

# The Sentinel

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The official news publication of The Bible Seminary

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The official news publication of The Bible Seminary

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*The Bible Seminary exists to glorify God by training Christian believers in a context of biblical community in all 66 books of the Bible so that they can serve the local church and fulfill the Great Commission by the power of God's Spirit.*

## About us

The Bible Seminary is an independent, non-denominational, 501(c)(3) institution of higher education incorporated in the state of Texas in 2010. The seminary offers an 8-course Bible Certificate program, and a 32-course, 96-hour Master of Divinity program for professional, vocational ministry training.

## Affiliation

The Bible Seminary is an Affiliate institution of The Association for Biblical Higher Education. As such, it participates in and contributes to collegial and professional development activities of the Association. Affiliate status does not, however, constitute, imply, or presume ABHE accredited status at present or in the future.

## Admissions

The Bible Seminary admits qualified students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. For Admissions information, contact Dr. K. Lynn Lewis, Provost, or visit "Admissions" at [TheBibleSeminary.org](http://TheBibleSeminary.org).



## Donations

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Let's face it. Cell phones have become ubiquitous. Consistently mentioned among world changers in top ten lists, smartphones were ranked the number one invention of all time by the History Channel last year.

I would rank the universe, gravity, music, and the human body higher, but there is no question that cell phones have catapulted over smoke signals, runners, pigeons, the pony express, and old wall phones with a rotary dial and squiggly coiled cord as a preferred means of communication.

Remember the old days when people used to walk with both hands hanging down at their sides, or drive with both hands on the steering wheel? No more.

The standard walking, sitting, driving, even sleeping, position is at least one hand upward holding a phone to

*Without our cell phones, many of us feel incomplete. We feel lost. But, perhaps, in moments untethered, we can truly find and be found.*

one's ears. Everywhere we go – the grocery store, the park, restaurants, the mall, home, office – people are talking on their phones, tex-

ting, surfing, e-mailing, shopping online, or posting photos and comments to Facebook.

Our daughter used to sleep with her cell phone – in her hand. Maybe she still does. And there are millions of others just like her who constantly have their phone within arm's reach so that everyone and all known knowledge is just a momentary tap, click, Google, or Siri away.

Without our cell phones, many of us feel incomplete, as if we are missing something and have no way to contact others or be contacted. We feel lost.

But, perhaps, in moments untethered, we can truly find and be found. The Lord proclaims through the psalmist, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10) and "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him" (37:7). The prophet Isaiah proclaimed, "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength" (Is. 30:15).

The first recipients of these messages did not have cell phones, but the bustling busyness and relentless racket of living life could just as easily drown out the voice of God as the buzz and ringtones of our cellphones, the blare of our televisions and radios, and the hum and rumble of our multitudes of machines today.

Most of us have grown accustomed to the pastor, the theater, the orchestra conductor, and public places of business reminding us to turn off our cell phones to avoid distraction and disruption.

But, how about when we personally set aside time for the Lord? Can we walk away long enough for some quiet time to be able to hear God? Can we let go of our phones then?

*(continued on page 7)*

## Celebrate and Pray

Howdy supporters and friends,

Thank you for your support of and interest in The Bible Seminary! God is doing amazing things through your prayers and support. Would you join me in celebrating and thanking God for:



**The Leggetts (L-R): John David, Grace, Lisa, Jim, and Smith.**

- The more than 800 students who have taken Bible Institute courses over the past 5 years. This Bible teaching is having a great ripple effect in our community as students use their learning to turn around and help others. We have 106 students taking courses this semester.
- The 12 Master of Divinity students going full throttle in 5 different courses in The Bible Seminary right now. These students include a youth director at a Presbyterian Church, a pastor in Prairie View, and 10 other servants of Christ.
- I was particularly touched by the story of one M. Div. student. Uche is a CPA accountant from Nigeria who is working in Houston and attending a Nigerian church. Recently, his pastor informed the congregation that he is moving back to Nigeria to take a ministry position there. The pastor then turned to Uche and said, "You will become the pastor when I leave." Uche said to himself, "I don't know how to be a pastor. I need training." Two days later he received a flyer in the mail announcing the start of The Bible Seminary, and now, God is providing Uche His training.

Two things I would ask you to pray for:

- 1) *Finances* - We are trusting God for more than \$500,000 over the next 8 months in order to meet budget. Tuition from students currently only covers 30% of the seminary's expenses. For the rest of its life, the seminary will need a significant percentage of its budget met through gifts and grants.
- 2) *Students for Fall 2013* - We are asking God for 25 Master of Divinity students for next Fall. Pray that God will bring us together.

Honored to partner with you to teach all 66 books of the Bible to students.

Jim Leggett

*Dr. Jim Leggett, President of The Bible Seminary, is the founding pastor of Grace Fellowship UMC in Katy, Texas.*

## A VISION FOR ALL 66

By Matt Larsen

"It's almost impossible in a 96-hour Master of Divinity program to do what we're going to attempt to do," says Paul Helbig, professor at The Bible Seminary (TBS). "But what transforms your life, what is transforming my life is the text. The power is found in the actual Word of God."

The near impossibility lies in studying all 66 books of the Bible in just a three-year period. But TBS likes the nearly impossible.

Contrary to popular belief, not all seminaries require study of all 66 books. The Bible Seminary, however, is looking to do something unique.

"The uniqueness in the system is that the priority is to teach that Bible," Helbig explains. "Then, to teach the course description whether its World Missions or Pastor/Shepherd."

TBS is not trying to simply be unique for the sake of being unique. For Helbig, it's about handling the Word of God in its entirety without bias or man-made emphasis. While he believes the story of God's redemption centers around Jesus, he also believes the cross loses its grandness without a proper understanding of the Old Testament.

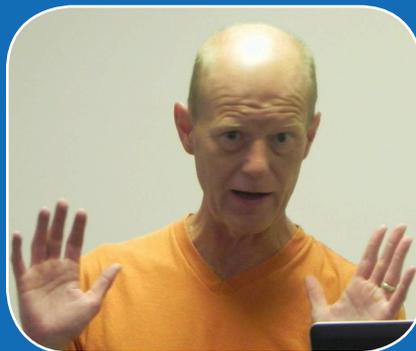
"We don't want to deal with the prophets because they all teach us about a God who is full of justice and is sovereign,"

Helbig continues, "Sorry, He's just wrathful because we're a bunch of basketcases and self-centered people. No one wants to teach that. However, it makes God bigger. My relationship with God is 10 times better because of my connection to God in His Book submitted to what His words say, not what I want them to say."

The uniqueness in the TBS goal to teach all 66 books of the Bible also comes in the way in which they will be taught. For example, some of the best learning will happen outside the classroom, immersion style.

"We want our students to know the Bible from beginning to end, but not just intellectually," explains Executive Vice-President/Provost, Dr. K. Lynn Lewis. "We need to be able to see it, smell it, taste it, feel it, and hear it. When we talk about sheep, we're going to actually go spend time with sheep. We are going to the Holy Land, and walk where Jesus walked and talk about what Jesus talked about where He talked about it."

While studying and seeking to experience Scripture in various ways, Lewis believes students will grow to more deeply understand how the words and actions of God most likely affected people in biblical times, as well as ways God may intend His words and actions to affect us today.



**"What transforms your life, what is transforming my life is the text. The power is found in the actual Word of God."** - TBS Professor and Chaplain, Paul Helbig

*(continued on page 7)*

# FIRST OFFICIAL DAY OF M. DIV. CLASSES

By Matt Larsen

Homemade blueberry muffins, fresh fruit, guttural Hebrew consonants, passionate prayers, and an cappella rendition of "The Doxology" were among the sights, smells and sounds that welcomed new students to the first ever day of Master of Divinity classes at The Bible Seminary (TBS).



Heidi Arneson, Chair-elect of the seminary Board of Directors, rejoiced excitedly as she welcomed Karen Coolidge, her friend and one of the first new students, to the September 4, 2012 inaugural class.

And everyone rejoiced as day one of classes began just like day one of dreaming about the seminary – with prayer.

Seminary President and Senior Pastor of Grace Fellowship United Methodist Church, Dr. Jim Leggett, reminded the group of representative TBS board members, faculty, staff, students, friends and family that this venture is not the planting of a little bush, but the rooting of a massive oak tree called The Bible Seminary. He also reminded everyone of the big dreams he believes God has ahead for TBS.

"At our first dinner gathering to lay the foundation for The Bible Seminary, we cast the vision of reaching a million souls for Christ because of the exponential Kingdom math that works in the ministry of a seminary," Leggett said. "We dreamed that over the next 100 years, The Bible Seminary will train 5000 students for ministry, and if each of those students reached 200 people for Christ each, then that is one million souls impacted for Christ."

After giving TBS family and friends a chance to share testimonies of pivotal remembrances throughout the process of establishing the seminary, Arneson, Leggett and Executive Vice-President/Provost, Dr. Lynn Lewis, each prayed, thanking God and asking that He receive much glory from the work accomplished at and through TBS.

After the opening prayers and dedication, the group sang "The Doxology". Shortly thereafter, Professor Paul Helbig kicked off the first Master of Divinity class, the graduate-level course, Bible Study Methods I – Mark, Ruth, and Esther.



In the second class of the day, Dr. Linda Pattillo introduced the inaugural students to gutturals, quiescents and vowel classes in Hebrew Language I - Jonah.

Shortly before noon, TBS student Kevin Penner exclaimed enthusiastically, while delivering a high-five to fellow student Matt Larsen, "I just finished my first day of seminary!"

By the end of the week, these pioneering Master of Divinity students – of varying denominational backgrounds, aged 22 to 54, male and female, of original nationalities ranging from American to Nigerian to Columbian – engaged in two additional courses, Spiritual Formation and Ministry I – Exodus and Missions I – Genesis, Nahum. And, along with all of their professors, support staff, Board members, and hundreds of faithful donors, these students truly made history.

Yes, The Bible Seminary is real. We can see it, hear it, touch it, and smell it. And it looks, sounds, feels, and smells like God!



The **Bible Seminary**  
Rooted in the **WORD** Classroom



Visit "News" at [TheBibleSeminary.org](http://TheBibleSeminary.org) for more current and archived news and photos, including an article and 100 photos highlighting our inaugural Orientation Retreat for new students, administrators, and faculty.

**Watch for our next issue for Bible Institute highlights and more!**



The Sentinel

# MEET OUR M. DIV. STUDENTS

Meet our very first ever Master of Divinity students, and find out what they have to say about their first few weeks of seminary!

## Leonard Butler

44, originally from Sarasota, Florida

*"The Word of God has opened up to me in fresh and new ways since I became a seminary student at The Bible Seminary . . . We are walking through the Bible chapter by chapter for the next three or four years, how attractive is that! Thank God for being unlocked, unpacked, organized and repackaged."*

## Karen Coolidge

49, sort of from Houston, Texas (after 19 oil industry-related childhood moves)

*"I can confidently say that I know that I know this is God's plan for me right now. Already, He is bringing Scripture alive in my heart again."*

## Uche Emenike

44, born in Ezira, Anambra, Nigeria, and raised in Lagos, Nigeria

*"I have come to the conclusion that everyone that desires to be relevant in ministry, especially while serving as pastor of a congregation, should have some form of Bible seminary training."*

## Esmeralda Heer

51, originally from Bogota, Columbia

*"Pastor Paul has a way of making the passages come to life, so that I am able to experience the people, the situation, their fears, their hopes and their inadequacies. With that vivid picture, I am then able to understand clearly the meaning of the text and apply it to real situations."*

## Sara Kinsey

27, originally from Farmington, New Mexico

*"There was this moment a day or so ago, that I just had this one thought pop into my mind. I was made for this, and THIS was made for me. My classes are enriching my life in a way I have never experienced."*

## Matt Larsen

23, homegrown in Katy, Texas

*"During a late night outing to McDonalds we were able to see two gentlemen give their lives to Jesus! God wasted no time in using this eclectic group of Jesus followers to draw people to Himself."*

## Rowena Marable

50, born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana

*"I am truly humbled and blessed to be in the right place, at the right time, with the right people doing exactly what God has called me to do."*

## Brenda Martin

49, from Houston, Texas

*"I love learning! I have known the Lord since I was 11. I am learning that I really do not know anything. What I thought I knew is only a shadow."*



**2012-13 M. Div. students (top, L-R):** Leonard Butler; Karen Coolidge; Uche Emenike - first child due early next year; Esmeralda Heer. (Middle) Brenda Martin; Matt Larsen - marrying his sweetheart this month; Erica McLemore; and Kevin Penner. (Bottom) Israel Rivera; Sara Kinsey; Eric Strong; Rowena Marable. Average age is 38, currently serving in ministries in 4 cities (Houston, Katy, Prairie View, and Sugar Land, Texas) in ten different organizations in positions they have served in for a total of 46 years.

## Erica McLemore

33, originally from Lafayette, Indiana

*"It is amazing how God has brought together a group of people that are so diverse and different, each with a story to tell and each with a lesson to share."*

## Kevin Penner

23, grew up in the mid-west, USA (the result of many oil industry-related moves during childhood)

*"At certain points in the class Dr. Linda Pattillo will take some much needed time off of pronunciation to explain some things behind a Hebrew mindset. For example, in every class she asks a student to come up with a phrase God calls us in the Bible."*

## Israel Rivera

24, born and raised in Houston, Texas

*"My spiritual life has gotten deeper, my understanding of the Bible has gotten wider, and my devotion to The Lord is continuing to grow firmly. I thank you all for being prayerful during this time and keeping me close to your hearts and thoughts."*

## Eric Strong

54, originally from East Chicago, Indiana

*"These are praying, God-fearing people who want to impart God's knowledge to us. They have been genuine and responsive to our needs."*

Visit ["News - Meet Our M. Div. Students"](http://News-Meet-Our-M.Div-Students@TheBibleSeminary.org) at [TheBibleSeminary.org](http://TheBibleSeminary.org) to read the complete reports from each student about their first few weeks of seminary.

# ALL THINGS NEW

By Matt Larsen

"Sex, drugs and rock and roll; that whole thing? I lived it," 54-year-old Eric Strong, one of the 13 members of the inaugural class of students at The Bible Seminary (TBS), says. "As a 22-year old I spent every weekend in Las Vegas."

As a child, Strong spent every Sunday in Sunday school. His mischievous nature, however, led him right out the doors of the church and into a rebellious lifestyle.

"I wish I would have met my wife when I was younger," he says. "It would have saved me a lot of heartbreak."

Though Strong doesn't feel he can quite relate to the Apostle Paul's Damascus road experience, he knows something happened as a 27-year old to cause him to want to change.

"It was time to shun it when I was 27," he says. "I remember trusting the Lord as I went to bed that troubled night," he says. "And waking up the next morning with the idea, 'I'm all in. I don't want the other lifestyle.'"

## A New Life

"When that happened I pretty much didn't look back," he recalls.

Strong went back to spending his Sundays in church. But it wasn't just Sundays. His whole week began to be reshaped as he found three spiritual fathers to pour into him as a young Christian: Rev. KT Robinson, Rev. William Cochran and Rev. Clyde Boone.

"With Rev. Robinson and Rev. Boone, I spent a lot of time with them," Strong said.

"There wasn't events, it was a daily grind. Go to work; stop by Rev. Robinson's store. Go to work; call Rev. Boone, 'Do you need anything?' 'Let's go fishing.' 'Okay.'"

Working two jobs for 13 of his first 20 years as a Christian, he didn't have the luxury of just throwing in a line whenever he wanted though. Strong worked "straight midnight" shifts Sunday-Thursday nights from 10 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. Wednesdays, however, became especially grueling.



church members and hospital rooms. When they finished their visits at 1 p.m. Strong would return home to pick up three or four more hours of sleep. Then he would have a couple hours of daylight to himself before returning to the steel mill again at 10 p.m.

"That's what I did every Wednesday for 5 years," he says.

Besides taking him under their wings, Strong appreciates the persistence of Robinson, Cochran and Boone in keeping his hands honest.

"They called a spade a spade," he says.

He also appreciates their selflessness and knows these three leaders have immensely shaped his walk with the Lord.

"Each of them invested in me for no reason," he says. "There was nothing in it for them. I find myself, because of the relationship I had with those three men, being able to give back more effectually rather than for status or for show or because you think you're supposed to do it."



## A New Call

From growing up in the Methodist Church to working in the Catholic diocese for over 12 years to graduating from the Rhema Bible Institute to getting ordained in the Baptist Church, Strong has seen nearly the full gamut in Christian practice.

"I'm sort of a spiritual mutt," he says. In the summer of 2011 he and his wife Tanya were serving as respected elders at a church in Merrillville, Indiana when God called them to Katy, Texas.

"I wondered why He would move me from such a comfortable position in what I thought was such an active and needed role," he says.

Moving would not be the only uncomfortable thing God asked him to do. He remembers getting The Bible Seminary post-

card in the mail on a Monday.

"Oh that's nice, they have a Bible seminary here," he remembers thinking before dropping the card onto the table amidst the rest of his mail. He continued about his week before going into his usual Thursday cleaning ritual prior to his wife's return from her business travels on Friday.

When he came to the stack of mail that had piled up on the table during the week, he paused. The TBS postcard was at the top of the stack.

"I knew darn well that card should have been at the bottom of the pile," he recalls, "I was piling stuff on there since I got it on Monday, and this is Thursday."

So Strong did some research, looking at the seminary website before placing the card on a different counter.

"Well, let me see if you can walk then," he remembers thinking.

Somehow, that card, for the next two weeks, kept coming into view. So Strong knew it was time to ask God if TBS was something he was called to take part in. When he felt like God gave him an answer, he proceeded to fight with Him about it.

"Look man, I'm 54 years old. Do you need me to be God for awhile?" he asked Him one day. "I don't think this is what I want to do right now. It's a three-year commitment."

A week later he was back online looking for the application. But still, Strong knew he needed to hear something more from God before he could willfully embark on this three-year journey.

"I was convinced, but I was not yet convicted," he says.

"Then I heard the Lord audibly speak to me and tell me I was like Abraham. I was like, 'Cool. I'm going to be the father of many nations, and I'm going to be rich.' He was like, 'No, he doubted and you're doubting.'"

The conviction came after that.

## A New Family

After meeting Executive Vice-President and Provost, Dr. K. Lynn Lewis, and other faculty members, Strong knew he was going to be in good hands at TBS.

"It is God-sanctioned," he says. "Most businesses write a mission statement as a matter of congeniality. They don't really believe in it. I believe the brethren here wrote the mission statement first, and then moved forward on the plan. I think these are visionaries. I think they see something that's not there yet, and you can only have that revelation knowledge from God. They believe in this mission. That's who I want to handle me."

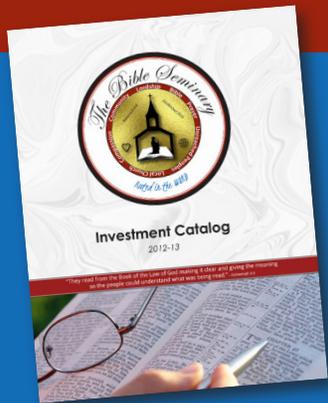
Strong looks forward to witnessing where God takes TBS in the next ten years, but doesn't even try to take credit for his choice to join.

"I don't have sense enough to choose TBS," Strong says.

Taking one index finger, he points upwards. "God chose TBS for me."

*Matt Larsen is an M. Div. student and serves as the Communication Director for The Bible Seminary.*

# CONSIDER INVESTING IN THE BIBLE SEMINARY



Invest in the students, personnel, programs, tools and equipment, and facilities of The Bible Seminary. Your donations and gifts of any size are truly an investment in Higher Education with eternal ramifications and significance.

Support categories include **General Fund, Classroom Fund, Holy Land Trip Fund, Library Fund, Student Scholarship Fund, and Student Technology Fund.** To ask for a copy of our investment catalog or for details about giving opportunities, contact us at 281-646-1109.

2012-13 Budget	Received Year-to-date	Still Needed
\$712,381	\$123,141	\$589,240



Rick McCallip (R), Vice-President of Finance and Administration, and his wife, Elaine

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## Untethered (continued from page 2)



two weeks at a time, and left my phone and computer behind. No access to the world, but full, unencumbered access to God, and others. It really is freeing.

I admit, I regularly read the Bible on my smart-phone, and my phone has some great study tools and apps. But, I also find spiritual freedom and rest in taking a Sabbath from technology every week.

I will often leave my phone in the car when we go to movies, or out to eat with the family. I have gone on mission trips, and even vacations, for as long as

"But, what if there is an emergency?" you doth protest. So far, so good. I've traveled all over the world, and rarely been far from someone who does have access to a phone or computer, or both.

Not only that, I have been alone with God, quietly listening, when people and things come to mind that need action or attention, but I only "heard" them when I was taking time out and away to listen and seek the Lord.

We can make that choice, to be untethered, for a while, regularly, in order to listen to God, to be quiet, to wait patiently, to gain strength.

And this is my prayer, that each of us will take some time, intentionally, to be untethered, to be still, and know that He is God.

Dr. K. Lynn Lewis (at left, with TBS President Dr. Jim Leggett) serves as Executive Vice-President/Provost of The Bible Seminary

## All 66 (continued from page 3)

"The Bible may be an 'old' book, but it is as relevant as any newspaper hot off the press today," says Lewis. "We plan to read every word cover to cover, and study the books and passages in depth so we can hopefully help others better understand this handbook for Christian living."

With such a heavy emphasis on studying the Bible from beginning to end, some might question whether the students will graduate with the practical, hands-on ministry experience and a heart that truly beats for God and others. Helbig acknowledges the potential even in himself to forget to simply love people, but thinks the last thing we should do is refrain from studying the Word of God in its entirety.

"If you have the ability to study all 66 books of the Bible for three years and you turn out to be an egghead that just wants to talk about pre-destination and free will without loving anybody," he says. "Maybe I should be fired twice and you should be kicked out. How can you remove loving God and loving others? It's in the text. But we've managed to do that. I've managed to do that at times."

As for receiving the practical, hands-on experience needed, Master of Divinity students are required to serve a minimum of 5

hours per week in various capacities in churches and ministries in neighboring communities throughout their seminary education. Some students already serve much more than that, and several are employed in full-time ministry.

"A TBS education is designed to be more of an apprenticeship than a standard 'classroom in a box' model," says Lewis. "Rooted in the Word of God and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we want to help provide training, tools, and experiences to prepare Christian world-changers for ministry leadership in the 21st century."

And at TBS, the Bible is central to the entire educational experience.

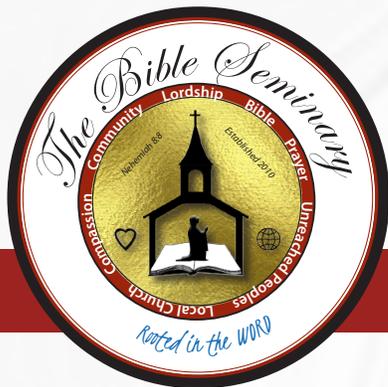
"I need to know that book for counseling, I need to know that book for marriage, to preach, for anyone's issues, for ethics, for morals, you want philosophy? Every philosophy answer is right there," Helbig says.

"What a minister of the gospel, a seminary graduate needs more than anything is to know that book."



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"They read from the Book of the Law of God making it clear and giving the meaning so the people could understand what was being read." - Nehemiah 8:8

## Our Core Values



**Lordship** – Because He is Lord (Philippians 2:11), we will continually ask Jesus Christ to sit on the throne of the seminary and on the throne of the lives of its faculty, administrators, and students for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).



**Bible** – Because the Bible is the fully true Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16), we will offer and require the study of all 66 books of the Bible before graduation with a degree. We will seek to creatively integrate classical theological disciplines and ministry training by studying books of the Bible (i.e. Church History will begin with the Book of Acts and keep going; Pastoral Leadership will come through the study of the Pastoral Epistles; Systematic Theology will flow out of the study of the Pauline Epistles)



**Prayer** – Because apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5), we will continually seek to plug into the Vine Jesus Christ through yielding to Him in prayer. We will offer a unique emphasis on prayer including classes on prayer, a school of prayer, prayer faculty, and multiple prayer opportunities in the life of the seminary.



**Unreached Peoples** – Because the return of Christ awaits the evangelization of all people groups (Matthew 24:14), we will keep our eyes on the unreached peoples of the world and train our students to have a heart for the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) by seeking to reach millions of souls for Jesus Christ.



**Local Church** – Because the local church is God's plan (Matthew 16:18), we will be based at a local church and have a symbiotic relationship of service and training including internships, volunteerism, and prayer/worship opportunities.



**Community** – Because we were created for community (Genesis 1:26; Romans 12:5). We will seek to build a campus-based fellowship where the "one anothers" of Scripture are lived out, where authenticity and accountability are practiced, and where integrity is modeled and taught.



**Compassion** – Because God has a huge heart for the poor and overlooked (Matthew 25:31-46), we will strive to motivate, equip, and train students to minister to "the least of these" as a lifestyle.