

An Interview with Southeastern President, Dr. Daniel L. Akin

Are you familiar with these words from Walter Lippmann, the American newspaper commentator: "The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on. . . The genius of good leader is to leave behind him a situation which common sense, without the grace of genius, can deal with successfully" (*Roosevelt Has Gone*; April 14, 1945)?

It may be premature to speak of the legacy of the President; after all, Dr. Daniel L. Akin's tenure at Southeastern has just begun. Nevertheless, the unanimous decision to bring Dr. Akin to this office expresses the seminary's confidence that God has brought an individual to this institution who can continue to build among us a legacy of evangelical scholarship.

The January 15th decision that officially brought Dr. Akin to Southeastern not only brings an air of excitement to the upcoming semester, but among Ph.D. students, a sense of curiosity concerning the new President's perspectives on the Ph.D. program. So even before Dr. Akin had the opportunity to settle in to his new position, he agreed to answer several questions that will be of interest to Ph.D. students and faculty. Here is what Dr. Akin had to say:

What role or purpose do you believe a Ph.D. program should serve in the life of a student?

The Ph.D. allows students to develop their God-given gifts to their highest level, especially with respect to the mind (Matt. 22:37). Scripture teaches us to love God with our total self, and this includes our mind. [A doctoral program] provides a program of study under the guidance of an experienced mentor to challenge and stretch a person to reach spiritual and academic excellence. The Ph.D. is not for everyone, but everyone who can pursue it for the glory of God and the good of the church should do so.

What role does a seminary president serve in a Ph.D. program?

The president should be a major advocate and, if possible, a participant in the Ph.D. program. I will work to do both. I will give my time and energy to seeing that we have the very finest program possible. I also intend to teach in the Ph.D. program both in the area of Theology (a seminar in Christology) and Preaching (a seminar in Expository Preaching). This, I hope, will convey to our seminary community my enthusiastic support for our Ph.D. program. I am delighted at what I already see under the direction of Dr. Köstenberger, and I will do all that I can in assisting him.

What is your view of the SEBTS Ph.D. program? What do you see as its distinctives? Are there any changes you would like to see?

I believe Southeastern has an excellent program. It is still relatively new, but it is already distinguishing itself with some outstanding graduates. As to its distinctives, it clearly has a broad, almost interdisciplinary, approach. This allows for a wide and comprehensive program of study in seminar work, which is then complemented by a more specific and targeted study in the dissertation. This brings breadth and balance to the program. At this point it would be premature for me to suggest any changes, through I strongly suspect any changes would be few and minimal. Southeastern has a fine Ph.D. program.



Are you presently working on any writing projects? Do you have other scholarly projects/goals?

The past year and the coming year have been a fruitful time for me in terms of writing. I had three books come out in 2003: *God on Sex*; *Song of Songs* in the Holman Old Testament Commentary; and *Rediscovering the Biblical Jesus*. I also contributed a number of articles to the revised *Holman Bible Dictionary*. In 2004 I will contribute a chapter in a forthcoming book on Church Polity where I defend the leadership of a Senior Pastor within a Congrega-

tional form of Church Government. However, my biggest project on the horizon is co-editing with David Dockery a new Systematic Theology entitled *A Theology for the Church*, which will hopefully come out in 2005. It is a different approach using multiple contributions, including among others Al Mohler, Paige Patterson, Craig Blasing, Timothy George, Mark Dever, David Nelson and Pete Schemm. I will write the chapter on the person of Christ. I am very excited about this project and I hope it will become a standard text in our colleges and seminaries.

Do you enjoy teaching Ph.D. seminars? List a few seminars that you might enjoy teaching.

As I previously noted, I love teaching Ph.D. seminars. At Southern Seminary I taught two seminars in the area of Christian Preaching: (1) Expository Preaching and (2) Hermeneutics in Preaching. I want to help where I am needed, but Christology and Preaching are the areas I have given the most attention over the past decade.

Who are some of your scholarly role models, men or women who have had a significant impact in your academic training?

No one has influenced me more in the area of scholarship than Paige Patterson. He was my ethics and preaching professor, and even after I joined him on the faculty of Criswell College I attended his Philosophy class. My own theology is very reflective of his. His influence on me cannot really be put into words. In recent years I have been challenged and blessed by my close relationship and friendship with Al Mohler. He is probably the most brilliant person I have ever known, and his commitment to a comprehensive Christian worldview and excellence in all things have impacted my life greatly. To those two men I could add the influence of Richard Land, Francis Schaeffer, Millard Erickson, Carl Henry, J. I. Packer, John Stott, and John MacArthur. In the area of biblical studies I have been influenced and shaped by men like Don Carson, Leon Morris, F. F. Bruce, I. H. Marshall, and Curtis Vaughn.

How would you describe the proper spiritual life and attitude of a scholar?

A genuine Christian scholar is what we are after in our Ph.D. students and graduates. Such persons will wed both heart and mind in their desire to know, love, and obey God. They will work, because they must, to avoid the sin of pride that puffs up (1 Cor. 8:1). A Christian scholar will strive to be a servant scholar first to our Lord and then to the Church. While he will have an eye on the academic guild, this will never be the source of his motivation or the place where he seeks praise. As a pastor-theologian, he will recognize his supreme contributions under the Lordship of Jesus Christ will be made to the Church. This is why he pursues his studies. This is why God has called him.

The Ph.D. community at Southeastern expresses its sincere appreciation to Dr. Akin for responding to our questions. We extend a warm welcome to our new President.

WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

It is with great joy and thanksgiving to God that we welcome our new president, Dr. Daniel Akin, to our campus. Dr. Akin knows our school well from his tenure here as professor of theology and dean of students, and he comes to us with every conceivable qualification as an administrator, teacher, and scholar. Even more important, it is apparent that God has called him to succeed our beloved former president, Dr. Paige Patterson, to carry on his charge.

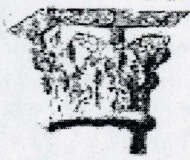
Ph.D. students will be pleased to know that not only is Dr. Akin fully committed to our Ph.D. program he will also be a regular participant in it, teaching seminars in the areas of preaching and theology. A seminar on expository preaching is tentatively scheduled for the spring 2005 semester, with a seminar in Christology to be offered the following year. For any of you interested in Dr. Akin's publications, the library has put together a fine display near the circulation desk. I have personally been impressed with the quality of president Akin's scholarly work in recently reviewing the *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary for Faith & Mission*.

As far as doctoral studies at SEBTS is concerned, you will be pleased to know that, in the interim between presidents, the Ph.D. program has continued to thrive. This past Monday saw a record number of prospective Ph.D. students sit for entrance exams. I have met with every student personally and once again am amazed at the way in which God through his Spirit draws so many qualified applicants from such diverse backgrounds to come and study here at Southeastern. It is certainly a serious responsibility to be adequate to the charge of equipping those who trust us with their education for further ministry.

May God bless each of you, students and faculty alike, as you serve and follow our Lord this new semester.

Dr. Köstenberger





INSIDER

VOLUME IV, ISSUE 3

Q & A Time with Dr. David Allen

David L. Allen, co-director of the Jerry Vines Institute and W. A. Criswell Professor of Expository Preaching at Criswell College (Dallas, Texas), will be the visiting chapel speaker on February 3 and 4. He has graciously offered to meet with the Ph.D. students for a time of interaction (Q & A) on **Tuesday, February 3, at 3:30 pm.** Interested students should contact Mrs. Janet Hellard in the Ph.D./ Th.M. Graduate Studies Office at 761-2491 or jhellard@sebts.edu. Our gathering will take place in Broyhill's Hall of Presidents. We look forward to having you with us.



IMPORTANT DATES

INTEGRATIVE SEMINAR DATES AND SPEAKERS — SPRING 2004

February 20	Dr. Kenneth Coley (Professor of Christian Education/Director of Secondary Education Program, SEBTS)
March 19	Dr. John Sailhamer (Professor of Old Testament, SEBTS)
April 16	Dr. Keith Harper (Professor of Church History, SEBTS)

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the following men who have successfully defended their dissertations and received their degree:

James D. Greear — “*Theosis and Muslim Evangelism: How the Recovery of a Patristic Understanding of Salvation Can Aid Evangelical Missionaries in the Evangelization of Islamic Peoples*”

Bruce Ashford — “*Wittgenstein’s Impact on Anglo-American Theology: Representative Models of Response to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s Later Writings*”

Russell Woodbridge — “*Gerhard Westerburg: His Life and Doctrine of Purgatory and the Lord’s Supper*”

Congratulations to Bill McMullan on the successful defense of his thesis: “*Church Discipline as a Necessary Function of the Visible Church in the Theology of Balthasar Hubmaier*”

LANGUAGES

If you have not yet completed your language requirements, please note these course offerings for 2004:

Spring 2004	Introduction to Theological Latin (Williams)
Summer 2004	Introduction to Theological French (Williams)

ACADEMICUS

Students who wish to publish an article in the Ph.D. newsletter, *Academicus*, now have that opportunity. The article should address an academic issue that is pertinent to the Ph.D. program or to the ministry of teaching, writing and research. Please feel free to suggest a topic that you think may be of interest.

JOURNAL NEWS

The Criswell Theological Review (CTR), a publication of The Criswell College, is being revived after a ten-year hiatus. Prior to its demise in the early 1990s, CTR was considered one of the premier theological journals among academics. The journal will include articles by a host of scholars from across the spectrum of evangelicalism. The theme for the Spring 2004 issue will be "Open Theism and Inerrancy: Are they Compatible?" It will feature articles by Bruce Ware, Clark Pinnock, Boyd Luter, and Steve Lempke, plus two interviews with Darrell Bock and Norm Geisler, both former presidents of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), who will offer different perspectives on the recent Openness controversy within ETS. Future CTR issues will cover such timely theological topics as the Third Quest, the New Perspective, Kingdom of God, Church Polity, among others. Each issue will also include peer-evaluated book reviews to inform its readers of the current selections available from the publishers. CTR will be published semi-annually in the fall and spring of each academic year. Inquiries regarding subscriptions should be sent to CTR, The Criswell College, 4010 Gaston Avenue, Dallas, TX 75246. Editor Alan Streett is now accepting inquiries from those wishing to write articles or book reviews. He can be reached at: astreett@criswell.edu.


Doctoral Seminars

Spring 2004

0112	Introduction to Theological Latin	Williams	2	1-5 (F)
	Class begins Jan. 23, then meets every Friday except Integrative Seminar dates			
0587	Integrative Seminar	Köstenberger	3	1-5 (F)
	Dates: Feb. 20, Mar. 19, Apr. 16; Student Conference: April 30 and May 7			
1379	Seminar in Contemporary O. T. Research	Rooker	3	12:30-3 (W)
1775	New Testament Themes: Evangelism in the N.T.	Beck	3	7:30-10 (R)
3279	Christian Faith and the Modern Mind	Bush	3	2-4:30 (R)
2177	Seminar in American Theological History	Harper	3	1-3:30 (T)
3283	Current Topics in Philosophy of Religion: Coherence of Theism	Little	3	7:30-10 (T)
2381	Seminar in Contemp. Southern Baptist Missiology	Eitel	3	9-11:30 (F)
4179	The Preaching Tradition	McDill	3	7:30-10 (W)

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