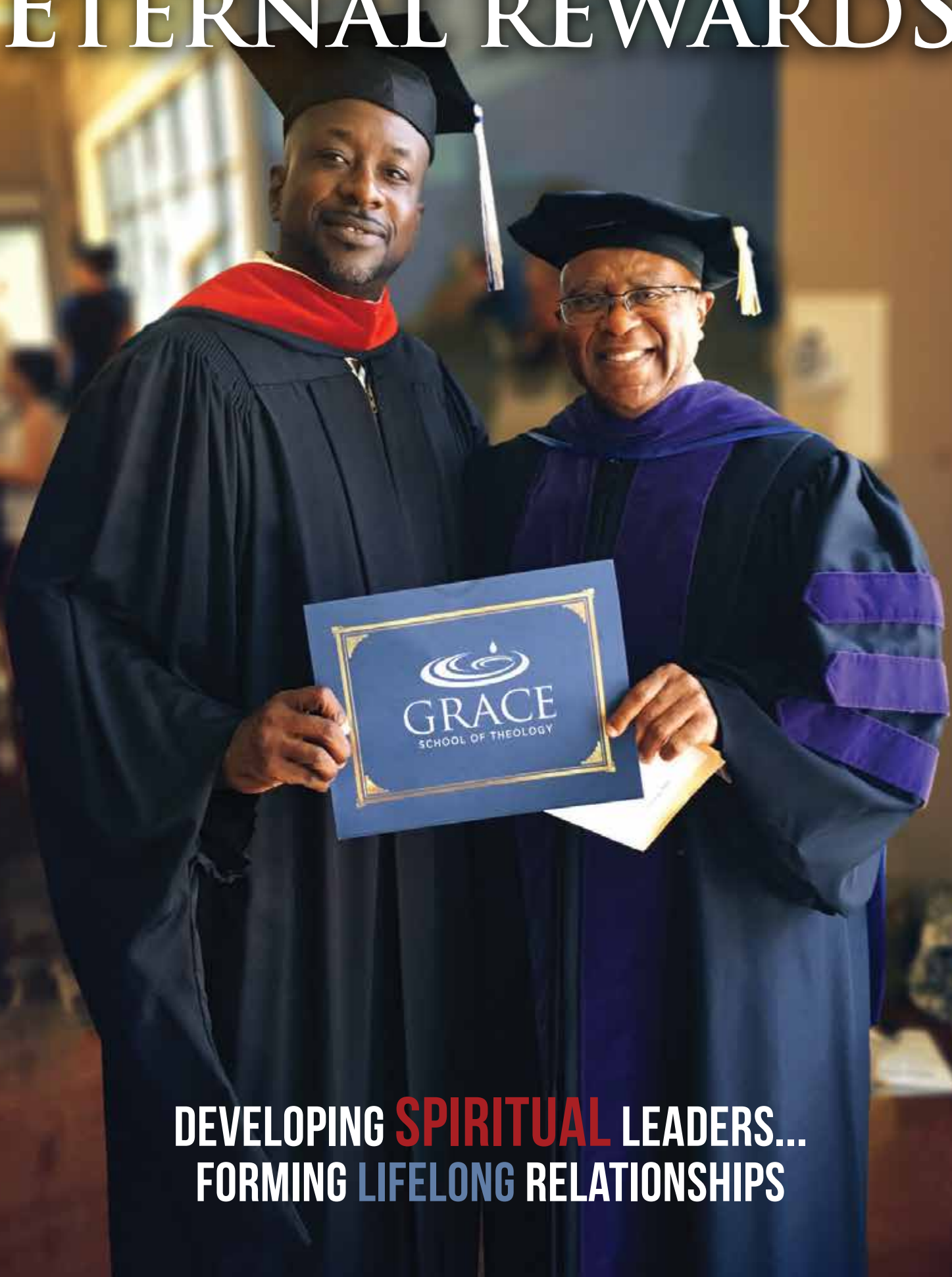


GRACE IN ALABAMA • CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES • PODCAST ANNIVERSARY

ETERNAL REWARDS



DEVELOPING **SPIRITUAL** LEADERS...
FORMING LIFELONG RELATIONSHIPS

CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2017

God is at work at Grace! What a blessing to celebrate our graduates on Saturday, May 13. This year's graduating class represents numerous milestones for our ministry! We were blessed with our first graduates from Spain, Kazakhstan, and the Philippines (see his story on the adjacent page).

We celebrated our first master's level Spanish Program graduate, and we recognized our first Master of Theology graduate (123 credit hours!). Our graduates represent 15 states and 4 countries, and our Alumni Association now boasts more than 100 members!



100+ MEMBERS
-GRACE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION-



40 GRADUATES
-LARGEST IN SCHOOL HISTORY-



MAKING MUSIC *with* GOD'S GRACE

AJ Villanueva has been an avid musician since he was young.

When he completed his music degree from the top university in the Philippines, he had already set his eyes on a path that would fulfill his musical dreams. But he would soon discover that God had bigger plans for him.



AJ dreamed of going abroad to study with a virtuoso teacher as is the practice for classical musicians. He applied to study overseas three times, but each time he was rejected. "As an achiever ever since I was young, all three times disappointed me to the point of depression," shared AJ. But during those moments, AJ began to see God's hand at work. He felt God calling him to equip church musicians, not only with skill but also with sound theology.



AJ heeded God's call and sought to equip himself with the training he needed to better equip others. "I chose Grace for my training because it's very convenient for people like me who work a lot," AJ said. Aside from leading the music ministry at his church, he also teaches church music in a local Bible college. AJ was also pleasantly surprised by how affordable it was to get the training he needed at Grace.

AJ has been pursuing his Master of Ministry degree for the last two years and recently became the first Grace graduate from the Philippines.

What a blessing to see God releasing spiritual leaders like AJ into the world to share the love of Christ. Join us in praying for his ministry in the Philippines and around the world.



READ THE ENTIRE STORY ONLINE AND HEAR FROM AJ PERSONALLY:

PartnerwithGrace.org/AJ

ON THE COVER: *Gusta Booker, III celebrates with one of his favorite faculty members and mentors, Dr. Mark "Dean" Haywood, Vice President of Student Services. To best serve students like Gusta, Grace School of Theology maintains small class sizes that are conducive to building lifelong relationships, enabling Grace to be a partner in ministry long after graduation.*

3 NEW WAYS TO REACH THE WORLD



THE WORLD NEEDS GRACE
NOW MORE THAN EVER.

That's why we have worked diligently to develop resources to encourage disciples around the world and to reach those who have yet to experience the life-changing power of God's Grace.

1

LISTEN TO OUR PODCAST: This spring we celebrated the one-year anniversary of the **Saving Grace Podcast**, a weekly program that shares the truth of scripture through the lens of grace. The response has been greater than we could have ever imagined with more than 33,000 downloads from people in all 50 states and 84 countries. By leveraging this cost-effective technology, we are truly reaching the world with the good news of Christ's love.



2

TAKE A FREE COURSE: In the fall, we launched a nine-part foundational series on grace taught by Dr. Dave Anderson, Dr. Ken Wilson, and Dr. Joe Wall. The online course, entitled **The Grace of God**, is offered free of charge and covers key tenets of grace related to sovereignty, salvation, and rewards. We are passionate about developing spiritual leaders in every nation, and courses like this enable us to deliver theological training that is accessible to anyone with access to the internet and a willingness to learn. Experience the course for yourself at: courses.gsof.edu



3

BROWSE OUR GIFT CATALOG: In addition, we created a resource for those who wish to partner with Grace relationally, prayerfully, and financially. This new digital tool includes the **Grace Gift Catalog**, an interactive list of giving opportunities ranging from \$100 to \$100,000, enabling you to give intentionally and specifically to a facet of Grace's ministry that most resonates with you. With your support, the opportunities to impact the world are truly limitless.

To find out more about these and other Grace resources, visit...

PartnerwithGrace.org



The Joy of Generosity

Making Grace Part of
Your **Family Legacy**

If you have wondered how to donate real estate, life insurance policies, or other non-cash assets to help advance God's Kingdom, we would love to introduce you to our friends at the **National Christian Foundation** (nationalchristian.com) or **Waterstone** (waterstone.org).

Giving is the ministry of these two great organizations. They have helped the Christian giving community convert billions of dollars of wealth into Kingdom impact through churches and ministries all around the world! If selling real estate or a business is something on the horizon – or if you want to reduce the taxes your business is paying right now and then use your business to fund ministry – these are situations where NCF or Waterstone can definitely help. They can assist with business interests, real estate, grain or oil and gas commodities, stocks and mutual funds – and they offer strategies to reduce taxes and convert that savings into charitable gifts.

Whether it's giving to Grace School of Theology, your church, or another favorite ministry, we would be blessed to personally introduce you to a representative from one of these wonderful organizations. There is no cost to talking with them or exploring the excellent resources on their websites. For more information, contact Daniel LaBry at dlabry@gsot.edu or call the Advancement office at (877) 476-8674.



The *Blessing* of Airline Miles

Do you have an abundance of airline miles you would be willing to donate to help develop spiritual leaders around the world? Your gift of miles could help the seminary save thousands of dollars. We have faculty traveling to teach and disciple students in places like Cuba, Spain, Nepal, The Philippines, Panama, and domestically to Birmingham, Alabama. If you can help, please contact Daniel LaBry at dlabry@gsot.edu or call the Advancement Office at (877) 476-8674. As a thank you, we'll make sure you get a full report and pictures of the students you help train!



#ibelieveingrace
Grace School of Theology gsot.edu

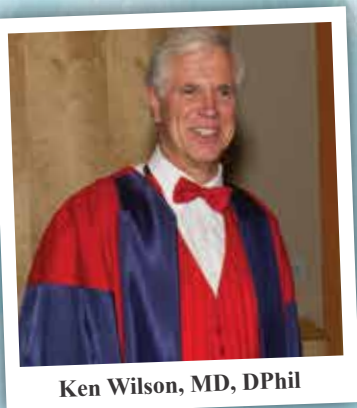
– FINISHING STRONG –

Help us finish our fiscal year strong as we prepare to serve a record number of students enrolled for our summer session! For a gift of any size, we'll send you an #ibelieveingrace sticker. Whether you put it on your car or laptop or favorite cup, it's a great conversation starter!

Give securely online at:
gsot.edu/donate

GRACE FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION TO BE PUBLISHED



Ken Wilson, MD, DPhil

Grace School of Theology is blessed to have one of today's foremost Augustinian scholars serving on our faculty. Dr. Ken Wilson, Professor of Systematic Theology and Church History, spent years studying Augustine, ultimately choosing to make him the focus of his doctoral studies at the University of Oxford. Through his research, Dr. Wilson uncovered Augustine's syncretistic theological revisions, still vibrant in church doctrine more than 1500 years later.

Only a handful of people in the world have read all of Augustine's extant works, and Dr. Wilson may be one of only two scholars who have read the massive Augustinian collection in the order it was written (chronologically). This chronological analysis exposed that "Augustine departed from what the earliest church fathers believed about people's freedom to choose God," says Wilson. "The early church did not view God as deterministic, but Augustine changed that by combining Christianity with Gnostic Manichaeism, Stoicism, and Neoplatonism." Because of Augustine's immersion in Greek philosophy

(Stoicism and Neoplatonism) and Gnostic Manichaeism, his version of Christianity became deterministic – everything is unilaterally predetermined by God.

Dr. Wilson's work has been praised as groundbreaking by scholars from a wide range of theological views, and his dissertation will be available in September from Mohr Siebeck, the world's premier academic publisher. The title is *Augustine's Conversion from Traditional Free Choice to 'Non-Free' Free Will*. To learn more about Dr. Wilson's research on this topic, we invite you to register for our free course entitled "The Grace of God," which features his teaching on the subject of sovereignty. Register online at courses.gsot.edu.

GRACE DEFIES BOUNDARIES

Dr. Fernando Abella, Director of Grace's Spanish Bible Program, is experiencing the boundary-defying power of God's grace firsthand. Born in Cuba three years after Fidel Castro's regime assumed power, Dr. Abella was raised with a communist philosophy that caused him to doubt even the existence of God. He lived on the island nation into his young adulthood, but his family miraculously received visas from Costa Rica which allowed them to leave.

Needless to say, the recently signed collaborative agreement with Los Pinos Nuevos Evangelical Convention in Cuba was an incredibly moving experience for him and the seminary, giving Dr. Abella the opportunity to return to his homeland to preach and teach about the love of Christ.

As a young man, Dr. Abella saw God miraculously answer prayers on behalf of his family, so he felt compelled to visit the

local church. During that first visit, the pastor preached from Job 19:25, "I know my redeemer lives." He trusted Christ that very day and has been serving Him ever since. However, Dr. Abella never anticipated how God would bring his life and ministry full circle. Grace will begin classes in Cuba on July 3, 2017, at Iglesia Bautista "Puerta del Cielo" (First Baptist Church "Door of Heaven") in Baracoa, Cuba, with an initial estimate of 30 students.

"This is the same church where I believed in Jesus. It is amazing how things are happening this way. God is at work," he says.

A dedication service is being planned with 1,000+ people from various churches in the city expected to attend. This is a tremendous opportunity to bring the message of grace to Cuba, so please join us in praying for Dr. Abella and other members of the Grace family who will be ministering there this summer.



The Grace Connection

Reaching **Alabama**
and **Beyond**

When God awakens an idea in the heart of a gifted businessman, things happen – and often quickly. That's the story of Grace School of Theology's campus in Trussville, Alabama, just outside Birmingham. Through divine connections among those who share Grace's heart and passion, God is fueling our vision to develop spiritual leaders in every nation.

"The statistics tell us that 80% of Christians do not read their Bible regularly. We are becoming a biblically illiterate generation," says Dave Nichols, a Birmingham area businessman. "Because of that, I felt a burden to get the Word of God taught to young people in the right way."

Not quite sure how to begin, but confident in what God had called him to do, Dave began sharing his vision with several people involved in Christian education and received a lot of encouragement to start a Bible college in his community. Teaming up with a fellow church member and businessman Robbie Roberts, the two men met, shared, and prayed about offering solid biblical education in their community, and a grace connection was forged.

Robbie dove into the research and feasibility study using the profile of the type of school he and Dave had defined. As he reviewed accredited Christian colleges and schools, Grace School of Theology's profile fit the model of what they envisioned for Alabama. He placed a call to Dr. Al Letting, Grace's Vice President of Academic Affairs, which sparked a series of prayerful conversations about a partnership in Alabama.

"It was incredible to find a school that was like-minded. The alignment in doctrinal position was paramount," says Robbie. "It was also encouraging to find a school that was not only affordable but also accessible through its online courses."

It was a divine connection, so the next step was finding a place for Grace to call home in the Birmingham area. After much prayer and planning, Dave was introduced to the Hooker family, who owned a property in the growing community of Trussville. They soon met to discuss the specifics of leasing space for Grace's Alabama teaching site, and another connection was made.

"As we were talking, Mrs. Hooker said, 'How do you negotiate with God?' They saw the opportunity to use this space for ministry, and I felt very good leaving that day that God had led them to partner with us," says Dave.

After a build-out process, the Trussville facility opened last year and hosted its first intensive class this spring. "We are blessed to be a part of what God is doing through Grace in Alabama," says Robbie. "We are excited to have this facility, but the greatest blessing is not the building. We really want it to be used of the Lord, but it's really about the people, the students, and the relationships."

And for Dave, this is just the beginning of what God has in store. "We hope to establish a model here that we can duplicate in other places because our vision is not just for Alabama but the whole Southeast and eventually the whole world."



(L-R) Dave Nichols, Ben Hooker, and Robbie Roberts

Listen to leaders from the Trussville community share their excitement about Grace School of Theology in Alabama:

partnerwithgrace.org/alabama

SAVE THE DATE



Join us this year as we "Carry On" and journey to destinations around the world to hear about the impact you are having through Grace School of Theology. As we get ready to take off, we'll be treated to a live mini-concert from Christian artist Wayne Watson, a 12-time Dove Award winner.



GRACE Annual Banquet Friday, November 10, 2017

Guests will hear in-person testimonies from students and partners and experience our cloud-based, interactive learning

technology with live updates from students around the globe. We truly are "A Seminary to the World" thanks to your generous support!

While we're going to take you around the world, the event will be hosted locally in The Woodlands area at the brand new Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites in Shenandoah. If you would like to be part of the volunteer leadership for the event, assist with auction items, or just want to find out more information, email Tammie Jurek at tjurek@gsot.edu or give the office a call at (713) 751-9984.

CARRY ON



Taking GRACE to the NATIONS

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Enrollment has grown
350% in the past
(109 to 377) **5 YEARS**

Summer enrollment more
than **DOUBLED** in the last
2 YEARS (122 to 278)