone project for graduation has included creating a non-profit organization that seeks to help individuals in need. Called Hesed Hands, Inc (HesedHands.com), the name comes from the Hebrew word “khesed.” Though difficult to translate into English, “hesed” seems to express a sense of love that inspires caring behavior towards our fellow human beings. Jesus summarizes the Greatest Commandment in Matthew 22:35-40, “One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’”

Hesed Hands aims to act on the second commandment of “Love your Neighbor” through acts of kindness and dialogue about “Loving the Lord your God.” By purchasing groceries, providing a needed appliance, or repairing a home (and anything in-between), we can both practically love our neighbors and hopefully bring them to know the Lord. As our acts of kindness open avenues for dialogue, we pray the Holy Spirit works through us and others and in our neighbors to complete the process. 



JESUS

— and the —

JIHADIS

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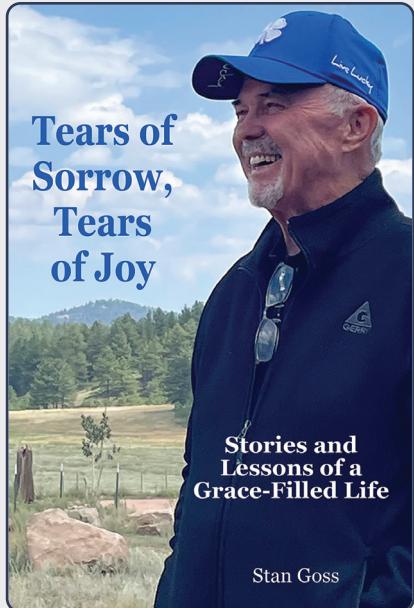


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Tears of Sorrow, Tears of Joy

by Stan Goss (2024)

Rising from a childhood laced with devastation and heartbreak, Stan Goss found immense inward healing and earthly successes with the Lord as his companion. *Tears of Sorrow, Tears of Joy* shares his journey of conquering hardships while also fully grasping the nature of both pain and joy, and shares his vibrant passion and strategies to inspire spiritual elders to fully live out their crown of glory years.

Stan is a Master Executive Coach, community leader, family man, and passionate servant of the Lord devoted to inspiring Christian spiritual eldership. He serves on the Board of Trustees for The Bible Seminary (TBS), is one of the first Bible Certificate graduates, and is the oldest living TBS alumni.

EXCERPTS FROM PP. 7-9, 12-13, AND 15

Pages 7-9

I remember myself as a youngster riding in the passenger seat of our pick-up truck with my father at the steering wheel. We were following my uncle Grady, who was driving a flat-bed truck with a tractor chained to the flatbed. Right in front of our eyes, he drove off the road into a ditch and the tractor broke loose and pinned him in the cab. The scene was horrific. My dad left me alone with Uncle Grady to search desperately for help. Pools of blood remain ingrained in my memory. These, and that Uncle Grady died. I think he was thirty-something. That's all I remember.

Sometime thereafter, I was out fishing with my grandpa, Oscar Lankford. My memories of him, along with the pictures I have seen, depict him as a tall, quiet man. He was sort of the "Gregory Peck" type. Yet on this day, my memories become fuzzy. My grandpa had a heart attack

and died. The story is that I dragged his body into the pickup truck and drove to the nearest farm for help...

The nightmare continued when my dad, Claude Benton Goss, died a few weeks later. We were alone on the tractor night plowing. I think he had a heart attack. I do remember my mom yelling at him to wake up. He didn't. I remember an ambulance driving away with his body, and that was it.

Pages 12-13

Many events conspired to bring me into the next dark day of my life. I was working one morning when the phone rang for me. My mom greeted me urgently, informing me that both she and Nancy had the flu.

"Could you call in sick for us?" she asked.

I agreed and phoned my mother's work and Nancy's school. I then raced to the house, checked in on them,

and fixed them a bite to eat. They were sick, but seemed stable, so I returned to work.

A few hours passed. Later that afternoon, I called the house and received no answer. I assumed my mom and Nancy were feeling better and read this as a positive omen, imagining perhaps they stepped out to shop. When we arrived home the phone was blaring and I answered to a neighbor's frantic voice urging me to the house. I arrived within minutes to a sea of flashing red lights and several emergency vehicles. When I stepped inside, I saw my mother's limp body on the floor and a gurney was wheeling Nancy outside and into an ambulance. It was all a blur after that.

I know that someone directed me inside the ambulance with Nancy, and that I spent the night alone at the hospital as people worked feverishly to save her life.

But Nancy didn't make it. She was only fifteen years old. Authorities determined that the house was flooded with carbon monoxide gas. Evidently, my mother pulled a panel off the furnace that kept the gas from recycling into the house. Without this panel in place, the house became a lethal gas chamber. We never knew how or why this happened.

Page 15

A few years ago, a lovely lady, Mary Bell, posed an interesting question to me, "How did you get this way?"

What a blessing of a question! How did I go from a talented young boy, deeply and profusely wounded by the deaths of my closest family members and leaving a massive heap of anguish and rubble behind, to arrive as such a man in such a prosperous place?

Yet, I knew the answer, and quickly: Only by God's grace. No other answer could attempt to make any sense at all. I couldn't begin to claim credit for the outcome of my journey. God has just brought me along for the ride. But the astonishing tales of His grace never end, and in my case, there is more to this story.



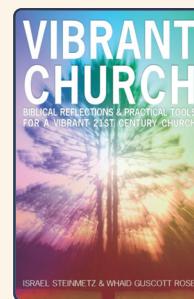
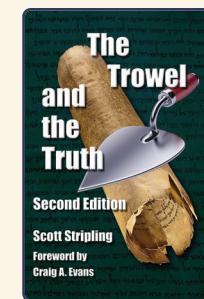
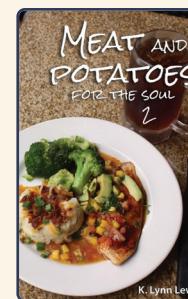
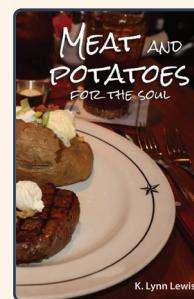
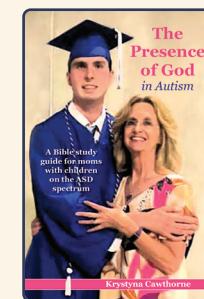
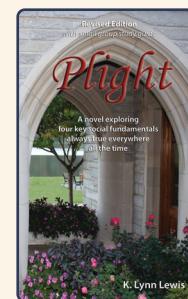
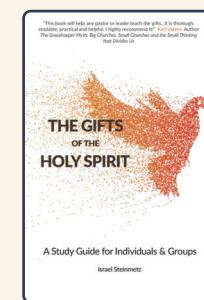
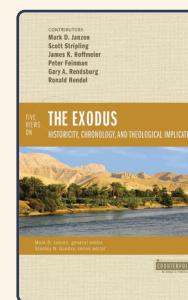
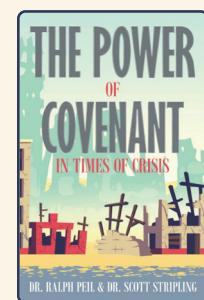
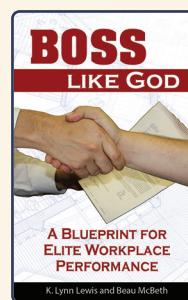
To read more of Stan's story and glean wisdom from a grace-filled life, **purchase** your Kindle or paperback copy today on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and **join the conversation** at [Facebook.com/tearsofsorrowtearsofjoy](https://www.facebook.com/tearsofsorrowtearsofjoy).

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ananiashouse

New Possibilities

By Shelli Alaniz



For the first time, I love that I am a woman. I know now that I am a daughter of the King and that my life has value and worth. I know now what it means to love and honor another woman. And that God will use us to build His Kingdom.

- MENA participant



Shelli Alaniz (MA in Biblical Studies 2023) lives in Brookshire, Texas, serves as Associate Director of Women's Ministry for Ananias House (AnaniasHouse.org), and is the Founder/Trainer of SURGE Team Building (surgeteambuilding.com).

In 2019, 40 women from four countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) gathered around a room, brought together to build the body of Christ in the 10/40 window. Even within the room, you could feel the division among these women, an echo of borders wrought with conflict, war, and suffering. It would take five years to dissolve those barriers between them and build a community grounded in biblical culture. By 2024, those same women were embracing one another like sisters, so grateful for the opportunity to gather together again and strengthen the thread that binds Christ's body as one. To witness what God has done over these five years has been profound.

Even though Christianity has its roots deeply embedded in the 10/40 window, today it represents some of the most unreached and unevangelized people in the world. In an area filled with endemic persecution, the Church has not only maintained a presence but has seen incredible growth through that persecution. As the Church has grown, so has the need for resources to equip the body of Christ. In response to that need, Ananias House (a Houston, Texas-based non-profit ministry led by a native Syrian man) launched a development program in 2019 that focused on investing in 40 selected women from across the MENA region over five years to train them in discipleship, leadership, and trauma healing.

Discipleship training focused on teaching women how to: study God's Word, cultivate a relationship with Him, grow spiritually, learn biblical culture, and practice abiding in Christ. Leadership training is focused on understanding themselves and their identity in Christ better, how a healthy leader impacts the ministries they lead, and how to lead with humility. Trauma healing training concentrated on healing heart wounds and understanding the grief process. In addition to helping these women grow spiritually, the program aimed to help them lead other women in their churches and communities effectively.

Ananias House created a training team from the States and each American woman committed five years to this initiative to invest in these women's lives. Since developing relationships and building trust takes time, the MENA women initially had difficulty opening up, especially with persons from other countries. The team focused on cultivating an environment of love and acceptance, and over time, guarded hearts eventually softened. A new community developed grounded in the tenets of Biblical community and honoring one another as image-bearers of Christ. Though antithetical to their cultures, the demonstrations of affirmation and honor helped cultivate spaces of unprecedented transparency.

As the relational connections deepened, the ground became fertile to address the heart wounds that the women had all clearly experienced. The level of trauma among the women ranged from economic decline and hardship to surviving war and losing loved ones. Suffering and persecution were commonplace, and for many, anesthetized them to the severity of their circumstances. The training team invested a few years into addressing heart wounds within the context of small groups, helping the MENA women to talk, process, and ultimately walk through their grief journeys. As the training

team became aware of the depths of some of their trauma and the need for additional counseling, they worked one-on-one with each woman to facilitate Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) sessions focused on deep trauma healing and addressing PTSD and complex PTSD symptoms. The results were robust as women experienced healing from wounds decades in the making.

In addition, the team helped the women see their cultures in the mirror of biblical culture. To transform the cultural mindset, we presented alternative perspectives to honor-shame tenets that might impede spiritual growth. Understanding ways Islamic culture infiltrated the Church and contributed to syncretism – combatting the honor-shame paradigms with the truth of God's Word – was both a daunting and a liberating experience for the women. It was daunting because stepping away from cultural paradigms opened them up to experiencing shame from their communities, and the women had to be prepared for this reality. The answer to this dilemma was community.

Community is a significant aspect of Arab culture and represents the foundation from which thoughts, beliefs, and choices flow. As women face counter-cultural options for living their lives, ostracization from their communities of origin can occur. The training focused on teaching the women to cultivate a biblical community where relationships could be rooted in God's design for community – one of love, support, honoring one another, accepting each other, and serving one another selflessly. The biblical community was modeled for the women over the five years. Multiple small groups focused on reinforcing these community concepts by understanding themselves better (using DISC assessments and reflecting on spiritual gifts), honoring the women around them (by doing affirmation exercises and

pointing out their strengths and gifts), and healing from heart wounds (and building trust). This was built around a solid framework of studying God's Word together and consistently letting Scripture shape and direct the dynamics of the training and the relationships that were being formed. This community model proved a vital piece of the puzzle because living in a communal culture meant that, for these women to live counter-culturally, they would need a new community around them living in that space as well.

In April 2024, Ananias House graduated these 40 women from the Ananias House Women's Leadership Program. No longer could we see the boundary lines represented by their countries, but instead, we witnessed women who learned what it meant to come together as the body of Christ, to live within the Bible culture rather than in the shadows of the Islamic culture, and to love and honor one another as they built a new community focused on glorifying God. They taught us what it meant to walk in faith when comfort was elusive, and suffering was a standard part of their lives. They taught us what pouring your life out for God and for the Kingdom looks like. They taught us what it means to live moment by moment in a felt need for God.

One woman shared, "For the first time, I love that I am a woman. I know now that I am a daughter of the King and that my life has value and worth. I know now what it means to love and honor another woman, and that God will use us to build His Kingdom."

What a gift to witness God working over these five years and to come alongside the beautiful and profound work that He is doing in the 10/40 window. As we prepare for the launch of our next five-year program with a new group of women, our anticipation continues to grow as we look forward in wonder of what God will do next. ☺

Ananias House
created a
training team
from the States.



Each American
woman committed
five years
to this initiative.

PRE-WIRED DESIGN

BY



Grace Fox lives in Taylorsville, North Carolina and is a Master of Arts in Biblical History and Archaeology student at TBS. She has a B.S. in Biology from Lenoir-Rhyne University (2013), a PhD in Neuroscience from the Medical College of Georgia (2018), and works as an Associate Director and Scientific Officer in Strategic Market Access for OPEN Health.

By Grace Fox

INTRODUCTION

I accepted Jesus as my personal Savior at age six when my mother led me to the Lord at our home in Northern Ireland, where our family served as missionaries. Through homeschooling, my parents offered unwavering support and proved instrumental in guiding my academic pursuits through the lens of a biblical worldview.

As I grew in my love for the Creator, I developed a keen interest in exploring His creation. I found science intriguing, appreciated the scientific method of ensuring evidence was observable, testable, and repeatable, and observed ample evidence that science harmonizes with the Bible.

I studied biology as an undergraduate and focused my research on development and regeneration. My doctoral studies centered on neuroscience, mostly investigating learning and memory. I recently shifted my focus from the basic sciences to more applied work in the pharmaceutical industry, including evidence synthesis, pricing and reimbursement, and value communication. As part of my continued interests across scientific disciplines, I am currently enrolled in graduate training in biblical archaeology at The Bible Seminary with a goal of leveraging my background in identifying, synthesizing, appraising, and communicating evidence to help further demonstrate the historicity of the Bible.

Of all my research over the years, one project that clearly declared God's glory involved investigations of cell assembly organization in the brain. Originally published in *Frontiers in Systems Neuroscience* in 2016¹ and revised below, I pray this evidence will strengthen your faith in the Creator.

ORGANIZATION OF NEURAL CIRCUITRY

Amidst the 86 billion cells forming 100 trillion connections in the human brain, cognition emerges.^{2,3} To put this into perspective, imagine a city with 86 billion residents and 100 trillion roads connecting them. This is the level of intricacy and organization in the human brain. We learn, process, and store information from this seemingly random organization of neurons and supporting cells. Owing to this complexity, scientists have long searched for the basic building block of neural circuits—a computational barcode that is repeated throughout cortical and sub-cortical regions.^{4,5}

During the last decade, I was a part of the team that proposed and tested the *Theory of Connectivity*, a mathematical rule for organizing neural circuits. The theory postulates that within each computational building block or functional connectivity motif (FCM), the number of principal projection cell cliques with distinct inputs should follow a power-of-two-based permutation equation of $N = 2^i - 1$. N is the number of distinct neural cliques that can cover all possible permutations and combinations of specific-to-general input patterns, while i is the number of distinct information inputs. With this organization, each FCM can cover every mathematical possibility in a specific-to-general manner.

Using neural recording techniques, our team demonstrated that these activity patterns, or FCMs, are used throughout the brain and across animal species during appetitive, social, and emotional experiences. At last, a unifying design principle for brain computation was found!

A crucial question remained—are these FCMs preconfigured, formed by learning in adulthood, or both? Incredibly, we found that genetic deletion of the N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptor—the synaptic switch for learning and memory—did not greatly impact the FCMs. These results suggested that these activity patterns are developmentally pre-configured or pre-wired by design.

Taken together, these results demonstrated that neural circuits are comprised of pre-wired, conserved FCMs. Instead of random connections that developed accidentally over millions or billions of years of evolution, these data, combined with prior research efforts, show that the brain's connectivity patterns are highly non-random. ☺

I AM NOT SURPRISED. ARE YOU?



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(L-R, back) Chyrrl and Rev. Allen Fox, with (front) Hannah, Grace, and Lydia on missionary assignment in Northern Ireland.

“Of all my research over the years, one project that clearly DECLARED GOD'S GLORY involved investigations of cell assembly organization in the brain.”

— Grace Fox

3 And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased.
4 Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.
5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.
6 So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made.

At the Bible Seminary's weekly PRS, out a reason which I'm going to and for until the waters had dried up from us.



PUBLIC READING OF SCRIPTURE

AT THE BIBLE SEMINARY

By Angela McClinton

In partnership with The Grace and Mercy Foundation based in New York City, The Bible Seminary (TBS) launched weekly Public Reading of Scripture (PRS) on September 11, 2023. Hosted on campus (with a free lunch!) and online on Mondays, participants enjoy high quality audio dramatized recordings of several Old and New Testament passages and two Psalms, summary insights of the day's passages, fellowship, and prayer.

The practice is inspired by the Apostle Paul's exhortation in 2 Timothy 3:16,

"Until I come, devote yourselves to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching." Similar PRS events are held weekly around the world. So far, TBS has launched one in English at TBS and helped launch another in Spanish at a local church.

"Public reading of Scripture has been such a gift to my husband, Austin, and me," says PRS@TBS attendee Tessa Kellam. "We plan our Mondays around PRS to make sure we don't miss it! Being able to listen to extended passages of Scripture in a public setting is something

I never experienced before, even growing up in church."

Four key pillars make PRS sustainable and enjoyable. One, we meet on a regular basis in keeping with the reminder in Psalm 1:2 to meditate on the Word of God day and night, as well as to establish the practice as part of our natural life rhythm.

"I desire to return every Monday because I simply love to hear the TRUTH," says Jeff Smart. "Every time Scripture is read, I seem to take away a very practical application."

Angela McClinton (TBS MDiv 2019) serves as Development Director and an Adjunct Professor at TBS and can be reached at Angela.McClinton@TheBibleSeminary.edu.



Two, PRS participants enjoy listening to (not just reading) the Bible using one of the highest quality audio drama Bibles available.

"To see and hear Scripture engages both my heart and mind," says Jeff's wife, Bette. "We are fed lunch and God's Word feeds my soul. We always learn something we had not noticed while reading the Bible in the past. PRS keeps blessing us."

Three, PRS happens in community with other participants.

"I love PRS because of the community we have while hearing God's Word," notes Adam Fithen, Senior Pastor of Friendship Church Assembly of God in Richmond, Texas. "I started attending because of my friendship with Blake Quimby and have met many others I now call friends."

Four, we read the entire Bible in context, not just our favorite parts, in obedience to Jesus's commands to live by every word that comes from God (Matthew 4:4).

"I love the insights that Dr. Stripling, Dr. Steinmetz, and Dr. Lewis give about the passages," Kellam exclaims. "Context is everything! Having such knowledgeable and credentialed instructors paint the biblical scene for us and give additional information has been so educational."

More than 125 people from across the U.S. and around the world have attended at least one PRS@TBS. Total weekly attendance averages 36, with just over 30 in-person attendees each week and 25 who have attended regularly since inception. Recent sessions have exceeded 40 and continued growth and possible expansion to a larger venue seems likely. Participants include members of the TBS family, as well as local pastors, ministry leaders and staff, and business and community leaders. Lunches are catered from local establishments, including Chicken Salad Chick, Ephesus Mediterranean Grill, El Jarrito Mexican Restaurant, Hat Creek Burgers, Olive Garden, Red River BBQ, and more.

Several staff members from Church on the Rock, a large bilingual church in Katy, Texas, attended PRS@TBS, and eventually inquired about hosting a Spanish version at their church.

According to Senior Pastor Jorge Cardenas, "PRS in Spanish has been an extraordinary answer to our prayers. Our people love it, including participants in Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua and El Salvador who tune in faithfully via Zoom along with our in-person attendees." ☀



The transformative experience of delving into Scripture as a communal practice is like embarking on a journey with fellow travelers through landscapes of wisdom, faith, and understanding. As such, PRS has been, and continues to be, a refreshing blessing for our family.

We experience a palpable power that fosters a sense of unity, solidarity, and mutual support each time we join with others who share our common purpose and belief in Christ. It reminds us that we are not alone on our spiritual journey but are part of a larger community bound by faith and shared values, which can be especially comforting during times of adversity or uncertainty.

Ultimately, the goal of reading Scripture together is not just intellectual understanding but spiritual transformation, and to this end, the insight and context the speakers provide for each passage we read proves invaluable for understanding the text at deeper levels.

The quiet reflection time between each reading allows us to meditate on the teachings, stories, and wisdom we consume, and we find this continuously challenges us to align our lives more closely with divine truth and purpose. For it is through the reading of His Word, prayer, and careful reflection that we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to grow in faith, character, and discipleship.

I cannot say enough about the myriad of benefits PRS@TBS has brought to our lives, including deepened understanding, unity, compassion, and spiritual growth. It is an enriching practice that nourishes our souls both individually and collectively.

- Jarred and
Simone Martin

MONDAYS AT NOON (CST)

PRS

PUBLIC READING OF SCRIPTURE

BIBLICAL
SUSTAINABLE
ENJOYABLE

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IN-PERSON OR ONLINE

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SAYING NO IN MINISTRY:

SEEK THE COUNSEL OF THE LORD

Have you ever been involved in a ministry project where you ended up giving more than you planned? Have you ever felt drawn into a urgent situation of overwhelming need, and later regretted getting involved? Have you ever stopped serving because you felt angry or exploited? If you answered yes to any of these questions, this article is for you!

After ministering for a year to a high-needs individual, I found myself disillusioned, confused, and resentful. Seeking wisdom, I reached out to eleven experienced ministers to ask how I got myself into this mess, how to learn from my mistakes, and their perspectives on what God asks of us.

My situation began when I volunteered to provide weekly communion to a homebound woman in her mid-fifties recovering from methamphetamine addiction. “Jean” was struggling with an autoimmune disease, had been in prison, was living in housing for the mentally ill, had no income due to her immigration status, and had a dog that hadn’t received veterinary care in years. She ate food from the food bank, had a parole officer, a county case manager, and sporadically attended a large traditional church for the previous three years.

I quickly noticed deficiencies in life – bad quality food, insufficient clothing, poor pet care – and thoughtfully began providing them. She soon began asking for other things and I complied. Over time, her requests escalated from expectations to demands to angry, insulting, and thankless demands. After fulfilling my one year commitment, I did not renew.

Four months later, she attempted to re-start our relationship. I immediately answered “No,” but felt confused and guilty. Was God testing my obedience, like with Abraham and Isaac? Doesn’t the Bible say to give to everyone who asks? I didn’t want anything to do with her, but also didn’t want to tell God “No.” In my spiritual conundrum, I reached out for help.

The people I reached out to had combined ministry experiences of over 200 years. Leaders in archaeology, churches, higher education, medicine, non-profit, and prison ministries, they represented a variety of denominational backgrounds and offered a great deal of wisdom.

WHAT MISTAKES WERE MADE?

1

WHEN IS IT OKAY TO SAY, “NO”?

2

WHERE IS THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN CHURCH AND INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY?

3



Michele Berrong lives in Flagstaff, Arizona and is pursing a Master of Divinity (MDiv) from The Bible Seminary.

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

By Michele Berrong

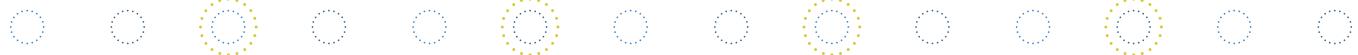
The leaders broadly agreed that the church failed in their leadership responsibility. Specifically, the church should have: 1) determined whether I had the ministry skills needed in this case; 2) facilitated clear communication – ideally via a written agreement – regarding the purpose and limitations of my visits and mutual expectation of both parties; and 3) provided ongoing ministry oversight and follow-up. They also agreed that I: 1) allowed myself to be manipulated; 2) never reached out to the church for help or training; and 3) waited far too long to set appropriate boundaries.

The leaders agreed that it is impossible to satisfy everyone's needs. Consequently, "No" is okay when: 1) individuals express unrealistic expectations; 2) resources are not reasonably or affordably available; 3) requests infringe on the rights of others, are outside the scope of established boundaries, or are beyond someone's abilities; or 4) requests place patently undue burdens on the provider(s).

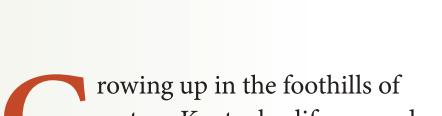
They also offered additional insights: 1) "Yes" answers given in the heat of the moment, especially in response to emotional pleas, often end up sacrificing the best interests of the minister for the interests of the person requesting assistance; 2) Out of a well-meaning desire to help, we can hinder what God is trying to do with an individual, such as ease discomfort that might otherwise provide motivation for change; and 3) Some people entrap themselves into answering "Yes" because they base their own self-worth on the approval of others. Ouch!

I received a wide range of answers to this question: 1) "It is not the church's responsibility to meet the financial needs of impoverished people;" 2) "Believers are to financially support the church, not vice-versa; and" 3) "Most destitute people refuse to accept responsibility. As people accept personal responsibility for their plight, the Spirit motivates others to help them more."

Others suggested setting boundaries such as making assistance proportional to the efforts individuals are willing to expend to help themselves; weighing whether a recipient has an attitude of gratitude; and/or determining whether an individual is trying to "game the system" through duplicative pleas for help to a variety of churches without meaningful participation at any of them.



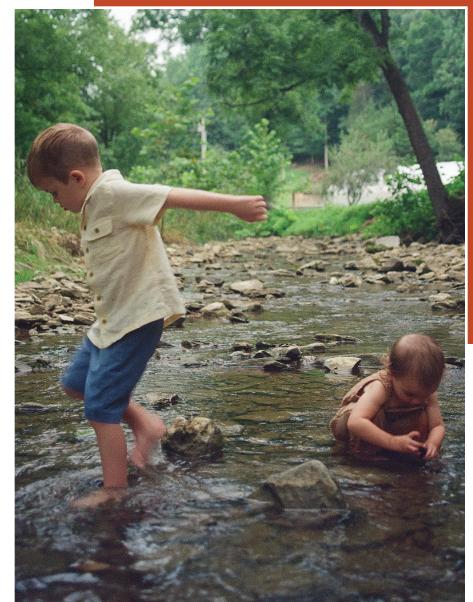
Ultimately, my experience turned out to be very instructive. First, the tools provided by the ministry leaders provided a firmer footing for exercising discernment going forward. Second, God used the process to reveal that I contributed significantly to the problem since I created and nurtured increasingly demanding expectations by "over giving" and then experienced misplaced anger without considering my own issues. Finally, I realized that I never asked God whether serving in this capacity was His will for me – I just saw the need and dove in – thereby missing a most important step: seeking the counsel of the Lord first and foremost. 



By Niki Lainhart



Niki Lainhart lives in Ravenna, Kentucky and is Master of Arts in Biblical History and Archaeology student at The Bible Seminary.



For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come. - *Mark 4:28*

”

Growing up in the foothills of eastern Kentucky, life seemed simple. I dug in the dirt, played in the neighboring creek with my cousins, and wandered our wooded hills in solace and peaceful reflection. I remain bound to the hollers and streams of my homeplace, as much as I am to the little family church where I grew up. In Appalachia, “church” was not just something we attended; it was instilled into every fiber of our being from birth.

My ancestry includes a long line of fiery, old-fashioned, Baptist preachers, and my understanding of faith was black and white. If God commanded it, you’d better heed. Most of us experience a crossroads in our faith journey where we struggle with God’s plan versus ours. Even so, He guides us step by step. Through opportunities, career, or otherwise, God

creates stepping stones for our lives. If we let Him, He will use them for His glory and our good.

Archaeology always fascinated me. But “younger me” choices meant pursuing a fast degree in the medical field to support my daughter when I found myself as a single mother. My long-time dream of pursuing an archaeological degree ended up on the shelf like an old, forgotten book. I married a wonderful man who adopted my daughter and we now have two more children. We bought our dream farm, advanced in our careers, and experienced abundant living.

On the outside, my life seemed successful, but I still felt something missing. Now, I can see how God was working, shaping, and molding me for the harvest of increase, depicted in Mark 4:28, “For the earth yields crops by itself:



first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

I cultivate a garden every year, even though my husband spent the first few years of our marriage poking fun at my “black” thumb. Determined to prove him wrong, through much trial and error, study, and struggle, my thumb appears impressively much more “green” now. We delight in the fruits of our labor and God’s majestic phases of growth. One bean seed produces dozens of vines that in turn yield a hundred bean pods.

In his book, *Scarlet Threads: How Women of Faith Can Save Their Children, Hedge in Their Families, and Help Change the Nation* (2014), Perry Stone reflects that “the blade represents the first level, the thirtyfold level; the stalk represents the sixtyfold level; and the mature fruit represents the complete hundredfold level. Once the seed reaches maturity and becomes a ripe ear, then it can be picked from the stalk and eaten, or the seeds on the ear can be used and planted for a future harvest.” The metaphor here is obvious to the seasoned

Christian. And while I knew my time for growth seemed to be reaching a turning point several years ago, my Mt. Everest pinnacle happened only recently.

Oswald Chambers asks two profound questions in his book, *My Utmost for His Highest* (1935): “Do you see your calling?” and “Are you ready to be poured out as an offering?”

I built a growing, successful medical billing company due to high demand and deeply personalized client care. As business increased and my happiness decreased, the possibility this was another stepping stone in my life led me to reflect and ask, “Was I ready to see my calling?” and “Was I ready to be poured out as an offering?” If so, perhaps God was leading me to make a career change.

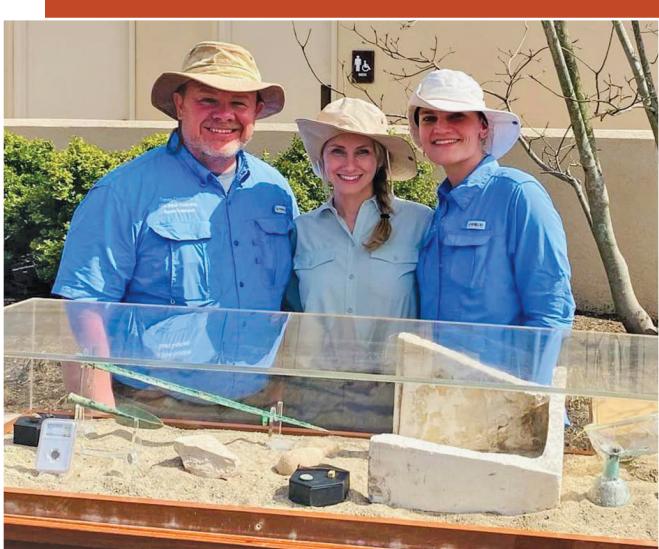
Just as Paul indicates in Galatians 1:15 (“When it pleased God, who separated me...”) that in God’s time, changes can come quickly, and boy did change come for me, seemingly out of nowhere.

In March 2023, I attended a local church event led by a student from The Bible Seminary (TBS) who serves as a square supervisor at the Tel-Shiloh excavation

in Israel. His presentation on biblical archaeology with fascinating artifacts that bore amazing evidence to Scripture inspired awe, wonder, brought me to tears, and accompanied a move of the Lord within me.

As Christians, when we experience a breakthrough in God’s time after a season of prayer and fasting, it is wonderful! For me, God spoke in such a clear way with gentle, comprehensible, and precise instructions. He wants to give us our hearts’ desires when they can be used for His glory, but we have to move when He says move, and I did.

I sold my company within a month and enrolled as a student at The Bible Seminary. One year later, thanks to God and TBS, I am growing in my Christian walk through ways I never knew possible. My student experience is an amazing journey, and I know it will continue getting even better as I continue to delve into biblical history and tap into God’s true calling for my life. In pursuing my Master of Arts in Bible History and Archaeology, God is allowing me to pull my old dream off the shelf and dust it off. This is just the beginning! 🏛



(L-R) Tommy Chamberlin, Niki Lainhart, and Corey East showcasing 1st century artifacts at the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky.



(L-R, front) Elena, Niki, and Emmylia; (back) Seth and Elias.

WHY



Since I enrolled in Greek class last fall, many friends have asked, “Why Greek?” Unlike some of my fellow students who sought to be better biblical scholars and teachers, I typically answer, “I want to be in a better position to apply for a doctoral program.” I didn’t study Greek because it was in my degree plan (it was elective), nor was I motivated to read the New Testament or Septuagint in the original language of the writers (Koine Greek is too daunting to just to have that skill “under my belt”).

The irony of any education, especially education that involves studying the Bible, is that while approaching what we originally perceive as an academic exercise, we inevitably find ourselves gaining so much more. Such is the case with me and Greek.

After one year of study, I now think that the most important reason to study Koine Greek is this passage recorded in Matthew 22:37 (cf. Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27) where Christ quotes Deuteronomy 6:5,

“ὅ δὲ ἔφη αὐτῷ, ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου.” *Matthew 22:37*

Translation, “And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”

we know this as the first and foremost commandment. So, what does it have to do with learning Greek?

Since I have grown up in the church, read the Bible in English multiple times, taught Bible studies, and taken many seminary courses, one would think I have a good understanding of the Bible and what it says. I have also believed I try to follow the commandment as best I can. Yet, learning the passage in Greek has shown me that my knowledge and obedience thus far is just the beginning.

I can currently read Greek passages of New Testament books. I still read slowly, painfully and meticulously parsing words, considering potential definitions, diagramming sentences and working through the grammar (which I was never good at in English, but have improved because of Greek), and getting a better understanding of the “voice” and intent of the writer. This “slow reading” leads me to love the Lord my God more with all my heart, soul, and mind.

HEART

I participated in a Bible study this spring as we began our second semester of Greek when we read about the woman who had bled for 12 years,

“ὅ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε. Ὕπαγε εἰς εἰρήνην καὶ ἔσθι ὑγιῆς ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγός σου.” *Mark 5:34*

Translation, “And He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction.’”
(Mark 5:34 NASB)

A key word in this passage, σέσωκέν, comes from the verb σώζω (sōzō) which has multiple choices for its meaning: save, heal, deliver, rescue. It is typically translated, “made you well.” As a female who struggled for multiple years with a microcosm of this woman’s affliction, I have a sense of what this “healing” meant to her. Christ not only healed her physically, he rescued her from the religious implications of continual bleeding, delivered her from a life of isolation and confinement, restored her ability to participate in life-giving community, and spiritually saved her through faith in him to heal, deliver, and rescue her. Thus, how can I not love the Lord my God even more fully after gaining such as deeper understanding of what this Greek word really encompasses?



Rosalie Brown lives in Magnolia, Texas, earned her Master of Arts in Church History and Theology from The Bible Seminary in 2023, has applied to the DMin program at Houston Christian University, and recently won third place in the “2024 Conference Student Paper Competition” sponsored by CBE International Conference in Denver themed, “Tell Her Story: Women in Scripture and History.”

GREEK?

By Rosalie Brown

LOVE

Consider 1 John 1,

“Ο ήν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ὁ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὁ ἐωράκαμεν τοῖς ὄφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὁ ἐθεασάμεθα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς - καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη, καὶ ἐωράκαμεν καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν καὶ ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον ἥτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἐφανερώθη ἡμῖν - ὁ ἐωράκαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ’ ἡμῶν. καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δέ ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ νιού αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. καὶ ταῦτα γράφομεν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ἡμῶν ἡ πεπληρωμένη.” *1 John 1*

Translation, “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life -- and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.” (*1 John 1 NASB*)

I enjoy visiting art museums and wandering around pondering paintings. Van Gogh is a master, and even with a rudimentary knowledge of art, many can appreciate his deft skill with oil paint on canvas. An interesting aspect of his painting style is that, even when viewed from different angles, his paintings remain the same, and yet reveal unique details more visible from different angles. His is breathtaking art and my soul rejoices in the beauty of his work.

Similarly, John painted this text in Greek so beautifully that we can see wonderful truths at first glance. But, as we explore the passage from different angles, more and more unique details emerge. When I had to slow down and consider each word, phrase, and thought and compare them to the others, God’s λόγος (word) became even more beautiful than I ever knew before. The poetic artistry is evident in English, but abundantly more so in Greek.

MIND

Without God’s gift to me of a mind, learning, understanding, and appreciating the Bible in Greek or English would be impossible! We concluded our second semester translating 2 Peter 2. Though I still feel like I’m drowning in a sea of ineptness, I am learning so much about God and his brilliance in choosing men like Peter and John to write his λόγος so that we can know him better.

Consider 2 Peter 2:20,

“εἰ γὰρ ἀποφυγόντες τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.” *2 Peter 2:20*

Translation: “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...” (*2 Peter 2:20 NASB*)

We cannot escape our “τὰ μιάσματα” (shameful deeds, or pollution of the world) and the effect on our souls and hearts without “the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” It is through our minds that we can gain “ἐπιγνώσει” (knowledge, acknowledgment, full discernment, recognition). What better way to gain knowledge of God and so love him better than by learning Koine Greek and reading the New Testament in the original language of the authors? Though my original answer to why I am studying Greek remains, I have added many other reasons. It truly is wonderful to (slowly) read the New Testament in the original language and perceive that my skills as a biblical scholar and teacher have increased dramatically. But most of all, Greek is helping me to better obey Jesus’ command to κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου. ☺

LOVE THE LORD MY GOD WITH ALL MY HEART, AND WITH ALL MY SOUL, AND WITH ALL MY MIND.

1. All Greek text is taken from Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th Edition.* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

2. All English translations are taken from the NASB.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

By Israel Steinmetz

Nearly 2,000 years ago Jesus Christ stood on trial before Pontius Pilate. Toward the end of the interrogation, Jesus told Pilate the very reason he came into the world. Pilate responded with a profound question, as recorded in John 18:37b–38a (NIV),

“...the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

- Jesus

“What is truth?”

... with this he went out again.

- Pilate

Jesus' responses to Pilate drove him to the right question. Tragically, after asking the question, Pilate turned away from the only One who could answer it. He turned away from the Truth himself (John 14:6).

Pilate's question, "What is truth?" remains as relevant two millennia later. In fact, in our increasingly "post-truth" culture, the need to know the Truth may be greater than ever. This is why The Bible Seminary has partnered with the Colson Fellows to draw Christians into a deeper relationship with the Truth and to prepare them to explain and defend the truth of the Christian worldview.

We are excited about this ongoing partnership with one of the global leaders in teaching Christian worldview and equipping Christians to fulfill the cultural mandate God gave to humanity in Genesis 1:28: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it,"

COLSON FELLOWS



The story of Chuck Colson is familiar to many. He first came to national prominence as President Nixon's special counsel, earning him the nickname of Nixon's "hatchet man" for his shrewd and ruthless political tactics. Colson was among the "Watergate Seven" and initially retired to private life to avoid accountability for his role in the scandal.

Then something happened. A friend gave Colson a copy of C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, and Colson came to faith in Christ! His life was forever changed. With the support of Christian friends, Colson decided to confess his crimes and pled guilty to obstruction of justice. He served just seven months of a 1-3 year sentence in a federal prison, but those seven months would radically alter the course of his life.

In 1976, Colson founded Prison Fellowship in fulfillment of a promise made to his fellow inmates. In the years since, Prison Fellowship has gone on to become the largest and most impactful prison ministry in the world. Prison Fellowship has positively impacted the lives of millions of incarcerated people and those impacted by crime and the justice system.

Colson's ongoing work with Prison Fellowship led to his conclusion that many of the problems represented in prison populations owed to an increasingly secular culture in which even Christians, to say nothing of non-Christians, were often ignorant of the grand narrative of Scripture and how the Bible

provided a Christian worldview. So, in 1991, Colson founded the Colson Center for Christian Worldview, aimed at teaching Christian worldview, apologetics, and cultural discipleship. Colson wanted Christians to have a biblical view of all of life, bringing the truth of Scripture to bear in every area of their life, home, community, nation, and world. Colson began the ministry as Centurions and after his death in 2012 it was renamed Colson Fellows.

More than a decade later, Colson Fellows is thriving around the world with annual cohorts of Christians who devote themselves to a 10-month intensive discipleship training program. In this program, they take a deep dive into the Christian worldview, apologetics, and cultural discipleship. Over 5,000 people have on five continents have completed the program with over 1,500 men and women now enrolling as Colson Fellows in Training each year.

Through readings, webinars, and monthly meetings, Colson Fellows in Training engage some of the most profound and perplexing challenges faced by Christianity in the increasingly secular Western world. When they complete the program and become Colson Fellows, they are commissioned to take what they've learned into the world to join God's mission of redemption and restoration. The path they take is as varied as the people who complete Colson Fellows, demonstrating the full range of gifts and callings in the Body of Christ.

HOSPITALITY & PARTNERSHIP



Over the past five years, The Bible Seminary opened its doors for the monthly meetings of the local chapter. Over 100 people in the Katy/West Houston area completed the Colson Fellows program during that time.

During the 2022–2023 cohort, two students of The Bible Seminary went through Colson Fellows and were amazed at the depth and rigor of the material. In conversation with them, The Bible Seminary decided to partner with Colson Fellows and offer graduate credit to Colson Fellows in Training who completed additional work with us.

The 2023–2024 Colson Fellows class graduated June, 2024. Five of them took advantage of earning credits with The Bible Seminary. Some earned 3 credits for Introduction to Apologetics while some earned an additional 3 Elective credits as well. We look forward to continuing partnership with Colson Fellows in the years to come. We hope many more Colson Fellows in Training will take advantage of this opportunity to deepen their experience and leverage their investment of time and work.

Moving forward, graduates of Colson Fellows may transfer 6 credit hours into any degree program at The Bible Seminary, without any additional requirements.

COLSON FELLOWS IN TRAINING CAN LOOK FORWARD TO THE FOLLOWING:

- » Discover how to share your faith and defend your beliefs with confidence, humility, and love.
- » Read 8–12 books addressing key issues of worldview, apologetics, and cultural discipleship.
- » Watch 20–30 hours of videos covering Christian worldview, controversial social issues, methods for discussing truth with non-Christians, and introductions to every book of the Bible.
- » Receive a daily news briefing from a Christian worldview perspective.
- » Complete a daily devotional focusing on the biblical themes of Creation, Call, Redemption, and Restoration.
- » Meet monthly with a group of Colson Fellows in Training to discuss and apply the material.
- » Develop short and long-term plans to utilize their specific giftings to join God's redemptive and restorative mission in the world.

JESUS IS THE TRUTH



After asking, “What is truth?” Pontius Pilate turned away from Jesus, never hearing the answer. The answer is, Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). As Christians, we are committed to following his ways, believing his truths, and living his abundant and eternal life. In partnership with Colson Fellows, The Bible Seminary is thrilled to help Christians continue in this commitment.

Join us as we explore the deep truths of Christianity and answer the deepest longings of our culture. A “post-truth” culture is also a “pre-truth” culture. The harvest is ripe for our secular world to hear the truth of Jesus Christ and to have that truth explained and defended with passion, wisdom, and grace.

Come learn
to **SPEAK THE**
TRUTH in love
with us!



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Dr. Israel Steinmetz serves as Academic Dean of The Bible Seminary and may be reached at Israel.Steinmetz@TheBibleSeminary.edu. For more information about the TBS/Colson Fellows partnership, visit TheBibleSeminary.edu/cfp.

For information on the partnership between Colson Fellows and The Bible Seminary, visit

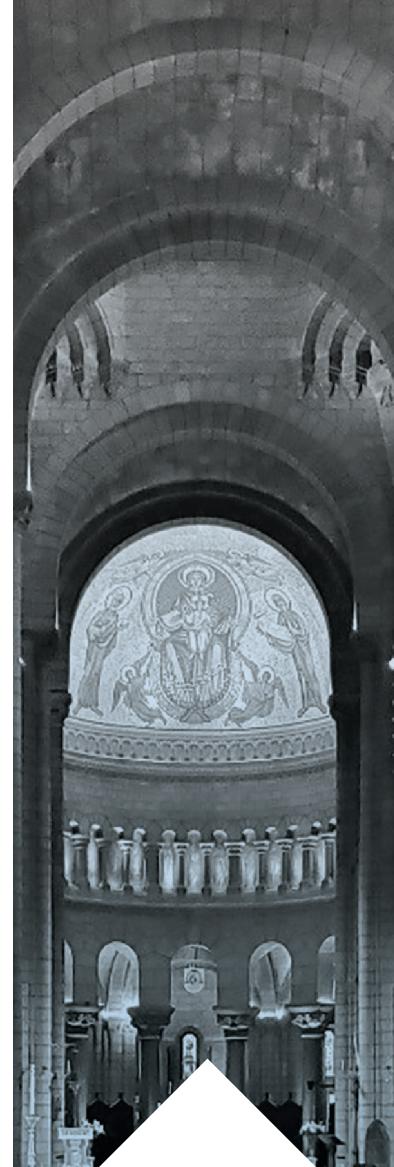
<https://www.thebibleseminary.edu/cfp>



AMALFI



BARCELONA



MONACO



SALONA

MEDITERRANEAN COAST CHURCHES

By Rick McCalip



Rick McCalip lives in Katy, Texas and serves as Vice-President of Finance and Administration for The Bible Seminary.

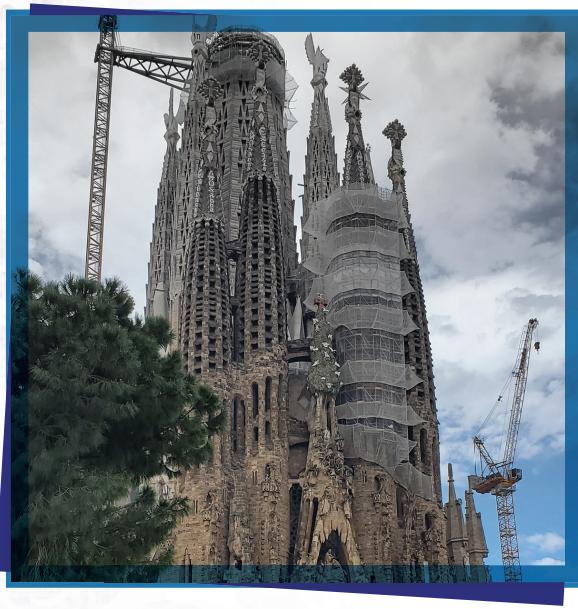
When Elaine and I travel, our Christian beliefs are affirmed in the beauty of God's masterful creation. We marvel at mountains, clear vistas, lakes and seas, animals, and flowers. We are encouraged by the energy, commitment, and tenacity of humankind all around the world.

We recently cruised the northern Mediterranean coast. Venice, Croatia, Corfu, Rome, the Amalfi Coast, Monaco, Marseille, and Barcelona all have long, interesting histories and most host beautiful, ornate church buildings. Many have been destroyed and rebuilt, some several times over, due to conquests, earthquakes, and fires. While some remain only as ancient artifacts, many are filled with frescoes, paintings, sculptures, stained glass, pipe organs, and beautiful, elaborate altars. Most were or are Roman Catholic, and include prayer altars, monuments to historic people, and even graves beneath the floors of worship areas (which feels strange to those of us taught not to walk on graves).

AMALFI



BARCELONA

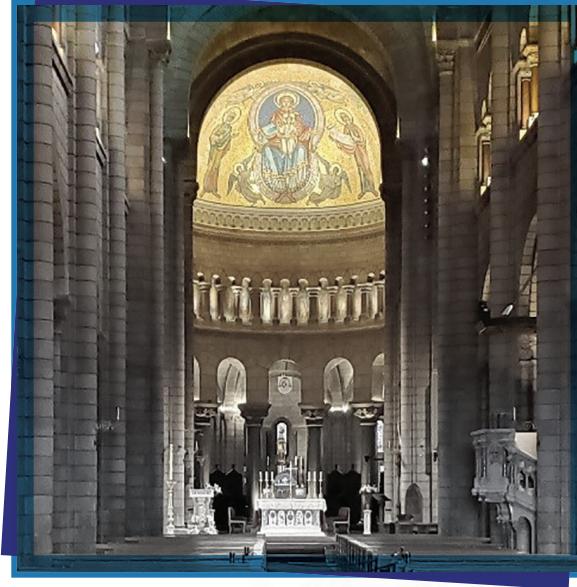


Amalfi | The Amalfi Cathedral towers at the center of Amalfi, Italy. Originally constructed in the 9th and 10th centuries AD with major façade reconstruction in the late 19th century, the facility is open to tourists most every day, even during Catholic mass. Filled with artwork and sculptures, the historic cathedral connects to a large building labeled “Sacrum Seminarium” (sacred seminary), although I found no evidence it was used for education.

Barcelona | The Sagrada Familia (“sacred family”) basilica in Barcelona, Spain has been under massive construction for 140 years. While locals predict the tallest tower, dedicated to Jesus, will be completed by 2026, the basilica will eventually include 17 separate towers: 12 for the original disciples, 4 for the gospel

authors, and the remaining tower for Jesus. The designer and architect, Antoni Gaudi, reflects his great appreciation for God’s creation and nature in his designs. Support posts often resemble trees and the building orientation incorporates natural light. The general cathedral “cross” design has three exterior “ends” with sculptures on the northeast depicting the birth of Jesus, on the northwest celebrating the Virgin Mary, and on the southwest the crucifixion of Jesus. The southeast end will eventually offer a virtual display of the resurrection of Jesus and depiction of heaven. While the interior is breathtakingly beautiful and used actively for mass, the basilica is primarily open to tourists and admission tickets provide financing for continuing construction. During our visit, many parishioners were actively praying in a private basement chapel where Gaudi was entombed after his death in 1926.

MONACO



SALONA



Monaco | Dedicated to the Virgin Mary, construction on the Cathedral of Monaco began 1875 at the site of the first parish church in Monaco dating to the 13th century AD. Catholic mass is held on Sundays and special holidays. The beautiful interior includes a prayer altar, an ornate main altar, and the grave of Princess Grace (Kelly) of Monaco.

Salona | An ancient city near Split, Croatia established in the 3rd century BC as a Roman center of commerce, Salona’s remains include a basilica, amphitheater, and an impressive cemetery filled with sarcophagi of Christian martyrs. The city was mostly destroyed in the 7th century AD after battles with invading armies, however a Roman-era brick baptistry built in the shape of the cross survives amidst the ongoing excavations.

Reflections | We were inspired by the activity surrounding these beautiful churches and cathedrals. At Corfu, Greece on Easter Sunday, we observed beautifully dressed families worshipping, choirs singing, traditional “philharmonics” (bands) marching through city streets playing happy music, and family gatherings celebrating traditional meals together.

However, many of the historic buildings no longer serve as churches, but rather bookstores, museums, or galleries and tourist attractions. Even those conducting regular worship/mass show little evidence of vibrant activities with children and youth, except for the occasional church parochial school.

WHY? IS THIS OUR FUTURE?

HOW MIGHT ONE STEM THE TIDE OF CHURCH DECAY AND DEMISE
REGARDLESS OF LOCATION OR HISTORY?



The Church

The grand nature of so many church buildings – past, present, and still under construction – suggests a constant, overwhelming risk of honoring buildings more than cultivating an ongoing, living faith that honors a living God. While God instructed Moses to construct an ornate tabernacle in the wilderness and later sanctioned David's desire and Solomon's work to build a majestic temple in Jerusalem, Jesus warned his disciples when they praised Herod's impressive temple complex. Majestic, ornate facilities can express thanksgiving, honor God through creative beauty, and provide avenues for disciples to employ their God-given gifts. However, ultimate honor must be directed to the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, not the works of human hands. Church is NOT a building. Facilities accommodate and provide locations for church activities, but the real church consists of disciples of Jesus Christ who serve the Lord and others through their prayers, presence, gifts, and service.

The Holy Bible

The Bible is not an object to worship on a gold-plated lectern, but a collection that chronicles the works of God throughout ancient history and reveals the Holy One, the Messiah, the Living Word of God. Bibles should be read, accurately interpreted, taught, and used for encouragement, reinforcement, and affirmation. According to Nehemiah 8:8 (NLT), the Levites “read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage.” Christian leaders should do just that. By giving people full doses of biblical truth whenever and wherever the church gathers, individual faith will blossom and fruit will be born for generations to come.

Children and Youth

Worship, teaching, and church activities should fully incorporate children and youth. Beyond offering spiritual nurture to adults, children need to be raised from infancy and surrounded by faithful disciples who teach, train, explain, and share the irrefutable truths and power of God together. Children need to know who they are and whose they are. While parents are primarily responsible for the care and teaching of their children, the church must serve as a dependable family resource of Christian support and fellowship.

Evil and Temptation

Evil turns doubt into mistrust, truth into lies, and togetherness into division. Churches divide over issues like modes of baptism, communion rules, worship methods, and seating arrangements. Evil uses such things to bring destruction. Our clergy, church leaders, and all Christians need to watch carefully for evidence of evil at work and pray earnestly for truth and the Holy Spirit to bring resolution to disagreements. We are all sinners, including priests, pastors, bishops, and high church officials. Fancy garments and pointy hats cannot prevent the same temptations that plague us all. While the historic church hierarchy has often attempted to intermediate between people and God, Jesus is our only needed intermediary. Jesus told (Thomas), “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me,” (John 14:6, NLT). When human intermediaries succumb to temptation, those who depend on them are often devastated, disillusioned, and feel betrayed. We need to seek God in all we do, be real, and teach and support each other in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24, NIV).

Implications | Our trip reinforced the eternal value of enterprises like The Bible Seminary. We have seen locally and internationally the power of evil to exploit, damage, disrupt, and destroy churches, denominations, and Christian institutions. Ancient and near history reveal the constant effects of evil. However, there are churches and ministries committed to biblical truth. There are educational institutions that teach the Holy Bible and train vocational ministry leaders in ways to lead others to know God, trust Jesus, and recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. We all need to find and support people, churches, and organizations that preach and teach the Good News, stand firm on the majesty of Jesus, and help defend against the power of evil. We pray for the continuance of the Great Commission in our local communities and worldwide. May all honor and glory be to God. ☩



THE BIBLE SEMINARY

Faculty » UPDATES «



Dr. Craig A. Evans,

Distinguished Research Professor and Graduate Programs Director

The Bible Seminary is pleased to announce that Dr. Craig Evans is scheduled to join TBS full-time in January 2025 as Distinguished Research Professor and Director of Master of Arts in Biblical History and Archaeology (MABHA) and Master of Arts in Biblical Languages and Culture (MABLC) Graduate Programs.

A well-known evangelical scholar, an elected member of the prestigious Society of New Testament Studies, and Director of the Christian Thinkers Society Fellows Program and Strategic Studies, Dr. Evans currently serves as the John Bisagno Distinguished Professor of Christian Origins at Houston Christian University. He earned a B.A. (1974) from Claremont McKenna College, an M.Div. (1977) from Western Baptist Seminary, an M.A. (1980) and the Ph.D. (1983) from Claremont Graduate University, and a D. Habil. (2009) from Karoli Gaspar Reformatus University in Budapest.

After teaching one year at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, Evans taught at Trinity Western University in British Columbia for twenty-one years, where he directed the graduate program in Biblical Studies and founded the Dead Sea Scrolls Institute. Evans then taught for thirteen years at the Divinity College at Acadia University in Nova Scotia. He was also a Visiting Fellow at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey.

Author and editor of more than seventy books and hundreds of articles and reviews, Professor Evans has given lectures at Cambridge, Oxford, Durham, Yale, and other universities, colleges, seminaries, and museums, such as the Field Museum in Chicago, the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. He is a Fox News Opinion contributor and also regularly lectures and gives talks at popular conferences and retreats on the historical Jesus, Archaeology, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Bible. Along with countless interviews on radio networks across Canada and the US, Evans has been seen on Dateline NBC, CBC, CTV, Day of Discovery, and many documentaries aired on BBC, The Discovery Channel, History Channel, History Television, and others. He has also served as a consultant for the National Geographic Society and for The Bible miniseries, produced by Mark Burnett and Roma Downey.

He and his wife, Ginny, recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and have two daughters and two grandchildren.



Dr. Melissa Davis

Adjunct Professor

Passionate about equipping men and women to be able to interpret and apply God's living Word in their lives and ministries, Dr. Davis has served in church and parachurch ministries for over 15 years in Canada, the United States, and overseas. She has served as an Associate Pastor, Pastor of Discipleship, director of Adult Education, Elder, and worship team member. Since 2017, she's worked alongside several ministries in East Africa to train and equip pastors and church leaders in the areas of the Bible, theology, discipleship, and spiritual formation. She earned a B.A. in History and German (2002) and an M.A. in German and History (2002) from Wilfrid Laurier University; an M.Div. in Theology, Church Planting, and Cross-Cultural Ministry (2007) from Mennonite Brethren Seminary – Trinity Western Seminary; and a Ph.D. in Renewal Theology in Christian Systematic Theology (2023) from Regent University.

She and her husband, Mac, live in Virginia Beach with their German Shepherd, Tori. They are puppy raisers with Blue Path Service Dogs, an organization that raises, trains, and places service dogs with children with an autism diagnosis.



Dr. Jeremiah Johnston

Adjunct Professor

A New Testament scholar, pastor, author, nationally syndicated radio host, Bible teacher, and apologist, Dr. Johnston ministers internationally as president of Christian Thinkers Society. He also serves as pastor of apologetics and cultural engagement at Prestonwood Baptist Church and dean of spiritual development at Prestonwood Christian Academy. Jeremiah's passion is working with churches and pastors in equipping Christians to give intellectually informed reasons for what they believe. Driven by the Great Commandment, Jeremiah's calling and the mission of Christian Thinkers Society is to equip Christians to love God with all their hearts and minds. He is a popular speaker who has authored articles in both popular magazines and scholarly books, journals, and media programs. He has been interviewed and contributed across a spectrum of national shows, including: Fox News, Publishers Weekly, CNN, CBS This Morning, Vanity Fair, Premier Christianity magazine and Premier radio, RELEVANT magazine, DECISION magazine, the Christian Post, the Moody Radio Network, and the Salem Radio Network.

He earned a B.A. in Biblical Studies (2006) from Midwestern Baptist College, an M.Div. (2009) from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and M.A. in New Testament History (2011) from Acadia University, was a visiting Ph.D. Research Scholar (2011) at Yale Divinity School, and earned a Ph.D. in New Testament (2012) from Middlesex University.

Jeremiah is married to Audrey, and they are parents to five children—Lily Faith, Justin, and the triplets: Abel, Ryder, and Jaxson.



Dr. Pat Ryan

Adjunct Professor

An ordained minister of Word and Sacrament in the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO), Dr. Pat Ryan has served as Assistant Pastor at Windwood Presbyterian Church in Houston, Texas since 2006 and now serves full-time as the Founder and Executive Director of A Future and a Hope Ministries, a Texas non-profit organization that leads a team of Lay Counseling Minister volunteers at Windwood. She earned a Diploma of RN Education (1984) from the U.S. Army, a B.A. (2000) from Bethel University, an M.Div. (2004) from Bethel Theological Seminary, a Chaplain Residency (2005) from the University of Texas/M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, and a D.Min. in Marriage, Family, and Individual Counseling (2015) from Fuller Theological Seminary. She has served in the US Army Nurse Corps and was ordained to a chaplain residency for the University of Texas/M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

Pat and her husband, Tom, have two married adult children, Debbie and Michael, and seven grandchildren.



2023-2024

FINANCIAL REPORT

For fiscal year June 1, 2023 through May 31, 2024

TBS Tuition Income



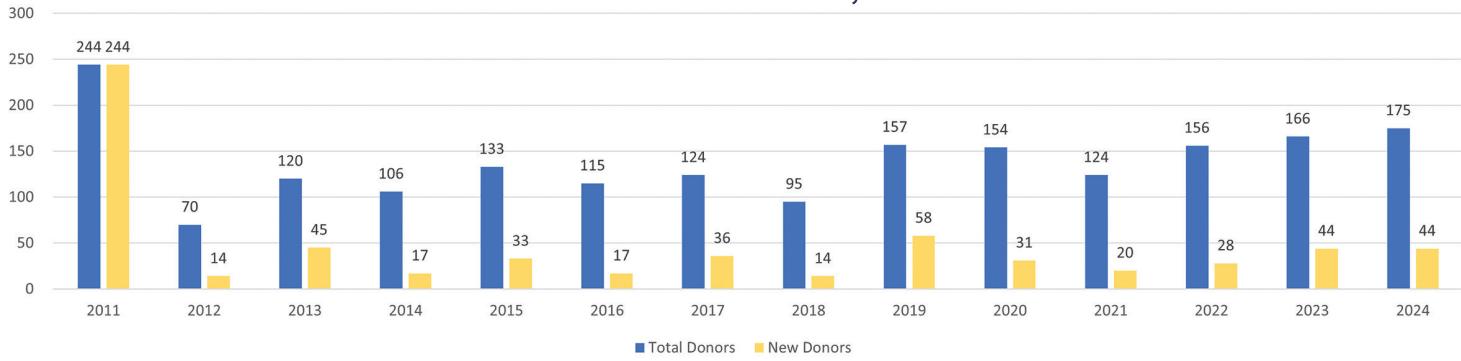
Income from tuition and fees reached the highest level ever. Historical average is 17% of all income and this past year funded 19% of all expenses. The tuition rate increase from \$375 to \$395 (5%) per credit hour for 2024-25 is still significantly less than the 2023-24 comparative average of \$635 per credit hour charged by approximately 25 other seminaries nationwide. Among those, tuition and fees tend to fund 20-40% of their budgets on average, with outliers that range from 5% (a denominational funded school) to over 100% (one university makes money through their enormous online enrollment).

TBS Donation Income



Donation income reached the highest level since launch. Historical average is 16% increase year over year, with eleven of the past thirteen years contributing to a positive overall trend. The significant 2021-22 \$308,000 shortfall is the reserve amount we have been working to replenish.

TBS Number of Donors, 2011-24 FYE



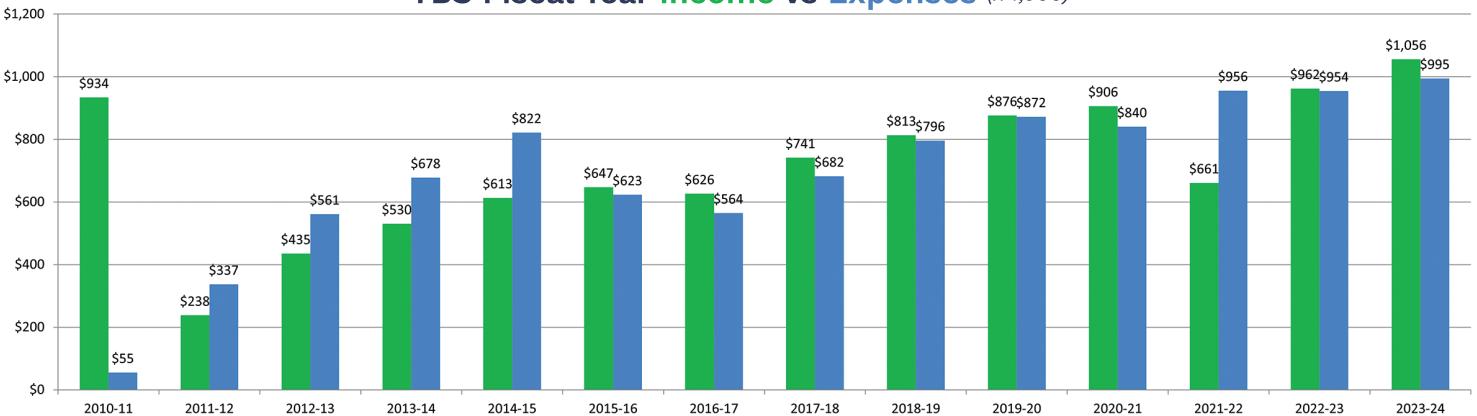
Donors totaled 175, the highest since launch, and included 44 new donors. Donors also included 107 previous year donors, 61 who provide monthly support, and 8 who have historically supported TBS every year. Individual/family donation totals ranged from \$10 to nearly \$130,000 with forms of support including cash, checks, online donations, and gifts of stock.

TBS Total Fiscal Year End Income



Total income reached the highest level ever. Other than the obvious and significant decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic, eleven of the past thirteen years have contributed to a positive overall trend.

TBS Fiscal Year Income vs Expenses (x 1,000)



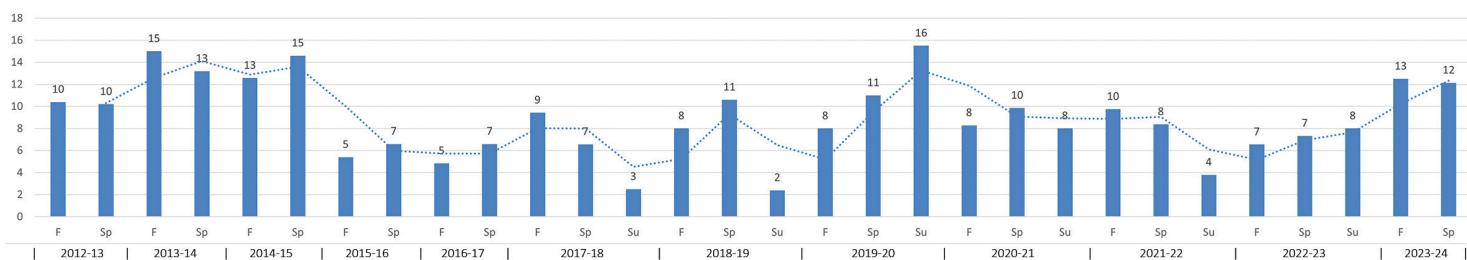
After launch in 2010-11 and four building years spanning 2011-2015 where expenses exceeded income, income has exceeded expenses during 8 of the past 9 years.

Exhibiting financial stability, health, and growth are key metrics for ongoing accreditation by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) and annual distance education approval by the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA). Evidence of continuous and increasing donor support, as well as increasing numbers of students paying to attend courses and seminars, is very exciting and bolsters confidence in future health and growth. 🇺🇸



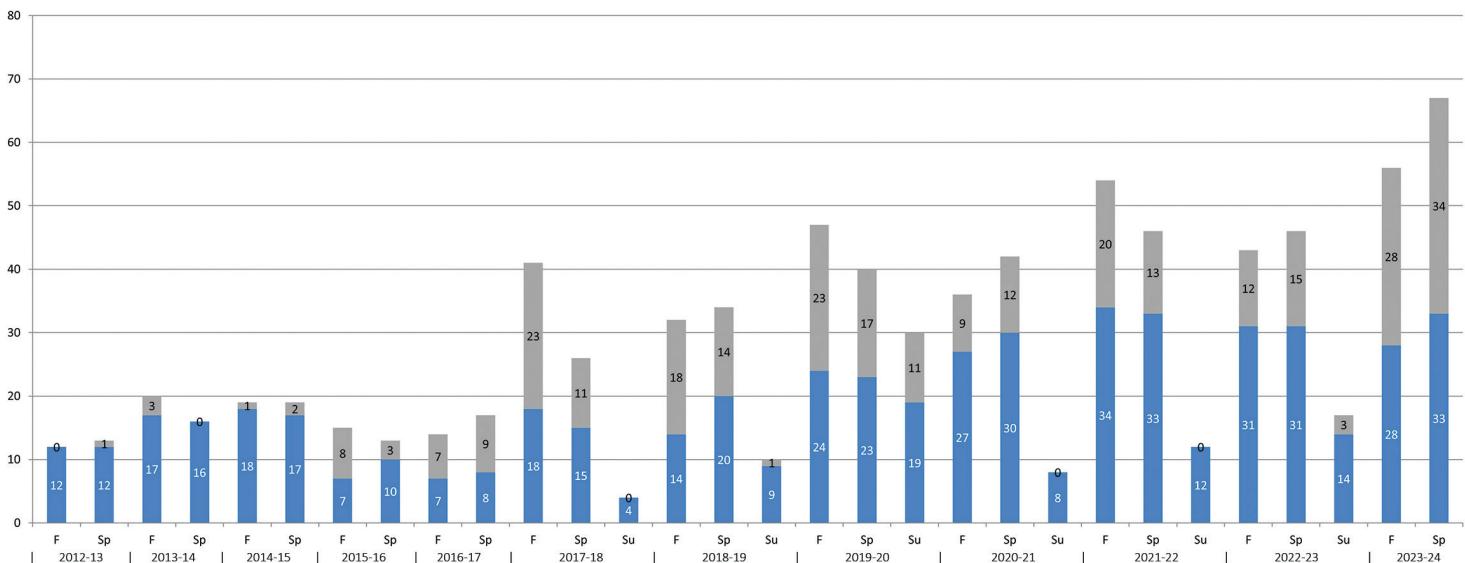
2023-2024 ENROLLMENT REPORT

Average Students Per Grad Class, Fall 2012 - Spring 2024



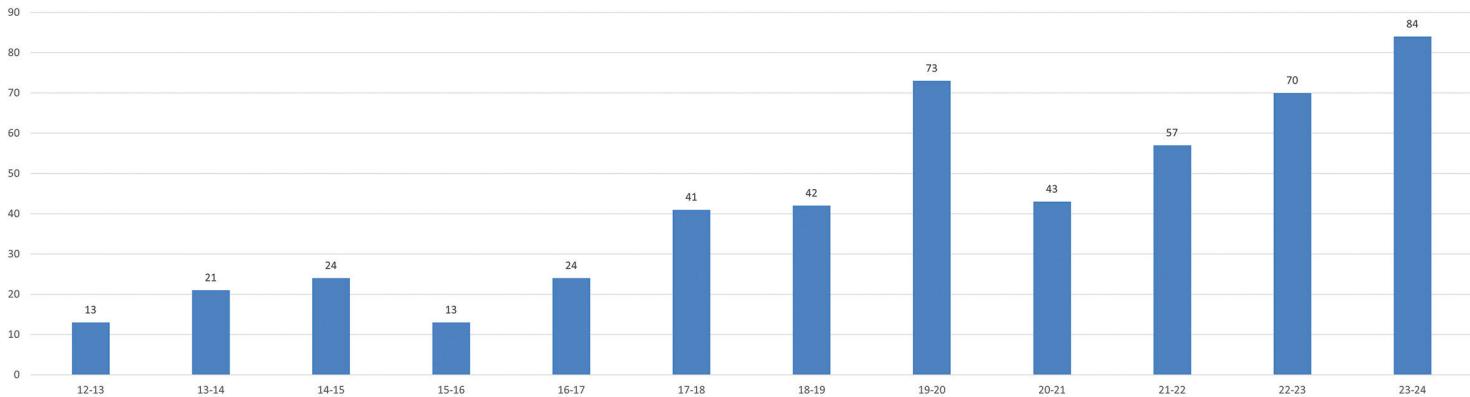
Enrollment per graduate class averaged 13 and 12 during fall (F) and spring (Sp) semesters this past academic year and evidenced an average increasing trend. Summer (Su) semesters tend to have fewer students, although COVID-19 was our largest average per class enrollment (probably because we taught class outside and people had been quarantining inside for months). The strong 2012 - 15 enrollment reflects the committed group of full-time students who helped launch TBS.

TBS Enrollment Per Semester



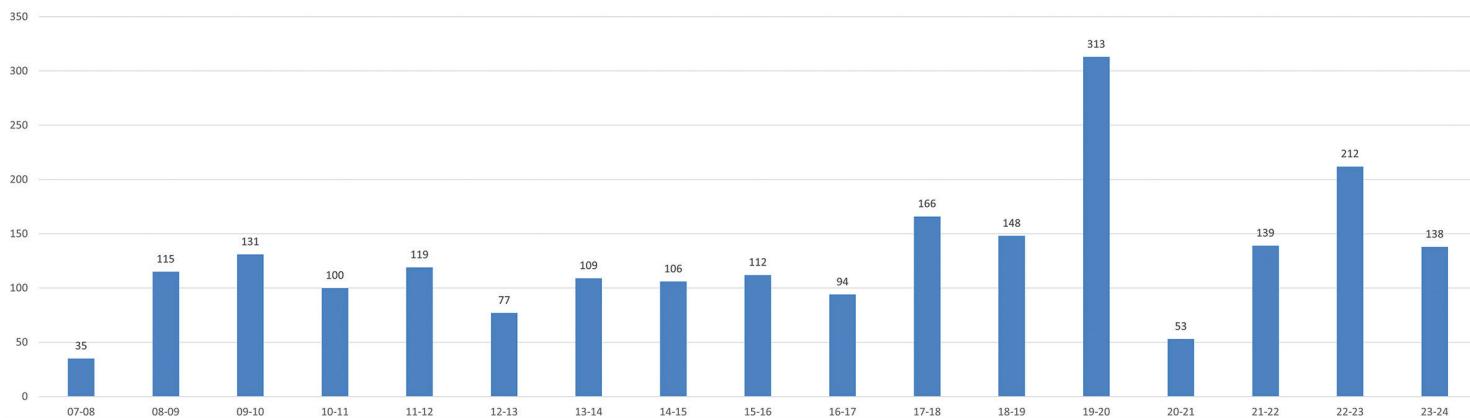
Graduate enrollment during spring semester reached an all-time high. While degree students (MA and MDiv, the blue bars) form a strong core, increasing numbers of non-degree students (Certificate and audit students, the gray bars) take courses, with quite a few eventually converting to degree students.

Individuals Enrolled in Grad Classes Per Year



Total enrollment in grad classes per academic year reached an all-time high of 84 during the 2023-24. Following a significant drop due to the COVID-19 pandemic (41% between 2019-20 and 2020-21), enrollment shows a strong average trending increase over the past four years (25% per year).

Total Individuals Enrolled



Total individuals enrolled includes non-degree audit and certificate students as well as seminar attendees. The large enrollment in 2019-20 shows our roaring growth and success in teaching certificate classes in numerous locations prior to COVID-19 shutting all that down. We pivoted and began offering seminars regularly in 2021 which contributed to the recent trend in annual growth (we have an upcoming seminar in August that is not yet reflected in the 2023-24 column).



For academic year 2023-24



The seminary offers courses live in-person, live online (synchronous distance education), and recorded online (asynchronous distance education). Most courses are offered at the main campus in Katy, Texas, three are offered annually in Israel as part of the Tel Shiloh excavations, and some churches host seminars. Online students live across the U.S. and Canada, as well as Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, India, the Middle East, and South America. 



2024 FACULTY OF THE YEAR

»» Dr. Israel Steinmetz ««



Each year TBS recognizes a faculty member who has demonstrated instructional and pedagogical excellence to empower students to fulfill the Great Commission. Past winners include Rich Cozart (2020), Ryan Lokkesmoe (2021), Israel Loken (2022), and Ralph Neighbour (2023). This year's winner is Israel Steinmetz. Dr. Steinmetz joined the TBS full-time faculty in July 2022 as Associate Professor of Practical Theology. Since then, he has taught certificate and graduate-level courses in Apologetics (APO 501), Bible Study Methods (BSM 501), Capstone (CAP 590), Pastor-Leader I (PAS 511), Pastor-Leader II (PAS 512), Spiritual Formation & Ministry/Bible Panorama (SFM 500), Spiritual Formation & Ministry I (SFM 501), Theology III (THE 503), and ELE 502. In addition to his teaching duties, Dr. Steinmetz serves as Academic Dean, advises students in several TBS programs, and leads the Faculty Association.

Dr. Steinmetz earned a Bachelor of Pastor Ministry (2003) from Christ for the Nations Institute, Master of Divinity

(2006) from Regent University, a second Master of Theological Studies (2012) from Nazarene Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry (2021) from Fuller Theological Seminary. He plans to begin PhD studies from Bangor University Wales this fall.

Israel and his wife, Anna, celebrate 22 years of marriage this year and have nine children ranging from 20 to 1 years old. Prior to joining the TBS faculty, he served as a Civilian Chaplain with the U.S. Navy; Team Lead and Researcher for Docent Research Group; as Co-Director, Academic Dean, and Faculty of Artios Christian College; and Co-Director, Dean of Academic Affairs, and Curriculum Development Specialist/Instructor for LifeSpring School of Ministry. He previously pastored New Hope Church of God in San Antonio, Texas and Kansas City Church of God in Kansas City, Missouri, and served as a church administrator at Centerpoint Community Church in Chesapeake, Virginia.

"Dr Steinmetz has a depth of knowledge across historical and modern theological

“Dr. Steinmetz is the kind of professor everyone wants. He addresses any questions or concerns about assignments and shows the kind of grace and mercy that makes me yearn to go out and do the same.

- MABHA STUDENT

Ryan Wood

thought," observes MACTH student Dan Lawless. "At the same time, he really cares for his students. It is not uncommon for him to stop class to pray for a student who is going through a difficult time."

"Dr. Steinmetz is the kind of professor everyone wants," explains MABHA student Ryan Wood. "He addresses any questions or concerns about assignments and shows the kind of grace and mercy that makes me yearn to go out and do the same."

Alumna Cassia Glass speaks for many TBS students, noting, "Dr. Steinmetz helped me move from being a student who writes research papers to a researcher who writes from what she has discovered. I have thrived under his teaching and coaching because he cares as much about his students' spiritual formation and calling as he does about the course content."

Congratulations Dr. Israel Steinmetz for his selection as the 2024 Faculty of the Year. Thank you for all you do to equip TBS students to impact multitudes of souls for Christ and help fulfill the Great Commission by the power of God's Spirit! 



THE BIBLE SEMINARY

3 J MUSEUM *on the Road*

By Allison Taylor



The **3J Museum**
will return to the
Merrell Center

for the . . .

2ND ANNUAL
KATY
COMMUNITY
EXPO

scheduled for

SATURDAY SUNDAY
AUG 24 & AUG 25

2024

For more
information, visit

While thousands of TBS campus visitors have enjoyed the Joshua, Judges, and Jesus (3J) Museum over the past two years, others have enjoyed museum displays off campus, too. In November 2023, a combined TBS and NEAS (Near East Archaeological Society) booth at the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) conference in San Antonio, Texas included select 3J museum artifacts on display. The museum regularly loans artifacts to churches for on-site displays and Dr. Stripling often displays items in conjunction with his speaking engagements.

In August 2023, TBS relocated nearly every museum exhibit to the Katy ISD Leonard E. Merrell Center for the 1st Annual Katy Community Expo hosted by the Katy Christian Chamber of Commerce (KCCC). Open to the public with complimentary admission and activities for all ages.

the event hosted a large variety of local businesses (ranging from small proprietors to major retailers), healthcare, home improvement specialists, non-profits, restaurants, schools, and more.

“The Katy Community Expo is an event designed for families and residents of the greater Katy area to connect and be ‘in the know’ about their community,” noted Erica Scardino, Expo coordinator and co-founder of the KCCC. “Many of us reside in the Katy area but have little knowledge as to what is available to us in our own backyard.”

Of the 10,000 visitors who attended the weekend expo, more than 2,000 toured the 3J Museum exhibits. Students, faculty and staff helped guide visitors and offer insights to the biblical eras of Joshua, Judges, and Jesus, as well as introduce visitors to The Bible Seminary. 



HOMEFORTHEHOLIDAYSGIFTMARKET.COM/COMMUNITY-EXPO-KATY



THE BIBLE SEMINARY



Van Huss and Leavitt Wed

Clayton Van Huss (MABHA 2024) and Abigail Leavitt (BACS 2021, MABHA 2021) were married just after sunrise at Tel Shiloh, Israel on Friday, June 14, 2024, the last morning of the 2024 excavation season. They met as students studying Biblical History and Archaeology at TBS, worked together on the Tel Shiloh excavations for several years, and worked consecutively as Student Service Coordinators for TBS.

Dr. Gary Byers, Co-Director and Senior Archaeologist of the Shiloh Excavations, performed the ceremony. Along with on-site attendees, others from around the world watched the service online via YouTube livestream. The happy couple toured the U.S. in July and enjoyed receptions hosted by family and friends in Idaho, Tennessee, and Texas. While continuing to maintain an active presence in Israel, they plan to make their home in Johnson City, Tennessee.

Clayton serves as Director of Affirm at Southwest Radio Ministries (SWRC), the oldest continuously running Gospel-based radio broadcast in the country. Follow Clayton at Claytonvanhuss.com. Abigail has been living in Jerusalem while pursuing a PhD at Ariel University in Ariel, Israel. She serves as Assistant Dig Director at Tel Shiloh and has enjoyed gaining increasingly extensive experience in excavations and exploration all over the country. Follow her blog and photos at AbigailsArchaeologicalAdventures.wordpress.com.

Follow  CLAYTON 
Follow  ABIGAIL 

CLAYTONVANHUSS.COM

[ABIGAILSARCHAEOLOGICAL
ADVENTURES.WORDPRESS.COM](http://ABIGAILSARCHAEOLOGICALADVENTURES.WORDPRESS.COM)



Brown Accepted into Doctoral Program

Congratulations to Rosalie Brown (MACHT 2023) for her acceptance into the Faith and Culture track of the Doctor of Ministry program at Houston Christian University. She joins two alumni who have already completed doctoral studies – Kevin Alvarez (MDiv 2017), who earned his D.Min. in Church Revitalization (2023) from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Brenda Martin (MDiv 2015), who earned her D.Min. (2021) from The King's University – and three other alumni who are currently enrolled in doctoral programs: Jordan McClinton (MABHA 2022) and Gary Urie (MABHA 2022), who are both pursuing doctorates in Biblical History and Archaeology at Veritas International University; and Abigail Leavitt Van Huss (BACS 2021, MABHA 2021), who is pursuing a Ph.D. at Ariel University in Israel.

Congratulations!

Family Updates

2024-2025 Student Government Association (SGA) Board



Meredith Ridenour President

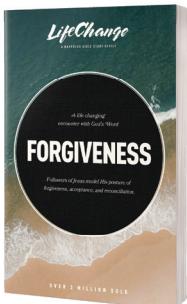
Ryan Wood Vice-President

Rebekah Yi Secretary/Treasurer

Rebecca Morgan Chaplain

Anita Murillo Activities Director

Jenny Ward Virtual Liaison



**Glass
Launches
New Book**

TBS alumna Cassia Glass (MACHT 2024) launched her second Bible study book on June 18th. *Forgiveness*, part of the LifeChange Bible study series published by NavPress, guides small groups or individuals through the topic in both the Old and New Testaments and helps them grasp the character of God as One who forgives and the power He has given us to forgive others.

Cassia says, "I drew heavily on my TBS training in Bible Study Methods and in all 66 books of the Bible to create discussion questions and contextual sidebars that help small groups unpack the Scripture passages. I also used what I've learned from my professors about spiritual formation and pastoral care to help readers move from an intellectual exercise in Bible study to a soul-level engagement with the Holy Spirit as they consider how they can receive Christ's forgiveness and then release wrongs and restore relationships themselves."

Cassia also included archeological research from The Bible Seminary's Provost, Dr. Scott Stripling, for "Session Six: The Response of the Forgiven." Dr. Stripling has analyzed first-century AD tear bottles, like those found in the seminary's 3J Museum, and offered Cassia cultural context for Luke 7:39-50 where a woman washes Jesus' feet with her tears. Cassia crafted a study aid sidebar to present this information in *Forgiveness*, p. 55:

Excavations of the first-century (AD) sites in Israel have revealed the popularity of lachrymatories, or glass tear bottles, in Hellenistic culture. According to archaeologist Scott Stripling, it is possible that in addition to washing Jesus' feet with the tears falling from her eyes, the woman in this passage may have been emptying her tear bottle onto His feet before anointing them with costly perfume. The lachrymatory was where one saved tears as remembrances of the ups and downs of life, and often a woman would present those tears to her husband upon their marriage, symbolizing her trust in him and their new shared life. Stripling also notes that the loosening of the woman's hair to wipe Jesus' feet meant that her hair was now down in the style of a married woman, another powerful symbol of her total devotion to the One who had saved and forgiven her.

..... **FORGIVENESS** IS AVAILABLE AT

Barnes and Noble • Christianbook.com • Amazon.com • NavPress.com



2024 GRADUATES



Brent Hoebling

Master of Arts in Biblical History and Archaeology (MABHA)

Brent and his wife Mary reside in Texarkana, Texas. He is the proud father of MyLisa and Jordan, and grandfather to AdahLisa and Jordan. Brent has served as Pastor of the Wake Village Church of God, a ministry of the Church of God of Prophecy in Texarkana, Texas, since August 2013. He joined the Church of God of Prophecy (COGOP) in 2005 and became a licensed, ordained minister in 2009. He has actively ministered in many capacities in COGOP since 2001 and served in general ministry for over 40 years. A bi-vocational pastor, Brent also works in IT support at Community HealthCore, a nonprofit company serving the mental, emotional, and behavior health services sector.

Brent received a Bachelor of Theology (1999) and a dual Master of Arts in Christian Education and Technology (2002 Summa Cum Laude) from Shalom Bible College and Seminary in Des Moines, Iowa. He earned his teacher's certificate in the COGOP in 2007.

“I love the flexibility of being remote and asynchronous,” Brent recalls about his experience studying at TBS, “although my best memories are when I could take classes synchronously with the rest of the students.”

Following graduation, Brent plans to continue in his current placements while also ready to follow and obey wherever the Lord leads with hopes this includes a local museum showcasing his legally acquired archaeological antiquities for others to enjoy and learn biblical history. He asserts that TBS has unequivocally helped equip him to serve more effectively in his pastoral role as an apologist, minister, writer, and Christian witness. He plans to continue his TBS involvement, especially in archaeological-related activities, and notes (in his best Arnold Schwarzenegger voice), “Ahhhhhlll bee Bach!”



Richard James

Master of Arts in Church History and Theology (MACHT)

Richard lives in Katy, Texas where he and his wife of 34 years, Becky, raised their daughters, Brooke and Jordan. He earned a Bachelor of Finance and Marketing (1988) from Texas Tech University, Associate of Nursing (1996) from San Antonio College, and an MBA in Health Organization Management (1993) from Texas Tech University. A nationally award-winning sales leader with over twenty years of experience in the medical industry, he currently works as the Regional Sales Manager for Spinal Cord Stimulation with Abbott. He has served in youth ministry and is now refocusing on Hesed Hands (see “Hesed Hands” on pp. 14) to help persons in need and expose them to the love of Jesus Christ. He believes his educational experiences at TBS have helped equip him with confidence by aligning his head knowledge with heart belief and equipping and encouraging him to serve as a witness and example of Christian living.

“I gleaned so much through my classes, participating in excavations at Tel Shiloh, and the relationships I developed with professors, staff, and students that have truly helped develop me into the Christian man I am today,” he says. “Enroll! You will not be sorry. The flexibility offered by TBS allows anyone to be able to learn. You will gain significantly. The classes require time and commitment but are absolutely worth the effort. I am very thankful to TBS!”



Clayton Van Huss

Master of Arts in Biblical History and Archaeology (MABHA)

Born on an island in the East China Sea, Clayton recently married Abigail Leavitt (BACS 2021, MABHA 2021) in a sunrise ceremony at Tel Shiloh, Israel. While the newlyweds will reside in Johnson City, Tennessee, Clayton will continue serving as Director of Affirm Apologetics with Southwest Radio Ministries and in ministry roles at Boone's Creek Bible Church (7 years) and Refuge Media (9 years). Prior to TBS, Clayton earned an Associate of Arts in Dramatic Production from The Academy of Arts and a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from East Tennessee State University. Clayton plans to continue his career writing, filmmaking, and speaking within these media ministries while also pursuing a PhD. Like Abigail before him, Clayton served as Student Services Coordinator at TBS. He also served as a docent for the Joshua, Judges, and Jesus (3J) Museum and as a photographer and videographer at Tel Shiloh. He loved that TBS professors were extremely accessible to students, took a vested interest in their education and careers, and nurtured a familial campus atmosphere. Reflecting on his amazing life journey that has led him to this point, he offers this encouragement, "Always keep your heart tuned to the calling of the Lord. Don't dismiss things that you think are impossible or irrelevant. You might be surprised where He will take you."



Patrick Wise

Certificate of Theological Studies (CTS)

Patrick and his wife of 14 years, Amy, reside in Katy, Texas with their two children, Ashlynn and Garrick. Patrick serves the Katy community as Restaurant Manager for the Pearl and Vine Restaurant; as a docent at the Joshua, Judges, and Jesus (3J) museum; and in both youth and worship ministries at the Waters Church for over nine years. A native of England, his children are, ironically, descendants of the American Revolution through his heritage, not Amy's.

Regarding TBS, he says, "What's not to love? I attended every way I could: in-person, online, and an asynchronous student engaging in independent study. Each had its merits, and the timing was always perfect. The lessons and professors were challenging, both greatly grew my faith, discipline, and awareness of my need for a Savior, especially when papers were due."

He appreciates the deep rooting of his life and ministry through growth in knowledge and understanding of ancient times which has helped solidify why He is worthy of worship. Patrick plans to continue to serve, love, and worship the Lord whenever and wherever. He may also enroll in TBS's Dual Degree Completion program to leverage his CTS coursework into earning both a bachelor's and master's degree.

"I have an overwhelming amount of gratitude for the faculty, staff, and my fellow students who helped mold, encourage, and sharpen me along the way. I enjoyed great insights and perspectives from other students in relation to their differing backgrounds, professors who showed grace upon grace and obviously loved the Lord and His word, and faculty who worked diligently to prepare a safe and intimate setting to push us to grow in the Lord."

Congratulations

to our

2024 TBS GRADS!

BRENT



RICHARD



CLAYTON



PATRICK



THE BIBLE SEMINARY

TEL SHILOH *Update*

Dr. Scott Stripling,
Director of Excavations at Shiloh

Report from the 2024 excavation season

Fourteen TBS students, professors, and alumni joined me in the land of the Bible from mid-May to late-June this year. TBS students Nathan Burris, Janet Fischer, Grace Fox, and Dan Lawless stayed for three weeks, while Clayton Huss, Ryan Wood, and Professor Israel Steinmetz stayed for six weeks. Our main purpose was to continue excavating Tel Shiloh, Israel's first capital city and tabernacle worship complex for 300+ years. Located about 20 miles (32 km) north of Jerusalem beside the ancient

Shechem Road (now a portion of Route 60) about halfway between Jerusalem's Damascus gate and Shechem (now Nablus), modern Shiloh is home to about 5,000 residents.

I serve as the Director of the Excavations at Shiloh for the Associates for Biblical Research (ABR). I concurrently direct the TBS Archaeological Studies Institute (ASI) supervising archaeological excavations, research, and study while leading the ABR consortium of universities, professionals, teams, and

individuals worldwide engaging in excavations at Ancient Shiloh.

Despite the war in Gaza and the altercations on the Israeli-Lebanon border, we experienced no security issues or concerns. The Antiquities Authority assigned us a staff member liaison, Aharon Tavgar, Director of Publications for the KAMAT (an acronym for the regional Antiquities Authority). A good friend and archaeologist, he worked with us on site nearly every day while carrying an automatic weapon with him for extra



Square Supervisor, Clayton Van Huss (MABA 2024), married Assistant Dig Director, Abigail Leavitt (BACS/MABA 2021), in a spectacular sunrise ceremony at Tel Shiloh on Friday, June 14, 2024. Photo by Cindi Steele.

This season's work at Shiloh focused on three important areas:

1

GATE COMPLEX

security. We will work closely together in the coming years to produce several volumes of final publications on Shiloh, which will combine KAMAT's work with ABR's work at Shiloh.

Our excavations this season (Season Six) focused on three areas: A favissa (sacred deposit of bones, pottery, and special objects), a monumental building, and a gate complex. All are fascinating field classrooms for TBS students and those who join us from other universities.

Jordan McClinton, TBS alumnus/teaching assistant and PhD student at Veritas International University, is the Area D1 supervisor and the lead excavator of the favissa. This season Area D1 yielded its seventh gold piece (see photo). Primarily pendants, these types of gold pieces are clearly offerings that accompanied the Israelites' animal sacrifices and libations (drink offerings).

Tim Lopez and Dr. Kevin Larsen lead the excavations of the east-west monumental building which spans Areas H1 and K1. Measuring ca. 25 x 12.5 meters and dating to the Late Bronze Age II and Iron Age I (14th to 11th centuries B.C.), the structure is a strong candidate for a building which may have replaced the original tent tabernacle. This season we recovered a miniature faience (glazed paste) pomegranate from the innermost part of

2

MONUMENTAL BUILDING

the building. This is the third pomegranate from in and around the massive edifice. Tim is writing his PhD dissertation at Ariel University on this structure.

Dr. Mark Hassler and Gary Urie (MABHA 2022), Dig Photographer and PhD student at Veritas International University studying Late Bronze Age scarabs, oversee excavations of the gate complex. Mark and Gary uncovered almost 100 geometric paving stones, several of which are in situ. Previously unknown from the Bronze Age, the paving is spectacular. I received permission from Shiloh's site management and KAMAT to remove a large modern terrace (with a viewing platform) enabling us to complete excavation of the gate complex area, including the glacis (earthen embankment) which it partially covers.

While we avoided social media this season, I did interviews and programming for CBN and TBN, a documentary for Holy Land Productions, and several podcasts that will drop in the coming weeks and months. In late October, I plan to return to Israel for five days and speak about the favissa at the "In the Highlands' Depth" conference and take care of some dig business, including construction of our new pottery lab on site where we can reconstruct the countless ceramic vessels we excavate each season. I am also scheduled to speak at the Shiloh Conference in July 2025. 

3

FAVISSA (SACRED DEPOSIT)



A gold, spoon-shaped pendant and one of seven gold items excavated from Tel Shiloh Area D1 over the past few years. Photo by Gary Urie (MABHA 2022).

Interested IN JOINING US

FOR EXCAVATIONS AND/OR TOURS NEXT MAY AND JUNE 2025?

VISIT  [DIGSHILOH.ORG](http://digshiloh.org)  FOR DETAILS.



THE BIBLE SEMINARY

By Dr. Scott Stripling

PROVOST'S PEN



Dr. Scott Stripling serves as Provost and Vice-President of Donor Relations at The Bible Seminary and can be reached at Scott.Stripling@TheBibleSeminary.edu.

Achieving accreditation by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) in October 2020 marked a watershed moment for TBS. In short, it was a validation of the high quality of our education program.

This year, we conducted another detailed self-study as part of our upcoming Reaffirmation of Accredited Status. The process began in January 2024 with a pre-self-study campus visit from our TRACS staff representative. We reviewed our digital and physical records, conducted interviews, and crunched numbers to help assess our readiness to conduct a self-study and note any potential “red flags.” Experienced and thorough, our representative offered a very strong and positive review and noted only two areas that demanded attention. I will circle back to these.

Following completion of our self-study in June and submission of all materials to the

TRACS team in July, a TRACS Self-Study Team comprised of a TRACS staff member and administrators from other schools is scheduled to visit campus September 16-19, 2024. During their three days on campus, they will verify the content of our report, document any perceived areas of noncompliance, and offer suggestions for improvement. Along with their report and any recommended updates to our study, we will submit all final materials to TRACS in February 2025, and then appear before the TRACS commission seeking reaffirmation of our accreditation status in April 2025. If approved, The Bible Seminary will receive a 10-year accreditation renewal.

The two noted areas of concern included: 1) the need to add another full-time faculty member, and 2) the need to replenish our reserve funds, which have been almost completely exhausted over the past two years. Fortunately, we already scheduled adding Professor Craig Evans to our full-time faculty starting January 1, 2025.

A world-renowned scholar, he will add significant gravitas to our teaching team (see pp. 36 for more about Dr. Evans).

The second concern appears more challenging. Along with the responsibility to generate enough income from tuition and fees and receive enough charitable support to meet our ongoing monthly obligations, we continue to face the reality that our \$300,000 income shortfall two years ago that has almost completely depleted our reserves not only threatens our stability, it threatens both our TRACS accreditation and annual SARA approval (National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements, i.e. Distance Education consortium). Since their reputations are on the line, too, both organizations require accredited and approved schools to exhibit unquestionable, verifiable financial stability.

Fortunately, the Lord is gracious and His servants generous enough that TBS

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Counting our Blessings

1

TBS remains debt-free, has never missed a payroll, never paid a bill late, and never spent any money we didn't have.



2

TBS enrollment continues to increase each academic year.



3

Our Joshua, Judges, and Jesus (3J) Museum continues to enjoy a steady flow of visitors from near and far.



4

We added a transformational aspect to our curriculum this year: Public Reading of Scripture (PRS).



remains debt-free, has never missed a payroll, never paid a bill late, and never spent any money we didn't have. Although some weeks and months this past fiscal year challenged our faith, we have ultimately received, sometimes seemingly in the last possible hour, enough daily bread to meet every financial obligation on time. If you would like to help TBS meet this challenge and move beyond it, please contact me or visit TheBibleSeminary.edu/support.

TBS enrollment continues to increase each academic year. We celebrated the largest number of individuals enrolled in graduate courses ever this year (84) and are averaging more than 160 students per year over the last three years (see “2023-2024 Enrollment Report” on pp. 42-43).

Likewise, our Joshua, Judges, and Jesus (3J) Museum continues to enjoy a steady flow of visitors from near and far. Recently, TBN’s InGrace filmed several episodes in the 3J Museum scheduled to air this fall.

Additionally, we added a transformational aspect to our curriculum this year: Public

Reading of Scripture (PRS). Each Monday from Noon-1 PM an average of 40-50 people gather on campus and online to enjoy dramatized audio readings of Old and New Testament passages and a free lunch, thanks to a generous grant from the Grace and Mercy Foundation. Derived from 1 Timothy 4:13, “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching,” we invite you to join us any Monday except holidays to experience PRS.

Summer at TBS is a beehive of activity. Dual-degree students regularly take undergraduate courses at partner universities to satisfy their general education requirements. Students nearing the end of their graduate programs are working on Capstone projects. We teach courses on our main campus in Katy, Texas; I teach courses at Tel Shiloh in Israel; and Parkway Fellowship Church in Richmond, Texas hosts an annual seminar each August. We are also matriculating new students, working on accreditation, preparing for graduation, and raising funds to support all that we do. 

I AM PROUD OF OUR

exceptional students • faculty members • entire faith community

Thank you

for being a part of the TBS family!

THE LORD IS GRACIOUS





THE BIBLE SEMINARY

FROM THE PRESIDENT



By K. Lynn Lewis

Why The Bible Seminary (TBS) exists, what we do, and how we do it is not very complicated. It is challenging. And demanding. It takes an incredible amount of effort, money, and time. It is impossible, without God's blessings, guidance, and provision, but not really complicated.

Very simply, we love Jesus, study His Word, and love others in His name.



We Cultivate

learners and train leaders.



We Deploy

disciple makers to cultivate more learners and train more leaders.



We Employ

leaders to do what God has called, gifted, and trained them to do.



**We are
committed to
The Bible
Seminary**

Vision | The Bible Seminary (TBS) exists to glorify God by impacting multitudes of souls for Christ and to help fulfill the Great Commission by the power of God's Spirit.

Mission | Our mission is to foster biblical literacy through studies of all 66 books of the Bible, cultivate professional and lay leadership skills, and deploy trained Christian disciples in service worldwide.

Key Verse | They read from the book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read." – Nehemiah 8:8

We encourage ministry leaders to follow 2 Timothy 4:2

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction.

Preach the Word | All of it. All 66 books. Read them out loud. Teach the history, social context, material culture, literary artifacts, grand themes, overtones, undertones, interconnections, and applications past, present, and future. Don't use Scripture merely as a diving board to leap into personal backyard oases of hot topics, motivational platitudes, psychology, and stories with a point. Rather, leap from those into the Lord's gigantic pool of Scripture and probe its depths together.

» Whenever we preach or teach, people should learn more about the Bible, increase in faith and love for the Lord, and love others better in His Name.

Be prepared | Seek knowledge, gain skills, study strategies, use tools, modify attitudes if needed, and grow in wisdom and favor continually.

» Be ready to pray, preach, teach, give, serve, or die at a moment's notice.

Correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and careful instruction

Field questions, observe, and provide feedback interacting with saints and sinners where they live, work, play, and worship.

» Embrace lifetime coaching and training with humility, grace, and strength.

Years ago I led a Sunday evening worship service for a group that had raised their families and attended church together for decades. Every week, I opened the Bible, read it, and taught chapter by chapter. They highlighted passages all throughout Scripture, took notes, and asked meaningful questions. We enjoyed deep discussions, considered ancient and contemporary applications, and prayed for ongoing guidance from the Holy Spirit.

“We have never done this before.” they told me. **“We love it!”**

“What have you been doing for the past 50 years?” I asked.

“We don’t know, but it wasn’t this.”

Fast forward thirty years to seminary classes at TBS. We open the Bible, read it, and teach chapter by chapter, even verse by verse and word by word. We highlight passages all throughout Scripture, take notes, and ask meaningful questions. We enjoy deep discussions, consider ancient and contemporary applications, and pray for ongoing guidance from the Holy Spirit.

A TBS student emailed me after spring semester, “This schooling experience is the BEST thing that’s ever happened to me (after being saved & marrying my husband of course!) I am growing by leaps and bounds and feel like a kid in God’s candy store!! There’s nowhere else I’d rather be.”

Ours is an incredible adventure, and **we thank you** for journeying with us!

Lynn



THE BIBLE SEMINARY

»» 2024 FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

By Adam Peters

Birthed 14 years ago in 2010, The Bible Seminary has thrived without excess, and this past year was no exception. As Philippians 4:19 reminds us, “My God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

God’s past and present faithfulness is so evident. We continually rejoice in the amazing impact TBS has in people’s lives and our notable growth each year, especially evident in the stories we hear from alumni, students, and faculty, as well as the increasing number of students enrolled in classes. These stories go way beyond the individuals that enter our doors in-person or engage online. TBS is God’s institution and communities near and far are blessed by His work through members of our TBS family in Texas, across the U.S., and around the world. Whether you are a past or present student, member of the faculty or staff, a supporter in prayer or through financial giving, a partnering church or organization, or a board member, we thank you for engaging in the wonder of what God is doing in and through The Bible Seminary. To Him be the Glory!

I would like to thank recently retired Board members for their faithful service. Founding Board member, Doug

Johnson, completed 12 years of Board membership last year (two consecutive three-year terms, a mandatory one-year break, and then two more consecutive three-year terms). Bob Button similarly completed 12 years of Board membership this year after joining the Board in the seminary’s second year of existence. Both faithful servants of the Lord employed their life experiences, wealth of knowledge and skills, and godly passions to help create, nurture, and shepherd the seminary from an idea into a life-changing reality.

George Armistead completed two consecutive three-year terms this year, Harry Chapman five years, and Cindy Hayley one year. We are grateful for their shared expertise, notable leadership, and faithful support. Thank you!

We welcome our newest Board member, Judy Powell. She joins our Executive Committee where I will continue to serve as Chair, Julia Dean Co-chair, Mickey Ellis as Treasurer, and Judy as Secretary this year. We are excited to see what God will continue to do through TBS and appreciate your ongoing engagement and supportive partnership in the life and mission of The Bible Seminary! 🏛

My God *will supply* every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

Thank you

TO OUR RECENTLY RETIRED BOARD MEMBERS

FOR YOUR FAITHFUL SERVICE

Doug Johnson

Founding Board Member

12 years of service



Bob Button

Board Member Since 2012

12 years of service



George Armistead

6 years of service



Harry Chapman

5 years of service



Cindy Hayley

1 year of service

Welcome New Board Member

JUDY POWELL



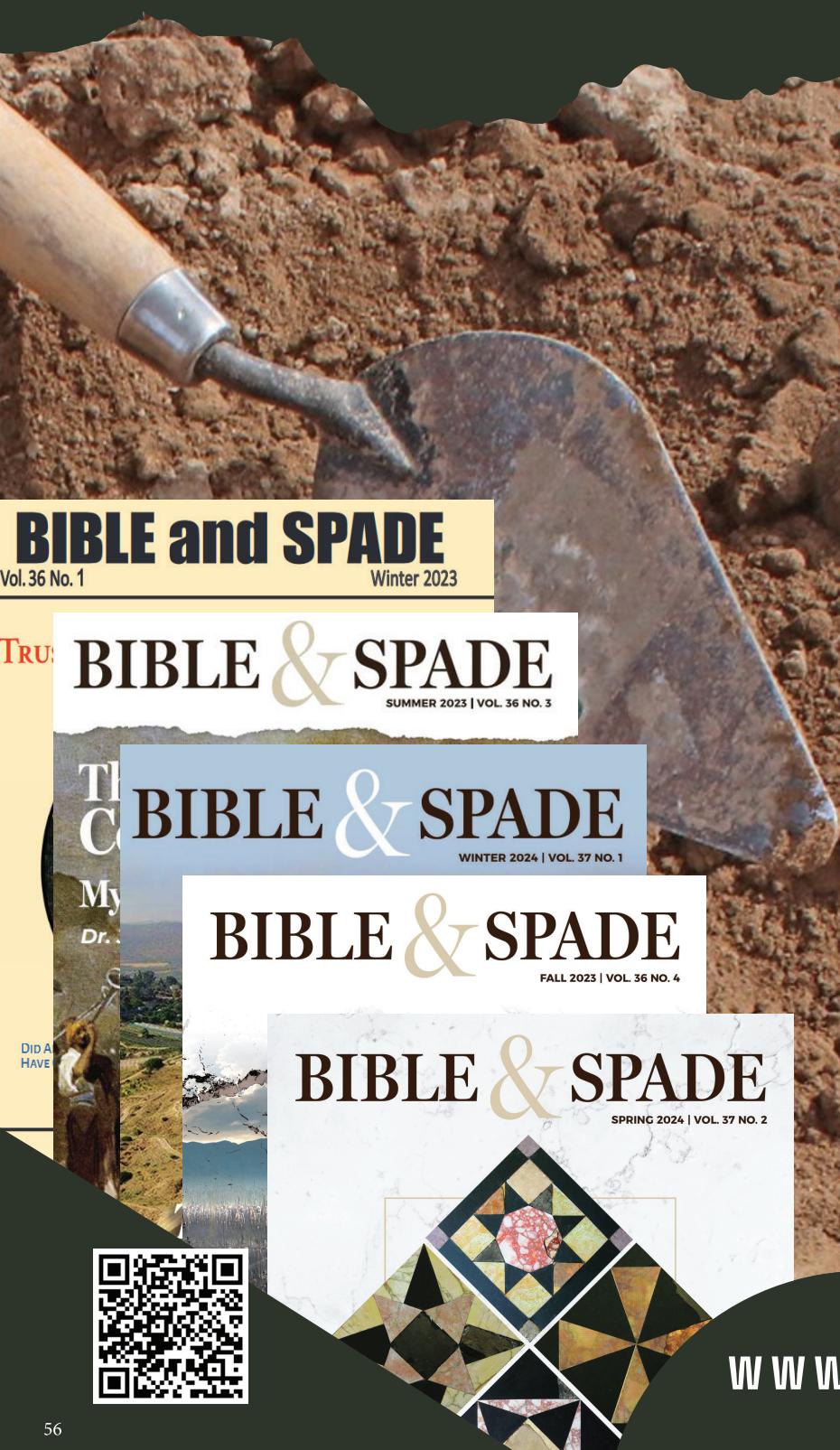
Judy Powell, Secretary, has spent her career developing and telling meaningful stories. She currently teaches Creative Writing and works as an Operations Training Specialist with Montgomery County Elections writing instructional materials and delivering training to election workers. Her experience includes elected positions, from City Council Member, University of Missouri Extension Council Member and Precinct Chair to appointed positions, such as the Texas State Board of Examiners for Professional Counselors (Chair), the Texas State Office of Patient Protection and the Texas Health Services Authority. In all, she has served on over 20 boards and standing committees, bringing a wealth of developmental and administrative experience to the TBS Board. In addition, she has served her Lord and her church in the areas of leadership, discipleship, and foreign missions, traveling on 20 mission trips with her church and the International Leadership Institute. Her experience includes writing, editing, marketing, public relations, mental health facilitation, career development, mediation and member care. She volunteered with OM Arts in the areas of ethnoarts and the contextualization of the gospel into other cultures, and she is a member of the International Orality Network and the Global Ethnodoxology Network. She leads a Sunday School class of over 200 at her church, The Woodlands GMC.

CEO of North America at Air Liquide Group, Adam and his wife, Heidi, have three children – Emily, Andrew, and Bennett.



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FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR GIVING

CHARITABLE IRA ROLLOVER

If you must take Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) from your retirement accounts, the IRS has a special provision allowing you to benefit charities while excluding the amount transferred to charity from your taxable income, while still allowing it to count towards your RMD. This is called a “Qualified Charitable Distribution” or QCD.

QCD usually provide greater tax savings than cash donations, even when charitable tax deductions are claimed, because you do not have to report QCD as taxable income and will not owe any taxes on the QCD. Further, if you do not itemize deductions, it's an even greater benefit because no taxes are due on the QCD. Adjusted gross income (AGI) is reduced when you give to charity using a QCD.

Individuals may give up to \$100,000.00 per year from IRA's as a QCD. Couples who each have an IRA may rollover \$100,000.00 per year from each spouse's IRA, giving up to \$200,000.00 per year.

Very Important

- »» **Rollover must come from your IRA (not Roth IRAs). Other retirement plans, such as 401(k) or 403(b) retirement plans, do not qualify.**
- »» Can come from Traditional IRAs, Inherited IRAs, and Inactive SEP IRA plans.
- »» CANNOT come from 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, Roth IRA plans, and ongoing SIMPLE IRA plans.
- »» **QCD must be paid directly from the IRA to the charity. It cannot be paid out to you first or it will not qualify.**
- »» **Donations from Donor-Advised Funds do not qualify for the QCD.**

DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS

A Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) is an investment fund designated for charitable contributions only – a giving account. Funds in DAF can grow tax-free. You advise your DAF institute on which charities you want your money to support and when to make those distributions to charity.

Strategy to Consider

Transferring appreciated stock allows avoiding paying capital gains since it's going through your DAF directly to TBS. If you still want to be invested in that stock, take the cash funds you would have paid directly to purchase more of the same stock, but now this stock has a stepped-up tax basis and you avoided capital gains tax. Check with your financial advisor on any restrictions.

FUNDS IN DAF
can grow
TAX-FREE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact **Yamile Soto**, Business Manager
yamile.soto@TheBibleSeminary.edu
281-646-1109 x 805

Visit TheBibleSeminary.edu/support

MAIL CHECKS OR CORRESPONDENCE TO

The Bible Seminary, 23501 Cinco Ranch Blvd.,
Ste. H120-930, Katy, TX 77494-3109

Thank You



"I want to personally thank our board members, faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, and prayer warriors."

— Rick McCalip

FEEL FREE TO
CONTACT ME AT



Rick.McCalip
@
TheBibleSeminary.edu

to offer your



IDEAS



PRAYERS



SUGGESTIONS

AS WE CONTINUE
WORKING TOGETHER
TO ASSURE TBS
REMAINS SOLID,
RELIABLE, AND
AN UNWAVERING
HONOR TO GOD.

This August 28th marks my 15th year helping develop The Bible Seminary (TBS). I've been greatly blessed helping implement a vision seeking to honor God by filling the Kingdom with well-trained, biblical servants and seeing it come to life in such wonderful ways. With constant hurdles to jump, hills to climb, and challenges to overcome, we know this is not a sprint, but a marathon steeplechase.

As we begin our 2024-25 fiscal year following an incredibly successful 2023-24 fiscal year, I want to personally thank our board members, faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, and prayer warriors. None of what we have accomplished, and will accomplish, would be even remotely possible without your steadfast commitment and unfailing support.

Your faithfulness through this past May helped TBS leap a major annual accreditation hurdle – achieving total operating income that exceeds annual expenses. After a COVID-19 disruption that led to two years of operating income shortfalls, this accomplishment is a massive relief and victory. Another major accreditation hurdle is to reestablish a minimum financial reserve equivalent to at least 10% of our annual board-approved budget. Prior to this past year, we have historically exceeded this goal, and our current goal is to replenish this fund with at least \$120,000 to allow a slight cushion above the minimum required reserve of \$113,000.

Our staff works continually to develop more secure and consistent funding to hopefully avoid frequent special requests for additional contributions. You have seen our efforts to seek ongoing monthly and quarterly contributions, encourage library book sponsorships, and otherwise attempt to achieve reliable ongoing financial support. Operating an accredited institution of higher learning is expensive and takes a broad reach and dependable resources to fund a budget of \$95,000 per month.

Securing funding from charitable foundations is demanding and exceptionally slow. Foundations are hounded continuously and many refuse to respond to unsolicited requests. This caution

AND UPDATES



By Rick McCalip

Vice-President of Finance
and Administration

makes sense, since funders must be satisfied and assured that recipient candidates are honorable, consistent with the foundation's missional priorities, and dependable over time. Establishing key relationships takes time, and we are praying for fruitful relationships and avenues toward mutually beneficial results.

Student enrollment continues to grow (see "From the Provost's Pen" on pp. 50-51) and our educational footprint continues to expand regionally, nationally, and internationally. We would like to move our main campus to more permanent facilities with more space once operational funding is reliable and secure. We also hope to establish a permanent endowment where a corpus of funds are reserved, protected, and invested cautiously, with proceeds invested in key TBS initiatives.

After three years of holding tuition steady, we implemented a small increase starting with the Fall 2024 semester. Even so, our upcoming \$395 per credit hour rate remains substantially competitive compared to the \$635 per credit hour average (for 2023-24) among 25 institutions we track annually that offer similar degree programs. We also try to help students avoid debt by requiring full payment of all outstanding tuition and fees from previous semesters prior to enrolling in a subsequent semester. We believe Christian leaders should live and lead by example and demonstrate personal financial integrity.

The opportunity to contribute something truly meaningful to the Kingdom through TBS is an answer to prayer. I appreciate the opportunity to work toward strategic long range plans, assist with general administration, and help keep lights lit and facilities operational. I anticipate helping someone transition into my role in due time, although I'll probably still replace fluorescent light ballasts until I can no longer climb a ladder or until we move to a new building, whichever comes first. ☺

In the meantime, thank you!

ADOPT a Book



Make an impact for \$100

TheBibleSeminary.edu/adopt

The **Adopt-a-Book** program allows you to help make a **lasting impact** on studious scholars, as well as communities near and far who benefit from the leadership and ministries of **TBS students** and **alumni**. In addition to supporting TBS, your **\$100 donation** can create a meaningful connection between your **loved ones** and our **cherished collection**. An adoption note will adorn the inside front cover of each adopted book ensuring that your **legacy** lives on for **generations** to come.



THE BIBLE SEMINARY

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Vision

- » The Bible Seminary exists to glorify God by impacting multitudes of souls for Christ and to help fulfill the Great Commission by the power of God's Spirit.

Mission

- » Our mission is to foster biblical literacy through studies of all 66 books of the Bible, cultivate professional and lay leadership skills, and deploy trained Christian disciples in service worldwide.

Key Verse

- » "They read from the Book of the Law of God making it clear and giving the meaning so the people could understand what was being read."

-Nehemiah 8:8

Core Values

LORDSHIP

- » Because He is Lord (Philippians 2:11), we will continually ask Jesus Christ to sit on the throne of the seminary and on the throne of the lives of its faculty, administrators, and students for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

BIBLE

- » Because the Bible is the fully true Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16), we will offer and require the study of all 66 books of the Bible before graduation with a degree. We will seek to creatively integrate classical theological disciplines and ministry training by studying books of the Bible (i.g. Church History will begin with the Book of Acts and keep going; Pastoral Leadership will come through the study of the Pastoral Epistles; Systematic Theology will flow out of the study of the Pauline Epistles).

PRAYER

- » Because apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5), we will continually seek to plug into the Vine Jesus Christ through yielding to Him in prayer. We will offer a unique emphasis on prayer, integrated with the curriculum, in classroom settings, meetings, and continual prayer opportunities in the life of the seminary.

UNREACHED PEOPLES

- » Because the return of Christ awaits the evangelization of all people groups (Matthew 24:14), we will keep our eyes on the unreached peoples of the world and train our students to have a heart for the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) by seeking to reach millions of souls for Jesus Christ.

LOCAL CHURCH

- » Because the church universal (the body of Christ) is God's plan (Matthew 16:18), comprised of local churches (Acts 5:42, 20:28; Romans 16:3-5), we will have a symbiotic relationship of service, training and education with local churches and parachurch ministries.

COMMUNITY

- » Because we were created for community (Genesis 1:26; Romans 12:5), we will seek to build a campus-based fellowship where the "one anothers" of Scripture are lived out, where authenticity and accountability are practiced, and where integrity is modeled and taught.

COMPASSION

- » Because God has a huge heart for the poor and overlooked (Matthew 25:31-46), we will strive to motivate, equip, and train students to minister to "the least of these" as a lifestyle.