



INSPIRE

AUGUST 2025, ISSUE NO. 18

Beyond Grateful

BY DR. MIKE WETZEL - 2025 EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

As I reflect on this past year, one word stands out: gratitude. This sentiment resonates even more deeply now, as I consider the transformative impact of your steadfast commitment to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Your generous and sacrificial support through the Seminary Foundation has been instrumental in advancing our mission and ensuring that our vision for theological education continues to thrive.

Just as you support our faculty and staff in their daily work, your financial contributions—whether through a monthly gift, annual membership, the Giving Tuesday Matching Fund, or during our Spring Giving Days—have significantly bolstered our efforts. Your dedication speaks volumes about your love for our students, this institution, and the Great Commission we all strive to fulfill.

BEYOND GRATEFUL - CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Photo: Dr. Jim Parker (L) and graduating student walking toward Leavell Chapel for commencement, May 2025



The New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Foundation - est. 1965

Beyond Grateful

CONTINUED from pg. 1

I am thrilled to share that because of your faithful support, we have concluded one of the top-five fundraising years in our 108-year history. This milestone is not just about the numbers; it signifies more scholarships awarded, more students equipped for ministry, and greater hope for the future of the Church.

It is inspiring to note that this year, for the first time ever, 100% of our Trustees contributed financially. Your generosity sets a powerful example and inspires others to join in our mission. Together, we are co-laborers in God's eternal work.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to the Lord and the Foundation. Your ongoing investment of time, talent, and treasure in this sacred mission is deeply appreciated and tremendously impactful. May God continue to bless you abundantly as you continue to partner with us in shaping future generations of Christian leaders. ✠

ANNUAL MEETING

SAVE

March 6 & 7

DATE

RALLY TOGETHER

SUCCEED TOGETHER

Once again, the Foundation has set a Giving Tuesday goal of \$500,000 and committed to raising half of that—\$250,000—through the Giving Tuesday Matching Gift Fund (GTMGF). Your contributions and pledges to the GTMGF play a vital role in motivating NOBTS & Leavell College alumni and friends to give generously. Thank you for leading the way and inspiring others to join this important initiative!

Donation Details

- ✓ August 1 - Gifts and pledges open
- ✓ September 30 - Gifts and pledges close
- ✓ December 2 - Giving Tuesday Campaign
- ✓ December 31 - GTMGF Pledges due

Make your pledge or gift
www.nobts.edu/match

*Your contribution to the GTMGF is a contribution above your Foundation membership.
Pledges must be fulfilled by December 31, 2025 to count towards this initiative.*

Recruit Our Future

BY MR. BEN HUMPHRIES -
2025 VICE CHAIRMAN & RECRUITMENT TEAM CAPTAIN

We are delighted to report the addition of a new board member and ongoing efforts to recruit two more members. While our team has the responsibility to champion this process, we need the whole board to help us identify and recruit candidates. As someone remarked at our annual meeting, "There's a lot of gray hair in this room!"

We need to reach out to those who can help support NOBTS, both now and for the future. Please consider your circle of influence (don't overlook family members) and pass along potential candidates. We can do the heavy lifting, but your input is vitally needed. Please use the three documents in the toolkit to generate interest from prospective board members. Our team is ready to help follow up on prospects and my cell is 318-366-7380 if you have questions or need more information. 🌿

Sincerely,
Ben Humphries

TOOLKIT



How will they know about the Seminary unless they're told? How will you explain to them what the Seminary is pursuing if we don't tell you? Please use these digital Foundation Essentials booklets to share the work in which you're involved.

Access them by
scanning the QR code
with your phone or
mobile device camera.



Physical copies are available upon request.

Membership Requirements

- Members are to pray for the Seminary daily.
- Commitment to give or raise* \$5,000 minimum to the Foundation Endowment per year.
- Enlist new members.
- Attendance at the Annual Meeting is missed only by excused absence.
- Each board member will be asked to help facilitate regional "NOBTS and Friends" events.
- Members give above their annual commitment to the Giving Tuesday Matching Gift fund.
- Members who give a minimum of \$100,000 in a one-time gift secure Lifetime membership.

Lifetime members are encouraged to continue providing financial support to meet the Seminary's needs.

*Membership eligibility is achieved by either recruiting others who meet the membership criteria or securing gifts from external sources that assist you in meeting these criteria. Members are encouraged to make personal annual contributions.

Presidential Ambassador

BY MR. CHRISTIAN TOWNSON
DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

We are thrilled to share some exciting news with you!

Dr. Gil McKee, a long-time Alabama pastor, leader, friend to Southern Baptists, and Honorary Foundation Board member, has officially joined the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College team as an NOBTS Presidential Ambassador for the state of Alabama.



In this new role, Gil is serving in three vital areas:

- Recruiting future ministers and leaders to be trained at NOBTS and Leavell College
- Fundraising to support the mission and vision of our School of Providence and Prayer
- Teaching doctoral seminars to invest in the next generation of church leaders

Gil's deep love for the local church, his passion for theological education, and his longstanding connection to Alabama make him an ideal representative for the NOBTS and Leavell College family in Alabama. His work will strengthen our ties across the state and help us extend the reach of NOBTS in powerful ways. ✝

Please join us in celebrating this exciting new chapter. Contact him at gmckee@nobts.edu.

Increased Engagement



We have seen remarkable increases in overall alumni engagement over the past year. Here are the areas of growth we hope you'll celebrate with us.

- Alumni Association membership grew from 476 to 663
- Total Alumni households giving increased 3.9% to 5.7%
- Volunteerism as a new metric has launched a new initiative, "Surviving After Seminary"

Surviving After Seminary will be a digital booklet written by Alumni for Alumni. This resource is designed to help alumni thrive in their post-seminary journey. Our goal is to distribute it by August 2026, equipping our community with wisdom, encouragement, and guidance!

Noteworthy News

In 2025, the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary showcased the impactful ministry of Crescent City Worship (CCW) during the SBC Annual Meeting in Dallas. Led by students, staff, and friends of NOBTS and Leavell College, CCW performed songs from their latest album "Hymns Project 1," featuring Meredith Andrews. Supported by the newly established Center for Worship Studies and serving as the seminary's music publishing arm, CCW not only leads worship locally and nationwide but also produces albums and performs at significant Baptist events. President Jamie Dew highlighted their success, emphasizing NOBTS's commitment to training worship leaders who are both theologically grounded and pastorally equipped to serve churches effectively. The full story can be found [here](#).



Pictured: Nate Jernigan and Meredith Andrews leading CCW at the 2025 SBC NOBTS Alumni and Friends Luncheon

Faculty Building Faith

You may be interested to know how NOBTS Faculty members influence the world today. The list of NEW resources written by our faculty may be of great help to you as you mature in your personal walk with Jesus. The church you serve may also be interested in the knowledge that these books explore. You can find these books online through retailers such as Lifeway, Amazon, and Christian Books, to name a few.

We pray they bolster your faith and challenge you to grow closer to the Lord.

Truth: Lectures from the Defend 2025 Apologetics Conference
- Edited by Tawa Anderson

Serve: Developing Those on the Team - By Jody Dean

Supralapsarian Christology and the Progressive Work of Christ: Christus Dominus - By Tommy Doughty

Equipping for Global Mission: Theological and Missiological Proposals and Case Studies - Edited by Greg Mathias, et. al.

Psalms in an Age of Distraction: Experiencing the Restorative Power of Biblical Poetry - By Ethan Jones

Black Church, White Convention: A Pastor's Story of Hope
- By Mark Johnson



DeMENT SOCIETY

Everyone a Member

Once upon a time there was a man who built his house upon the seashore with the hope of enjoying the surf, sand, and sun. He found great satisfaction in his decision to move to the beach. He also found great exposure to these elements and was concerned about his decision when storms blew and rain poured and surf swelled.

At NOBTS, we stand on the firm foundation laid by those who came before us - visionaries like our first president, Dr. Byron Hoover DeMent, who answered God's call in 1917 to lead a fledgling seminary in the heart of New Orleans. Today, we invite you to follow in his footsteps by planting seeds of faith that will bear fruit for generations to come. The DeMent Society celebrates those who ensure that theological education continues to thrive and proclaim the Good News to the ends of the earth through planned gifts.

Last year and this year, NOBTS and Leavell College used a planned gift to scholarship 100 students during the Summer term, and that planned gift will continue doing so until the Lord returns.

Giving USA 2025: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2024, estimates that gifts to United States charities through bequests (estate distributions) totaled \$45.84 billion in 2024. This represented approximately 8% of all charitable giving in the US that year.

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Your generosity today ensures that tomorrow's students will continue to be equipped with the training and spiritual foundation they need to answer God's call. You are invited to join this significant society that has given \$7.3 million in estate gifts since 2019 to enable and equip God's work at NOBTS and LC. Investing in your church and other Kingdom minded ministries like NOBTS and LC will be your lasting gift to Jesus.

Your “Why” -

- You are carving your legacy of Faith for your children/grandchildren/great grandchildren
- You are ensuring the continued work of the Great Commission beyond your lifetime
- You are faithfully stewarding and multiplying what God has entrusted to you
- Your legacy is being extended to the ends of the earth and eternity
- You are fulfilling the call of God's people to give your time, talent, and treasures to others
- You are giving back and refreshing others as you have been refreshed (Proverbs 11:25)
- You love Jesus and gratitude overflows because of what He has done for you

Make a simple beneficiary designation of your IRA, 401k, or life insurance policy, and tell us about your decision to join the DeMent Society. ✝

Lifted and Carried

I carried you once in the crook of my arm,
Safe from the world, so gentle, so warm.
Now God has lifted you far from this place,
Home to His glory, held in His grace.

Though grief bends low the frame of my
soul, Christ, ever faithful, carries me whole.
He bore the cross, the weight of all pain—
And promises joy where now there's rain.

I lift my eyes to heaven above,
Where you are held in endless love.
One day, through mercy, I too shall rise,
And meet you again beyond the skies.

Till then, I walk—though heart is worn—
Carried by Christ, who grief has borne.
Each step by grace, each breath a prayer,
Till I am lifted—and find you there.

In loving memory we wish to acknowledge
a life well lived.

Kris Wamsley (son of Kurt & Judy) -
October 12, 1978 - July 5, 2025

Board Officers

Jerry Pounds - Chairman
Ben Humphries - Vice-Chair
Scott Ramsey - Recording Secretary
Larry Lyon - Treasurer
Mike Wetzel - Executive Secretary

Team Captains

Recruitment - Ben Humphries
Stewardship - Errol Wilken
Alumni Engagement- Gil McKee
DeMent Society- Chuck Simmons

Institutional Advancement

Mike Wetzel
VP for Institutional Advancement

Mark Hagelman
Director of Development

Lindsay Holder
Director of Development Services

Christian Townson
Director of Alumni Engagement

Carla Ross
Director of Stewardship

Contact Us!



By telephone at
504.816.8224
or by email at
development@nobts.edu



The New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Foundation

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