

Alabama Centers

The Gatekeeper



New Orleans Baptist
Theological Seminary
www.nobts.edu
September 2014

Special Points of Interest:

- **Current Student Scholarships**—September 30 is the deadline for the Current Student Scholarship application. Please visit nobts.edu/financialaid for more information.
- **Graduation Deadline**—September 17 is the deadline for the graduation application. If you plan to graduate in December, you must fill out this application. To apply visit nobts.edu/registrar/applygrad
- **Chapel**—The Birmingham Center will be having chapel each month this semester. Mark your calendars on the following Mondays: Sept 22, Oct 20, & Nov 17. All chapel services will be at 12pm in M-17. All Alabama Center students and faculty are welcome!
- **Library:** Please visit the Birmingham Center Library for resources this semester. We have a collection of over 2,600 volumes including commentaries, theology, counseling, etc. We also have access to online databases with current research. Please see Elizabeth Stephenson for more info.

SPECIAL REPORT: MISSION TEAM SHARES THE GOSPEL FAITHFULLY IN ECUADOR, 70 PROFESS FAITH IN CHRIST



By Elizabeth Stephenson

What comes to your mind when you hear the term short-term missions? Is it the sad dirty faces of hungry children; do you picture tiny huts in Africa or Latin America, where pure drinking water is a novelty and food a luxury? Does your heart ache for those who have never heard the amazing news of the Gospel? Or is your initial response to shrug and think, "that's not for me, someone else will go", or "I don't have the

money, I have responsibilities here". Better yet, how do you answer the question Paul sets forth in Romans 10:14, "...and how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" During the first week of August I was blessed to be a part of a group of individuals from North Park Baptist Church, along with several students and professors from NOBTS Birmingham to travel to Puyo, Ecuador. Our team partnered with Pastor Victor and his local church, Agape Baptist, to share the

Gospel. Eighteen Americans worked side-by-side with locals in going door-to-door sharing the Good News. Every morning, after a time of prayer and instruction, the team broke into small groups. The groups were made up of a translator, a couple of Americans and several members of Agape Church who would then go out to share the love of Jesus. Although we utilized tools such as the Evangecube in sharing the Gospel, the Biblical knowledge and love of Jesus the members from Agape Church demon-

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The Alabama Centers Gatekeeper is a publication of the NOBTS Birmingham Center. Any ideas for articles, interviews, or news can be sent to: bhamasst.nobts@gmail.com

ECUADOR TRIP CONTINUED...

strated was invaluable. Over seventy Ecuadorians came to place their faith in Jesus Christ! In a culture saturated by Catholicism and filled with people who are chained to the ideology of attaining heaven by good works, it was miraculous to see the joy light up the faces of those who came to believe that Jesus Christ is the only way! Did the team encounter rejection? Most assuredly, but praise God that salvation is the Lord's work and He is always working behind the scenes. Several new believers agreed to participate in a Bible study. We were able to return to their homes to help guide them, provide them with tools on how to study the Bible and explain how faith in Jesus changes your life. Our afternoons were spent helping Pastor Victor with VBS, telling Bible stories, making crafts, and playing crazy games with all of the children. At night we had the opportunity to host a Christian Education class for the local church members, which was led by our very own Dr. Chism as well as having a time to share God's plan for sexual purity during a youth emphasis service. Despite the busy schedule we moved at the leisurely pace of every Latin American, except

for Pastor Victor who never sat down. One evening when the team went out to dinner Pastor Victor was walking around pouring drinks for the entire team. He provided a new definition to the term servant. Any visit to Latin America would be incomplete without a trip to the local ice-cream shop, or in extreme cases a couple of trips a day were necessary for some of the team, who shall remain nameless, and you must not leave without having a taste of the local Ecuadorian delicacy "cuy" or better known in the U.S. as guinea pig. Short-term missions are always full of surprises! Most people go on mission trips to change the lives of others, but inevitably their lives are the ones forever changed. Yes, missions can and should be done daily wherever you are, but God works in special ways when you become increasingly aware of your dependence on Him. Whatever comes to your mind or whatever excuse you find yourself offering next time you hear the term short-term missions, please remember the words of Paul, "how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?"

MINISTRY POSITIONS

Youth Minister: FBC Helena is seeking a qualified Youth Minister. Candidate should be a Christian with a clear calling to youth. Must be committed to prayer, Bible Study, disciplining, and the local church. Email resumes with both personal and ministry references to glwalker20@gmail.com

Interim Pastor: First Baptist Church of Haleyville is seeking an interim pastor who lives within an hour's drive of the church, if possible. FBC is located in Haleyville at 1103 21st St., which is in the "downtown" area of Haleyville. To submit a resume for consideration, please contact Patrick Taylor at (205) 272-3038 or prtaylor@southernco.com

Children's Minister: Taylorville Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa is seeking a Children's Minister. This position can be full or part time. If you are interested please contact Justin Nelson at 205-758-0568 ex.12.

Music Minister: First Baptist Church of Kingston, AL is seeking a Part-Time Music Pastor. Please send resumes to benandtoriposey@live.com or call 334-456-9179 if you are interested. We are a growing church in a rural community that is seeking to transform the lack of spiritual interest in our community.

BOOK REVIEW: *READING THEOLOGICALLY (2014)*



By Zach Kendrick

Reading encompasses more than merely interpreting words on a page or screen. Reading is the way we interpret the world around us. Every one of us views the world through a certain lens. This lens is called our "worldview." As believers in Christ each one of us views the world through the lens of our theology or our what we believe about God. For those called to vocational ministry seminary is a place where our worldview is honed. Seminary is where men and

women go to learn how to better read theologically. Yet, reading theologically entails more than merely reading books, articles, and papers on theological topics. Reading theologically involves the way we interpret the world through our own theological lens. In his new book *Reading Theologically* published by Fortress Press, editor Eric Barreto discusses the importance of seminary students learning how to read theologically. The book is written to young seminarians as they are preparing to study. It serves as a great reminder that seminary is not only a place where we go to reaffirm our theology, but to stretch our theology as we dialogue with people who believe differently. *Reading Theologically* shares eight areas that challenge seminary students to read basically, meaningfully, biblically, generously, critically, differently, digitally, and spiritually. Each author writes from a different perspective giving the reader a broader view of the Christian world. The chapters on reading generously, critically, and digitally proved to be most helpful. First, as followers of Christ learning to live generously is important. We must be especially generous toward people with whom we disagree. We must be generous while listening to opposing views in order to hear what they are saying. This is the first step towards reaching common ground. Second, reading critically is just as important. We cannot read theologically without thinking

critically. Thinking critically allows us to read what is being said logically, thereby allowing the reader to determine the value of the material. Third, in the Internet age it is important to read digitally. Digital material is ever growing and will be a major platform for theological resources. Reading digitally, however, forces us to employ critical reading because not everything on the Internet is true. For this reason it is crucially important to check the facts. I personally believe that *Reading Theologically* should be a required text for every orientation class at all seminaries in America. We live in a culture where the person next door may hold a vastly different worldview. Today it seems that when we disagree with someone we draw battle lines in the sand. However, life does not have to be this way. *Reading Theologically* serves a reminder that we must learn to dialogue with people with whom we disagree theologically in an effort to better understand one another. The compilation format in which *Reading Theologically* is written proves to be most helpful. The chapters are written from eight different perspectives including gender, race, and theology. If you are thinking about attending seminary I highly recommend that you read *Reading Theologically* first.

If you are interested in ordering a copy of *Reading Theologically*. Please visit www.fortresspress.com