

Policy to Increase Faculty Ethnic, Racial, and Gender Diversity at NOBTS

Biblical/Theological Rationale

Ministering to a diversity of persons has its origin in divine creation. All humankind descended from that first pair, Adam and Eve, whom God created after His own image (Gen. 1:27, 2:15-20). Humans were the pinnacle of the beings God created (Ps. 8:3-8). Not only is all the earth the Lord's, but also all its peoples (Ps. 24:1). Although God chose one nation, Israel, to be the people through whom salvation would come, this soteriological mission was never intended to be reserved for Israel alone. The Abrahamic covenant makes it clear that the covenant is not merely for Abraham's family, but that through it "all the nations of the world shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3, Gal. 3:8). Although the Hebrew people tended to look inward, God kept reorienting them outward. The Old Testament law instructed Israel to treat the "strangers" or immigrants with kindness (Ex. 22:21, 23:9; Lev. 19:10, 19:33-34, 23:22, 25:35, 35:15; Deut. 10:18-19, 14:29, 23:7, 24:14, 24:19-21, 27:19). God led the reluctant prophet Jonah to preach a revival for the pagan city of Nineveh (Jonah 1-4). Hebrews such as Joseph, Daniel, and Esther impacted other nations, while Rahab, Ruth, Uriah the Hittite, Hiram, and Cyrus of Persia impacted Israel in a positive way.

The New Testament church reflects increasing diversity of race and ethnicity. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20, c.f. Acts 1:8) assigns the church the mission of reaching all persons of all nations with the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. The early prototype of the office of deacons were created to resolve tensions between the Hellenistic Jews and the Palestinian Jews, with Stephen (whose name indicated a Greek background) as one of their leaders (Acts 6-7). Simon Peter was led by God to expand the mission beyond Judaism to the Greeks (Acts 10), and the church at Antioch sent out missionaries to the Gentile world (Acts 13). The salvation of the Gentiles raised concerns in the Jerusalem church, but these were resolved at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). The remainder of the book of Acts celebrates the expansion of Christianity across the Roman world.

The Pauline Epistles reinforce this multiethnic approach to ministry. Persons of each gender, ethnic group and socio-economic status are made equal "in Christ" as God's adopted children (Gal. 3:26-29). Paul urges the Colossian believers to put aside prejudice and discrimination against other ethnic groups: "there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:9-11). Christ has made Jew and Gentile one, breaking down the wall of hostility dividing them and uniting Gentiles who were far off with Jews who were near (Eph. 2:11-22). The appeal of the gospel is to be offered to "whosoever" will believe, regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender (Matt. 7:24, 10:23-33; Luke 6:47, 12:8; John 3:15-16, 4:13-14, 6:40, 8:51, 11:26; Acts 2:21, 10:43; Rom. 9:33, 10:11-13; 1 John 2:23, 4:15, 5:1). The New Testament gives us two specific glimpses of the multicultural diversity in the early church. The leaders of the church at Antioch, as described in Acts 13:1, included Barnabas of the island of Cypress, two Africans (Simon called "Niger" and Lucius of present day Libya), one Asian (Paul from Tarsus in the Roman province of Cilicia in present day Turkey), and Manean, who was reared with Herod the Tetrarch in Galilee. The cultural diversity in the early church was also illustrated in

the Apostle Paul's note to the Roman church. In Romans 16, he personally addresses over 29 Christians – 19 men and 10 women. Paul particularly commends Phoebe, a woman, a key servant in the church. The majority of the names listed are either Greek or Latin names, with several Hebrew names and perhaps a couple of pagan origin.

While there is no spiritual distinction between men and women in Christ (Gal. 3:28), the New Testament does draw some distinctions regarding the pastoral office. While affirming the value of women serving the Lord through the church, all references to pastors are male (1 Cor. 14:34-37; 1 Tim. 2:11-12, 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-12). Based on this scriptural foundation, Article VI of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, our SBC doctrinal statement, states that “While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.” NOBTS is committed to this confessional stance in training leaders.

The current church should be multiethnic because the eschatological church will be. The Old Testament prophets spoke of all nations coming to worship in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4, Mic. 4:2, Zech. 14:16). This theme of the people of God coming from all tribes and nations is repeated in the book of Revelation (Rev. 5:9, 7:9, 15:4, 17:15). The church of today should be reaching out to all peoples of all nations, for of such does the Kingdom of God consist.

Missional Rationale

The Mission of NOBTS is to “equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.” The Great Commandments call upon us to practice love for all persons (Matt. 22:36-40). The Great Commission commands believers to proclaim the gospel to all people of all nations (Matt. 28:19-20, c.f. Acts 1:8).

This multicultural focus is our mission at NOBTS. Because of the increasing diversity represented in Southern Baptist churches, the multicultural urban setting in which the Seminary's base campus is planted, and the Seminary's initiatives to offer theological training to a diversity of ethnic, racial, and gender students, NOBTS desires to increase the ethnic and racial diversity within its faculty. Underscoring this desire is the fact that the Southern Baptist Convention has become intentionally more diverse in the last two decades, such that minority/ethnic congregations now constitute about 20 percent of SBC churches, not including those who attend predominantly Anglo congregations. NOBTS has programs focused on Korean, Hispanic, Haitian, and African American students. Therefore, the Seminary enthusiastically supports the aspiration to increase ethnic and racial diversity in our faculty.

Although Baptists in the South have often not been exemplars of racial equality and diversity, the Southern Baptist Convention has made encouraging and significant strides in these areas in recent years. In 1995, on the 150th anniversary of its founding, the Southern Baptist Convention approved a resolution repenting of its racism.¹ In 2012, Fred Luter was elected the first African American to serve as the President of the SBC, and persons of various ethnicities are serving in significant positions in associational, state, and national entities in the SBC.

¹ The resolution is available at <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/899>. Dr. Lemke on our faculty was part of a Racial Reconciliation Task Force which was created in response to the approval of that resolution.

Non-Anglo churches in the SBC have increased from about 6,000 churches in 1998 to over 10,000 churches in 2014, now comprising 20 percent of all SBC churches. Over 3,600 of these churches are predominantly African American. A resolution encouraging more diversity in the convention's entities was approved in 2008,² and African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and multiethnic advisory committees were appointed to assist the convention to be more responsive to minorities.³ The SBC has come a long way in redressing the racism and support for slavery of its early leaders. The SBC of today is quite different than the SBC of yesterday, and that is reflected nowhere more clearly than in our increasing ethnic and racial diversity.

Plan to Increase Faculty Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Diversity at NOBTS

- As funding permits, continue the Korean, Hispanic, Haitian, African American, and Women's Ministry programs in which the Seminary has been engaged in recent years to encourage more trained leaders in these areas.
- The Seminary will engage intentionally facilitating numerous ministry projects each year in multicultural settings in the New Orleans area.
- Give official recognition to the new campus student group Reconcile, which meets monthly to discuss issues of race, ethnicity, and culture in student life.
- Prioritize scholarships to increase ethnic, racial and female students at all levels. The existing scholarships for African American and female students should be continued and increased, if possible, and increased scholarship aid is needed for Hispanic and Haitian students in South Florida.
- Create at least one doctoral fellowship to provide a full scholarship to encourage minority doctoral students to become future possible teachers.
- The Assistant to the President will chair a series of "Different Voices" discussion meetings with students to address issues of racial reconciliation and the role of minorities at the Seminary. This name and focus has already been vetted with minority groups on campus.
- A "Different Voices" workshop will also be held for minority students and other interested persons in 2018-19, possibly in partnership with Louisiana College and/or other institutions, to provide training in the academic hiring process and encourage them toward a possible teaching ministry.

² The resolution is available at <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/1185/on-celebrating-the-growing-ethnic-diversity-of-the-southern-baptist-convention>. Progress toward those goals was reported in this Baptist Press story: The SBC also approved resolutions on the 50th anniversary of the approval of the Civil Rights Act in 2014 (<http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/2246/on-the-fiftieth-anniversary-of-the-civil-rights-act>) and on Racial Reconciliation in 2015 (<http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/2254/on-racial-reconciliation>).

³ See the Baptist Press story at <https://www.baptiststandard.com/news/baptist/17916-sbc-executive-committee-affirms-racial-diversity-report>.

- The Provost has asked the Deans of the Graduate Program and Leavell College to employ at least one minority adjunct teacher per semester (in addition to those employed in our minority-focused program locations). Election to trustee-elected faculty status is sometimes offered to adjunct teachers who have a record of effectiveness in teaching.
- The Provost and Deans will begin developing a database of qualified prospective minority faculty candidates.
- An effort will be made to identify a qualified racial, ethnic, or female candidate for possible consideration for each new faculty position.
- Bryan Loritts, author of *Right Color, Wrong Culture* is speaking at the Faculty Workshop in August 2018, addressing the need for a more multiethnic faculty in order to reach our multiethnic society more effectively.