

# THE BAPTIST EDUCATOR



News Journal of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities



## Honoring Commitment

*Vol. 88, No. 1, Spring 2024*



## Annual Meeting coming

The 2024 Annual Meeting of the IABCU will feature valuable updates from the nation's capital that impact all schools from keynote speaker Sarah Flanagan.

From FAFSA delays to financial transparency requirements, new overtime rules, Title IX mandates, and campus unrest to the potential impacts of the looming presidential election, it is safe to say that American higher education is in a state of disruption and uncertainty. Nowhere is that more evident than in Washington, D.C., as our elected officials and federal agencies interact to consider our collective way forward.

All IABCU members are impacted daily by these outcomes and those attending the Annual Meeting will have the opportunity to hear and interact with one of the most knowledgeable and experienced governmental relations experts in the nation in Flanagan.

Flanagan effectively serves our independent higher education sector in our nation's capital through her work at the National Association of



Independent Colleges and Universities. She directs a comprehensive governmental relations effort focused on issues of government regulation, student financial assistance, and tax policy in coordination with NAICU's related state associations. During her tenure at NAICU, Flanagan has been instrumental in a number of successful policy efforts. Flanagan has an extensive background in higher education policy, education, and the federal government.

**Dr. Perry Glanzer** will also be a featured speaker at the meeting. Glanzer is a professor of Educational



Foundations at Baylor University and a Resident Scholar with the Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion. His lectures will include "The State of Christian Higher Educa-

tion: Our Strengths and Challenges" and "Christ-Animated Learning: Overcoming the Two-Spheres Baptist Temptation."

Meeting registration can be accessed [here](#). Reservations at the conference hotel can be made directly at [this link](#).



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**Cover image:** Dr. Gary Cook, chancellor at Dallas Baptist University, presents a diploma to a DBU graduate at a commencement service. *File photo by Dallas Baptist University*



## Redesigned website debuts in early June

The website for the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities is undergoing a redesign aimed to help members and others better navigate the content within and to refresh the dated design.

"We wanted to both freshen the look to reflect current website standards and to reconfigure the site to be easier to browse and more intuitively find the information needed about our organization and what it has to offer," said executive secretary Laurie Hall, noting the organization enlisted 5 Degrees Branding to execute the redesign.

The new site, which will be live in time to introduce at the 2024 IABCU Annual Meeting June 2-4, will have a

home page (pictured above) that will include a simple header menu, clear links to mission and purpose, and a rotating feature of member institutions with links to those institutions. Continuing down the home page, one will find button links to the Career Center where IABCU members can post their employment opportunities at no cost, the Annual Meeting page, access to *The Baptist Educator* and archives, as well as a new page that will include our auxiliary groups like the National Association of Baptist Enrollment Professionals (NABEP). All of this is accessible through a single-scroll home page for easy mobile browsing to reflect the current trend in internet use and mobile devices.



### Member Schools

- Baptist University of Florida
- Baptist Health Sciences University
- Baylor University
- Blue Mountain Christian University
- Bluefield University
- California Baptist University
- Campbell University
- Campbellsville University
- Canadian Baptist Theological Seminary and College
- Carson-Newman University
- Charleston Southern University
- Clear Creek Baptist Bible College
- Criswell College
- Dallas Baptist University
- East Texas Baptist University
- Fruitland Baptist Bible College
- Gateway Seminary
- Hardin-Simmons University
- Howard Payne University
- Jacksonville College
- Louisiana Christian University
- Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Mississippi College
- Missouri Baptist University
- Montana Christian College
- New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
- North Greenville University
- Oklahoma Baptist University
- Ouachita Baptist University
- Queensland University of Haiti
- Samford University
- Shorter University
- Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Stark College and Seminary
- Union University
- University of the Cumberland
- Univ of Mary Hardin-Baylor
- Wayland Baptist University
- William Carey University
- Williams Baptist University



# Leadership Changes

## Board, university leaders changing

Along with leadership changes across our institutions, IABCU is experiencing unexpected leadership changes in our board officers.

President/chairman **Dr. Rick Brewer** retired from Louisiana Christian University (see story below) effective April 15 and was no longer able to serve as our chair, so vice-chair **Dr. Gene Fant** agreed to finish his term that ends in June. Dr. Brewer has been a strong supporter of IABCU and served on the board of directors since 2018. Dr. Fant, president of North Greenville University, began his service on the board in 2022 and stepped into the vice chair role this past June at the annual meeting.

Dr. Mike Hardin, presently serving as secretary of the IABCU board after serving two terms as the treasurer and serving on the board for the past seven years, will



Dr. Gene Fant

also be stepping down from his role (see story below) after a position change at Samford. A replacement will also be needed for Dr. Keith Elder, who left Mississippi College and has been on the board for three years.

Changes in presidencies and other cabinet roles have dotted the headlines at various IABCU schools during the spring.

**Dr. Adam Groza** was named the eighth president of Gateway Seminary with a term to begin May 13.

Dr. Groza holds a bachelor's degree from Northern Arizona University and a Master of Divinity degree from The Master's Seminary in California. He also has a master's degree in theology and a PhD from Southwestern Seminary, where he also served as director of admissions.



Dr. Adam Groza

He joined the Gateway staff in 2010 as vice president for enrollment and student service and is an associate professor of philosophy of religion.

"I came back to California in 2010 to be part of Gateway because I believe raising ministry leaders in the western U.S. is a necessity for Southern Baptists," said Dr. Groza. "I still believe in this mission, and I am humbled to be entrusted with this responsibility."

**Dr. Donna Hedgepath** was appointed the first woman to lead Wayland Baptist University in January, set to officially take office July 1 following the retirement of **Dr. Bobby Hall**, who was recently named President Emeritus by the Wayland Board of Trustees and as such will continue to serve as an IABCU board member. Dr. Hall has been a longtime active member of IABCU as Way-

land's Executive Vice President and Provost and after becoming president of Wayland served on the board as the vice chair and chairman.

"I have always believed it to be very important, for senior administrators, especially presidents, to serve the profession and the Baptist constituency through organizations like the IABCU," said Hall. "Those who serve and engage fully with this organization will benefit themselves, their institutions, and Christian higher education. This has certainly been my experience and I am thankful that I will be able to continue to serve."

Dr. Hedgepath currently serves as Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at Campbellsville University in Campbellsville, Ken.

"It is a tremendous privilege to be invited to lead Wayland Baptist University," Dr. Hedgepath said. "To serve this institution is an extraordinary opportunity. Academics have played a major role in my career as an educator, department dean, vice president, and provost. Using my experience, I am



Dr. Bobby Hall

excited to lead the faculty and staff as we build on the excellent foundation established here at Wayland."

During her time as provost at Campbellsville University, enrollment at the school's multiple campuses grew from 4,000 to 12,000 students. She helped develop dozens of degree programs, academic minors and trade certification programs and also supervised extension campuses at the school.

Dr. Hedgepath earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Campbellsville University and a Ph.D. in music education from the University of Kentucky.

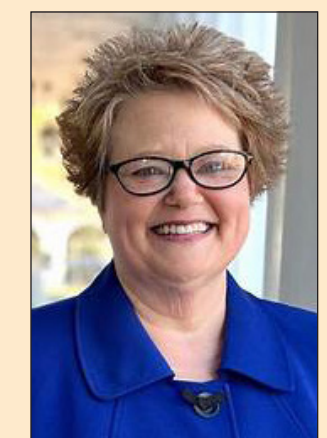
**Dr. Rosemary Thomas** was named the 24th president at Chowan University in December, taking office on March 1 as the first female to hold the position. Dr. Thomas comes to Chowan from Davis and Elkins College, where she served as executive vice president after serving as vice president for enrollment management and institutional advancement. In that first



Dr. Donna Hedgepath

role, she successfully implemented a campus-wide retention initiative and was vital in completing a \$100M fundraising campaign.

"I see the future of this institution as being very bright and transformative for the students as well as the greater community," said Dr. Thomas. "Successful higher education institutions of today require unprecedented dedication, collaboration, vision, and courage – I have seen first-hand all of these attributes and many more in the faculty and staff of this celebrated Christian university."



Dr. Rosemary Thomas

She holds degrees from Clemson University, the University of South Carolina and West Virginia University, in her home state.

As a nationally recognized speaker and workshop leader, Dr. Thomas has shared her expertise on board relations, volunteer management, fundraising, and marketing strategies. Her focus on leadership development has been instrumental in shaping the lives of leaders from all walks of life.

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*“Successful higher education institutions of today require unprecedented dedication, collaboration, vision and courage.”*

*~ Dr. Rosemary Thomas*



# Leadership changes, continued

**Dr. David Olive**, who announced his retirement from Bluefield University in the fall,

was named Chancellor at the school beginning January 1, 2024.

In that role, he remains an ambassador of the university he has served since 2007.

Following his retirement on June 30, Dr. Olive is committed to continue support of the mission of the university in a different capacity.

"As I shared in my announcement at the beginning of the academic year, Kathryn and I will always be two of Bluefield University's greatest cheerleaders," said Dr. Olive.

"We look forward to continuing our support of this venerable institution in the years ahead."

As of January



*Dr. David Olive*

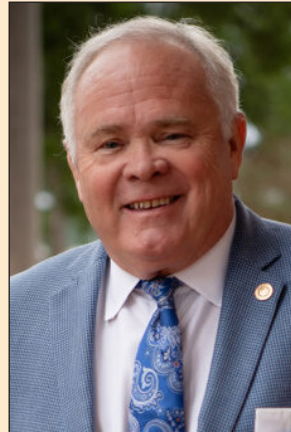


*Dr. Michael Salmeier*

1, **Dr. Michael Salmeier**, Provost of the University, will assume the title and responsibilities of Interim President and Provost of Bluefield. Over the past year, Dr. Salmeier has provided leadership in the area of academics on campus and will now combine that with the Office of the President.

**Dr. Rick Brewer** has served as president at Louisiana Christian for the past nine years. He announced his retirement from higher education administration in March with plans to join Master's Academy in Vero Beach, Fla., as Head of School, a move he said would put his family closer to aging parents.

Since Dr. Brewer's tenure began in March 2015, LCU has added four graduate programs, added the C.S. Lewis Honors Program and established academic partnerships with Louisiana Tech University and community and technical colleges statewide. Under Dr. Brewer's leadership, the university has raised



*Dr. Rick Brewer*

more than \$50 million from more than 3,000 donors.

He established many additional scholarship programs, implemented flat-rate tuition, and addressed over \$40 million in deferred maintenance and campus refurbishment. Additionally, he oversaw the addition of more than \$5 million in new technology, lights, cameras and classroom equipment.

"As I reflect on the past nine years serving the Louisiana Christian University 'family' and the churches and pastors of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, I marvel at the work of the Lord in significant and transformational ways in and through the university," Dr. Brewer said.

**Dr. Keith Elder**, who previously served as executive vice president and provost at Mississippi College, took office as the 22nd president at Saint Xavier University, a private Catholic school in Chicago, on March 1, 2024.

Dr. Elder holds bachelor's and master's degrees in public health and public adminis-



*Dr. Keith Elder*

*"So many times, it's been pitted that you can't be an intellectual and a Christian at the same time, but the truth is you can be both."*

*~ Dr. Michael Hardin*

tration from the University of Alabama Birmingham. He earned his Ph.D. in policy sciences from the University of Maryland Baltimore. He has spent many years in Christian education, also serving as professor and founding dean of the School of Public Health at Samford University.

A noted scholar in the field of public health, Dr. Elder has conducted various studies on the health care industry, including how to reduce disparities and inequities in the medical sphere. He currently serves on the editorial board of the *American Journal on Public Health*.

**Dr. Mike Hardin**, provost at Samford University, stepped down after nine years of leadership at the Alabama school and will be joining its faculty in January following a brief sabbatical. He is a leading scholar in analytics and knowledge discovery, data visualization, and data management and collection methodologies.

Coming into the provost role in 2015, Dr. Hardin believes his biggest contributions were recruiting "many incredible faculty" and leading impactful initiatives that combined faith and

learning.

"So many times, it's been pitted that you can't be an intellectual and a Christian at the same time, but the truth is you can be both," said Dr. Hardin. "I am really proud of the work we've done to navigate through that and to ask questions about what it really means to be a Christ-centered university."

**Dr. Jeff Iorg**, who retired as president of Gateway Seminary in the fall, was named President/CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee and will take office on May 13.

A graduate of Hardin-Simmons University, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southwestern Seminary, Dr. Iorg came to Gateway in 2004 and was recently honored there for 20 years of service as president.



*Dr. Michael Hardin*



*Dr. Jeff Iorg*

He is excited about the new convention role but said he will miss connecting with IABCU.

"The Baptist college and university system is a gift from

God! I am delighted to have been part of IABCU for the past 20 years, and to have served on the Board for two terms. As a Baptist college graduate, I look forward to promoting this important part of our cooperative work as I serve at the SBC Executive Committee," said Dr. Iorg. "I am grateful for 20 wonderful years as President of Gateway Seminary, including our involvement with IABCU. I am confident our new president, Dr. Adam Groza, will continue the good relationships Gateway has with colleges across the country."

*Have a leadership change to share? Email [Laurie.Hall@baptistschools.org](mailto:Laurie.Hall@baptistschools.org).*



## Honoring Leadership

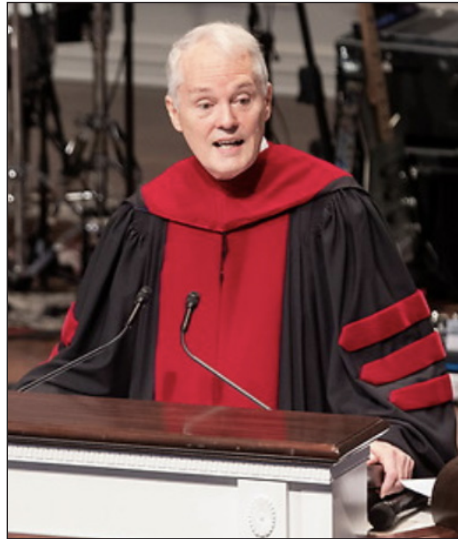
# Cook to receive Johnson Award

Dr. Gary Cook, chancellor at Dallas Baptist University, will receive the distinguished Charles D. Johnson Outstanding Educator Award at the IABCU Annual Meeting in June.

The award is given to a person that has demonstrated a commitment to Christian higher education through Baptist-related institutions. The award recognizes Charles D. Johnson, who authored *Higher Education of Southern Baptists* and who served as chairman of the Southern Baptist Education Commission from 1932 to 1953. Johnson worked as professor, dean and president at four schools, including Ouchita Baptist University, Blue Mountain College and Baylor University.

Cook earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Baylor University, a Master of Arts in Aging Studies from the University of North Texas, a Master of Divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Cook also received an Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Dallas Baptist University.

Cook served as pastor at First Baptist Church in McGregor before taking administrative staff roles at Baylor University. Cook served for ten years and taught at least one class each semester. His responsibilities at Baylor included serving as Administrative Coordinator of the Gerontology



Program, Assistant Chaplain, Director of Denominational and Community Relations, and Special Assistant to the President for Denominational Relations.

He was elected President at Dallas Baptist in April 1988 and served for twenty-eight years as president until June 2016. The University grew from 1,859 students in the fall of 1987 to 5,319 in the fall of 2015. The University's net assets grew from \$19.9 million to \$171.5 million, and the University finished each fiscal year in the black for 28 years.

The campus expanded from 200 acres to 292 acres. Average SAT scores for incoming DBU freshmen were raised from 887 in 1992 to 1118 in 2015. In addition, by 2015, 80% of full-time faculty had doctorates or terminal degrees, compared to 52% in 1988.

During his tenure, the number of master's degree programs increased from three in 1988 to 28, while graduate enrollment increased from 187 in the fall of 1987 to 2,004 in the fall of 2015. A new Ph.D. in Leadership Studies program began in the summer of 2005, and a new Ed.D. in Educational Leadership began in the fall of 2005. In the spring of 2004, the DBU board of trustees voted to name a new academic division of the University the Gary Cook Graduate School of Leadership.

The DBU Board appointed him chancellor in 2016 and he has held that position since.

Cook has received many honors throughout his career, including distinguished alumni awards from Baylor, and Southwestern and Southern seminaries.

In addition to his work with DBU, Cook has served with the Baptist General Convention of Texas and with the Baptist World Alliance, as chairman of the IABCU and chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Baylor University Medical Center and a member of the International Board of Directors for Habitat for Humanity. He is a long-time member of Park Cities Baptist Church, where he serves as a deacon, and the Rotary Club.

Cook and his late wife, Sheila, have two adult sons and three grandchildren.



## Empowering Your Mission

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# Legal wins protect Christian employers

Christian Employers Alliance (CEA) has filed and won two lawsuits to protect their members from federal mandates which violate their Christian Values. As a result of these victories, present and future members of CEA are guaranteed exemptions from federal regulations that require employers to provide coverage for two areas of benefits in their group health plan.

The first exemption is for abortion-causing drugs and devices (“abortifacient services”). Pursuant to this legal victory, employers may request their insurer to remove all abortifacient services from their sponsored health plan. Specifically, they may ask that the insurer insert the following statement in their plan document and that it should apply to all plan services, whether those services are under the policy or otherwise offered alongside the policy to beneficiaries:

“Emergency contraceptives (such as Plan B and Ella), any abortifacients, or any IUDs for contraceptive use are not covered.”

Under the Affordable Care Act and related regulations, group health plans must provide coverage for abortifacient services without cost sharing (the “abortifacient mandate”). Christian businesses and organizations cannot provide this coverage without violating their Christian values.

To protect member companies, CEA filed and won a lawsuit against the abortifacient mandate: *Christian Employers Alliance v. Azar*, No. 3:16-cv-309 (D.N.D.). On May 15, 2019, the Court granted the CEA, its members, and their insurers permanent injunctive and declaratory relief from the mandate. Specifically, the Court permanently enjoined

the federal government from enforcing the abortifacient mandate or assessing penalties or fines against the CEA “and its members, their health plans, and their insurers and third-party administrators.”

The second exemption is for any services or procedures rendered on the basis of gender identity, gender reassignment, or gender transition. Pursuant to this exemption, CEA members may request their insurer to remove all gender reassignment services or procedures from their sponsored plan and confirm any necessary changes to their plan in writing. Specifically, they may request their insurer to insert the following in their plan document:

“Services or procedures rendered on the basis of gender identity, gender reassignment, or gender transition, including hormone treatment, surgical procedures, and transgender treatment/ sex therapy are not covered.”

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has determined that failure to cover these treatments, procedures, and services in an employer health plan is a violation of Title VII’s prohibition against discrimination on the basis of sex. Additionally, under section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act and related regulations, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requires any medical provider who receives federal funding to perform gender transition surgeries, procedures, counseling, and treatments in violation of their medical judgment and religious beliefs, and to compel and restrict those providers’ speech concerning these activities.

CEA filed and won a lawsuit against the transgender mandates: *Christian Employers Alliance v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*, No. 1:21-cv-



Shannon Royce, CEA President

195 (D.N.D.). On March 4, 2024, the Court granted the CEA, its members, and their insurers permanent injunctive and declaratory relief from the mandates.

Specifically, the Court permanently enjoined the federal government “from interpreting or enforcing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq., or any implementing regulations thereto against CEA or its present or future members, or anyone acting in concert or participation with them, and their respective health plans and any insurers or TPAs in connection with such health plans, in a manner that would require them to provide insurance coverage for gender-transition procedures in those plans, including by denying federal financial assistance because of their failure to provide insurance coverage for such procedures or by otherwise pursuing, charging, or assessing any penalties, fines, assessments, investigations, or other enforcement actions.”

Additionally, the Court “permanently enjoined HHS... from interpreting or enforcing Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, 42 U.S.C. § 18116(a), or any

implementing regulations thereto against CEA or its present or future members, or anyone acting in concert or participation with them, and their respective health plans and any insurers or TPAs in connection with such health plans, in a manner that would require them to perform or provide insurance coverage for gender-transition procedures, including by denying federal financial assistance because of their failure to perform or provide insurance coverage for such procedures or by otherwise pursuing, charging, or assessing any penalties, fines, assessments, investigations, or other enforcement actions.”

Concisely and practically speaking, this means privately held Christian-owned businesses and organizations

would gain tremendous legal protections over their healthcare plan should they become members of the CEA and can request that their insurer and their third-party administrator remove abortifacient and transgender services from their healthcare plan and not fear enforcement actions from the EEOC or HHS, should their plans not have protections under a “church plan” for example.

Additionally, Christian-owned businesses can further their values and help contain health plan costs through Covenant Choice, a Group Stop Loss Captive program, through CEA, offering a community of private, like-minded employers to bring transparency, strength in numbers, cost-containment solutions, and fierce protection of religious freedoms to

their self-funded healthcare plans.

Covenant Choice was developed in cooperation with Berkley Accident and Health, a leading provider of Stop Loss Group Captive programs. For more than 15 years, Berkley has provided reliable health funding solutions to companies nationwide. IABCU members can join CEA at a reduced rate to receive these recent legal protections, as well as access the Covenant Choice Captive for cost containment solutions for self-funded health plans.

To learn more about this collaboration, please join us for a webinar on June 18, 2024, at 2 pm CST. We will be sending you an email invite soon to this informative event co-hosted by CEA, Covenant Choice, and IABCU.

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# St. Augustine: Ripple Effect on Scholars

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



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

Augustine's influence is so vast that we could write a whole book just about people who were deeply influenced by him. But I would pick out three that I think are especially important as we reflect upon the Great Tradition of Christian education: Boethius, Cassiodorus, and Patrick.

First, Boethius. Who was he? His full name was Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius. The more names you had, the higher you were esteemed in the Roman hierarchy. He had been born an orphan but was adopted by a very wealthy and noble family in Rome, where he received the very best education possible for his time, becoming a philosopher, knowing the classics backwards and forwards. He emerged as one of the last public intellectuals in the crumbling Roman Empire. Boethius later became an administrator, holding a highly valued and influential position in the court of Theodoric, an Ostrogothic Arian emperor. At this time Arianism was still a very powerful force in the Roman Empire, and most Ostrogothic rulers adhered to Arianism. Because of his

family connection and his innate ability, Boethius was chosen to serve in the imperial government in a high-ranking position.

One remarkable aspect of Boethius is that he was equally fluent in both Latin and Greek, and his life's ambition was to translate all of Plato and all of Aristotle from Greek into Latin. His aim was to demonstrate how the thought of these two classic philosophers could be harmonized. Boethius advocated for the compatibility of the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, suggesting that one did not have to choose between the "Augustine train" or the "Plato train" versus the "Aristotle train." Instead, he believed that consensus was possible: he proposed that individuals could embrace these diverse philosophies simultaneously.

Boethius set forth a pattern of learning that would form the heart of scholasticism and medieval education for over a millennium. This earned him the title of "the last of the Romans and the first of the scholastics." He popularized the famous division of the seven liberal arts into the Trivium (the lower division comprising grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the Quadrivium (the higher division consisting of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). Although he did not invent

this division, his influence gave it lasting currency. Boethius's translations of Aristotle's works, particularly his *Categories* and *On Interpretation*, were instrumental in transmitting Aristotle's ideas to medieval scholars. Much of the knowledge about Aristotle available to medieval Europe stemmed from Boethius's translations, predating the later rediscovery of Aristotle by Muslim scholars. Boethius's impact on medieval thought was profound, as he almost single-handedly taught the Middle Ages how to think, emphasizing logic and language as essential tools of intellectual inquiry.

Intellectualism is a deadly plague to the human soul left to itself. It should never be indulged but there is an irreducible intellectual dimension of the Christian faith, rooted in what I dare say is the key verse for rightly understanding the entire New Testament, John 1:14—"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Someone has said that everything Boethius wrote, he wrote with Saint Augustine looking over his shoulder. His treatise on logic and all of his works on the liberal arts can be interpreted as a commentary on these lines from Saint Augustine, which I consider to be among the finest on grappling with the interplay of faith and reason, or reason and revelation, as it is often termed. Augustine said, "No one believes anything unless one first thought it believable. Everything that is believed is believed after being preceded by thought. Everyone who believes thinks, thinks in believing, and believes in thinking." Here, we see the germ of that notion that would

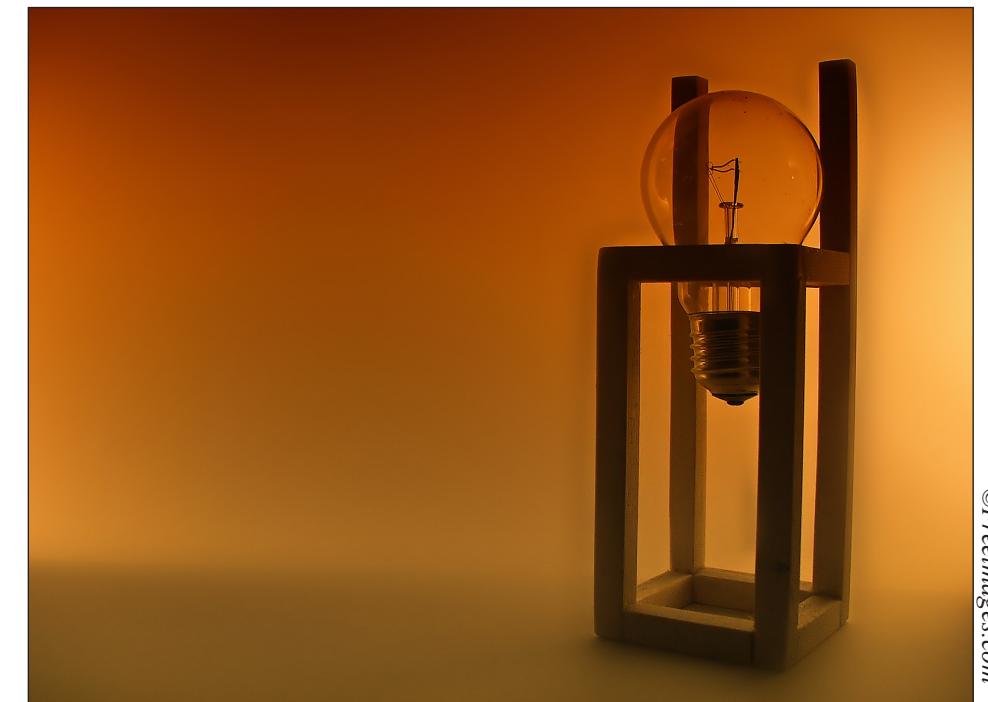
become particularly famous in the Middle Ages, yet it's already evident here in Saint Augustine: faith in search of understanding: *fides quaerens intellectum*.

All three words—faith, seeking, and understanding—are significant, and their sequence matters greatly, as Anselm articulates in the Middle Ages. Faith. Faith is not credulity, as Augustine clarifies, "We believe through thinking, and we think in believing."<sup>1</sup> These are intertwined and coinherent. We commence with faith, and then we seek—seeking, searching, *quaerens* in Latin. Are we merely passing through, or are we earnestly seeking understanding? However, once understanding dawns, if it ever does in this life, it isn't passive. It doesn't remain static or tranquil. It pushes forward, onward, and upward toward the final, ultimate

vision, as Dante eloquently describes it—the beatific vision. This is the goal of faith in search of understanding leading toward vision. Boethius provides us with a framework for thinking along these lines as we transition from the early patristic era to the Middle Ages.

Now I have discussed Boethius at length without mentioning his most renowned work, *The Consolation of Philosophy*. I would like to briefly touch upon it because it holds immense significance. I first encountered Boethius when I was an undergraduate philosophy student at my state university. Our professor wisely assigned us to read this work, which is considered Boethius's greatest masterpiece. This work has been widely read over

*continued, pg. 16*



*"Intellectualism is a deadly plague to the human soul left to itself."*





Jaime Jordan

# Free advice can keep universities protected

I learned all I know about commodity trading by watching the 1983 comedy “Trading Places,” starring Eddie Murphy and a cast packed with past and future stars. As I recall, the movie’s lesson in commodity trading was to buy low and sell high. That may not be complicated, but it sure was fun to watch in action.

If there is one commodity that always seems to sell cheaper than a penny stock, it is free advice. It is amazing how much more valuable advice seems to be when you have to pay for it. That goes for legal advice, medical advice, investment advice, relationship advice, and host of other counsel. Free advice is too often trivialized as being worth exactly what it cost - nothing.

At the risk of having this column fly right out of your hands and into the trash can (or, more likely these days, the Deleted folder), I’m offering free advice today. The goal of today’s advice is to help you avoid trouble at your institution - trouble that may come in the form of litigation, a bad mark on an employee evaluation, or what my dad used to call a good ole fashioned gluteal mastication – kinda.

**Pay attention to compliance training.** Some federal laws require schools to train employees so they will know what the law expects of them and how to comply. Some laws do not expressly require training, but failing to train employees to apply them may mean that the school is not engaging in best practices.

Good training is a lot more than checking the “done that” box. Employees who are well-trained are in a much better position to help students. They can protect students’ rights, answer their questions correctly, or even just guide students to the right place to find the answer. Well-trained employees will know their limitations - when they can be truly helpful and when they need to recognize that the complexities involved in an issue require it to be kicked over to someone who is even better trained. And if you are a well-trained employee, you are less likely to wind up on a witness stand explaining to a guy like me why you violated a law and injured his client.

For those of you who provide training, don’t just mail it in. Do what you can to make it relevant and to help those being trained understand why the training is important. Don’t waste your time and theirs with fluff.

The next time you find yourself in a training session, get engaged! Your institution is trying to help you as well as help itself. No less a personage than Thomas Jefferson wrote, “Knowledge is power, knowledge is safety, and knowledge is happiness.”

**Don’t go it alone - use your community.** One of my best clients frequently calls me for what she calls “a sanity check.” She is experienced, capable, and very smart, but she recognizes that we all have blind spots, and every situation is unique. It takes only a moment to confirm that the path you are about to blast down is, in fact,

the correct path. On the other hand, putting toothpaste back in the tube is a whole ‘nother thing.

Two examples where this can be critically important are grade appeals and disability accommodations. Students (or their parents) may have spent tens of thousands of dollars in a professional program, and dismissal may hang on a single disputed exam grade. Such a situation has motivated many a student to hire legal counsel to mount a challenge. Grade appeals, if handled consistently and properly, can be a high-percentage win for the institution. On the other hand, if an appeal is mishandled, a jury can be very sympathetic to the student who has spent so much money only to be turned away just short of getting a degree. Legal counsel should be called in early for these high-stakes appeals.

Disability accommodations also require a trained touch. Accommodation requests must be handled by the institution under a very particular protocol. Faculty and staff are generally not trained to do that. If an accommodation request is not handled correctly, or not handled confidentially, the institution frequently must clean up the mess, sometimes at great expense or embarrassment.

My mentor talks about clients who want him to review a contract they have just signed, “to make sure it’s okay.” Don’t be that person. When you

are confronted with a situation that is new or where the stakes could be high, run your plan past your general counsel or HR before you put it in action. Too many times the lawsuit is already filed before I get to see that email to a student or employee (whom I like to call “Future Plaintiff”) which should never have graced the “Sent” folder. A distressingly large number of folks tend to forget the proper order for the words, “Fire! Ready! Aim!”

**Thou shalt follow thy policy.** When a client calls me (often the same day they get a letter from Future Plaintiff’s lawyer), the first question I will probably ask is, “Is there a policy covering this?” What I am longing to hear is, “Yes there is, and we followed it precisely.” Sadly my life has, in this regard, been one of many disappointments.

Policies do not spring up around you like kudzu vines. A good policy is a carefully crafted roadmap through the wilderness. It will help you navigate a situation in a way that is the most likely to be successful and the least likely to put gold coins in the pocket of Future Plaintiff’s lawyer.

The thing that really warms the heart of Future Plaintiff’s lawyer is to discover the institution had a policy that applied to Future Plaintiff’s situation, but the policy was not followed. My free advice is, always review the poli-

cy one more time, every time you need to apply it.

**Prepare.** This may sound like it doesn’t need to be said, but believe me, it does. My best clients never go into a meeting which could have significant legal consequences without a clear plan and even a script for the meeting. Meetings with significant legal consequences include interviewing candidates, disciplining employees, and (especially) terminations.

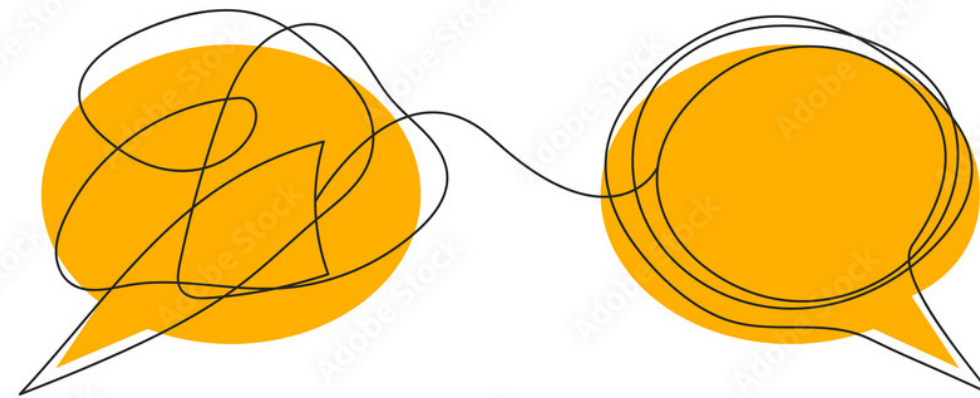
I can’t over-emphasize the importance of a script. A script can be reviewed in advance by legal counsel and prevent the other party (who longs to become Future Plaintiff) from leaving your office with the smoking gun they will use on you in front of the jury. A script can help you control what you are going to say and later on help you prove what you did say when Future Plaintiff’s lawyer gets you on the stand.

One of my favorite (true) stories about preparation is the tale of a lawyer who grabbed a new associate by the arm for a fast dash to the courthouse where he was late to argue a motion before the judge. “Do you have your speech ready?” the associate asked. “No time!” said the running lawyer. “I’ll have to shoot from the seat of my pants.” I wonder how that went.

“Legal Notes” is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information on legal issues facing Baptist-related higher education. It is provided with the understanding that the publisher and editors are not engaged in rendering legal counsel. “Legal Notes” is not intended as a substitute for the services of a legal professional. If your institution needs legal counsel, a competent attorney should be consulted.

## Legal Briefs

“It’s amazing how much more valuable advice seems to be when you have to pay for it.”





## Hester Lectures, continued

the centuries, attracting readers and commentators like Dante and Thomas Aquinas. It has been translated more times than almost any other book from late antiquity. It was initially translated into English by King Alfred the Great and later by the remarkably scholarly Queen Elizabeth I during the Renaissance. Even Geoffrey Chaucer, the great English poet, translated it earlier. There must be something about *The Consolation of Philosophy* that has attracted the attention of such esteemed individuals, making it a formative work for the Great Tradition.

This work was penned near the end of Boethius's life while he was imprisoned in Pavia, falsely accused of treason. It was the last piece he wrote before facing brutal torture and death. *The Consolation of Philosophy* is a beautiful and poetic treatise on the mystery of divine providence. Like the

Book of Esther in the Old Testament, it does not anywhere contain the word "God" nor does it explicitly express Christian doctrine, or dogma. Some scholars have argued that this absence reveals a secular Boethius, positing that Boethius's Christianity was merely a masquerade, a facade for his true secular perspective.

But Boethius demonstrates himself to be a devout orthodox Christian, not only in *The Consolation of Philosophy*, though one could argue about that too, but primarily in his five theological treatises. These include *De Fide Catolica*, "On the Catholic Faith," which upholds the authority of both the Old and New Testaments, affirms the Virgin birth, the miracles of Jesus, and the central Trinitarian and Christological consensus of the early church. Additionally, he acknowledges Augustine by condemning Pelagianism

and its excessive emphasis on human responsibility at the expense of divine grace.

But *The Consolation of Philosophy* serves a different purpose. That is why I believe he approached it the way he did. It is somewhat akin to Friedrich Schliermacher's book on speeches about

Christianity intended to convince its cultured despisers. These are individuals who are unlikely to respond to traditional Christian teachings or to a simple evangelistic appeal as, for example, the Four Spiritual Laws. Therefore, a different approach is required. I think that is what Boethius accomplishes in this mysterious and remarkable book. It resonates with a theme articulated clearly in Book One of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, namely the fragility, uncertainty, and utter contingency of the human condition.

While in prison, Boethius is visited as in a dream by a mystical character, Lady Philosophy who is frequently referred to as the grey-eyed lady. Some interpreters suggest that she is a slightly Christianized version of Minerva or Athena, the goddess of wisdom. Lady Philosophy's first action is to dismiss the Muses, who have been conversing with Boethius and leading him deeper into self-pity. "Be gone," she says to them. Then she assumes a therapeutic role, gradually nursing Boethius back to health while reminding him of the vanity of pursuing the things to which he had given so much of his life. Despite its length, consider this quotation from Boethius and what Lady Philosophy is imparting to him amidst the most critical crisis of his life, that eventually leads to his torture and execution:

*All these paths we believe might lead to happiness are false trails that*

*cannot take us where we truly wish to go. Do you want to pile up large sums of money? Where will you get it if not from those who already have it? Do you want honors? How will you obtain them except by begging for them from those who cannot bestow them? Thereby becoming not the proud man you wanted to be, but a suppliant amender. You want power? Okay, you will lie awake at night worrying about your subject's treachery. You want glory and fame? You will be the toy of vicissitude trying to figure out the mood of the people and drawn this way and that by their fickle preferences. You want pleasure. You will become the servant of your body which you know to be both frail and base. The human body can be beautiful, but its beauty passes away like the spring flowers. And however beautiful a human body may be, that beauty can be destroyed in the course of a three-day fever.<sup>2</sup>*

For Boethius, the darkness of the world without—the crumbling Roman Empire—is matched by an even deeper darkness within. The challenge is to see ourselves in the light of eternal truth, beauty, and goodness.

One more point to consider: Boethius was not a monk, nor a priest, nor a bishop like Augustine. He was a layperson who had a family, children, and a wife. Perhaps that is why *The Consolation of Philosophy* has been particularly beloved through the ages by laypeople, including doctors, lawyers, and civil servants like Sir Thomas

More who read the book while imprisoned in the Tower of London under the command of Henry VIII. Despite facing trial and execution, akin to Boethius, he uttered in his final words, "I remain the King's good servant, but God's first." Such documents, like *The Consolation of Philosophy*, should be essential readings for our students. I am grateful that my undergraduate philosophy teacher introduced me to this work, which I have revisited numerous times in my life. I urge you to consider it as a vital part of the great tradition, something that we must pass on to the rising generation.

Cassiodorus, though not as famous as Augustine or even Boethius, was a contemporary and colleague of Boethius. He also served under Theodoric, the emperor of the Ostrogothic Empire. The reason we have *The Consolation of Philosophy* is that Cassiodorus preserved it after Boethius's death in the prison in Pavia. Cassiodorus came to a turning point in his own life, which you could call a conversion of sorts. He had spent the first part of his life as a learned scholar, primarily a historian recounting the story of the Ostrogothic kingdoms. A kind of forerunner of Erasmus, he sought to promote unity and peace, striving to end old enmities. This was his purpose, and he worked tirelessly as an administrator in the Roman Empire alongside Boethius. However,  
*continued, pg. 18*



*Cassiodorus was a forerunner of Erasmus and sought to promote unity and peace."*





“Cassiodorus believed that even in something as seemingly trivial and mundane as proper spelling, God could be glorified.”



there came a moment where this work no longer satisfied the deepest longings of his heart. He relinquished all the honors bestowed upon him from serving the king and emperor and returned to his birthplace, Calabria, located in the south of Italy, near the tip of the boot-shaped peninsula. It is a remote place, one you would not visit unless you had a reason to be there.

And there, in his native land where he was born and raised, Cassiodorus establishes a community. It is a community of learning and worship, resembling what would later be called a monastic community during the Middle Ages. This occurs around the same period when Saint Benedict of Nursia is creating Benedictine monasticism. However, there were some distinctions, notably the enormous emphasis Cassiodorus places on hospitality: Hospitality extended to strangers, exiles, and pilgrims seeking refuge and rest. It was a retreat center. Nestled beside the beautiful Ionian Sea, the souls gathered by Cassiodorus in his community engaged in Scripture reading. This activity served as the vital heartbeat of their daily lives. It

was a community dedicated to the reading of Scripture, to meditation, and prayer, especially prayer enriched by the reciting the Psalms. One reason why the reciting of the Psalms became so highly regarded in the Middle Ages is due to this foundation laid by Cassiodorus, who wrote commentaries on all 150 Psalms, following in this respect in the footsteps of Augustine. Cassiodorus was blessed with longevity, living to the remarkable age of 95, thereby challenging the notion that everyone in the ancient world died young! He surpassed the average lifespan, nearly reaching a century.

At the age of 93, not long before his passing, Cassiodorus embarked on writing his final book. If you've ever thought about what you would write if you could write just one more book, what would it be? Well, Cassiodorus made his choice, probably not the same as that which you or I might choose. It was a book on orthography—a subject that might seem mundane and unremarkable. If given a short span of time, would you spend it instructing others on correct spelling?

However, Cassiodorus had a broader

perspective. He believed that even in something as seemingly trivial and mundane as proper spelling, God could be glorified. He saw its inherent value under God, and in the light of eternity. It was part of his divine calling, his vocation. Consequently, to the very end, he diligently worked on this manuscript, intending to pass it on to others. Alongside this treatise on orthography, Cassiodorus amassed a collection of numerous books, gathered from far and wide thereby establishing one of the earliest recorded monastic libraries.

I want to mention briefly one other figure, Patrick. And why am I talking about him? Because he seems so out of place among these Italian scholastics: Patrick of Ireland. You know, some

books you write just because you want to. Other books you write because you are asked to. In the year 1993, I received a call one day from the Women's Missionary Union, and they asked, "Would you consider writing a biography of William Carey?" I had never thought about it. I knew what most Baptist scholars knew about Carey—that he was the father of modern missions, one of our greatest heroes, and so forth. So, I began to delve into his life and ended up writing a book called *Faithful Witness: The Life and Mission of William Carey*, which I think is still in print. Of all the books I have written, I would say that this one has had the greatest impact on my own life and understanding. To

*continued, pg. 20*

“The Great Tradition ought primarily to be about the passing on to others of that which has been entrusted to us.”



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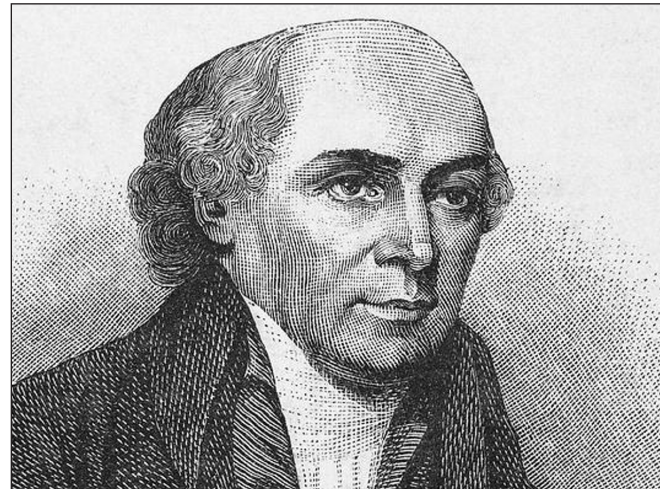
“We see unmistakably the sort of universe in which we have all along been living, and must come to terms with it.” ~ C.S. Lewis

## Hester Lectures, continued

get inside the mind, underneath the skin, and into the soul of William Carey, to understand what made him tick, that is what I was trying to answer. So, I decided to include in that biography the entire text of his famous *Enquiry*, which is one of the greatest manifestos of the modern missionary movement. I was surprised to discover that as Carey set forth his plan for carrying the gospel to the four corners of the world, that he cited as one of his predecessors St. Patrick.

One does not often put Saint Patrick and William Carey together in the same sentence: a medieval Irish Catholic and an English Baptist shoemaker turned teacher-missionary. But Carey had the idea that what he was doing, in an important way, was in continuity with what Patrick had done. Patrick stood out to Carey. Carey saw himself as continuing that message of Patrick and passing it on to others. That is really what tradition is about. I think that is why the Great Tradition ought primarily to be about the passing on to others of that which has been entrusted to us. And so, it is not only Cassiodorus who gives us these remarkable libraries that stand out, but many others as well. And going back to the Irish, going back to the Celts, some of you no doubt have been to the wonderful library in Dublin that contains the *Book of Kells*, one of the great manuscripts of all time. Here is an 11th-century scribe's poem describing writing the *Book of Kells* or some other book of a very similar nature:

*My hand aches with writing, unsteady my craft's sharp tool, its slender beak spewing bright ink, a*



*beetle dark shining draw. The God of light, streams of wisdom flow from my narrow, tanned hand, flooding the page with splashes of green leaf holly ink. My dribbly little pen scratches across the vast white vellum plain, its treasure-strewn path unending. Thus, my aching hand.*

Well, why would they do such a thing at that particular time? Why would they, with the Vikings about to descend with ferocity on Ireland, with the violence of the early Middle Ages, internal and external, with life itself on the edge, why are they doing this? Because they believed that this was their calling under God. It had intrinsic value in and of itself, and it was worth their passing on to others, although perhaps they didn't quite fully understand how significant it would become, this Great Tradition.

One of my favorite quotations from C.S. Lewis is from a sermon he gave in 1939 at Saint Mary the Virgin Church in Oxford. He was speaking to hundreds of young men who would soon be called upon to give the ultimate sacrifice for their country on the battlefields of Europe. Remember, C.S. Lewis had been a soldier in World War One. He knew something about the battle-



field, about the danger that those to whom he was preaching were about to experience. And so, he gives a sermon, really.

C.S. Lewis was a professor not a pastor, but this is not so much a lecture as a sermon, a sermon entitled "Learning in Wartime." It is a remarkable sermon. He says we feel fearful when we look at the world around us. We wish we knew what the outcome would be, but we don't. There is uncertainty. And perhaps most of all, the feeling that we will not have time to finish what we have started, what we have begun. Yet, he says, this fear and the squeamishness about not being able to finish ought to inspire us to think more deeply about why it is we do what we

do. What is the motive that gets us up in the morning and gets us to work in whatever place we work? Well, this is how C.S. Lewis ended that very famous talk:

*In ordinary times only a wise man can realize it. Now the stupidest of us knows. We see unmistakably the sort of universe in which we have all along been living, and must come to terms with it. If we had foolish un-Christian hopes about human culture, they are now shattered. If we thought we were building up a heaven on earth, if we looked for something that would turn the present world from a place of pilgrimage into a permanent city satisfying the soul of man, we are disillusioned,*

*and not a moment too soon. But if we thought that for some souls, and at some times, the life of learning, humbly offered to God, was, in its own small way, one of the appointed approaches to the Divine reality and the Divine beauty which we hope to enjoy hereafter, we can think so still.<sup>3</sup>*

He is talking to students at Oxford, who have to take an algebra exam next week. He is talking to people who wonder why are we wasting our time teaching people how to spell when the stormtroopers are on the march. And his answer is that the life of learning, offered humbly to God, is in its own small way one of the appointed approaches to the divine reality and to the divine beauty which we hope to enjoy hereafter. And if we approach it this way, we can still continue to do our work, to the praise and glory of God.

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 1.5.

<sup>2</sup> Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*

<sup>3</sup> C.S. Lewis, "Learning in War-Time" in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1980),