

David S. Dockery

WITH THE PUBLICATION OF *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition* in November 2001, David S. Dockery joined a select list of theologians and scholars who have written more than 100 books, chapters, and articles. Dockery was inaugurated as president and professor of Christian studies at Union University in 1996.

Since then Dockery has directed Union with a new vision for education and financial stability. Union has added new undergraduate degrees in ethics, political science, physics, sports management and sports medicine, and graduate programs in education and nursing. The university also launched a \$60-million capital fundraising campaign.

Dockery, however, is most pleased with the Christian character of the campus.

"Beyond the buildings and the fundraising, Union has an across-the-board commitment to a Christian worldview, to integrating faith with the intellectual life, and taking seriously the call to think and live like Christians."

Dockery was elected to serve on the Commission for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the executive board of the Tennessee Foundation for Independent Colleges and Universities.

Todd Brady, university minister at Union, praised Dockery for his leadership of the university.

"He is truly Christ-like in all he does and consistently bears the fruit of the Spirit in all settings. He is a Christian gentleman, a visionary leader, a dedicated scholar, a compassionate pastor, a passionate evangelist, and a friend to the students, faculty, and staff that make up Union University."

After completing a bachelor of science degree at the University of Alabama, Dockery received a master of divinity with biblical languages from Southwestern in 1981.

"James Leo Garrett, John Kiwiet, Tommy Lea, John Newport, and many more Southwestern professors were so influential in my life, and I will always be grateful for my years at Southwestern," Dockery said.

Garrett, distinguished professor emeritus of theology at Southwestern, said that Dockery was only in one of the courses that he taught, but he recognized great potential in Dockery during their days of examining patristic theology together.



"I recognized in him a very able, eager, and diligent student with a deep Christian commitment," Garrett said. Garrett further commented that Dockery has excelled as an author and editor as well as a professor and an administrator.

"He has become Southern Baptists' most articulate interpreter of the doctrine of the Bible in its various facets," Garrett said.

Dockery also received a master of arts from Texas Christian University, where he graduated summa cum laude; a master of divinity from Grace Theological Seminary, where he graduated magna cum laude; and a doctor of philosophy in humanities from the University of Texas at Arlington.

Dockery served as pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., from 1982-1984. He served as professor of theology and New Testament at Criswell College and associate pastor of First Baptist Dallas from 1984-1988. From 1990-1992, he served as a general editor for Broadman and Holman Press.

Before assuming his current duties at Union University, Dockery served in several capacities at Southern Seminary. Between 1988-1996 he was assistant professor of New Testament and New Testament theology, professor of New Testament theology, dean of the school of theology, and vice president for academic administration.

President Hemphill commended Dockery on his accomplishments in Christian higher education. "David is a consummate leader, inspires confidence, and knows what a Christian university should be and how to lead and accomplish that vision."

Southwestern Executive Vice President and Provost Craig Blaising noted that Dockery is highly respected as a scholar and a leader in Christian higher education, both among Southern Baptists and in broader evangelicalism.

"His literary works cover several fields, including New Testament, theology, and hermeneutics, and he is a leading theorizer on the place and purpose of Christian higher education in today's world," Blaising said.

George Guthrie, chair of the department of Christian studies at Union, said, "David is one of those individuals who has been given a mix of gifts that make for unique impact... I could give no higher praise than to say that David loves our Lord Christ and the Church and has given all of his gifts, with integrity, to live out those twin loves."

Dockery and his wife, Lanese, have three children: Jonathan Samuel, Benjamin Paul, and Timothy David. ☒

--by Gregory Tomlin and Lauri Arnold