

Southwestern Seminary president condemns documentary film as “scandalous, scurrilous slander;” asks Mid-America Seminary head to cancel on-campus premiere

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP and local reports) – The president of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth has formally requested that Mid-America Seminary in Memphis reconsider screening a film that casts a negative image of the Southern Baptist school.



Spradlin

In an Oct. 17 open letter to Michael Spradlin, president of Mid-America Seminary, Adam Greenway expresses his “deep disappointment” that Mid-America, which is not affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention but is popular with Mississippi students, would host the Oct. 19 premiere of the film, *Enemies Within the Church*, produced with “apparent coordination” with the Conservative Baptist Network (CBN).

According to the CBN website, the organization is “a partnership of Southern Baptists where all generations are encouraged, equipped, and empowered to bring positive,

biblical solutions that strengthen the SBC in an effort to fulfill the Great Commission and influence culture.”



Greenway

A 2019 fundraising web page for the film says it will expose postmodern agendas “commonly known by the terms social justice, intersectionality, critical race theory and Neo-Marxism,” and “expose those who are selling out the Church to postmodernism – and the money behind it.”

In a film trailer released Aug. 3 on YouTube, a video clip of the chapel at Southwestern Seminary is shown while a narrator says, “American churches today are where the universities were 10 years ago. They’re pretty heavily Marxist. Not quite there yet, but definitely on the way. Many of the seminaries and the Bible colleges are definitely already there.”

Greenway said in his letter to Spradlin, “I take strong umbrage to such scandalous and scurrilous slander, particularly when it is apparently condoned by an institution such as yours.” He also said the trailer leaves viewers “with the mistaken impression that Southwestern Seminary is something other than orthodox, Baptist, and evangelical.”

In his appeal to Spradlin, Greenway pointed to a 1992 statement from Mid-America’s former Academic Vice President Howard Bickers addressing the seminary’s desire to prohibit negative criticism of any Southern Baptist agency, leader, or program by classroom or chapel speakers.

“Consequently, the energies of the Seminary are focused upon the training of students rather than upon participation in

divisive issues within the Convention,” Bickers said, as quoted by Greenway.



Gordon

Greenway ended the letter by calling for Spradlin to “withdraw support from those working to divide our Convention by engaging in untruthful attacks against SBC entities.” Spradlin serves on the steering council of CBN, which promoted the premier of the film in a Nov. 12 Twitter post.

Multiple requests from Baptist Press for comment from Spradlin were not returned.



Saul

Enemies Within the Church was written by Cary Gordon, senior pastor of Cornerstone World Outreach, a non-Southern Baptist congregation in Sioux City, Iowa, and one of the groups releasing the film.

According to the church’s website, he is also president of PeaceMakers Institute, “a theological school dedicated to equipping conservative thinkers with the tools necessary to achieve victory in the American culture war.”

The film was directed by Judd Saul of Cedar Falls, Iowa, who states on his Twitter account, “I’m a Christian Conservative

Activist/Missionary/Filmmaker from Iowa.” He is also listed on his LinkedIn account as the founder of Equipping the Persecuted, a Christian ministry in Nigeria.