

THE PRESENCE OF SOUTHERN BAPTISTS in the Evangelical Theological Society AND THEIR INFLUENCE: An Interview with Dr. Köstenberger and Dean Bush



For those students who have never participated at an ETS meeting, but plan to attend this year's meeting in San Antonio, Texas, Nov. 17-19, will you explain in a few words what one should expect from such a meeting in terms of scholarship and interaction?

Dr. Köstenberger: Professional meetings such as this one provide a premier opportunity for students to learn about the academic calling. They can go and listen to the plenary addresses and paper presentations. They can browse the book tables and buy books at 50% off. They can also meet some of the scholars who write the books and, if close to graduation, interview with prospective employers. Overall, while attending such a meeting for the first time may be daunting, attendance is a must for those who are seriously pursuing an academic calling.

Dean Bush: Dr. Köstenberger is right. ETS is a professional society that exists to foster academic research, but it is friendly toward students and younger scholars.

What are some of the benefits that SEBTS students could gain from participating at an ETS meeting? I am here referring to both the opportunity of familiarizing oneself with the current theological discussions in evangelicalism and major theological figures as well as to the benefits in terms of professional opportunities that open up for the participants, especially for those who will be looking for a teaching position in the near future. Do ETS meetings provide such benefits and in what way?

Dean Bush: Through ETS I have had the opportunity to meet the best evangelical thinkers in the world. I use ETS to build relationships, keep up with the latest theological debates, look at the latest theological publications, and participate in the work of the society to foster professional growth. It is the single most important meeting I attend each year. Ph.D.

students especially would benefit from participating in the conference.

To shift the discussion towards the upcoming ETS meeting, the theme is "What is Truth?" Is there a specific reason for choosing such a topic? And what connection is there, if any, between this theme and the recent discussion concerning the orthodoxy of "Open Theism."

Dr. Köstenberger: "What is Truth?" is a topic that was chosen by the ETS executive committee several years ago. It is deliberately worded in a broad and general sense in order to engage not only the biblical disciplines but also systematic theology, hermeneutics, philosophy, ethics, and other theological disciplines. There is no intentional connection with open theism, though there is an obvious tie-in that some of the presenters at this year's meeting may intend to explore.

Dean Bush: That's right. Themes for the meetings are set several years ahead. We try to have a theme that can be approached by biblical scholars as well as theologians, historians, philosophers, and so forth. Not every paper will address the theme, but many will, and the extensive scholarly attention to truth is something you won't find at any of the non-confessional society meetings (such as AAR). There is no explicit link between this year's theme and the open theism debate. Last year's theme on "the boundaries of Evangelicalism" was probably aimed at the open theism issue. But we have used many different themes over the years. The theme usually governs the topic of the plenary sessions but not each individual paper.

Last year's ETS meeting in Atlanta focused on this theological current called "Open Theism" and on Clark Pinnock and John Sanders who are members of ETS. The decision of the Society was not to revoke their membership. However, the ETS Executive Committee, in response to a motion made by Dean Bush, is seeking to clarify the doctrinal refer-

ence to biblical inerrancy in the doctrinal statement of the Society. What are some of the main points that are being considered and how will that affect the debate over "Open Theism"?

Dr. Köstenberger: In response to Dean Bush's motion, the ETS executive committee has recently adopted a unanimous resolution that will be presented to the membership at the November meeting with a view toward proposing it, or a similar statement, as a bylaw at a subsequent meeting. The resolution reads as follows: *For the purpose of advising members regarding the intent and meaning of the reference to biblical inerrancy in the ETS Doctrinal Basis, the Society refers members to the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978). The case for biblical inerrancy rests on the absolute trustworthiness of God and Scripture's testimony to itself. A proper understanding of inerrancy takes into account the language, genres, and intent of Scripture. We reject approaches to Scripture that deny that biblical truth claims are grounded in reality.* The intent of this statement is not to revisit the "open theism" issue but to flesh out the meaning of inerrancy in the ETS Doctrinal Basis in light of concerns raised when dealing with open theism that the meaning of this clause is not adequately specific and concrete.

Dean Bush: I have been concerned that the "open theism" debate (and the failure to remove John Sanders in particular from membership) would cause some to lose confidence in the society's commitment to inerrancy. I am very pleased with the resolution that will be brought to the ETS this year, and I hope it is overwhelmingly adopted.

Can you comment on the position of Norman Geisler in ETS, knowing that he was a strong advocate of the idea that "Open Theism" poses a threat to the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture in the last year's meeting? Where do Southern Baptists stand in relation to his view?

Dr. Köstenberger: I think the resolution speaks for itself and, if adopted as a by-law by the membership in due course, sends a strong signal that the ETS has not weakened in its commitment to inerrancy but continues to uphold it as a meaningful standard for membership in the Society.

Dean Bush: Norman Geisler is a good friend and colleague. I appreciate his work greatly. It will be a great loss for ETS if his resignation remains permanent. My hope is that the resolution/bylaw mentioned above will be sufficient to dissuade others from leaving the ETS. I was opposed to open theism on the ground that I think it is in principle contrary to the ETS doctrinal basis. But we were a few votes short of the necessary 2/3 majority needed to remove Sanders from membership. Pinnock actually claimed that he was willing to revise some of his views. Geisler did not accept that and protested the vote by his resignation. There were also other issues (some procedural and some personal). I understand his point, and I support Geisler's right to express himself as he wishes. I still have confidence in the ETS, however. Southern Baptists will follow their own consciences, but I believe that most of us have deep concerns about the loss of Divine foreknowledge in "open theism." I have other concerns as well.

Where do you stand in this debate and how do you actively participate in defining the future direction of ETS? Do you think that inerrancy and "Open Theism" are mutually exclusive theological positions, and if so, can your position within ETS influence the outcome of the debate?

Dr. Köstenberger: I plan to continue as editor of the Journal and as member of the ETS executive committee. The Journal has had a positive role in defining the issues and facilitating debate, and this will continue. The committee will continue to meet its constitutional obligations as well. Personally, I have grave reservations about the viability of open theism and will continue to find appropriate ways to express those concerns.

Dean Bush: I have written on open theism in the recent *Faith and Mission* and in my book *The Advancement*. I hope ETS will see a decline in interest in open the-

ism. I don't mind theological debate, and several of my own views are controversial in ETS, but to the best of my ability I always try to affirm the full truthfulness of biblical affirmations. I don't know how much influence I have, but I will continue to seek ways to strengthen ETS and to reaffirm its doctrinal basis.

Obviously you are both Southern Baptists with a high view of Scripture and you adhere to the inerrancy of Scripture as defined and consolidated during the conservative resurgence of the 1980s. At that time the conservatives won the battle over the Bible and its inerrancy. What role could the conservative Southern Baptists have, if any, in the future of ETS, given its current discussion?

Dr. Köstenberger: Conservative Baptists, as full and voting members of the Society, have had, and continue to have, a strong voice in the deliberations and

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future direction of the Society. This is an indication of the larger influence of Southern Baptists beyond their own denomination on evangelicalism at large. Clearly, biblical inerrancy is an issue that transcends any one denomination or even scholarly society. As the history of interpretation shows, the interpretive outcome is very different depending on the view of Scripture a given interpreter holds. Personally, I can certainly attest to the fact that holding to biblical inerrancy is not an undue constraint that makes true scholarship impossible but a necessary affirmation, given Scripture's teaching about its own nature and the nature of God himself, and one that in no way inhibits scholarly exploration and discovery.

Dean Bush: Dr. Köstenberger stated my view exactly. If the SBC controversy teaches us anything it is that inerrancy is a vital principle for the true church. ETS is

denominationally pluralistic, but we find fellowship in our common commitment to the Word of God. The SBC experience has not gone unnoticed in ETS, and I pray that we will be a positive influence on ETS.

Among those who will give plenary addresses at the ETS meeting in November are two conservative Southern Baptists: Dr. Al Mohler, president of SBTS and Dr. Andreas Köstenberger, director of PhD studies at SEBTS. How important will these addresses be to the presence and influence of Southern Baptists in ETS?

Dr. Köstenberger: I'll leave it to others to comment.

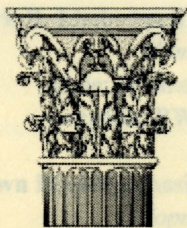
Dean Bush: Well, I think it is obvious that these two addresses will be very important. Mohler is a nationally known spokesman for evangelical Christianity, and our own Dr. Köstenberger is rapidly gaining recognition as a preeminent New Testament scholar. I am glad to know both of them. Together these two will take a strong stand for truth and thereby will reveal why Southern Baptists are growing in influence in ETS and in the wider Christian community.

And one last question directed to Dr. Köstenberger: could you give us an abstract of your plenary address in November at ETS? Hopefully this will motivate more SEBTS PhD students to participate in this year's ETS meeting, if for no other reason than to support you.

Dr. Köstenberger: I can certainly use all the help and support there is! Addressing the whole society on a topic as important as truth in the Bible is a great challenge and opportunity. In my plenary address, I plan to discuss the ramifications of Pilate's question to Jesus, "What is truth?" from a historical, literary, and theological vantage point. I will first try to establish the historicity of the account; then look at the passage in light of the various larger themes which tie it in with the rest of the Gospel; and finally look at the major characters in the passage one at a time. Hopefully, my address will set the stage for the other plenary speakers who will explore the contemporary cultural, hermeneutical, and philosophical challenges related to truth in our day.

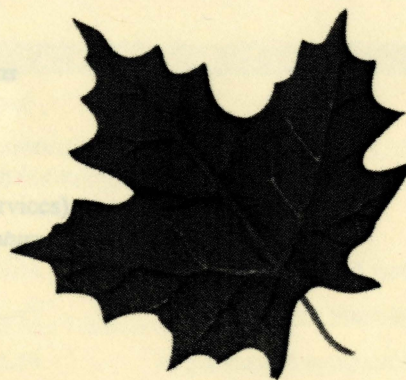
Dean Bush: This is going to be a great year to attend ETS.

The Ph.D. community at Southeastern expresses its sincere appreciation to Dr. Köstenberger and Dean Bush for responding to our questions. We look forward to Dr. Köstenberger's plenary address at ETS this year as well as both his and Dean Bush's future influence in the scholarly circle. We are blessed to have such prolific scholars on the faculty of Southeastern and we are sure that the influence of Southern Baptists in ETS will grow as a result of their contributions.



INSIDER

FALL 2004



Women's Certificate Program

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Call for a Teacher

2005 Spring Semester



Southeastern is advertising for a Master of Divinity or Ph.D. student to teach a Women's Certificate class on Basic Christian Doctrine. The class is designed to introduce the student to the broad concepts of Systematic Theology. The class will be taught either Tuesday or Thursday evenings from 7-9 p.m. for the last half of the Spring 2005 semester. For those interested in teaching this class please contact the Women's Studies office at Southeastern at 761-2340.

Koinonia

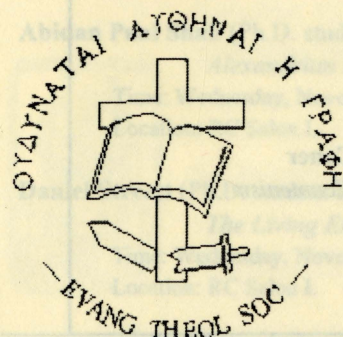
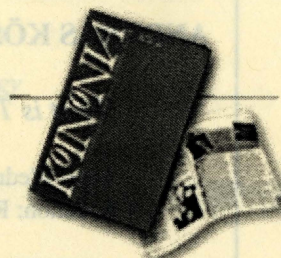
Princeton Theological Seminary's Graduate Journal

Call for Papers

2005 Annual Forum on the Topic:

Religious Resources for Conflict Resolution in a Violent World

Koinonia is looking for a centerpiece essay for its Annual Forum February 17-18 in Princeton, New Jersey and for respondents to this essay from a variety of disciplines. These will be published in *Koinonia's* 2005 issue. For more information and a complimentary copy (while supplies last) see <http://www.ptsem.edu/koinonia/index.html>.



56th Annual ETS Meeting

Remember, it is not too late to attend the 56th Annual ETS Meeting in San Antonio, Texas (November 17th-19th). Students who have not pre-registered can register at the door either for a given day or for the entire conference. Whether or not you are able to attend this year's annual meeting, you may want to consider becoming an ETS member. More information at www.etsjets.org.

Evangelical Theological Society

56th Annual Meeting



What is Truth?

SEBTS Presentations

Plenary Session:

ANDREAS KÖSTENBERGER (Director of Ph.D./Th.M. Studies/Professor of New Testament)

What is Truth? Pilate's Question in its Johannine and Larger Biblical Context

Time: Wednesday, November 17, 1:15–2:15 p.m.

Location: RC Salons E, F and Corridor

Study Groups/Open Sessions:

SEBTS Faculty

Michael E. Travers (Professor of English)

Imagination as a Principle of Truth

Time: Wednesday, November 17, 9:00–9:40 a.m.

Location: RC Salon A

Emir F. Caner (Associate Professor of Church History and Anabaptist Studies) and **Ergun Caner**

The Oprah-ization of the Church: Rescuing the Church from Emasculated Ecumenism and Effeminate Evangelicalism

Time: Wednesday, November 17, 9:50–10:30 a.m.

Location: RC Conference Room 4

Mark D. Liederbach (Associate Professor of Christian Ethics)

Humble Absolutism: A New Paradigm for Understanding Moral Dilemmas

Time: Wednesday, November 17, 9:50–10:30 a.m.

Location: RW Bowie

Shawn Madden (Assistant Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew/Director of Library Services)

Soprano or Bass? Daniel and the Boys, Castration, Josephus and 1st Century Jewish Views

Time: Wednesday, November 17. Time: 9:00–9:40 a.m.

Location: RC Conference 13

Edward A. Buchanan (Senior Professor of Christian Education/LifeWay Professor)

Chronological Bible Teaching—A Means to Teach the Truth

Time: Wednesday, November 17, 2:30–3:10 p.m.

Location: RC Conference Room 13

Maurice A. Robinson (Senior Professor of New Testament)

*Incomplete Truth and its Consequences: A Clarification of the Manuscript Evidence regarding
2 Corinthians 1:6–7*

Time: Wednesday, November 17, 2:30–3:10 p.m.

Location: RW Salon E

Robert L. Cole (Assistant Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages)

Psalms 3: Of Whom Does David Speak, Of Himself or Another?

Time: Wednesday, November 17, 3:20–4:00 p.m.

Location: RW Salon F

Daniel R. Heimbach (Professor of Christian Ethics)

The Paganizing of Christian Sexual Ethics

Time: Thursday, November 18, 9:20–10:00 a.m.

Location: RW Bonham

Daniel L. Akin (President)

Truth Inerrancy and Bible Exposition: How We Should Preach, Teach and Do Theology

Time: Thursday, November 18, 2:10–2:50 p.m.

Location: RC Conference Room 18

David P. Nelson (Associate Professor of Systematic Theology) and **Lorraine Coker**

A Pillar and Foundation of Truth: God, Order, and Gender Roles in the Church

Time: Thursday, November 18, 3:50–4:30 p.m.

Location: RC Conference Room 4

SEBTS Students

Abidan Paul Shah (Ph.D. student in New Testament)

Alexandrian Presumption of Authenticity Regarding the Matthew 24:49 Addition

Time: Wednesday, November 17, 9:00–9:40 a.m.

Location: RC Salon L

Daniel Streett (Ph.D. student in New Testament)

The Living End: The Theological and Narratival Function of Acts' Conclusion

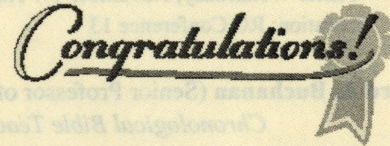
Time: Wednesday, November 17, 5:00–5:40 p.m.

Location: RC Salon L

NEW PH.D. STUDENTS

Dr. Köstenberger is pleased to announce that the following students have been admitted to the Ph.D. program at Southeastern. Included in the following list are the students' areas of concentration and their mentors.

Don Allard	Philosophy	Dr. Bruce Little
Michael DeBusk	Church History	Dr. Keith Harper
Volodymyr Nazarkevych	Philosophy	Dr. Bruce Little
Andy Preslar	Philosophy	Dean L. Russ Bush
James Smyrl	Preaching	Dr. Wayne McDill
Stephen Vipperman	Old Testament	Dr. Allan Moseley



EXAMS, PROSPECTUSES, AND DEFENSES

Anthony B. Greenham will defend his Ph.D. dissertation on October 29, 2004. The defense will take place between 1:30-3:00 p.m. in the second-floor Conference Room in Jacumin-Simpson. The title of the dissertation is "Muslim Conversions to Christianity: An Investigation of Palestinian Converts Living in the Holy Land." Dr. George Braswell, who is his mentor, will also serve as the moderator.

These Ph.D. students have had their Prospectuses approved:

Robert Cole	Kathie Johnson
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These students have passed their Ph.D. Written & Oral Comprehensive Exams:

Michael Chiavone	Richard Daniels
Marty Jacumin	Abidan Shah

Congratulations!

PERSONAL NOTES

Congratulation to **Marcelo Lubenco** for his marriage to Christi on July 31st. The wedding took place at Binkley Chapel. Pastor Leon Tucker from Providence Baptist Church performed the ceremony.

Todd and Alisa Stewart would like to announce the great news concerning the recent birth of their daughter Madison Lynn Stewart. She was born on August 17, 2004, and weighted 8 pounds, 2 oz.

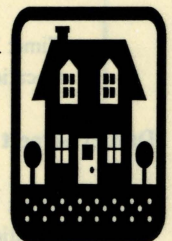
Alan and Necoe Bandy are happy to announce the birth of their daughter Victoria Lynn on September 2, 2004. She weighed 6 pounds, 12 oz.

Bobby and Cindy Lewis are glad to announce that they are expecting their third child in early December.

Matt Queen and his wife are pleased to announce that they are expecting a daughter, Madison Hope, on December 17th.

Rich and Larissa Holland are happy to announce that they are expecting their second child in the middle of December.

Condolences to **Matt Lytle** for the recent passing away of his father. May the Lord comfort and strengthen him and his family.



LITERARY BIRTHS

Academicus is pleased to recognize these faculty members and their literary contributions:

- Dr. Emir F. Caner. *The Costly Call: Worldwide Testimonies of Muslims Who Have Become Christians; Our Anabaptist Heritage; Theological Holocaust: Two Former Muslims Defend Israel in the Work of God; and The Schizophrenic Christ: Jesus in World Religions*. Kregel Publications, 2004 (forthcoming).
- Dr. Robert L. Cole. "An Integrated reading of Psalms 1 and 2." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (forthcoming).
- Dr. Gerald Cowen. *Who Rules the Church? Examining Congregational Leadership and Church Government*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2004.
- Dr. Ant Greenham. Academic consultant for "The Sword of Islam: A.D. 565–740: The Muslim Onslaught all but Destroys Christendom." In *The Christians: Their First Two Thousand Years*, vol. 5. Edmonton, 2004.
- Dr. Keith Harper. *Rescue the Perishing: Selected Correspondence of Annie Armstrong*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2004.
- Dr. Daniel R. Heimbach. "The Rising Challenge of Therapeutic Sexual Morality." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 9, no. 2 (Fall 2004) (forthcoming).
- Dr. L. Scott Kellum. *The Unity of the Farewell Discourse: The Literary Integrity of John 13:31–16:33*. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement* 256. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2004.
- Dr. Andreas Köstenberger with Dr. David Jones. *God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2004.
- Dr. David E. Lanier. "Synagogue Personnel in the Time of Jesus." *Biblical Illustrator* 31, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 23–26.
- Dr. Bruce Little. *A Creation-Order Theodicy: God And Gratuitous Evil*. University Press, 2004.
- Dr. Steven A. McKinion. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Isaiah 1–39*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2004.
- Dr. Waylan Owens. "A Different Look at the Frog." *SBC Life*, vol. 10, no. 11 (October 2004). Nashville: Southern Baptist Convention, Executive Committee (forthcoming).
- Dr. Alvin Reid. "Foreword." In *Called2Ministry* by Dana Mathewson. Xulon Press, 2004.
- _____. *Evangelism Guidebook: Advice from Today's Evangelism Experts*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004 (forthcoming).

IMPORTANT DATES

October 25	Submit theses, project reports, and dissertations for December graduation
November 5	Graduate Studies Committee Meeting
November 12	Integrative Seminar
November 22–27	Thanksgiving Recess
November 29	Submit theses, project reports, and dissertations to the library for binding
December 10	Graduate Studies Committee Meeting
December 11	Last day of classes
December 13–17	Exam Week
December 18	Commencement Exercises, 10:00 a.m.

DOCTORAL SEMINARS

Spring 2005

0112	Introduction to Theological Latin Class begins Jan. 28, then meets every Friday except Integrative Seminar dates	Williams	2	1-5 (F)
0586	Integrative Seminar Dates: Feb. 25, Mar. 18, Apr. 22; Student Conference: May 6 and 13	Köstenberger	3	1-5 (F)
1176	Seminar in Hebrew Prophetic Literature	Rooker	3	12:30-3 (W)
xxxx	Contemporary Approaches to the NT*	Black	3	1-3:30 (R)
3097	Seminar on a Selected Doctrine: Soteriology	Hammett	3	7:30-10 (R)
1485	Seminar in Selected Greek Texts: Gospel of John	Köstenberger	3	9-11:30 (F)
3283	Current Topics in Philosophy of Religion I	Little	3	7:30-10 (T)
3380	Seminar in Christian Ethics: Natural Law	Liederbach	3	1-3:30 (T)
2385	Seminar in Southern Baptist Foreign Missions (1880-1920)	Eitel	3	7:30-10 (W)
4190	Seminar in Expository Preaching	Akin	3	7-9:30 p.m. (R)

*pending Faculty and Trustee approval

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep Up to Date: Students, if you suspect that your mailing or e-mail address or phone number may need to be updated please contact Mrs. Hellard, the Administrative Assistant, and let her know what those changes might be. You may contact her at 761-2491 or jhellard@sebts.edu. Or if you are not receiving the occasional e-mail messages and reminders about events and happenings in the Ph.D. program, please send an updated e-mail address to corin.mihaila@sebts.edu.


How Can We Minister to You? We hope *Academicus* is serving your needs. Feel free to send an e-mail concerning the news and issues you would like to hear more of in the future. You may submit an article or article proposal that you would like to contribute or you may suggest ideas for topics that you believe should be addressed in the front page article of *Academicus*. Send those messages to jhellard@sebts.edu or corin.mihaila@sebts.edu. Please type "Academicus" in the subject heading. Remember that the article should address an academic issue that is pertinent to the Ph.D. program or to the teaching ministry and will have to be approved by Dr. Köstenberger (General Editor) and Corin Mihăilă (Managing Editor).

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