

In the midst of writing my PhD dissertation and adjusting to being a college professor, I was given the opportunity to record the historical developments that occurred at Arlington Baptist College during the twenty years since Dr. Earl K. Oldham released his historical account of the college and by extension, the World Baptist Fellowship, *USS WBF: Sail On!*

What was originally intended to be additional chapters became an addendum, which is provided below. Unfortunately, in addition to the above-mentioned change, the page numbers and footnotes were also dropped in the portion that was inserted into *USS WBF: Sail On!* (2013).

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Abstract:

Craig Dunning provides a historical narrative of Arlington Baptist College from 1992 through 2012 according to three college presidential administrations: Dr. Wendel Hiers, Dr. David Bryant, and Dr. D. L. Moody. The data for this narrative was compiled through personal interviews and internal documents provided by the administration of Arlington Baptist College.

Forward to the 20th Anniversary Updated Edition

In 1992, Dr. Oldham published *USS WBF Sail On* as an historical account of the World Baptist Fellowship (WBF), the fundamental Baptist movement originally established by Dr. J. Frank Norris in 1933 as the Premillennial Missionary Baptist Fellowship. His book was a monumental task that was made more challenging by his failing heart, which progressively worsened throughout the course of writing. During the final stages of writing *USS WBF Sail On*, the work was interrupted when Dr. Oldham became the world's oldest heart transplant recipient. That he came back to finish the project after his heart transplant was testimony to the importance he placed on recording the history of the World Baptist Fellowship.

Dr. Oldham preserved this movement's history as best he could, depending on his and Mrs. O's memories of first hand experiences, which dated back to the earliest days. Those memories were meticulously cross-checked and supplemented by various written accounts of WBF activities, including countless newspaper clippings, magazine articles, personal journals, and, in some cases, notations from the back of photographs.

In the original edition of *USS WBF Sail On*, Dr. Oldham's narrative ended with the appointment of Dr. Wendell Hiers as the interim president of Arlington Baptist College (ABC). And by God's grace, Dr. Oldham's record has now become dated, which is to say, thank God, there is a need to update the book; the Fellowship and College are still sailing! The Arlington Baptist College, World Baptist Fellowship, and WBF Mission Agency are still partnering with each other and with local churches to prepare men and women for Christian life and service.

Dr. and Mrs. Oldham have done their part to preserve the history of the ministries of the World Baptist Fellowship and Arlington Baptist College. The baton has been passed to me, and it is now my turn to record the last twenty years' history of the WBF. To this point, my personal connection to this movement has spanned thirty years: I was saved and baptized under Dr. Oldham's ministry at Calvary Baptist Church, graduated from ABC twenty five years ago, and before becoming a faculty member at ABC in the fall of 2011 was supported for many years by WBF churches to do evangelism in Israel.

I am honored to have this opportunity to update *USS WBF Sail On!*, thus preserving for those who come after me the history of our independent Baptist movement, which has occurred over the past twenty years. Honoring Mrs. O's desire, as expressed in her forward to the 2001 reprint, I have chosen not to edit any portion of Dr. Oldham's account. Leaving it the way he wrote it, including the "[m]any obvious errors: grammar, punctuation and spelling . . ." that will be "preserved forever!" is my effort to show appreciation and respect to both Dr. and Mrs. Oldham.

In contrast to Dr. Oldham's work, most of what I record is not my own memories. Because I have lived most of this period outside the United States, disconnected from

the campus, I have been dependent upon information mostly gained by interviewing people who were involved in the events described. Many agreed to be interviewed, but did not want to be quoted, which is fine. However, anonymous sources naturally create questions of credibility or agenda. With that in mind, I crosschecked the things I was told as much as I could. I have done my best to be fair in evaluating the opinions and memories of those who were willing to be interviewed, drawing conclusions as generously as possible.

A Long Transition

Dr. Oldham concluded his portion of *USS WBF Sail On* with the announcement of Dr. Wendell Hiers being selected by the Board of Directors to serve as the interim president of Arlington Baptist College beginning January 1992. Interestingly, he noted that the appointment was “until May, 1992, at which time [the Board of Directors] will name a new president of the College who will be the new captain of the USS-WBF.”¹ Ultimately, that timeline was short by one year, leaving Dr. Hiers to serve as interim president until May of 1993.

The Board had been informed in May 1991 that Dr. Martin intended to resign. At that time, they began to assemble a search committee that would make recommendations regarding the next president of Arlington Baptist College. Clearly, the search took longer than anticipated, which was indicative of the difficult situation that Dr. Hiers would face as interim.

The fellowship and school were still hemorrhaging from the 1984 split. While enrollment had been on a fairly steady decline since its peak in 1975-1976, it appeared to be a manageable decline. That changed in May 1984. The Spring 1984 enrollment of 314 students dropped to 244 that Fall, and remained the largest student enrollment for the duration of Dr. Martin’s tenure. The Fall 1991 enrollment of 134 students was a decrease of almost 60% from Spring 1984, the semester prior to the split.

Those were dark days on the campus. Student enrollment was at a 30-year low. To say finances were tight would be both an understatement and misleading. To be honest, the financial situation was impossible. Paired with a severe decrease in enrollment, offerings were dwindling at an alarming rate. Dr. Oldham accurately described a number of things that had converged to create the perfect storm that had settled over Arlington Baptist College²: The fragmentation that now seems inherent among independent Baptists had done inestimable damage. And if that were not enough, the school was also suffering from a sluggish economy, the rising cost of education, fewer students and smaller offerings from churches. All of these things continued to hinder Dr. Martin’s efforts to rebuild the College, though by all accounts, he gave a yeoman’s effort.

¹ Oldham, Earl K. *USS WBF Sail On*. Self published, Grand Prairie, Texas. 1992, 350.

² *Ibid.*, 348.

During Dr. Martin's tenure, three things occurred that appeared to give a glimmer of financial hope: ABC received a large gift from the September 1982 sale of the Arlington Villa, which was set up as an endowment;³ in the late 1980's the school sold 22 acres of land to a developer;⁴ and in 1989 at the Jubilee celebration, ABC received \$365,048.00, the largest cash offering ever.⁵

Eventually, though, the property that had been sold was returned with tax debt in tow and the Arlington Villa endowment was incrementally withdrawn and used for operating expenses, as was the Jubilee offering. Ultimately, the two large gifts and land sale were insufficient to turn the financial tide.

Dr. Martin felt like he had done all he could do and tendered his resignation, effective January 6, 1992. Dr. Oldham personally recruited Dr. Hiers to serve as interim, which seemed appropriate in so many ways. By that time, Dr. Hiers had become the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Grand Prairie, Texas. But that was not his only connection to the World Baptist Fellowship. For twenty-six years he and his wife Daisy had served as WBF missionaries in Brazil, which was followed by six years as the director of the World Baptist Fellowship Missions Office. He definitely had the pedigree, but pedigree alone wouldn't provide stability to what one board member sadly labeled the "Titanic."

No matter how much experience one has, it seems without actually sitting in the captain's seat, no one can imagine the complexity of steering this ship. In addition to all the problems already mentioned, Dr. Hiers almost immediately came to feel the tension between his two roles, that of pastor of Calvary Baptist Church and that of interim president of Arlington Baptist College. When a business is in dire financial straights, it is common to reduce staff through retirement and or layoff. In his case, though, Dr. Hiers had to face the reality that a number of members of his church made up a sizable portion of the faculty and staff at the College. The problems of the school were no longer theoretical; they very quickly became agonizingly personal. Meanwhile, the board continued to search for the right person to take the helm long-term.

Seemingly against all odds, Dr. Hiers did bring stability if that is measured by enrollment. For the one semester he agreed to serve, Spring 1992, student enrollment remained the same as Fall 1991, 134 students. His second semester as interim president saw an increase of fifteen students, which was then increased significantly at the May Fellowship, when sixty people signed up to take Dr. Sullivan's visual aids course during that week.

In many ways Dr. Hiers must have felt like the little boy plugging holes in the dam. With each leak at least temporarily stopped, another would appear. And he was quickly

³ *Ibid.*, 342.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 348-9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 349.

running out of fingers to put in the holes. Dr. Hiers was literally giving his life for the cause, and the demands of pastoring Calvary Baptist Church and managing the College in its dire condition were evident to those who were watching. The physical toll was illustrated well when late one evening while driving home from another hard day at the offices, Dr. Hiers fell asleep at a traffic light and was awakened only when a man knocked on his window while checking on him. His investment, yes sacrifice, should not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

Even though the bleeding had temporarily stopped in terms of enrollment, donations remained weak and facility needs continued to increase. Morale was very low. Trust had been lost. Loyalties were questioned. Jobs were at stake. Rumors were spread. Things were so unsettled that the rumor that a Catholic priest was teaching at ABC was being passed around the Fellowship. That such a rumor could get any traction indicated that the general perception of the school was clearly at an all time low. One faculty member reported that, on at least two occasions, he happened upon former students who were visiting campus to verify reports that the school had closed. The situation at that time was eerily similar to Dr. Oldham's description of the time a false accusation against him and Dr. George Norris was circulated in the late 50's: ". . . even though their case was unjust and what they said was not true, there were those who fragmented and left the ranks of the World Baptist Fellowship. We lost some contributors and some potential contributors."⁶ However, Dr. Hiers' situation in the 1990's was more desperate than the situation of the 1950's.

Offerings remained low, and to keep the school afloat, the decision was made, once again, to sell the property north of the dormitories. Dr. Oldham and others had envisioned retired missionary housing being built there, but that idea had to be sacrificed for the survival of the school, though survival was certainly not guaranteed. This was the only remaining asset that could be liquidated without sacrificing parts or all of the currently in-use campus. Selling the entire campus and moving into a storefront had previously been suggested during Dr. Martin's tenure, but the idea came to a halt when opposition was expressed, particularly by Woody Cash during a pastor's advisory meeting at the May Fellowship. At that time, Mr. Cash felt that he and others had not yet sacrificed enough to save the school, and that selling the campus would be an injustice to the labor and sacrifice of previous generations.

Dr. Hiers, though discouraged and physically exhausted at times, never lost hope. He continued, well beyond his initial commitment of one semester, to try to maintain stability. However, the unfortunate reality was that the "temporary" label that is naturally placed on interim leadership made it impossible to cast vision, build confidence, or do any type of capital campaign. Generally, people are hesitant to invest deeply in a temporary situation.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 259.

Dr. Hiers' efforts to simply hold things together until a permanent president could be designated by the board were being severely challenged by deterioration of at least three things: the support base, student confidence, and the physical plant. It appeared that donors had all but walked away; the enrollment for his third and final semester had declined to a new low of 126 students, and the buildings were crumbling. Not only were the buildings crumbling, the ground was eroding, too. If anything could appropriately illustrate the dire situation of the school, it was the discovery that the hillside was eroding from under the utility building. This was not only another potentially backbreaking financial issue, it well illustrated the erosion that had and continued to take place on the hill and within the World Baptist Fellowship.

Early in the Spring 1993 semester, there was a new development. It took almost two years, but it appeared the board might have finally found the right man to lead ABC. As part of his consideration of whether to accept their offer, the candidate went to visit Dr. Hiers with one question in mind: "Is the school salvageable?" Dr. Hiers was candid, but hopeful: "We are over a half million in debt, but yes, it is salvageable."⁷

Through it all, Dr. Hiers believed there was still hope, and that hope was one of the factors that convinced David Bryant to accept the call to become the next president of Arlington Baptist College

The Tenure of David Bryant

David Bryant was a member of the board of directors and was actively involved in finding the sixth president⁸ of Arlington Baptist College. In the process of scouring the land for a viable candidate, he had not considered himself for the job. But that all changed during a board meeting when a couple of his fellow board members turned toward him and asked, "What about you?"⁹

Some thought the suggestion was a last ditch effort to find somebody, anybody willing (or foolish) enough to take on the task of righting this ship. After all, how many people would want to captain the Titanic?¹⁰ There were some who thought Dr. Bryant's lack of formal education beyond his three-year bachelor's degree earned at Bible Baptist Seminary disqualified him for the position.¹¹ However, others thought the idea of David Bryant as the president of ABC was the right decision, and many were surprised that he had not been considered sooner.

Mr. Bryant's supporters suggested that anything he might have lacked in advanced academic degrees was mitigated by a number of things: the discipline of self-study that

⁷ Personal interview with Dr. Hiers, 12/19/11.

⁸ This number includes Dr. Hiers' interim presidency: Norris, Peak, Oldham, Martin and Hiers.

⁹ Personal interview with Vickie Bryant, 12/15/11.

¹⁰ Several people used the Titanic reference during interviews for this update.

¹¹ Dr. Bryant earned a Masters of Theological Studies from Louisiana Baptist University in 2004.

was demonstrated, for example, in his memorization of large portions of the Bible; his twenty-four years experience as a pastor¹² coupled with sixteen years as a Christian school administrator;¹³ and his World Baptist Fellowship pedigree. Additionally, some believed that as the salutatorian of the final graduating class of Bible Baptist Seminary in 1972 that he demonstrated plenty of academic acumen, and, perhaps more importantly, he could maintain (or regain, as some thought) ABC's connection with her heritage.

Whatever the case, the idea of David Bryant becoming the next president of Arlington Baptist College had been raised and, therefore, had to be considered from both sides. Overall, the Board of Directors was in favor, but Pastor Bryant needed to consider the ramifications of accepting the call to become President Bryant. He had been the pastor of Bible Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas and administrator of the church's Christian school for sixteen years. He had to consider what relocation would mean to his family. He also had to consider the viability of the College. After much prayer and deliberation, the Bryants accepted the call to serve at ABC and moved to Arlington for the second time.

First Move to Arlington, Texas

David and Vickie Bryant had been married just under two years when they left Ohio and moved to Arlington, Texas in July 1969. The Ohio natives had heard of J. Frank Norris and the Bible Baptist Seminary at the Dayton Baptist Temple where their pastor, Gerald Fleming, recommended the school to all the young people in the church. Mr. Bryant had been saved in 1967 while serving in the United States Army in Newport News, Virginia. Having been called into the ministry shortly thereafter, the 23-year-old David Bryant intended to go to seminary to learn as much about the Bible and preaching as he could. He did well in the classroom, graduating as salutatorian in 1972. Mrs. Bryant gained her education by typing her husband's class notes at night.

Mr. Bryant's sharp mind and hard work caused him to stand out as a strong student, but he was not interested in only being an academic. He wanted to fulfill his call to ministry as soon as possible. One of the principles of the school since its inception was that as part of their training, all students should be involved in some type of ministry in their local church. Obviously, not every student was ready to be a pastor upon arrival at the school, but surely they could do something of service in their local church. And each student was required to get involved in some type of ministry at their local church. Any host of ministries would qualify. For example, among the many options were Sunday school teacher, home visitation and soul winning, nursing home ministry, youth ministry,

¹² Dr. Bryant served as associate pastor of Victory Baptist Church, Weatherford, Texas (1969-72); pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church, Crane, Texas (1972-77); and pastor of Bible Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas (1977-1993).

¹³ Dr. Bryant served as head administrator of Bible Baptist Christian School, Wichita Falls, Texas (1977-1993).

or bus ministry. For David Bryant, it took only three months into his freshman year to become the associate pastor of the Victory Baptist Church in Weatherford, Texas.

Similarities with Dr. Oldham

During his days as a student, several things were burned into Dr. Bryant's soul, many of them a reflection of what he saw modeled by Dr. Oldham. "From behind the plow to behind the pulpit" was commonly heard around campus in those days, and Mr. Bryant never got over the idea that common men could be soul winners, preaching the gospel to anyone who would listen. Dr. Oldham was known for strong preaching, and the young David Bryant embraced this wholeheartedly and honed his own preaching skills after Dr. Oldham.

He also saw in Dr. Oldham a man who would work long hours, doing whatever was necessary to get the job done. Dr. Bryant became the same type of committed laborer himself, one who earned the respect of others by putting in the time necessary to get the job done. As a demonstration of respect, one staff member referred to President Bryant as "Seven to Seven" because he was regularly "in his office from seven in the morning until seven at night." Even after a long road trip, when others might grant themselves a reprieve, Dr. Bryant got up early and made his way into the office.

Based on the many similarities between the two, several people said that Dr. Bryant was "cut from the same cloth" as Dr. Oldham. One person who knew them both very well said they "shared the same leadership style," and went on to explain that both were "predictable because they were men of principle." They were both firm and decisive in their leadership, especially under adverse circumstances, and both seemed to be continually surrounded by adverse circumstances.

This same person added that both Dr. Oldham and Dr. Bryant "encouraged their staff by recognizing the small details." They might notice someone in the office had been working extra hours, and simply walk in and say, "Go ahead and take off early today; you've earned it." They cared much for their staff, and on many occasions privately gave an encouraging gift or word just when it was needed most. Many faculty members who served under Dr. Bryant have only good things to say about him, especially words of appreciation for his character and care for them.

Both Dr. Oldham and Dr. Bryant were described as micro-managers. More than one former Ensemble member said that Dr. Bryant was never as happy as he was when he was driving the bus or sitting at the sound board adjusting knobs. In both places, "he was in complete control."

As president of ABC, Dr. Bryant saw himself first and foremost as a preacher and teacher of the Bible. His vision for the school was to maintain the work of men like Dr. Oldham and Dr. Martin whom he had studied under as a student as well as worked with

while a board member. He intended to do this by standing strong for Baptist doctrine and the primacy of the local church, and preserving the school's priority of training preachers and missionaries. The school was in such dire shape survival appeared next to impossible. But there were those who were still hopeful, thinking, "we've been here before, and we survived then."

According to Dr. Oldham's account, survival of the school had been in question many times, perhaps more times than not, throughout its 50-plus years of existence. The situation that Dr. Oldham inherited when he became president of Bible Baptist Seminary in 1953 was very similar to the situation that the newly installed President Bryant faced. Dr. Oldham described the financial problems of the Seminary in his day as being long-standing and growing to "almost astronomical proportions" as a result of the 1950 split.¹⁴ Yet, time and time again, they made enough recovery to keep the doors open. Change the names and dates and that accurately describes 1993.

However, the similarities notwithstanding, the newly-installed President Oldham had at least two advantages over the newly-installed President Bryant. First, though the World Baptist Fellowship was still wounded from the first split, independent Baptists, as a movement in the 1950's, were not nearly as fractured as they had become by the 1990's, which meant there were still only a few Independent Fundamental Baptist college options at that time. By the 1990's, as a result of various schisms and splits within the movement, a number of independent Baptist schools and Bible institutes had been opened, which provided more options for training within an independent Baptist framework.

The result of the schisms and subsequent establishment of new schools was fewer students at the more historic institutions. A comparison of the first semester enrollments of President Oldham and President Bryant illustrates this point well: In the Fall 1953 semester Dr. Oldham had 287 students,¹⁵ almost double the 148¹⁶ that Dr. Bryant began with in Fall 1993.

Dr. Bryant Faces the Challenge

At a school like ABC, one without a large endowment or donor base, enrollment is the key to viability. That meant that Dr. Bryant had to roll up his sleeves and get to work recruiting students. During his first semester as president there was an immediate increase of 22 students over the previous semester, which was exciting news. Likely, that initial boost was mostly attributable to the appointment of a permanent president, but the steady increase over the next several years should be attributed to his leadership and hard work, tackling several issues simultaneously: student recruitment,

¹⁴ Oldham and Oldham. 216.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹⁶ Caner, E. *Historical Enrollment Survey*. 2012. This and all subsequent enrollment figures are derived from this document.

increasing the donor base, improving the education department, and the renovation of the physical plant.

He immediately began a plan to restore the crumbling infrastructure, and as finances allowed, every building had been renovated by the time he resigned. Local church workdays and adopt-a-dorm-room efforts all played a part in improving the very deteriorated dorms. The most practical and successful plan to refurbish the buildings was the Impact Partner Program, which was initiated in 2005. This program was implemented and promoted by Mike Evans, who was hired primarily to introduce it to World Baptist Fellowship churches. At its peak, about 1,300 Impact Partners committed to give \$2.00 per week to Arlington Baptist College for the specific purpose of improving infrastructure. Impact Partners were instrumental in helping Dr. Bryant bring the school out of debt because their gifts toward building renovation released other monies to be used toward debt retirement and other operation costs.

Steadily increasing student enrollment also helped bring the financial crisis under control. In his first academic year, 1993-1994, Dr. Bryant had a two-semester combined enrollment of three hundred three. While this was still a relatively small number, it represented a ten percent increase over the previous year's combined enrollment of two hundred seventy five. Dr. Bryant saw another ten percent enrollment increase during his second year, 1994-1995.

Each of Dr. Bryant's first seven years had enrollments that steadily increased between two to eighteen percent. This resulted in a "burn the note" debt retirement ceremony, which may have been the highlight of the 1999 May Fellowship meeting. During Dr. Bryant's tenure, the highest combined enrollment of four hundred seventy one students occurred in 2001-2002.

The Ensemble

The primary tool for recruiting churches and students under Dr. Bryant was the traveling music group, The Ensemble. Initially, President Bryant asked Homer Hess, pastor of South Center Baptist Church, to organize and work with the Ensemble. Unfortunately, due to his sudden death, Pastor Hess was able to fill this role for only one school year. Jimbo Cash, the music director at Calvary Baptist, Grand Prairie, was hired to replace Pastor Hess to work with the Ensemble on campus only, and he continued in that capacity until Dr. Bryant's resignation in 2009.

In the beginning, the group's music offerings were southern gospel oriented with only piano accompaniment. However, as time passed, they began to perform limited selections of more contemporary music from artists like Chris Tomlin and Phillips, Craig and Dean. By this time, the pianist had been replaced by recorded music, which was uncomfortable for some pastors. The selection of music was always challenging because of the variety of tastes and convictions of the churches the Ensemble visited.

For some churches drums were out of the question, while others, like Calvary Baptist Church, Grand Prairie had used drums since about 1981. “Dr. Oldham was way ahead of most of the fellowship, using drums, guitars, and even doing cantatas,” Mr. Cash explained. And based on his experience growing up under Dr. Oldham’s ministry, Mr. Cash said that he continually encouraged Dr. Bryant to expand the Ensemble’s repertoire to also include some more contemporary music. Referring to more contemporary music, Mr. Cash remembered saying many times, “You can do this, Dr. Bryant,” and he appreciated Dr. Bryant’s willingness to listen, even if it took a while to consent.

The Ensemble’s travel schedule was quite demanding, regularly being on the road more than thirty weekends each school year with an additional five weeks during the summer. While most of the former members who responded to requests for interviews had very positive memories of their time in the group, they also frequently commented on how demanding it was to travel each weekend while trying to keep up with their studies. A few mentioned the irritation of the relationship drama and personality conflicts that naturally occur in college traveling groups, but all agreed that the most difficult aspect was returning to campus after Sunday night performances and being expected to be in class on Monday mornings, no matter how late they arrived.

Overall, it seems that most of the Ensemble members have fond memories of traveling together. Some found life partners. Others found lifelong friends. But almost all told of finding a new appreciation for Dr. Bryant who was bus driver, sound-man, counselor and preacher during each trip. Many said that prior to joining the group, they had never perceived him as being approachable. However, for most members, this changed during the course of their membership. Whether the change in perception was the result of spending large amounts of time with him, or he was actually different remains unclear. Whatever the explanation, a lot of the former members said they came to see him as a father figure, which continued after they left the group. Mrs. Bryant said that on Father’s Day, her husband “receives several cards each year from former Ensemble members.”¹⁷

Not all was perfect, though. A large number of former members who responded to interview requests admitted there was a feeling among other students that Ensemble members received special treatment, especially in matters of discipline. However, none of the members believed they actually did. Neither did Mr. Cash, who clarified that on at least a few occasions he remembered Ensemble members being released from the group because of low grades or discipline issues. Reality or not, the perception of a special status for Ensemble members, created division within the student body, which was unfortunate since the division was related to the main recruiting tool at that time.

Education Department

¹⁷ Personal interview with Vickie Bryant, 12/15/12.

Dr. Bryant had several initiatives that increased the school's academic offerings, which he thought would improve the quality of education and raise interest among potential students. These initiatives affected several departments. The Distance Education Program was designed to allow students the opportunity to get a Bible education away from campus. It was modeled after traditional Bible institutes that provide all study materials in writing and permit the student to start a course at any time of the calendar year. This self-paced program, designed by Carl Johnson, allowed students 120 days to complete a course, which earned credit towards a college degree, or alternatively, to earn units toward a Bible diploma.

The Online Study Program was initiated in 2005-2006. E-Learning, as this program was officially known, was the natural technological advancement of the Distance Education Program in that it offered all course materials online. It was designed to meet the needs of non-traditional students who wanted to earn a bachelors degree, but were unable to be on campus. This program was intended as a degree completion program and was limited to students over the age of twenty-five, unless they were married or still living with their parents. The original degree available through E-Learning was a Bachelor of Science in Bible/General Studies. That single degree offering was expanded in 2008 to include a Bachelor of Science in Bible/Biblical Counseling, which was a degree that had been available through on-campus study since August 2005.

Perhaps the most important development in the education department that occurred under Dr. Bryant's leadership was certification by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Prior to TEA approval, the College already had an academically strong education program. However, the lack of TEA certification created a financial and time hardship on certain education majors. Those who desired to teach in Texas public schools had to get alternative certification, which required them to complete additional hours of study at other institutions. Many did, but the alternative certification requirement undoubtedly caused others to choose to get their entire training elsewhere.

Dr. Bryant's sixteen years of experience in Christian school administration prior to coming to ABC was very instrumental in his recognizing the value of Christian teachers, particularly in public schools. Though the process was not particularly difficult or lengthy, Dr. Sullivan said "certification would not have been possible if Dr. Bryant hadn't been so supportive of moving forward in the pursuit of TEA certification." This new status was realized in 2002 and meant graduates of ABC no longer needed to seek alternative certification, and that the education department could expand to offer other specializations in education.

Clearly, this was a very positive development not only for the education majors, but also for the school because the strength of the department created a new opportunity to recruit students. Some even credit a strong education department with keeping the College's doors open since education majors outnumbered preacher boys. This enrollment shift, which began in Spring 1992, prior to Dr. Bryant's arrival, bothered

some who still remembered the motto “from behind the plow to behind the pulpit.” They wondered if ABC had lost its direction, which seems to disregard the realities in the World Baptist Fellowship at that time: fewer member churches were sending fewer preacher boys for training at ABC.

During this same period, the administration and faculty were also involved in an institutional self-study for continued accreditation from the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE).¹⁸

In spite of Dr. Oldham’s belief that accreditation was important for the College, both for institutional integrity and for student needs (i.e. the ability to transfer credits), accreditation continued to be criticized by some as unnecessary or worldly. Some falsely argued that accreditation allows the government to dictate what subjects can be offered as well as their content. In reality, as Dr. Oldham argued, the process of institutional evaluation is good for the College, forcing the administration and faculty to evaluate whether they are fulfilling their stated mission.¹⁹

Filling Positions of Leadership

In 1998, Academic Dean Terry Spencer went to work at another college, leaving the position of Academic leadership at ABC in limbo. The position demanded a firm and steady hand, and Dr. Bryant knew the exact person to take the position. In the fall of 1998, Dr. Helen Sullivan was elected the Academic Dean of Arlington Baptist College. Perhaps a few pastors may have struggled with the idea of a female Vice President, their fears were quickly assuaged. As has often been said, Helen Sullivan can outwork, out hustle and out-think any pastor we know!

Few people in the almost 75 year history of Arlington Baptist College have invested as much of themselves as Helen Sullivan, or had such a profound effect. Beginning as a faculty member in 1979, Dr. Sullivan served to usher ABC into the accredited era, and garnered the institution a stellar reputation in the state of Texas.

A year after she began teaching at ABC, she became Chair of the Education Department and quickly pressed for the college to train students to pursue certification with the Texas Education Agency, known as T.E.A. This would take the unprecedented step (for our graduates) to be certified to teach in any primary or secondary school in the State. Though ABC had been graduating teachers for two decades prior to this, by 2002, our graduates stood shoulder to shoulder in virtually every county in Texas.

Sullivan deservedly has been called a trailblazer among Independent Baptist Colleges. She is among the few women in the WBF to have earned a doctorate (Ph.D. in Education, Texas Woman’s University, 1995). Her innovative methods and indomitable

¹⁸ Formerly known as American Association of Bible Colleges (AABC).

¹⁹ Oldham and Oldham. 300.

spirit grew the Educational program exponentially, and often served as the means of survival for the college.

As anyone who has worked at ABC knows, Dr. Sullivan worked sixty to seventy hours each week, often coming in on Saturdays and Sundays after church and visitation. By the time she retired from the position in 2012, it is conservatively estimated that she worked over 100,000 hours. At least three thousand hours, each and every year, for thirty-three years. Simply amazing.

Additionally, Dr. Bryant found himself in the position of replacing a key role when D. L. Moody stepped down as Dean of Students in December 2003. President Bryant chose a man who had already proven himself faithful to Arlington Baptist College and the World Baptist Fellowship. Emil Balliet graduated from our college with a Bachelor of Arts in 1973. In his junior year, he became an associate pastor under Dr. E. K. Oldham at Calvary Baptist Church in Grand Prairie, Texas, and was completing his thirtieth year in that position when Dr. Bryant asked him to consider becoming the Dean of Students. Emil had been an adjunct faculty member since 1994, but the commitment for which Dr. Bryant was asking was monumental. The Vice President of Student Affairs is the official name for the Dean of Students. The man in this position becomes a type of pastor to the students. It's a full time task, to be sure.

Balliet agreed, and began his second career in January 2004. For the next decade, he served as Dean in tireless fashion. In many ways this is one of the hardest callings at a college, as it demands late hours, with midnight emergencies, hospital visits, errant students, broken hearts, student events and countless other tasks performed well after the faculty have gone home.

In his twentieth year of service to the College (February 2013), Emil informed Dr. Moody that he was accepting the position of Chaplain/Community Service Coordinator at the Grand Prairie Police Department, and thus was resigning from his position as Vice President of Student Affairs. Few men would have the energy he has to keep up with such a schedule, but then again, few men have a servant's heart like Emil.

The Heritage Collection

Although it is not directly connected to the academic endeavors of the College, Mrs. Vickie Bryant has built an important bridge to our past through the development of the Heritage Collection. What started out as an effort to organize a few pieces of memorabilia turned into an ever growing collection of artifacts, a historical landmark recognized by the State of Texas and the City of Arlington, and the subject of magazine and newspaper articles, television news reports and doctoral research.

Through persistent hard work and a variety of "coincidences and chance meetings," Mrs. Bryant uncovered and expanded the story of the property that has been home of

the Bible Baptist Seminary and Arlington Baptist College since 1956. The irony of a Bible college purchasing the "Top O' Hill Terrace," a former restaurant and tea garden that served as cover for an underground casino and brothel during the 1920's through the 1940's, created a human interest story that evolved into the number one historical tourist site in Arlington. But the Heritage Collection offers more than a fascinating tour, it is a growing collection of materials - books, articles, audio recordings, and other artifacts - that preserve the historical influence of J. Frank Norris and the ministry and movement he started. It is the bridge to ABC's past.

Decline in Enrollment

The 2001-2002 academic year marked the peak enrollment during Dr. Bryant's presidency. The next year, 2002-2003, enrollment dropped 86 students to 385, and the fall semester of that academic year would be the last time Dr. Bryant would see a semester enrollment of at least 200 students. By the 2005-2006 year, the combined enrollment had dropped to 340, which was followed each of the next two years with enrollments of 325 and 314, respectively. Those years, however, were still not the bottom. That would come in 2008-2009 when enrollment had fallen to 269.

The constant travel, defending against critics, losing supporters because he did things differently than they would, and constantly trying to find more funds to keep the school open had started to take a toll on Dr. Bryant. The various initiatives that broadened and strengthened the College's programs did not increase or even stabilize enrollment. Neither did new scholarships or a full-time recruiter. The trend for seven years was downward and consistent. Eventually, the grind had been enough and Dr. Bryant, tired from the battle, assembled the faculty and gave them notice of his intention to resign. This was followed by officially tendering his resignation to the Board of Directors in Spring 2009.

In spite of the perilously declining enrollment, Dr. Bryant still had a large measure of support from both the faculty and Board. So much so, that a resolution of support was drawn up on behalf of the faculty and staff and submitted to the board. Some members of the Board did not want to accept Dr. Bryant's resignation, which resulted in a small amount of division within the Board. At least a few of those who were willing to accept his resignation, felt like the other side was trying to paint them as firing Dr. Bryant. However, nothing could be further from the truth. One board member clarified his thoughts on Dr. Bryant's resignation: "I didn't want to fire him; no one did. If the man says he's tired and wants to resign, I believe him. I'm not going to try to talk him out of his decision. He had fought to keep the school alive for a long time and did a good job. But, it seemed like it was time to go another direction, especially if he wanted to resign."

After sixteen years as president of Arlington Baptist College, the second longest presidential tenure in school history, David Bryant stepped aside. After his resignation, Dr. Bryant continued teaching theology and ecclesiology at the school. He also planted

the New Testament Baptist Church in Pantego, which is one of the local churches that many students chose to attend.

D.L. Moody

Straight Ahead, The Board Selects D. L. Moody

The Board of Directors was fairly quick in choosing the seventh president of the Arlington Baptist College. In previous searches, there was discussion of going outside the fellowship to find new vision and energy. However, that was not necessary this time because a number of the Board members had already realized there was a visionary who had big dreams for the school already serving the college.

Dr. Moody's dreams for what the school could be had been shaped during his student days and in the twenty-three years he had served the college. D.L. Moody first came to ABC from Community Baptist Church, Paris, Texas in 1979. His pastor, James F. Cox recommended the College as a good place to learn the Bible and the art of preaching. That recommendation changed Dr. Moody's life in ways he could not have imagined. Still in their first year of marriage, D.L. and Sherry moved to Arlington to prepare for the ministry. He was young and wanted to learn to preach, which he did. Very well. He has been recognized by many preachers in the World Baptist Fellowship as one of the best preachers to graduate from ABC.

Moody, recalled one of the ways he and some of his classmates learned to preach: "A few of us guys who worked in maintenance during my first year of school, went down the side of the hill - we still owned the property at that time - and put up a large wooden cross. Then we arranged some big logs around it so we could sit and listen to whoever was preaching. After work each day, some of us would go down there and preach at the cross. We took turns preparing sermons and preached to whoever was there that day. Then, we would do spontaneous preaching; someone would call out a verse and we would turn to it and just start preaching. Those weren't very good sermons, but we were excited to be preaching 'at the cross.'"

As a student, Dr. Moody also played basketball for three years, and sang in the Carpool Quartet. The idea of the quartet came together as Mark Cain, Troy Christian, Clay Weaver, and D.L. Moody carpooled to work at Central Freight Lines. They were all very talented vocally and sang in chapel regularly and sometimes traveled with Dr. Martin to Fellowship churches.

Prior to graduation Dr. Moody became the pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Paris, Texas, serving there from 1982-1989. In those early days of his ministry, he was heavily influenced by a number of men, but was particularly blessed by the confidence that

Charles Dunn showed in him. Ben Langley and Herbert Burcher offered the greenhorn preacher a chance to preach at their youth camp, which really gave Moody confidence.

In an interview for this update, Dr. Moody mentioned two men whom he considered to be his spiritual mentors; one from his earlier years, the other from his later years. The first of Dr. Moody's mentors was from his days as a student. Dr. Wayne Martin was a professor when the young D. L. Moody arrived on campus in 1979. Dr. Martin was a gifted orator, whose skills in the pulpit and the classroom made a lasting impression on the young student. Besides his talent as a speaker, Dr. Martin had another captivating gift; his heavy West Virginia accent and cadence sounded exotic and foreign and was mesmerizing to many young preachers, including Mr. Moody. Moved to be a good preacher like Dr. Martin, he committed himself to learning the craft by preaching when and where he could, even if it was outdoors to other preacher boys at the cross.

Many had described Dr. Martin as the quintessential southern gentleman, which went beyond the appropriate accent. Dr. Moody described Dr. Martin as a kind, humble, and wise preacher who had a great influence on him. Dr. Martin also was instrumental in Dr. Moody's return to campus in 1989, inviting him to join the faculty as Director of Institutional Advancement. And it was in this role that Dr. Moody met his second mentor. Dr. Louis Johnson moved to Tucson in 1958 to start the Tucson Baptist Temple and stayed the rest of his life, which impressed Dr. Moody. He said that over the years Dr. Johnson whom he met about 1990, "was kind and encouraging and an example of class."

Dr. Moody remembered specific occasions when Dr. Johnson would send a special offering to sponsor a singing group so they could travel and recruit for the school. Eventually, Dr. Moody began to go out to Tucson to visit with Dr. Johnson, which deepened their relationship. This deepening of their friendship led to Dr. Moody asking permission to adopt Dr. Johnson's life motto, "straight ahead," as his own. Of course, Dr. Johnson, ever the gentleman, was pleased to pass on this mantle to the younger preacher.

In addition to initially serving the College as Director of Institutional Advancement, Dr. Moody, at different times, was the Dean of Students (1991-2004), a professor and department head of pastoral ministries, and he and Sherry also served as dorm parents for two years for the ladies living in Lillian Norris Hall.

No president in ABC's history had as much prior experience with the college as Dr. Moody had when he was selected to succeed Dr. Bryant. The prospective president suggested this experience gave him a different perspective than others might have had because he had seen and experienced the school from so many vantage points.

When asked by the Board of Directors what his vision was for the school, Dr. Moody explained that he saw the best days ahead, days of increasingly higher enrollment that

would create a new generation of WBF/ABC alumni “impacting the world for Jesus Christ.” His vision was of a school that would be conservative in theology, distinctly Baptist and relevant to the culture. He spoke of no longer “guarding the borders to protect against those without a WBF pedigree.” Instead, he suggested the future could be bright if “we enlarge our borders and make new friends among those who may not have been previously associated with our group, but do share our doctrine and interests in evangelism and church planting.” The borders he spoke of enlarging were associational borders, not theological ones.

The Board was overwhelmingly in favor of Dr. Moody, but some in the fellowship who were focused on associational borders thought this desire to make new friends signaled danger, and perhaps disloyalty. His response to this type of thinking was “making new friends is not disloyal; it’s not disloyal to add to our numbers.”

Dr. Moody brought a can-do attitude to the job and encouraged the faculty to help create a can-do atmosphere around the College, which began to be realized almost immediately. In his first year, 2009-2010, Dr. Moody had a combined enrollment of 303, an increase of twelve percent over the previous year. Word was spreading that “things were changing on campus.” This new spirit was reflected in a thirty-eight percent enrollment increase in 2010-2011, bringing the total student count for the year to 419. The combined enrollment for 2011-2012, Dr. Moody’s third year, had grown almost fifteen percent more to 481 students, which was the largest combined enrollment in the twenty-seven years since the 1994 split.

As part of his vision casting, Dr. Moody presented several initiatives that he believed would be beneficial for the College. The Fall 2009 semester, Dr. Moody’s first, marked the beginning of graduate studies at ABC. Dr. Mark McDaniel, who had become a part of the faculty in 2001, began developing the structure of the Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies (MABTS) during Dr. Bryant’s tenure, but it never got off the ground until Dr. Moody had become the president.

The following year, President Moody, the Board of Directors, and ABHE approved another graduate program at ABC. In January 2011, the first cohort of seventeen students enrolled to study toward a Masters of Education (M.Ed.) in one of two tracks. The first track was Educational Leadership, which allows qualified students who pass the Principal TExES exam and all state regulations to apply for certification as a principal in Texas public schools. The second track, Curriculum and Instruction, is designed for those who desire to be curriculum or instruction specialists, or develop curriculum in Texas public schools. According to Mrs. Massingill, coordinator of the masters programs, “these two graduate courses are just the beginning.” She was hopeful that a M.Ed. for public school superintendents would be the next offering, followed by a Doctorate of Education (D.Ed.). In order to help facilitate the latter, Mrs. Massingill was working on her dissertation for a PhD in Christian Education, and Vickie

Brown who was hired full-time in 2002, also was writing her dissertation for a D.Ed from Dallas Baptist University.

Athletics

In addition to strong academic offerings, Dr. Moody was convinced that campus life was an increasingly important aspect of the student experience. Mike Evans had already confirmed this when he reported to the Board that the first two questions he receives while speaking to prospective high school students were what kind of sports are offered and what kind of scholarships are available. When Dr. Moody was selected as the president, there were no sports being offered, but that changed very quickly. Immediately upon hearing of Dr. Moody being hired as president, Cliff McDaniel, who not only was valedictorian of ABC's Class of 2000, but also had just won a basketball state championship as a coach at Cedar Hill High School, approached Dr. Moody about the possibility of establishing a sports program at the College. Dr. Moody, who had himself played basketball as a student at ABC, was definitely interested. Shortly thereafter, Mr. McDaniel was hired as athletic director with the mandate to develop a respectable athletic program that would improve campus life, offer a variety of sports, and help promote the school.

The first team sports to be offered were men's basketball and women's volleyball. Being a self-funded program was a challenge, but Coach McDaniel had built a network of contacts in the area that helped him find players and small sponsorships. Though it was a small operation, ABC athletics was back in action. The first year Coach McDaniel managed both sports and, as should be expected, dedicated much of his time to getting the athletic program launched.

The second and third years of men's basketball under Coach McDaniel, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, saw improvement, though discipline issues created competitive challenges for each of those teams. It would have been possible to look the other way as many athletic programs do, but integrity, personal responsibility, and character were core values upon which he wanted to build Patriot Athletics. So, in spite of any temporary competitive setbacks, Coach McDaniel followed through with suspensions with the hope that the individual athletes would see the error of their actions and that the program would continue to draw athletes who shared those same values. The problems notwithstanding, two players on the men's team provided some very positive results. In the 2011-2012 season, Rod Reed was selected as an NCCAA All American and Josh Green was selected to the second team All Region.

In his second year as athletic director, Mr. McDaniel was able to bring in volunteer coach Barrett Weaver, a colleague from his days at Cedar Hill High School, to begin the men's baseball program. In addition to a "can do" attitude, Coach Weaver brought with him a strong baseball resume and an extensive network of area baseball contacts, all of which made baseball an instant success at ABC. Due to Mr. Weaver's influence, in their

inaugural season, 2010-2011, the baseball team was able to secure Quick Trip Park, a twenty-one million dollar minor league stadium in Grand Prairie, as their home field. The highlight of the season, though, was playing against the University of Dallas under the lights at the Texas Ranger's Ball Park in Arlington, which appears to be an annual event in the making. Weaver's efforts were so successful that by the next year, 2011-2012, he had earned himself a full time position at the College. The future of Patriot Baseball immediately appeared to be something the students can be excited about.

The third year of Patriot athletics was a landmark year in terms of faculty and program growth. In addition to Barrett Weaver being hired full time to continue the development of baseball, Jason Covarrubias (Coach C), another of McDaniel's Cedar Hill colleagues, was hired to teach science, develop student life, and coach the cross country team; and Kristi McDaniel, Cliff McDaniel's wife, was hired to teach math and develop women's athletics.

In her first season, Mrs. McDaniel was responsible for all women's athletics, including starting the basketball team and continuing the volleyball program. While the ladies had a slower start than either of the new men's programs, the foundation was established. The highlight of this season of women's athletics was Amanda Carlson receiving honorable mention all-region honors on the volleyball court. This recognition gave the ladies something to build upon in the future.

Known also as "Dr. Fun," Coach C's impact on campus was immediate as he began to organize student mixers and emphasize Christian service projects. His first group of runners also made a quick impression, not only hosting ABC's first cross country meet, but also competing well during their inaugural season against much larger schools like UTA, TCU, and Baylor; and finishing third in the NCCAA national meet.

Administrative and Faculty Expansion

Perhaps the largest initiative undertaken by Dr. Moody was the expansion of his administrative team and faculty. In 2010 he hired Gerald Smith as the Vice President of Business Administration. Mr. Smith brought a strong business background coupled with solid pastoral ministry experience. By the end of Smith's first year, the new office staff had been trained and was in place. In addition to new personnel, the business office had a makeover with fresh paint and minor remodeling, which gave it a fresh and professional appearance. Board members were immediately pleased with and very complimentary of Mr. Smith's clear and accurate financial reports, and the new atmosphere in the business office.

In an effort to reclaim the school's historic standing as a training center for pastors and missionaries, Dr. Moody began hiring new faculty that he and the Board thought could help in that effort. Greg Adams, a 1981 graduate of ABC, was the first of several new faculty hires that would occur between 2010 and 2011. Mr. Adams' almost thirty years of

pastoral experience (twenty-three as senior pastor) was coupled with solid academic training, which included a M.A. in Biblical Counseling from Central Baptist Seminary (Plymouth, MN) and a ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary.

The next year, in May 2011, Dr. Moody made headlines by hiring Dr. Ergun Caner, former President of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, as the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. In addition to his representing the college through a full calendar of speaking engagements, Dr. Caner was also expected to fill the vacuum that would be created by Dr. Helen Sullivan's retirement.

She had previously announced her intention to retire after the 2011-2012 academic year, and Dr. Moody needed someone with the experience and academic credentials to build upon the strong foundation laid by Dr. Sullivan. In her thirty-two years at ABC, Dr. Sullivan had been an English instructor, became the first female academic dean at the College, shouldered most of the burden of developing the education department and maintaining ABHE accreditation, as well as provided credibility to the school with her PhD, earned at Texas Woman's University.

Dr. Moody and many of the Board members believed that a more widely recognized accreditation, specifically, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation, would help the school grow because it would allow recruiters to fairly encourage high school students to come to ABC to get a solid Bible foundation in their first year or two of college, which was one of the things that motivated Dr. Oldham to push so hard for accreditation. He realized that everybody is not called into the ministry, and he believed it was important for those young people heading into a different career path to get a biblical foundation before embarking on a career. He also realized that education requires a significant financial investment and that many parents were hesitant to send their children to a college whose credits would not transfer to another institution where their sons or daughters would be getting their career training.

Recognizing that providing a college education had become even more expensive than in Dr. Oldham's day, and that institutions were competing more strongly than ever to recruit students, Dr. Moody and the Board members also thought SACS accreditation would help ABC compete in the academic market place. The cultural norms had also shifted such that credibility within the community at large was very difficult to attain without a recognized college degree, and in many cases a master's degree. Dr. Caner's experience in this specific area of acquiring SACS accreditation was another important element in the Board's unanimous decision to hire him.

Dr. Moody also announced his plan for Dr. Caner to develop a School of Global Apologetics, which was expected to eventually offer tracks at both graduate and undergraduate levels.

Dr. Caner's first year at the College, 2011-2012, was spent teaching theology, researching the school's history and records in preparation for an accreditation application to SACS, hosting two apologetics seminars with ABC faculty member and President of Watchman Fellowship James Walker, as well as traveling extensively to speak at churches and conferences.

In addition to Dr. Caner and the three coaches, Dr. Moody hired three other full time faculty members in the Fall 2011 semester: Ted Marvin, Bill Bingham, and Craig Dunning.

Ted Marvin, a 1985 graduate of Bob Jones University (B.A. Bible), was enlisted to boost the youth ministries department, and to share the women's dorm parent responsibilities with his wife Kim, who also became Dr. Moody's administrative assistant. Raised in a pastor's home, Mr. Marvin came to ABC with twenty-six years experience in youth ministry in two churches in Illinois. In his first year, Mr. Marvin taught in the Bible, Youth Ministries, and Music departments. In addition to his campus duties, Mr. Marvin was also pursuing his Masters of Religion (M.Rel.) through Liberty University.

Bill Bingham, a former ABC student and graduate of West Texas A&M University (B.A. Voice Performance; B.S. Music Performance; M.M. Choral Conducting), was given the responsibility of remodeling the music program into a worship arts program. His twenty-five years of experience leading worship in churches coupled with his academic training were tools that Dr. Moody believed would be helpful in equipping music majors to be able to lead worship in a variety of settings.

The goal of the worship arts program was to provide the students with broad exposure and training in the variety of responsibilities that generally are required of 21st century music ministers, including leading congregational worship, choir directing, special music (singers and musicians), drama production, and projection systems and software.

In addition to developing the worship arts program, Mr. Bingham also was responsible for the ABC Student Choir, programming music for chapel services, and preparing the Impact Team for church visits.

The Impact Team, a student ministry team that regularly accompanied Dr. Moody or Dr. Caner to fellowship churches, schools and camps, had replaced the Ensemble of Dr. Bryant's day. Similar to the Ensemble in function, the Impact Team became one of the main recruiting tools at ABC, and, whereas the Ensemble only sang, the Impact Team used visual arts and music in their presentations.

Dr. Moody intended for Craig Dunning to use his academic and ministry experience in the Bible and Mission departments. Mr. Dunning graduated from ABC in 1988, and after two years of study at Dallas Theological Seminary, he moved to Israel to study at Jerusalem University College, where he earned a M.A. in Biblical History and Geography.

In parallel with his graduate studies in Jerusalem, Mr. Dunning worked with a new church plant, which led to a change of heart from his original plan to live in Israel only three semesters. During his sixteen years residing in Israel, Craig and his wife Colleen worked with three Israeli churches in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Hadera, as well as the Sudanese refugee church in Tel Aviv.

During his time in Israel, Mr. Dunning had also done PhD research on Muslims coming to faith in Christ in the West Bank, and at the time he was hired by Dr. Moody, he was working on his dissertation for a PhD in Missiology at the University of Pretoria in South Africa.

Dr. Moody had specifically voiced a desire that Mr. Dunning help Brian Powers expand the Missions Department, and help generate a renewed evangelistic zeal among the students. After Mr. Dunning's first semester at ABC, Mr. Powers, the missions department chair at the time, left full-time teaching to work as an associate pastor and counselor at Temple Baptist Church in Fort Worth. As a result of this change, Mr. Dunning became the missions department chair and immediately began to build on the foundation laid by Mr. Powers.

During his first semester, Mr. Dunning, with the help of Mr. Marvin, began to build a network of partners with whom ABC students could get cross-cultural ministry experience in the summers both outside and inside the United States. Mr. Powers had done a good job of providing a variety of mission opportunities through the Spring Break mission trip, but Mr. Dunning believed more could be offered to and expected from the students. He specifically had in mind sports mission trips abroad and cross-cultural ministry among the growing immigrant population in Arlington.

Another area of study that Dr. Moody desired for Mr. Dunning to develop was Israel study trips for students and pastors. Mr. Dunning had extensive experience in this area and immediately began to work on the initial plans with Dr. Caner, who had taken many student groups to Israel, as well. At the time of this writing, they were working on a broad plan that will blend all the academic travel opportunities into a complete program that will give the most benefit to ABC students.

Conclusion

In 1992, Dr. Oldham wondered if the best days of the College were already long gone, or if they may still lie ahead. In the twenty years since he raised that question, there have seemingly been only trying days and very trying days with just enough bright spots interspersed to keep the College's doors open. And none of those bright spots came near the zenith of the 1970's that Dr. Oldham wrote about. But that does not mean that brighter days are not ahead.

The College has struggled to survive. At times the dire financial situation suggested the life of the college was terminal, beyond hope of resurrection. However, God used the sacrifices of many to bring ABC out of the ashes again and again. "But God!" was the refrain that Dr. Oldham continually used to explain the survival of the College through the many difficult times that he recounted. "But God!" also serves well to explain the survival of the College through the years 1992-2012. In fact, there is no other explanation for the survival of the College, but God! As long as God still has a work for Arlington Baptist College, He will provide the leadership, faculty and finances to keep the doors open.

As Dr. Oldham pointed out twenty years ago, adjustments need to be made in how students are recruited and in the programs offered. Additionally, the leadership of the College needs to emphasize building relationships. And, if the World Baptist Fellowship and Arlington Baptist College want to continue to sail, their supporters - primarily pastors - must take an all hands on the deck approach, which allows for differences of opinions in matters of preference for the sake of the success of the College. It must be recognized that the school is not a local church. More precisely, it is the product of local churches cooperating together to train men and women for Christian service, vocational or lay.

Dr. Moody has crafted a plan to address these issues. And, at the time of this writing, not only was ABC enjoying a twenty-seven-year high enrollment, it had a three year pattern of increased enrollment.

Will the future of Arlington Baptist College be brighter than the past? I certainly hope that God still has a work for us.