

# **E**THE BAPTIST **EDUCATOR**

News Journal of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities



## **Changing Faces**

*Vol. 87, No. 3, Winter 2023*

# From the Chairman's Pen

Growing up in a Baptist pastor's home meant I went to church...a lot! Most Boomers like myself who grew up in a Baptist church knew that Sundays were full as we went to Sunday school, worship, youth choir, training union and evening worship. (Fortunately, The TV Land network plays all those *Gunsmoke* shows I missed every Sunday night.)

Understand, this is not meant to be a statement of regret, as I actually miss those days and times spent with other Believers "doing church" together multiple times during the week, every week.

Obviously, I heard many, many sermons, most I don't recall. But what I do recall are illustrations or stories my dad or a visiting evangelist would include in the sermon to make a point connect with the listener. As I consider the darkness enveloping much of our world today, I was reminded of an illustration I heard my dad share numerous times.

As I recall, a young boy was playing with friends and accidentally wandered away from his friends and his neighborhood. He tried to figure out where he was, but the more he walked, the more lost he became.

Fortunately, a police officer was on duty working that same area and he saw what looked to him as a distraught young man. The officer asked what was wrong and the boy quickly shared how he had wandered away and no matter where he turned, he couldn't find his way home.

The police officer asked him if he could recall any landmarks or structures near his home that might provide direction. Suddenly he recalled that the street he lived on was behind a church with a



Dr. Rick Brewer, Board Chair  
President, Louisiana Christian University

cross that was lit up every evening. He said, "Mr. Policeman, if you could take me to the church with the lighted cross, I can find my way home."

I think you know the rest of story. The light of the cross led him home. Even in dark times the "light" of Christ's cross still leads us "home"... a place of salvation and hope.

I'm grateful for my colleagues who provide steward leadership at the colleges and universities of the IABCU. Each one is a bearer of the light in the kingdom work of Christian higher education.

Illustrations. Stories. Parables. They're still effective teaching tools. Didn't the Master Teacher demonstrate that during his three years of public ministry?

*"I must needs go home by the way of the Cross, there's no other way but this; I shall ne'er get sight of the gates of light, if the way of the Cross I miss."*

*The way of the Cross leads home, the way of the Cross leads home; It is sweet to know as I onward go, the way of the Cross leads home."*



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**Cover image:** Dr. Keith Faulkner speaks to students at a fall chapel service at Charleston Southern University, where he was began serving as president in October. *Photo by Charleston Southern University*



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- Wayland Baptist University
- William Carey University
- Williams Baptist University

# 2024 Annual Meeting changing locations



Although originally slated to be hosted by Louisiana Christian University in Pineville, La., the 2024 Annual Meeting will now be held in Knoxville, Tenn., and hosted by Carson-Newman University.

Less than 30 minutes from the McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS), the meeting will be held at the Marriott Knoxville Downtown, offering an IABCU Annual Meeting discount of \$170 per night plus taxes. Mark your calendars for June 2-4, 2024, and plan to join us!



**CARSON-NEWMAN**  
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More information will be coming soon with schedule changes in the meeting as well as add-ons before and after the meeting to enjoy more time for fellowship or just fun with your family.



# Changing Faces

## New IABCU school presidents named

Several schools within the IABCU have welcomed new presidents over the past few months. Dr. Hampton Hopkins started his tenure as president of Baptist Health Sciences University in Memphis, Tenn., on July 10, replacing the retired Betty Sue McGarvey. Jacksonville College in Texas welcomed Dr. David Erickson as president on July 31. Dr. Keith Faulkner returned to his alma mater, Charleston Southern University in South Carolina, this time as president, beginning in October.

Hopkins comes to BHSU from Carolinas College of Health Sciences in Charlotte, where he served 15 years as Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and seven years as president. Overall, he's been in higher education for more than 30 years.

He is a graduate of Winthrop University, the University of Tennessee and UNC-Charlotte. While he had no ties to BHSU previously, he was familiar thanks to the Consortium of Hospital-Affiliated Colleges and Universities, of which both his current and previous institutions were members. He is excited about the new role.

"I have come to truly appreciate the passion, compassion and commitment students have for health sciences programs. My small part in educating the health care



*Dr. David Erickson, president of Jacksonville College*

practitioners who will take care of me and my family is what motivates me every day," he said. "In this role at BHSU, I have the opportunity to continue this work and expand it into osteopathic medicine with the launch of the Baptist University College of Osteopathic Medicine."

Erickson comes into his role at Jacksonville College with a longtime association. While not an alumnus, he is married to one and has been involved in alumni activities for years. Additionally, he's a longtime resident of Jacksonville and has many friends on the faculty and staff. He has been a seminary professor and administrator for the last 14 years and a pastor prior to that.

"Pouring into young people who are building Christ's kingdom has always been my passion," said Erickson. "While my new role is more about enabling others to do

*Dr. Hampton Hopkins, president at Baptist Health Sciences University*



mater as well.

The new leaders all agree that serving in higher education leadership roles can be highly rewarding.

"Being a leader at a higher education institution with deep Christian values allows my servant leadership philosophy to shine through," noted Hopkins, who called leading an organization an honor. "Serving God and serving others in the pursuit of higher education and health care is a calling."

Erickson expressed similar feelings about the high calling of Christian education.

"Everything I do is for the sake of the Lord's churches. Christian higher education prepares the next generation who will serve and lead in the Body of Christ," he said. "It is a great privilege to steward an institution that exists to build up the entirety of the church."

The service aspect of Christian higher education is special to Faulkner.

"I have been privileged to serve in several roles where I was serving something bigger than myself – serving a mission," he said. "Leading in a Christian institution is the most gratifying position because I can serve our Lord and, in the process, also serve a faculty, staff, student body, and alumni community committed to excellence. Christian Higher Education assists students in finding their calling and to lead lives of significance."



*Dr. Keith Faulkner visits with students at a fall ice cream social event at Charleston Southern University.*

school, then as dean of the Liberty University School of Law. He comes to Charleston Southern from the presidency of the Appalachian School of Law. He is excited about serving at CSU.

"CSU is poised for tremendous growth. What excites me most is the possibility of what CSU can become as we lean

the teaching, mentoring, and discipleship, it's the same fundamental mission of Christian higher education that keeps me excited and pressing forward."

Faulkner has spent several years in higher education following a stint in the U.S. Navy and as an attorney in private practice. He served in various roles at Campbell University, both in the law school and the business

into our mission, have faith, and work to glorify Jesus Christ," said Faulkner. "Serving others and exciting them about the 'what could be' is the opportunity of a lifetime."

Faulkner holds the distinction of being an alumnus of Charleston Southern, earning a business degree in 1998. He has served on CSU's Board of Visitors and has supported his alma

*"It is a great privilege to steward an institution that exists to build up the entirety of the church."*

*~ Dr. David Erickson*

# Changing Faces

## Leaders retiring from Baptist institutions

As the saying goes, all good things must come to an end. And for four university administrators at IABCU schools, that end is really a transition into the next leg of their life's journey.

Dr. Bobby Hall, president at Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, will retire in June 2024 after eight years at the helm. Dr. Jeff Iorg, who has served 20 years as president of Gateway Seminary in Ontario, Calif., will retire after leading the seminary in an 18-month transition process that started in October 2023.

Dr. David Olive, president of Bluefield University in Bluefield, Va., for 17 years, will retire at the end of the academic year. Finally, Dr. Keith Spears retired in July 2023 as chancellor of Campbellsville University in Campbellsville, Ky.

Though Hall has been president at Wayland only eight years, he has served his alma mater more than 40 years. Coming to Wayland from the journalism field, he completed a degree while on staff, then moved into different roles over the decades, including Professor of Business and Executive Vice President and Provost before being named president.

*Dr. Bobby Hall,  
president,  
Wayland Baptist  
University*



While Hall has accomplished much over decades at the university, he believes his greatest contribution as president would be “loyalty to the mission and persistence in times of extreme challenge... We have been innovative and resourceful in turbulent times.”

Hall said he and wife Laurie, executive secretary at IABCU, plan to let the Lord lead to his next chapter of service, whatever that may be. They have two grown children, both WBU alumni, who live in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Iorg came to Gateway from the pastorate and a stint as executive director-treasurer of the Northwest Baptist Convention. He was at the seminary's helm when the board made the decision in 2014 to move from Mill Valley to southern California and change its name.

He plans to take a six-month sabbatical before finding a way to plug into “productive ministry without taking on another full-time job.” He said the most rewarding part of his job was simply the people, noting he would miss the students and employees the most.



*Dr. David Olive, president,  
Bluefield University*

Iorg said he believes “stable leadership through major change” was his greatest contribution as president.

When he retires, Olive will have served 17 years at Bluefield, coming to the university after serving in serving several other institutions. He first worked with alumni and development at

*Dr. Jeff Iorg, president at Gateway Seminary, speaks at convocation.*



his alma mater, Tennessee Tech, also working in higher education while attending law school. After seminary and a brief stint in ministry, he returned to higher education advancement, first at Carson-Newman College, then at Pfeiffer University, where he also served as executive vice president. He was named president at Bluefield in 2007.

While there have been many accomplishments in Olive's tenure at Bluefield, he believes his greatest may be the creation of graduate programs that then led to collaboration with the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in developing two master's degree programs.

Olive said he and wife Kathryn plan to move to east Tennessee to be closer



*Dr. Keith Spears, chancellor,  
Campbellsville University*

to family in retirement. He envisions doing some consulting and serving the disadvantaged wherever God leads.

Spears served Campbellsville for 14 years after working for his alma mater, Marshall University, for three decades and a two-year stint in West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin's Department of Education and the Arts. He served in several vice presidential roles before being named 11th president in January 2021. He was named the university's first chancellor in February 2022. He plans to serve as a consultant in retirement.

Despite that challenging atmosphere shared by many of leaders, there have been plenty of rewards as well.

“The most rewarding part has always been to watch students grow in their faith in Jesus Christ as they

also grow in knowledge, graduate and have meaningful lives of service,” said Hall. “I will miss our people the most, including the many trustees I have worked with through the years as well as the many fellow university presidents I have come to love and appreciate. They are really good people in really difficult jobs.”

Olive's sentiments are similar. “It truly has been an honor to serve the Bluefield community and to see the wondrous transformations that have occurred in thousands of students' lives. I am humbled to have been a small part of the life-transforming impact of broadening minds and deepening souls,” he said. “I also have been privileged to work with some amazingly gifted and talented colleagues through the years, along with some extraordinary Trustees and alumni. What Kathryn and I will miss most are interacting in the lives of our students, participating in worship with the campus community each Wednesday, and being close to the numerous friends we've developed relationships with over the years.”

Spears also spoke gratefully. “The first meeting of my first day at Campbellsville, I knew that I had made the right decision,” he said. “I was encircled with a sweet spirit of Christian higher education. I am very pleased to have been part of the growth of this institution, made possible by the extraordinary faculty and staff, who never lost sight of CU's potential.”

# Baptist Scholars gather at Oxford

WACO, Texas (September 26, 2023) — Baptist scholars gathered at Oxford University for the 2023 Baptist Scholars International Roundtable to share academic papers on the theme Baptists and Global Mission.

The program is designed to promote Baptist scholarship among faculty and doctoral students around the world. Each year, BSIR selects seven to eight academic papers to be presented at the Roundtable and shaped by experienced Baptist scholars’ responses. After receiving feedback from all BSIR participants, the accepted papers will later be published. Papers from the 2019 and 2021 meetings, for example, will appear this Fall in *Baptists*

and the Kingdom of God from Baylor University Press.

Christ Church hosted the 2023 BSIR participants in its new Research Centre and participants enjoyed the beautiful college setting, including worship at Evensong in Christ Church Cathedral and dining in the college’s magnificent Great Hall. Participants also toured Regents Park College, the Baptist entity that makes up the system of colleges comprising Oxford University. In the Angus Library, these Baptist scholars were introduced to rare manuscripts of early Baptist dissenters like Thomas Helwys and John Smythe.

IABCU and the Consortium for Global Education were both represent-

ed by Carolyn Bishop and David Bishop, along with Brad Creed, president of long-time BSIR sponsor, Campbell University,

The theme for BSIR 2024 will again be Baptists and Global Mission. BSIR will extend a call for papers in October for the 2024 annual meeting and select seven papers through a competitive process.

“We expect another set of rich, diverse presentations from Baptist scholars all across the globe,” said Dr. João Chaves, BSIR Co-Director.

For more information, and to explore joining the BSIR as a sponsoring member, please visit the BSIR website.



## Proposals open for 2024 Roundtable

The Baptist Scholars International Roundtable (BSIR) invites proposals for its 19th annual meeting, to be convened at Christ Church, University of Oxford, on August 4-7, 2024.

IABCU is a proud sponsor of this program, and our early-career faculty and doctoral students are encouraged to apply.

This year’s conference theme is Baptists and Global Mission. We invite scholars from a broad array of disciplines to consider how Baptists worldwide have thought about missions and engaged in missionary work—as well as how locals of different backgrounds appropriated, resisted, and/or disseminated the message and work of Baptist missionaries. We are particularly interested in approaches centered around Baptist groups outside the United States and Europe, even if such groups are studied in relation to Baptists in the West. Topics may range widely and might consider themes such as the following:

- Historical role of Western influences on Baptists in the Global South;
- Geopolitical implications of Baptist Global missions;
- The history, contributions, impact of individual Baptist missionaries;
- Theological reflections on Baptist

- missions;
- Historical role of Baptist missionaries who established religious institutions globally;
- Rhetorical analysis of missionary writings;
- The contributions and complexities that Baptist missionaries introduced in the Global South via theological education;
- The multidirectional nature of Baptist missions;
- Resistance by Global South Baptists to missionary theology and practice of Baptists from the United States and Europe;
- Assessments of gender and race dynamics among Baptists in mission fields;
- History of Baptist institutions connected to missionaries;
- Qualitative or quantitative explorations from the social sciences related to Baptist missions.

Our Distinguished Fellow for 2024 will be Dr. Loida Martell, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean at Lexington Seminary, who will provide important context for our theme of Baptist and Global Missions.

We encourage participation by scholars from all career stages, especially junior scholars and doctoral can-

didates. While papers should pertain to the Baptist expression of Christianity, scholars from all faiths are welcome.

**Format:** Seven BSIR Scholars are selected to present their original papers of 15-25 pages. BSIR Fellows offer responses, followed by group discussion. To promote a vibrant conversation, all participants agree to prepare for engagement with each paper in advance. BSIR offers publication opportunities in journals or edited volumes. Proposals should be submitted at this link.

The submission deadline is January 1, 2024. For accepted submissions, the full paper will be due on June 1, 2024.

- Submissions should include:
- Name, affiliation, and contact information
  - Paper title and abstract (no more than 750 words)
  - Bio (150 words max., including degrees and selected publications)

Proposals will be selected based on the quality and clarity of the proposal content, the relationship of the paper to the conference theme, and publication potential. Lodging and meals are provided, and accepted scholars receive assistance with travel costs.



# The Next Chapter

## Cammuse retiring from SBF



Instead of computer screens and ringing telephones, someone’s days will soon be spent listening to waves crash onto the shoreline while reading a good book. The Southern Baptist Foundation (SBF) is both delighted and saddened to announce that Margaret Cammuse is retiring on December 31. Margaret has been an integral part of the SBF for 26 years, and her lifetime commitment to the Southern Baptist Convention is remarkable.

In 1979, gas was eighty-six cents per gallon, ESPN aired its first live episode on cable television, and people listened to music on their Sony Walkman. 1979 was also the year Margaret Cammuse began her Southern Baptist career. Margaret graduated from Samford University with a BS in Business Administration and immediately went to work with the Southern Baptist Education Commission. Margaret was with the Education Commission until she joined the SBF in 1997 when she was hired as Corporate Secretary by former President Hollis Johnson. These two positions span 44 years with organizations in the Southern Baptist Convention!

On reaching this significant milestone, SBF President Warren Peek said, “I want to express my sincere appreciation to Margaret. She has been a friend to all with her thoughtfulness



and encouragement, especially to Southern Baptist students and faculty. Loyal and dedicated employees like Margaret are the backbone of any successful organization, and we thank her for her significant contribution to the impact the SBF is making for the Kingdom.”

Margaret has a heart for helping others, and that characteristic is certainly appreciated by the thousands of students she has assisted through the scholarship and doctoral loan programs of Southern Baptist education institutions. In fact, more than 10,700 scholarships totaling more than \$6.8 million have been given by the SBF as of September 30, 2022. Besides coordinating these programs, Margaret’s responsibilities include an extensive list of trust-fund and accounting tasks.

Kimmie Hayes has joined the SBF as Assistant Trust/Tax Accounting Manager and will be taking over these duties. Kimmie has worked in both for-profit and not-for-profit entities over the past twenty years, most recently as Senior Director of Accounting at the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce.

Exploring new places is one of Margaret’s hobbies and some of her favorite SBF memories include traveling to the Annual Meetings that were held in Phoenix, Baltimore, and St. Louis. When not manning the SBF’s booth during these events, the staff enjoyed sightseeing together and visited places like the Grand Canyon and Sedona. She and her late husband, Les, traveled to cities from coast to coast, including Niagara Falls, San Antonio and San Francisco.

Margaret has one son, Douglas (Holly), and two grandchildren, Carson and Caroline. She is a member of Victory Baptist Church in Mount Juliet, Tenn., where she serves on the Finance Committee and volunteers in the nursery. In addition to playing with her grandchildren and traveling, she enjoys reading and cheering for the Vanderbilt Commodores. Please join the SBF in extending best wishes to Margaret as she begins this new and exciting chapter in her life.

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# St. Augustine: Pilgrim for an Ecotonic Age

Dr. Timothy George, Samford University and IABCU's 2023 Hester Lecturer



*This is the second installment of the Hester Lectures delivered at the 2023 IABCU Annual Meeting at Bluefield University in Bluefield, Virginia.*

Aurelius Augustinus, Bishop of Hippo, Doctor of the Church, Pilgrim for an Ecotonic Age. The word “ecotone,” coined in 1859 by British biologist and geographer Alfred Russell Wallace, refers to the space where two or more ecospheres meet and merge, where the mountains meet the plains or where the drift of the river flows into the current of the sea. Ecotones are marked by great fluidity, generativity, and biodiversity. There are also places of great danger, risk, and uncertainty. They are spaces at once unstable and capacious.

If we can extrapolate from the world of geography to that of history, Saint Augustine (354-430) lived in one of the great ecotonic moments in the unfolding of Western consciousness, for he witnessed the death throes of one age, classical antiquity, and the birth pangs of another, the Middle Ages.

Han von Campenhausen once said of Augustine that he is the only church father who even today remains an intellectual power.<sup>1</sup> We can go even further: Outside of the inspired authors of Holy Scripture, no one in

the history of Christianity has thought more deeply about things that matter most ultimately than Saint Augustine. Alfred North Whitehead famously argued that the history of Western thought can be read as “a series of footnotes to Plato.”

Likewise, the history of Christian thought can be read as a series of footnotes to Augustine. No one else has such equal purchase on both Catholic and Protestant construals of Christianity. The debates surrounding the Reformation of the sixteenth century were not so much about who understood the Bible best, but rather who got Augustine right. Luther, let us not forget, was himself an Augustinian monk and Calvin cites Augustine more than any other non-biblical source in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

Over the past one hundred years, there has been a veritable renaissance in Augustinian studies, not only among theologians and religious thinkers but also among psychologists, postmodernists, and philosophers. Martin Heidegger lectured on Augustine’s *Confessions* prior to his publication of *Being and Time* in 1927. Albert Camus, born in the country of Algeria that Augustine once called home, wrote his doctoral dissertation, *Christian Metaphysics and Neoplatonism*,

focused on St. Augustine. A more recent example is Hannah Arendt, the brilliant philosopher and refugee from Nazi Germany, who wrote her dissertation on *Love and St. Augustine*. His influence is deep and wide and permeating.

But it is not only philosophers with PhDs who still respond to Augustine. His appeal cuts across ethnic, political, and generational divides. This is partly because he himself did not easily fit into the well-established social niches of his time. He was a provincial, born in the sticks, from the small town of Thagaste in North Africa. His father, Patricius, was a minor bureaucratic official whose job was to collect taxes (cf. Zacchaeus). Even though he was not on the lowest rungs of the social ladder (he owned a small amount of property and had a few slaves), the threat of bankruptcy and poverty was always a possibility. If your neighbors did not pay their taxes, then

“Augustine has directly and indirectly shaped the way we understand our pursuits, the call to authenticity.”

their debt fell on you. When he was sixteen, Augustine had to be taken out of school—although his parents had shown great prescience in sending him to school and arranging for his Latin lessons and basically doing the best they could to give him a head start in the world of learned culture. But when he was sixteen years old, the money ran out.

His mother, Monica, was a devout Christian of Berber stock, an ethnic group from closer into the heartland of Africa. Augustine himself was a mixed breed. We know this because later one of Augustine’s chief theological opponents, Julian of Eclanum, used numerous racial slurs when speaking

of Augustine: “this African,” “the hard-headed Numidian,” or “the Punic polemicist.”

If you would like to test how Augustine plays on today’s college and university campuses, I recommend you assign James K.A. Smith’s delightful little book, *On the Road with St. Augustine: A Real World Spirituality for Restless Hearts*. Smith reads Augustine as a philosopher of experience, as a phenomenologist. He reads Augustine with Heidegger, Arendt, Derrida, and Camus looking over his shoulder:

*Augustine is our contemporary. He has directly and indirectly shaped the way we understand our pursuits, the call to authenticity. In some ways, he’s put us on the road we’re on. It’s why he continues to fascinate.*

Augustine shapes the great tradition of Christian learning and believing not only through his many voluminous writings and theological formulations hammered out in controversy, but also by how he lived. He tries to go beneath the surface to explore the deep caverns of human consciousness, to explore what we call today the subconscious. Augustine is a corrective to shallowness. His authenticity, his transparency both with himself and with God make him a master of deep wisdom from whom we still have much to learn. Of the many themes that course through Augustine’s writings, none is more important than pilgrimage.

*continued, pg. 17*



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Members of the 2023-24 BCU Scholars gather at Slow Rise on the Brazos for a kick-off event.



## BCU Scholars adds five for 2023-24

Baylor's BCU Scholars Program seeks to strengthen ties among IABCU member schools by identifying Baptist College and University Scholars from Ph.D. or MFA programs. To be eligible for the BCU Scholars Program, students must have attended a school (for their undergraduate or previous graduate degree) that is a member of the IABCU.

The Baptist College & University Scholars program kicked off the fall school year by adding five new members to the group. Dr. Kevin Dougherty, Professor of Sociology at Baylor, is faculty sponsor for the program which involves young men and women committed to furthering higher education through teaching, research and administration.

New for the year are the following Baylor graduate students:

- Erin Ellis, PhD student in Higher Education Studies & Leadership, alma mater Ouachita Baptist University (B)
- Scarlett Gardner, PhD student in School Psychology, alma mater University of Mary Hardin-Baylor
- Grace McCright, PhD student in English, alma mater East Texas Baptist University
- Morgan Raines, PhD student in Chemistry & Biochemistry, alma mater University of Mary Hardin-Baylor
- Carol Raymond, PhD student in School Psychology, alma mater Hardin Simmons University

(M), Dallas Baptist University (certificate program)

The scholars have been at work already.

"We held a kickoff dinner on Sept. 12, where Dr. Dougherty introduced himself and spoke about plans for the year, and Graduate School Dean Larry Lyon and former Baylor Provost Dr. Don Schmeltekopf spoke about the importance of Christian faith in the world of research universities and keeping the Baptist heritage," noted Laura Sepanski, program coordinator for professional development at Baylor's Graduate School.

Following that, the Scholars were invited to attend Baylor's Institute for Faith & Learning annual conference in October. The group will be meeting monthly November through February for book discussions of *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms* by Walter B. Shurden. A breakfast follows in March, then in April the Schmeltekopfs host a dinner at their home. The BCU Scholars who are nearing graduation also attend the IABCU Annual Meeting in June.

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## Hester Lectures, continued

### Pilgrimage

Augustine did not of course coin the term peregrinatio, or pilgrimage, but it was one of his favorite words and became his chosen motif for describing the entire spiritual life—from the opening line in Book One of the *Confessions* which Sarah Ruden translates: “You made us with yourself as our goal, and our heart is restless until it rests in you,” all the way to the end of The City of God where, as Augustine describes that blessed felicity of eternal rest:

*There we shall be still and see; we shall see and we shall love; we shall love and we shall praise. Behold what will be, in the end, without end! For what is our end but to reach that kingdom which has no end.*

We humans are teleological beings, built by God with a goal in mind.

In Augustine’s world, there were two paradigms for pilgrimage. First, there was the story of Odysseus as told in Homer’s epic poem, *The Odyssey*. Augustine’s Greek was rather sketchy, but he knew this story well from Vergil’s retelling of it in Latin, *The Aeneid*.

Odysseus sets out from his hometown of Ithaca, leaving behind his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus. For nine long years he wanders—through many dangerous and exotic adventures but always intending to return to Ithaca, where he started from. That’s the classical motif of pilgrimage and Augustine knew it well. This paradigm



matched Neoplatonic motifs of the myth of the return of the soul, the fallen soul, and the human soul’s ascent back into the vision of God’s supernal truth and beauty.

But Augustine was much more moved by another pilgrimage, the biblical model of Abraham and Sarah as recounted in Genesis. Abraham was well settled in his hometown of Ur in Chaldea when one day in the midst of all that was familiar, he felt strangely out of place—not at home anymore. Somehow a call comes to him and Sarah from beyond themselves. So Abraham and Sarah gathered their extended family, all their belongings and set out for a place they had never been before—not knowing, as the writer of Hebrews says, where they were going (Heb. 11:8). It was a move from certainty to trust, from security to vulnerability.

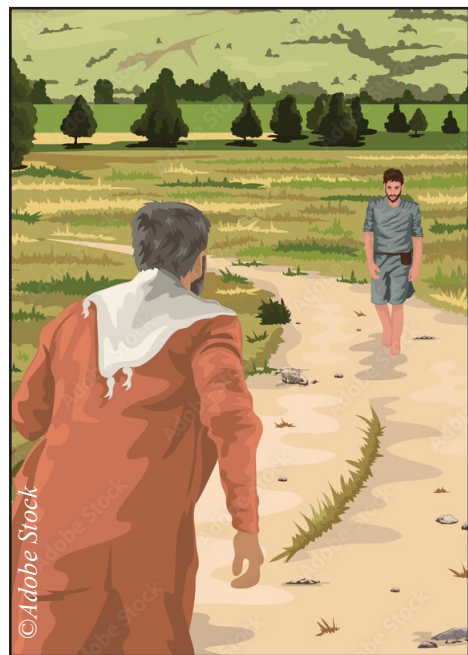
Augustine understands the call of God more like Abraham and Sarah, responding to this divine summons. Now this has been hard for some Augustine scholars to take on board

because there is a kind of understanding of Augustine that stands over against this one. One of my teachers was the New Testament scholar, Krister Stendahl, who published an article in 1962 called “St. Augustine and the Introspective Conscience of the West” in which he interpreted Augustine’s approach to faith as the result of a turn inward, a quest for his true self. He stands at the headwaters of that introspective conscience that becomes so dominant in our Western understandings of identity.

For Augustine, the self is not a thing to be discovered by gazing deep within. Interestingly, there is no word for self in Latin. You have to go to the intensive pronoun ipse or the reflexive pronoun sui. The closest you can get with Augustine is his phrase homo intensus, the internal person, the person inside. This quest for the self will, in the end, be a dead end. This dead end is the source of so much misery and sadness in our world today—those made for God are still restless as

*continued, pg. 18*

GENERATING LEADS. GUIDING RELATIONSHIPS. GROWING ENROLLMENTS.



*“In that moment of dislocation – away from home, alone, poor – he came to himself!”*

they turn inward in a futile quest for self-discovery.

Fourteen hundred years after Augustine wrote the *Confessions*, another book with the same title was published by Jean-Jaques Rousseau. His *Confessions* is a deliberate counterpoint to Augustine’s. Rousseau wants to find the true self by paring away the layers of tradition, including all the sacred texts like the Bible, the doctrines, and the creeds of the Christian faith. These stand in the way. For Augustine, though, the self is more elusive than it was for Rousseau. For Augustine, the self is never at its own disposal. It’s not that you can peel these layers away to discover a jewel within. It is not by introspection, psychological self-examination, but by the experiences of dislocation and loss that the self can be found. It is when we are brought up short, when we realize that our life is not in our hands that there is an openness and readiness to hear the good news of the Gospel. Look at the prodigal son (Luke 15). It was one of Augustine’s favorite biblical texts. The turning point for the son came after he had blown all his money and was reduced to eating alongside pigs. It was then that “he came to himself.” In that moment of dislocation—away from home, alone, poor—he came to himself! In that moment of dislocation and destitution he says, “I will arise, I will go home.”

In the Old Testament, consider Psalm 130: “Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice.” Augustine dug as deeply as he could into the innermost part of himself but at the end of the day, it is only when he came to the end of his rope that he was able to turn away from himself and back to the God who

made him, the God who loved him, the God who was seeking him. So we pay attention to ourselves in a proper, life-giving way when we bring our lives *coram Deo*, into the very presence of the living God who made us with Himself as our goal. The goal of the contemplative life is, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, that we might see God face to face. Even though here in this life we inwardly see through a glass darkly, then we shall see face to face.

Along the way, there are glimpses, little breakthroughs, that turn us away from ourselves, away from the world around us, to the One who made us. There are vestiges of God throughout the created order, placed there to spur us on toward the love of God. There is a kind of *contemptus mundi* tradition that would have us disparage the sensuous reality of the world around us—would prevent us from seeing it as the “theatre of God’s glory” as Calvin puts it so well in Book One of his *Institutes*. This neglect and disdain for creation shows up in certain heretical movements such as Manichaeism (to which Augustine himself was drawn as a young man), but also within the bounds of Christian orthodoxy in movements of extreme asceticism. But Augustine will have none of this. “But what do I love when I love my God?” Augustine asked. He answered:

*Not material beauty or beauty of a temporal order; not the brilliance of earthly light, so welcome to our eyes; not the sweet melody of harmony and song; not the fragrance of flowers, perfumes, and spices; not manna or honey; not limbs such as the body delights to embrace. It is not these that I love when I love my God. And yet,*

*continued, pg. 21*



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# TRENDS <<<<<<<<<<

## Are presidential tenures getting shorter?

A number of looming presidential retirements across the IABCU member schools, and another set of new presidents new in their roles already begged the question: what is causing this current pattern of leadership exits? Is the length of presidential tenures declining industry wide?

According to experts, the answer is complicated.

“Statistically, it is a fact that the current average tenure of all presidents has dropped from seven years to five years. However, this statistic suffers from what we call “right-censoring,” explained Stuart Dorsey, senior consultant with Academic Search, a firm that helps conduct executive searches for higher education and himself a former university president. “That is, it is not an average of *completed* presidential tenures. The average tenure quoted thus includes all current presidents.”

Dorsey notes that at the same time, several long-serving presidents are retiring and being replaced. But it remains to be seen how long those successors will serve.

In a recent story in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, presidents spoke about the intense pressure that Dorsey thinks is more the looming issue.

“It’s hard to be a leader,” says Sian Leah Beilock, president at Dartmouth College. “It takes a toll on all of us men-

tally and physically. We’re making tough decisions that not everyone always agrees with. We have to be okay [with] not always being liked, not always being able to fully explain or defend every aspect of what we’re doing.”

Dorsey said reports from the Association for Governing Boards reflect more very short presidencies, with leaders resigning or being fired after 1-3 years. He believes this could be largely attributed to new presidents “not realizing what they are getting into.”

“But if the main reason is that more presidents (like myself) are retiring younger rather than staying on for 20-25 years, that suggests that the job has become more demanding, physically and mentally,” Dorsey said.

He said these trends are changing the landscape of higher education leadership, both at public and private schools. He said, “we are seeing that new presidents are more careful these days with their initial contract... In addition, presidential compensation has increased, with financial incentives for longer tenure becoming common.” He added that the search firm is seeing no lessening of interest from good candidates for presidential vacancies, which is a positive sign for higher education.



### Hester Lectures, continued

*when I love him, it is true that I love a light of a certain kind, a voice, a perfume, a food, an embrace; but they are of the kind that I love in my inner self, when my soul is bathed in light that is not bound by space; when it listens to sound that never dies away; when it breathes fragrance that is not borne away on the wind; when it tastes food that is never consumed by the eating; when it clings to an embrace from which it is not severed by fulfillment of*

**The Conversion(s) of Augustine**

How is this perspective related to Augustine’s experience of conversion? Conversion is a turning to God that is less a punctiliar moment and more a process, a pilgrimage. Augustine started on his pilgrimage toward God by reading an old Roman philosopher named Cicero. He came across a line in Cicero’s treatise *Hortensius* in which Cicero argues there exists a telos, a meaning, a purpose, beyond

*desire. This is what I love when I love my God.*

riches, beyond fame, beyond pleasure. Augustine suddenly realized there had to be something more than all that he had experienced in the things of this world—more than gold, more than glamor, more than glands. This started him on a pilgrimage to find that “more.”

Augustine went from one philosophy to another. He begins as a disciple of Cicero. He next turns to Manichaeism, a dualist religion of light and dark, good and evil, God and the devil. One reason Manichaeism

*continued, pg. 22*



“For Augustine, then, conversion is... a lifelong process of turning, or better, of being turned from the self to the soul.”

was so popular was that it had some of that mystique of the East. It is expressive, it is enchanting, almost psychedelic. Augustine was an auditor in Manichaeism for nine years. From Manichaeism, Augustine embraced skepticism, or what we call today, agnosticism, a word only coined in the nineteenth century. Finally, he realized that if there is no absolute right and wrong, how can one know that there is no absolute truth? This approach is self-defeating.

Next, he turns to Neo-Platonism with its model of transcendence. This philosophy did one very important thing for Augustine: it showed him that there had to be something beyond this life, something that offers a transcendent view of reality. But there were problems with Neo-Platonism when read alongside the Bible. There were two issues: creation and history. The Bible says that God created everything ex nihilo. Plato did not believe that. Rather, he believed that there had always been some primordial stuff that God reshaped in some way. Creation was a corrective to his Neo-Platonism. History, according to Plato, is a cycle that turns round and

round ad infinitum. The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that history has been bisected in a decisive way by the incursion of God himself into our world. That is the incarnation of John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Neo-Platonism does not have room for the God of creation and incarnation.

Augustine then moves beyond Neo-Platonism and comes at last to that moment of surrender in the garden in Milan where he turns in faith to Jesus Christ and humbly embraces the truth of the gospel. This was a supernatural work of God in his life. He was not led to that point solely by a rational process of investigation. It took something more to bring him to this moment of surrender. He had to come to the end of his rope.

For Augustine, then, conversion is not a one-time turnabout, a lightning-quick response to an altar call fervently proffered at the end of the sawdust trail in an old-time camp meeting. It is rather a lifelong process of turning, or better, of being turned from the self to the soul, from self-sufficiency and self-aggrandizement to self-expenditure, from arrogance and pride to humility and surrender. It is letting that mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus who, though he was truly divine, did not cling to the advantages of that status, but humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Or, in Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of Philippians 2 in *The Message*,

*continued, pg. 24*

Tuition and Enrollment Figures for Baptist Institutions					
Data received from IPEDS report    *self-reported, not included in IPEDS					
School Name	Tuition & Fees 2022-23	Enrollment 2022-23	School Name	Tuition & Fees 2022-23	Enrollment 2022-23
Anderson University	\$31,720	4,690	Jacksonville College	\$7,150	1,081
Baptist Health Sciences University	\$13,078	1,048	Judson University	\$30,910	1,300
Baptist University of the Americas	\$6,768	136	Louisiana Christian University	\$19,720	1,345
Baylor University	\$51,738	23,218	Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	\$9,480	4,764
Blue Mountain Christian University	\$19,280,	1,169	Mississippi College	\$21,098	5,238
Bluefield University	\$29,420	1,215	Missouri Baptist University	\$33,316	5,769
Brewton-Parker College	\$21,696	1,013	New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary	\$10,820	2,824
California Baptist University	\$38,058	13,883	North Greenville University	\$23,590	2,613
Campbell University	\$39,230	6,278	Oklahoma Baptist University	\$32,880	1,563
Campbellsville University	\$26,100	17,126	Ouachita Baptist University	\$31,180	1,894
Canadian Baptist Theological Seminary and College*	\$8405 GR \$7,033 UG	65	Samford University	\$36,725	6,140
Carson-Newman University	\$33,000	3,402	Shorter University	\$22,810	1,786
Charleston Southern University	\$29,990	4,095	Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary	\$10,234	4,477
Chowan University	\$25,880	1,056	Southwest Baptist University	\$27,038	3,331
Clear Creek Baptist Bible College	\$9,970	189	Stark College and Seminary*	\$6,750	252
Criswell College	\$13350	206	The Baptist University of Florida	\$12,450	523
Dallas Baptist University	\$35,310	5,044	The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary	\$12,000	5,520
East Texas Baptist University	\$28,910	1,811	The Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	\$9,910	3,403
Fruitland Baptist Bible College*			Truett McConnell University	\$24,440	3,023
Gardner-Webb University	\$32,200	4,376	Union University	\$36,880	3,357
Gateway Seminary*	\$7,000	2,259	University of Mary Hardin-Baylor	\$31,950	4,774
Georgetown College	\$41,600	1,756	University of Mobile	\$25,880	2,066
Hannibal-LaGrange University	\$25,600	866	University of the Cumberlands	\$9,875	25,239
Hardin-Simmons University	\$31,686	2,067	Wayland Baptist University	\$22,368	4,410
Houston Baptist University	\$36,750	5,261	William Carey University	\$14,685	7,528
Howard Payne University	\$31,650	971			



*Augustine recommends we gaze with the mind's eye on the wounds of the crucified one, that we behold the marks in the flesh of the risen one."*

### Hester Lectures, continued

*If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.*

*Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at*

*that—a crucifixion.*

Augustine did not recommend that we turn our gaze within, searching for an elusive self, but instead he recommends that we gaze with the mind's eye on the wounds of the crucified one, that we behold the marks (stigmata) in the flesh of the risen one—for in those wounds will we see the wounds of our fellow pilgrims, including the poor, the needy, hungry, thirsty, ill-clad, sick, prisoners, these icons of Christ, our fellow pilgrims with whom, and through whom we see the world through the eyes of the Savior's love.

<sup>1</sup> Hans von Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1964), 183.

<sup>2</sup> See Justo Gonzalez, *The Mestizo Augustine: A Theologian Between Two Cultures* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> James K.A. Smith, *On the Road with St. Augustine: A Real World Spirituality for Restless Hearts* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2019), 34.

<sup>4</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, transl. Sarah Ruden (New York: The Modern Library, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, 22.30.

<sup>6</sup> *Conf.* 10.7.

## Baptist schools change names

Several IABCU schools have had name changes in the recent months.

The Baptist College of Florida officially became Baptist University of Florida on Nov. 14, 2023, after two consecutive votes of the Florida Baptist Convention.

Yellowstone Christian College has a new name and mascot: the



Montana Christian College Eagles. The college also moved from Billings to Kalispell, Mont., in 2022.

The name change reflects a change in mission to reach the entire state and to more adequately reflect the location of the school.

The Baptist Health Sciences University underwent a name change from college in 2020, reflecting their growth in offering graduate degrees.