

What In The World Has Happened To The Southern Baptist Convention?



The Rapid Decline and Disintegration of the S.B.C.

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these learning experiences provided the conception of this entire book and thesis. I am so thankful that God gave me the privileges of getting to know so many wonderful people through my eleven years of extensive travel here in the U.S.A. I tell you these things because I want you to understand that I wasn't just sitting at home doing nothing while the S.B.C. continued to decline and ultimately disintegrate.

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In the King's service,

Dr. Stan A. Frye
President of GIMI
John 4:35

¹ The Religion That Is Raping America, By: Moody Adams, The Moody Adams Evangelistic Association, page 5.

Introduction

As I begin writing this new book, I would like to say that this will be my 53rd book if I live to complete it. I love to write, but my best work seems to be when I write from an extremely burdened heart. I believe God places these burdens on my heart because of the need for some servant to bring attention to the problems that need to be addressed in whatever subject it might be discussing, and then hopefully, the material discussion will initiate additional concern from others who will become activated to try and do something about the situation that is existing. This is exactly what I am going to try to do as I begin this long journey in trying to answer the question, **"What In The World Has Happened To The Southern Baptist Convention?"** Now, I will confess first thing that this book will be one of the most difficult challenges that I have ever accepted due to the tremendous amount of time and subject matters which I will try to cover and provide research on during this arduous journey of work. I knew when I first contemplated addressing the subject of this book that it would be a very difficult one. But, because I am now nearing my 71st birthday, I am determined to finish the task, if God will allow me to do so. Hopefully, others may read the material and feel extremely burdened to join me in doing something about the horrible mess that is bringing a spiraling decline, and possibly ultimate death, to the Southern Baptist Convention. Many of you readers may not agree with the things that I will say in these pages, but I don't believe anyone will dare to come right out and say that the thesis of this book and the proposition that I propose to get across to you, the readers, is flat wrong. For sure, it is not wrong, and many former and present day leaders have agreed with me down through the past several years. The time has come that something must be done, and just maybe God will use this work to initiate some tremendously needed changes like He used Martin Luther to start the Protestant Reformation when he nailed the Ninety-five Theses on the Castle Church door in Wittenburg, Germany back on October 31, 1517. Maybe God will use this project to stir up some tremendous interest in making a last stand for Jesus before the sinking Titanic called the Southern Baptist Convention goes down! Of course, you probably won't understand how bad things are until you read the content of this book.

In order for you to clearly understand why I have such a heavy burden for the Southern Baptist Convention, I believe I need to share some of my life story with you. I grew up in a non-spiritual home where my dear mother was a nominal Christian, but because my father was a lost religious man, there was just nothing spiritual to any degree in our home. My father didn't go to church, unless of course my mother begged him to take us. If he did, he would drop us off in the front yard of a small Southern Baptist Church called Smyrna Baptist just a few miles from where we lived back then and even now, since my wife and I bought the last home place where my Mom and Dad lived until they both died. Mom had to beg dad to take us because the only vehicle my mother could drive was a Ford farm tractor.

So, each time my dad would consent to Mom's request to take us to Smyrna Baptist Church, he would drop us off and then go join some extended family members to play cards while we were in church. When he came back after church to pick us up to take us back home, he would always make fun of mom because she would sing in

the choir. He would belittle her, the kids, and even the great young Southern Baptist pastor who did his best to preach the word of God to the best of his ability. Almost inevitably, there would be an argument on the way home between my mom and dad. It usually went on for a couple days in the new week. This was the typical weekend when my dad would consent to take us to church.

Well then, when I turned nine years old, my mother endured the complaining from my dad and insisted that we children would go to Vacation Bible School. So, he reluctantly took us to V.B.S a couple nights. On Friday afternoon before the final family night, or commencement as it was called then, I went a little early to V.B.S. My dear pastor, Horace Moree, took me aside and showed me how to get genuinely saved. I prayed to receive Jesus as my personal Savior, and then that very evening, I walked down the aisle during the invitation and made my public profession of faith in this small country Southern Baptist Church. The date of that event was July 27, 1957. I truly got saved that night, and after we returned home that Friday evening, I mustered up enough courage to tell my dad that I got saved. His cool and collected response was, "Well, that's good son.", but he showed no excitement or pleasure in my decision at all. But folks, I still remember the changes that night's decision made in my young life. My father didn't get saved until he was 60 years old, but thank God he did finally get saved, and I expect to meet him in heaven one day when I die, if Jesus doesn't come first. That night in this small country Southern Baptist Church was just the beginning of my life of working in and out of the Southern Baptist Convention.

My Introduction to Southern Baptist Life

After I got saved at age nine, back in 1957, I went to church at Smyrna Baptist Church as much as my father would take us. However, when I became a teenager, I decided that if my dad didn't need to go to church, then maybe I didn't need to go either. So, much to my deepest regrets, I quit going to church on a regular basis, even sometimes when my mother went, I would stay at home. I dropped out of church as a teenager, and I spent the next few years in absolute misery due to the fact that I was saved, but I wasn't living the way a believer should be living. Then one afternoon, when I had just turned seventeen years old, I drove my 1957 Chevy on to the driveway of our home. I stepped out of the car, and my mother stepped out of the door of the house. She immediately began to scream at me, and she said, "Stanley, you are the most miserable person I know, and if that isn't bad enough, you make everybody else's lives miserable as well." When she made this last statement, I got so mad that I got into my car and drove quickly out of the driveway. I started down the crooked country road like a wild man. I almost wrecked the car, but while trying to flee from my mom, God was speaking to my heart and saying, "Stanley, your mom is right. You are miserable, and you are making other people's lives miserable as well because you are backslidden on Me." Well, that was "the straw that broke the camel's back". I later returned home, went to my room, and repented of my backslidden condition. I made God a promise that I would return to church that coming Sunday. The next Sunday I went back to church, and on Sunday evening, I went down the aisle during the evening invitation. I begged God to please forgive me of my sins, and I sincerely rededicated my life to Christ. That evening was the beginning of some very big changes in my life.

From that day forward, I really began to pray much and regularly delve into the pages of the Word of God, trying so hard to find God's will for my life. Due to the fact that my wife was in High School one grade ahead of me, I went to summer school at the age of seventeen and completed my High School education. My wife had graduated in the month of May, just before I started the Senior English course in summer school to finalize my secondary education. After I finished my school work, in the month of September 1965, I married my dear wife, and we were just older teenage newlyweds.

After getting married, Jo Anne and I got very serious about seeking God's will for our married life together. But, during this interim period from High School until I genuinely discovered the will of God for my life and our future work for Christ as a young couple, I went to work in a furniture shop upholstering furniture. I was working myself to death as a young married man starting out in life just trying to make ends meet, and of course, taking care of my new bride. My wife and I had made a promise to her pastor, Oliver Price, at the Bethlehem Baptist Church, that we would attend her church with Pastor Price as our pastor. The church was another Southern Baptist Church which was about twice the size of my church, Smyrna Baptist. And too, because I came out of the country, I felt like there were too many "big" people in her church that I just couldn't relate to. So after much deliberation, we decided to return to Smyrna Baptist and start working for Christ there. I sincerely believe this was indeed the right decision because this church had so much more for us to do as a young couple starting out because they just didn't have as many workers as did the Bethlehem Baptist Church. We became more and more involved in the church work, and it was through this encounter at Smyrna Baptist that I began to become familiar with the Southern Baptist way of life. A lot of what I began to learn was good and promising, but as I grew in my relationship with Christ and my new pastor, Interim Pastor, Ernest Robinson, I began to see that everything in the Southern Baptist Churches was not always good.

I suppose the first thing I noticed from a negative standpoint was when our home church appointed me to conduct the business sessions of the church when I was only 18 years old. I thought I had learned quite a bit about church life until I ran into these country church business sessions. My, what a shock I had coming. Not long after I had assumed the responsibility for conducting the business sessions as the Moderator of the church, we had a "knock-down, drag-out" in one of the meetings. People began to argue and scream at one another, and believe it or not, when we left the church that night, one woman slapped another woman's face on the front porch of the church. Of course, I have always joked that, "I guess she slapped her in the name of Jesus, and that made it right." No, in fact it was a horrible thing, and I just thought as a young man, "What a terrible way to conduct one's self at the house of God." But, little did I know the many things I would face during my next years in the Southern Baptist Churches where I served. I must tell you that I was absolutely amazed at how quickly good professing Christians could get out of hand and hurt one another. Little did I know that I would see this often over the next many years in the Southern Baptist Churches where I would serve.

After this first encounter with people arguing and fighting in the church, I wasn't too shocked at the many things I saw happen. Following my work as the

Moderator of the church and a short stint as the Discipleship Training Director, I started visiting some of our local Baptist Associational meetings which were usually conducted by the Associational Missionary or possibly some pastor who had been elected to serve as the Moderator of the Association. It was at these Associational Meetings that I began to notice something very disconcerting and shocking. At these meetings, I noticed that there were always some pastors there who were very educated and noticeably college and seminary trained. On the other hand, I saw some local pastors that didn't have much, if any formal education who were also pastoring some smaller country churches. The thing that stood out the most was the disdain that a lot of the educated pastors had for the preachers who were not educated, and yes, the bitterness and resentment from the country preachers who just didn't cater to their educated brothers. There just always seemed to be an air of distrust and disrespect by each of the groups of pastors for the other group.

It was at these Associational Meetings where I began to have some encounters with the State Baptist Convention representatives. And truthfully, the more I was around them, the more I realized there was the same type of division between some of our very own representatives and the pastors in the local association. But honestly, I just never realized the great divide that was existing between so many of the S.B.C. pastors and convention personnel until I finally surrendered my life to preach the Gospel and decided to go away to Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute to start studying for the full-time Gospel ministry.

My Eyes Were Truly Opened At The Bible Institute

In August of 1967, I left my dear wife behind with our little one year old daughter, Rebecca, and I made my way to the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. I arrived in Hendersonville at the Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute to begin my studies for God's service. Truthfully, when I got there, I was only 19 years old and was one of the two youngest men on campus. I was scared to death, but yet very expectant of what God might do through my efforts if I really applied myself. For the next two years, I worked myself to death carrying eight subjects every quarter while being away from my young family. But, just after the first six months of my study, God opened the door for me to be called as a 20 year old pastor to the Center Baptist Church, North Wilkesboro, NC through the recommendation of a dear older preacher friend, Pastor Dean Dillard. God opened the door for me to go and pastor this little old country church in the Wilkes County Mountains. We would live in the church parsonage during the weekend, and then we would leave on Monday afternoon. I would take my wife and child to her mother's where they stayed each week while I went back and forth up the mountains to the Bible Institute. It was at the Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute that I really got my eyes opened to what the term Southern Baptist meant.

Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute was owned by the North Carolina State Baptist Convention, and thus, what should I expect but to really be exposed to what being a Southern Baptist was! On one side, like in the associations, there were the highly educated professors and teachers who had graduated from the Baptist Colleges and Seminaries, and on the other side, was this group of basically country preachers

who had very little formal training because they had surrendered to the ministry late in life. And so, the setting was set for me to be exposed to some of the best people and preachers on earth, but also, to be exposed to some of the most ridiculous and “hard to deal with” preachers and professing preachers I had ever met. But, these two years at Fruitland opened my eyes to a huge amount of truth about the way the Southern Baptist Convention worked.

One day I would go to class and sit under some highly trained teachers who showed me the formal side of educated brothers, and the next day I would see the raw emotion from some of the “late in lifers” who just didn't have any formal training about the church, the ministry, or even daily deportment. Of course, I could recognize the ones who really knew Jesus and were there for the right reasons. I could also readily identify those who should never have been there to begin with. So, from my initiation into the world of Southern Baptist training, I could vividly see not only the condition of things then, but also the prototype of many things that I would see over the next 50 plus years in the ministry.

While at the Bible institute we were exposed to numbers of Southern Baptist leaders, both good and bad. During those days I began to hear of great pastors and churches all across America and the rest of the world who were winning thousands of people to Christ because of their passion for souls. Truthfully, it was at this time that I led my first soul to Christ personally. I had never had a greater experience. But also, during those days in the Bible Institute, I not only was exposed to the names and actual people of many people who were on fire for Jesus, but I also was introduced to the differences in theology, styles of worship, various music, and different leadership skills. Putting it very bluntly, there were some things I saw that made me extremely proud to be a Southern Baptist, while on the other hand, there were other things that made me embarrassed to be one. But, with the help of Jesus, I graduated with my diploma and a thousand ideas that I hoped to put into practice in my church that I then pastored and any others that God might give me in the future. I came out of those years believing that if any denomination on earth would win the world to Christ, it would be the Southern Baptist.

I left the Bible Institute with much excitement and passion to carry out the Great Commission, but I never got away from the two different extremes of people and methodology that I had witnessed in local associations, and yes, even there in the Bible institute. And truthfully, I never could have visualized what I would see over the next half-century as I have tried to serve the Lord and work almost all of my years within the Southern Baptist churches with the exception of six years. I would probably have never pastored any church outside the S.B.C. were it not for the infighting and rank differences between so many people who let Satan destroy some of God's great churches. And yet, not only has this happened in local churches, but this has happened on a major scale throughout the S.B.C. down through the years. This is why the convention has spiraled downward, out of control.

Over the next many pages, I want to share with you some very personal observations that I have made about the Southern Baptist Convention during my lifetime of ministry. I will be dealing with how and when the convention was started. I will also deal with how the S.B.C. schools built to prepare God's servants for ministry eventually moved away from the truth of the Bible and began to produce

Bible-denying preachers with many doubts about whether the Bible was in fact God's inerrant word. Then, after the conservatives took back the convention and seminaries from the moderates or liberals, they used the same "ole buddy system" that the moderates and liberals had used. They continued to lead the convention downhill just like their predecessors. The decline and deterioration of the S.B.C. started somewhat quietly under the radar, but as the years came and went, things began to heat up and change so much that almost everyone was talking about them. As I stated earlier in this introduction, I do pray that this written work might inspire some younger dedicated Bible-believing servants of God to step to the forefront and say, "We will take a stand for Jesus, His Word, and yes, for truth." I would ask you, the readers, to please let God speak to your hearts about the decline and disintegration of the Southern Baptist Convention. If nothing else can be done, let's come together in prayer for this formerly great institution and ask God to intervene on its behalf to see if something can be salvaged so that this institution can move forward somewhat positively for the cause of Christ. The legacy of the S.B.C. is at stake, and if we can save the overall good reputation and formerly fruitful name of this great ministry, it will surely be worthwhile.

One More Point Before We Begin

Before moving on to the primary substance of this book, I would like to mention that my biggest concern for the decline of the Southern Baptist Convention is that the world outreach and missions program of the convention might be stopped or die. And yet, there are a lot of signs right now that attention has been redirected away from winning multitudes to Christ on the white harvest fields of the world and to the unreached people groups where very few people are being saved annually. This really burdens my heart because it is quite opposite of the "Biblical Blueprint For Missions", which Jesus gave to His disciples in **Matthew, Chapter Ten**.

I bring this to the forefront here because in spite of the fact that church attendance is up some in the S.B.C. churches, baptisms are down, mission giving seems to be declining, and church membership is down according to the 2017 edition of the "Annual Church Profile Statistical Summary" of the Southern Baptist Convention.² Not very long ago, I heard the information that every month, seventeen S.B.C. churches are closing their doors. Therefore folks, the decline and ultimate demise of the S.B.C. will be quite a disaster for the cause of Christ around the world. I would just mention what a dear friend of mine who served as the President of the Southern Baptist Convention for two terms said just a few years back. He said that if there is not a revival in our churches very soon, then the Southern Baptist Convention will indeed die. The very thought of this is very demoralizing.

Also, I just read in the just mentioned "Annual Church Profile Statistical Summary," that during 2017, the total receipts of all churches in the S.B.C. was \$11,728,420,088. Then the statics are given that only \$1,185,509,033 was given from the churches to world missions.³ This is just a little more than 10% of the massive

² Amazonaws.com/lifewayblogs/wp, pages 1-2.

³ Ibid.

income which was spent in trying to win people to Christ around the world. This just boggles my mind that we receive so much of God's money in and through our churches, and we do little more than just investing a tithe into world missions and evangelism. I see this as complete hypocrisy!

Then, let me mention the fact that according to "aboutmissions.org", Christians make up 33% of the world's population, receive 53% of the world's annual income, and spend 98% of it on themselves.⁴ Also, according to "aboutmissions.org," the total cost of Christian outreach averages \$330,000 for each and every newly baptized person.⁵ Folks, this is truly amazing. We are spending \$330,000 of God's money given through His people for every person we get saved and then baptized. This of course is among all professing Christians. Yet, we are allowing God's money to go down the drain in all of our Christian churches, when in fact every year in our churches, annual church embezzlements by top custodians exceed the entire cost of all foreign missions worldwide.⁶ Thus, the average American Christian only spends one penny each day on global missions.⁷ Therefore, if the world is to get the Gospel message of our Lord Jesus Christ, then we need to stop wasting God's money in so many worthless endeavors and keep taking the Gospel to the lost world. But, if the Southern Baptist Convention, the most evangelistic denomination is history, dies, the multitudes will die lost without Jesus. So, we need to wake up, pay attention to what is happening, and not allow this great denomination to perish like so many others have done down through history. One more thing! Do you know that in the last 40 years, over one billion people have died who have never heard of Jesus, and over 30 million people will perish this year without hearing the message of salvation?⁸ Does this alarm you? It surely does alarm me, and so I want to do whatever I can to not only try to help the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention get back to making "the main thing the main thing", but also to hopefully inspire all Christians from every denomination to get back to telling the world about Jesus Christ as He is the only Way to heaven.

Well, I have said enough in this long introduction. Let's now get started with this project and see if we can discuss our present situation in the S.B.C., and hopefully come out of this discussion with some concrete plans to replace the Southern Baptist Convention with a new fellowship of true Traditional Historical Baptist believers committed to the Great Commission.

⁴ aboutmissions.org, Mission Statistics, page 2.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid, page 3.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, page 4.

Chapter One

The Origin Of The Southern Baptist Convention

As we begin this great study, let me say that there are a huge amount of history books about the formation of the S.B.C. Therefore, I don't intend to try to rewrite history when so much has already been done. However, in order to help us understand the decline of the S.B.C., we need to go back to the time it was organized and follow its path down through the past almost 174 years of existence. In order to be precise in this presentation about the organization of the S.B.C., I am going to present copies of some wonderful information already done by some tremendous historians. So, let me ask you to really pay attention to the following information and just see how and why the S.B.C. was formed.

"When Baptists in this country formed the first of three national societies in 1814, many of their leaders recognized that there were numerous social, cultural, economic, and political differences between the businessmen of the North, the farmers of the West, and the planters of the South. These differences had already brought much rivalry between the several sections of the new nation. Each section continued to revive old colonial disagreements and wrestled with questions about how the new constitution should be interpreted, what constituted the final legal power, and similar problems."⁹

"Perhaps most critical of all was the slavery issue. This practice had been forced upon the colonies by England early in the seventeenth century against the protests of Northerners and Southerners. Northern merchants, however, soon sought the profit involved in importing slaves from Africa. Southern planters, the only ones able to use large numbers of unskilled laborers on large plantations in a relatively warm climate, helped prolong this evil. At the height of this system, however, two-thirds of the white families of the South owned no slaves at all, and Baptists (who generally of the lower economic status) were probably less involved than this."¹⁰

"The same moral blindness that caused a minority of northern businessmen to purchase and import slaves from Africa and finance their sale to southern planters was displayed in the South in continuing this evil institution. The same argument concerning the right of secession from the federal union that were debated in the South in 1860 had been vigorously used by the northeastern states a generation earlier in the Hartford Convention. The same political frenzy that finally brought all of these issues into civil conflict in 1861 dominated equally the New England merchant, the western farmer, and the southern planter."¹¹

These tensions were already building at the very time when Baptists united in the three societies for Christian work. Naturally, Baptist unity was affected by such tensions. Furthermore, the meetings of these societies between 1814 and 1845 revealed some basic differences in the thinking of northern and southern Baptists."¹²

"Southern leaders, for one thing, desired a stronger denominational unity that

⁹ baptisthistory.org/baptistorigins/southernbaptistbeginnings, page 5.

¹⁰ Ibid, page 6.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

the society plan afforded, but were unable to achieve it. In addition, just three years after the organization of the national home mission body in 1832, many Baptist leaders of the South openly urged the formation of a separate southern body for home missions. They believed that southern mission needs were not being met by the northern-based society. A separate southern home mission body was actually organized in 1839, but it died after three years. In his history of the Southern Baptist Convention, W.W. Barnes expressed the view that these differences between the northern and southern Baptists would have brought separation eventually, even if there had been no slavery-abolition issue. However, when the 'slave states' voted as a bloc in Congress (and particularly in the Senate), threatening to upset the political balance, the slavery issue became a political football as well as a moral issue."¹³

"The meeting of the three Baptist national societies in the 1840s brought angry debates between Northerners and the Southerners. These debates concerned the interpretation of the constitutions of the societies on slavery, the right of Southerners to receive missionary appointments, the authority of a denominational society to disciple church members, and the neglect of the South in the appointment of missionaries. The stage was set for separation."¹⁴

"In 1844, Georgia Baptists asked the Home Mission Society to appoint a slaveholder to be a missionary in Georgia. After much discussion, the appointment was declined. A few months later, the Alabama Baptist Convention asked the Foreign Mission Society if they would appoint a slaveholder as a missionary. When the society said no, Virginia Baptists called for Baptist of the South to meet at Augusta, Georgia, in early May, 1845, for the purpose of consulting 'on the best means of promoting the Foreign Mission cause, and other interests of the Baptist denomination in the South.'"¹⁵

"Thus, on May 8, 1845, about 293 Baptist leaders of the South gathered at the First Baptist Church, Augusta, Georgia, representing 365,000 Baptists. They concluded, with expressions of regret from their own leaders and from distinguished northern Baptist leaders, that more could be accomplished in Christian work by the organization in the South of a separated Baptist body for missionary work. The Methodists in the South had already separated over the issue of slavery, and southern Presbyterians would do so later. Southern Baptist leaders noted that Paul and Barnabas had disagreed over the use of John Mark in mission service, and 'two lines of service were opened for the benefit of the churches.' These leaders hoped that 'with no sharpness of contention, with no bitterness of spirit, ...we may part asunder and open two lines of service to the heathen and the destitute.'"¹⁶

"The first meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention provided the Preamble to the Constitution. It began by stating:

We, the delegates from Missionary Societies, Churches, and other religious bodies of the Baptist Denomination, in various parts of the United States, met in convention in the city of Augusta, Georgia, for the purpose of carrying into effect the

¹³ Ibid, pages 6-7.

¹⁴ Ibid, page 7.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid, pages 7-8

benevolent intentions of our constituents, by organizing a plan for eliciting, combining and directing the energies of the whole denomination into one sacred effort, for the propagation of the Gospel, agree to the following rules, or fundamental principles."¹⁷

"The Preamble and Constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention emphasizes the independence and equal rights of each church. It also set up a system whereby the Convention would meet every three years in a triennial Convention similar to that already functioning in the North. It set up a series of boards and provide for a president, treasurer, and other officers. It is interesting to note that in 1907, the term delegate was changed to messenger. Also, in 1931, the Preamble to the Constitution was changed to eliminate messengers from any group or society other than the churches."¹⁸

"It was customary when some new entity was born or some new organization was established to provide an address to the public. When the Southern Baptist Convention was birthed in 1845, the new president, William B. Johnson, gave an address attempting to explain the rationale for forming the new organization. In his address, he stated: 'Let not the extent of this disunion be exaggerated. At the present time, it involves only the Foreign and Domestic Missions of the denomination. Northern and Southern Baptists are still brethren. They differ in no article of the faith.'"¹⁹

"According to Johnson, the crucial question was, "Who may be a missionary? The problem that created the impasse was, again, the confrontation of slavery and antislavery forces and the unwillingness of those on the Board of the Domestic Missions for the Baptists in the North to permit a slaveholder to serve as a missionary. In Johnson's words, the understanding of Baptists in the South was this: 'It was forbidding us to speak unto the Gentiles.' His address, delivered May 12, 1845, strongly emphasized the passion that Southern Baptists had for taking the Gospel to the world. This passion has not changed in the entire history of the Southern Baptist Convention."²⁰

Yet, I believe that several times during the S.B.C. history, it has gotten sidetracked from the main business of world evangelism and missions. And as we will see later, it did get very sidetracked by a major decision made in 1974, when the future president of the S.B.C. bought into a lie and changed the strategy of how we should try to win people to Christ. It was a tragic mistake!

¹⁷ "The Baptist Reformation", By: Jerry Sutton, Broadman/Holman Press, page 32.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, pages 32-33.

Chapter Two

Some Of The Early Struggles Of The S.B.C.

After the Southern Baptist Convention was officially organized in 1845 in Augusta, Georgia, this new organization would face many imminent struggles in the years ahead. One of the main struggles that the new Southern Baptist Convention initially faced was the coming of the Civil War. Yet, there were many other problems they had to solve, but let's look at the Civil War problem first.

"The Civil War, Reconstruction, continued sectional rivalry, depressions and inflation, the withdrawal of blacks from the white churches, internal doctrinal conflicts, perplexing organizational questions, and--despite these things--remarkable growth and expansion in Christian ministries made up the story of Southern Baptist until 1891.²¹

"The Civil War totally disrupted all of the programs of the Convention, while Reconstruction (until 1877) delayed the return to normalcy. Although the slavery-abolition issue had disappeared, sharp sectional differences in other forms continued to mar the fellowship and cooperation of all Baptists in America. The question of reunion was raised by Northern Baptists after the civil conflict had ended, but Southern Baptists declined to return to the society-type denominational bodies they had left in 1845. Despite this, the Home Mission Society of the North carried on a fruitful program of missions, education, and church, assistance among both blacks and whites in the South during this period. This active work in the South by the northern society provided a formidable rival for the Southern Baptist Convention. Not until the 1880s was the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board able to claim the southern field as its base."²²

The Struggle With Calvinism

""In the early nineteenth century, however, a new and virulent strain of hyper-Calvinism made strong inroads among Baptists in America, leading to major disruptions of fellowship and outright schism. A system of thought originating among British Congregationalists in the early eighteenth century, hyper-Calvinism promoted the doctrine of eternal justification. The elect were not only chosen in Christ from all eternity, they were actually justified before they were born, quite apart from repentance, faith, and a personal response to Christ and the Gospel. This view appeared to undermine the urgency of personal conversion and the importance of the historicity of the Incarnation itself. The Philadelphia Confession of Faith, echoing the Westminster Confession, rejected it plainly: 'God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect....nevertheless, they are not justified personally until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them.'"²³

"Hyper-Calvinist also rejected 'duty faith,' the teaching that unconverted

²¹ baptisthistory.org/baptistorgins/southernbaptistbeginnings, page 9.

²² Ibid, page 10.

²³ Firstthings.com/article, southern-baptist-ghosts, Timothy George, page 14.

sinner who hear the Gospel proclaimed have a duty to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. This view in turn led them to oppose the open, promiscuous preaching of the Gospel: it was useless to exhort unconverted sinners to do what they neither could do nor indeed had any obligation to do. On these theological grounds, hyper-Calvinists thwarted efforts to promote missions, evangelism, Sunday Schools, theological seminaries, and other humanly contrived devices that seemed to them unwarranted intrusions into the sovereign work of the Spirit."²⁴

"Among Baptists on the American frontier, these views were forcefully presented by Daniel Parker (1781-1844), a man of slight build with a beard streaked with tobacco stains, who set forth his ideas in "Views On The Two Seeds (1826). Based on his reading of Genesis 3:15, Parker claimed that two seeds, 'the seed of the woman' and 'the seed of the serpent,' had entered the human bloodstream resulting in a fatalistic bifurcation of the human race. Two 'seed in the Spirit' predestinarian Baptists claimed that Christ and his elect one were born of the pure seed of the woman, while the non-elect reprobates were doomed because they had within them the seed of the serpent."²⁵

Here we are after almost 175 years later, still struggling with the hyper-Calvinism doctrine which is bringing irreparable damage to the Southern Baptist Convention. This false doctrine caused damage in the initial stages of the S.B.C., and today, it is still causing so much confusion that it is providing an excuse for thousands of churches to stop doing missions and outreach. Therefore, it is sending millions of people to hell, just because we have some people who believe they have found an inside track with God which makes them more spiritual. And, I am going to be so forthright as to say that I personally believe a lot of contemporary pastors have embraced the false five steps of Calvinism because they are lazy and don't want the responsibility for trying to win people to Christ. I will talk much more about that later in this book, but I just wanted you to see that this was a struggle way back there when the Southern Baptist Convention had its origin.

The Struggle With Campbellism

Another tremendous struggle that the young fledging Baptist movement had to deal with was Campbellism. "Alexander Campbell was born in Ireland, educated in Scotland, and emigrated to Pennsylvania with his father, Thomas Campbell, where both were immersed as believers and affiliated with the Baptist denomination in 1812. The Campbells were Scotch Irish Presbyterians by background, but after Alexander's wife, Dorothy, gave birth to their first child, they rejected infant baptism. Campbell was a popular speaker at Baptist gatherings and disseminated his ideas through a widely circulated paper he edited called the 'Christian Baptist.'" ²⁶

"The Campbell movement (the word Campbellite was a nickname coined in 1832) began as an effort to counteract the disunity of Christendom. Campbell's reforming movement was part of the larger restorationist impulse in American

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, pages 14-15.

²⁶ Ibid, page 3.

Protestantism. Campbell wanted to bring visible unity among all Christians and hence 'restore' the true church by returning to the New Testament, which, he believed, contained a precise blueprint for church order and belief. Building on the earlier restorationist call of Barton W. Stone, Campbell led many erstwhile Baptists to leave their congregations and affiliate with his newly formed Churches of Christ."²⁷

"The results of this schism are with us still; it is not uncommon to find Baptist and 'Christian' churches still facing one another across town squares and village lanes throughout Tennessee and Kentucky, just as New England Congregationalists divided into Old Lights and New Lights in the eighteenth century. Why did Campbell leave the Baptists after seventeen years of ministry among them? For one thing, Campbell's stark biblical literalism led to disagreements over many aspects of church life and ministerial order. Campbell opposed, for instance, the use of instrumental music in worship and refused to call ministers by officious sounding titles such as 'Reverend' or 'Doctor.'"²⁸

"Campbell also had serious soteriological differences with the Baptists. He taught a doctrine that sounded very much like baptismal regeneration, denying the direct agency of the Holy Spirit in conversion. Indeed, Campbell would often poke fun at Baptist who talked about 'getting religion' or being convicted of sin and drawn to Christ by the work of the Spirit. For Baptist awakeners in the tradition of Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and the Wesleys, this smacked of heresy or even blasphemy, ruling out what the Baptists called 'an immediate work of God's grace in the heart.'"²⁹

Another thing that Campbell hated with the Baptists was an outright rejection of confessions of faith. "By the nineteenth century, Baptists had produced many such confessions, but the one against which Campbell directed most of his ire was the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, a document printed for the Philadelphia Baptist Association by Benjamin Franklin in 1742. By the 1830s it exerted a magisterial influence among Baptists North and South. At the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, each of the 293 'delegates,' as they were then called, who gathered in Augusta, Georgia, belonged to churches that embraced this confessional standard."³⁰

"By the time of Campbell's death in 1866, Baptists and the Restorationists had already gone their separate ways. Yet the lingering influence of Campbell's legacy would continue to haunt Southern Baptists."³¹

I believe it would be good for us to know just how much damage Alexander Campbell caused many of the original Southern Baptist Churches. I want to give you some strong words from the Dover Baptist Association of churches in Henrico, Virginia in the autumn of 1832. Please read this following committee report about Alexander Campbell and the damage he was causing.

"The select committee appointed to consider and report what ought to be done

²⁷ Ibid, page 4.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, page 5.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, page 7.

in reference to the new doctrines and practices which have disturbed the peace and harmony of some of the churches composing this association, met at the house of Elder Miles Turpin, and having invited and obtained the aid and counsel of Elders Andrew Broaddus, Eli Ball, John Micou, William Hill, Miles Turpin, and brother Erastus T. Montague, after due deliberation, respectfully report the following preamble and resolution for the consideration and adoption of the association."³²

Let me give you just a portion of this associational committee's report, and I believe you will see why the Campbellites and the soon-to-be-organized Southern Baptist went their different ways.

"While they boast of superior light and knowledge, we cannot but lament, in their life and conversation, the absence of that 'wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.' In fine, the writings of Alexander Campbell, and the spirit and manner of those who profess to admire his writings and sentiments, appear to us remarkably destitute of 'the mind that was in Christ Jesus,' of that divine love 'which suffereth long, and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.' Whenever these writing sad sentiments have to any extent, been introduced into our churches, the spirit of hypercriticism, 'vain janglings and strife about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers,' have chilled the spirit of true devotion, and put an end to Christian benevolence and harmony."³³

Truly, there was much bitterness between the early Baptists and Alexander Campbell. We could go on in volumes talking about the Campbellite exit from the Southern Baptist Churches, but I believe this is enough information to tell you that there was a tremendous struggle over Campbellism—just one of many struggles.

The Struggle With Landmarkism

"Landmarkism, another important movement in Southern Baptist history, developed in the 1850s from the views of J.R. Graves. He migrated from Vermont to the South bringing with him the typical New England Baptist fear of conventions. His ideas were reflected in various severe controversies during the remainder of the century."³⁴

"**Landmarkism** is a type of Baptist developed in the American South in the mid-19th century. It is committed to a strong version of the perpetuity theory of Baptist origins, attributing an unbroken continuity and unique legitimacy to the Baptist movement since the apostolic period. It includes belief in the exclusive validity of Baptist churches and invalidity of non-Baptist liturgical forms and practices. It led to intense debates and splits in the Baptist community."³⁵

"The movement began in the Southern United States in 1851, shaped by James Robinson Graves of Tennessee, and Ben M. Bogard of Arkansas. The movement was a

³² baptisthistoryhomepage.com, page 14.

³³ Ibid, page 16

³⁴ Ibid, page 10.

³⁵ Landmarkism, wikipedia.org. page 1.

reaction to religious progressivism earlier in the century. At the time it arose, its proponents claimed Landmarkism was a return to what Baptists had previously believed, while scholars since then have claimed it was a major departure."³⁶

"In 1859, the Southern Baptist Convention approved several resolutions disapproving of Landmarkism, which led to adherents gradually withdrawing from the Southern Baptist Convention 'to form their own churches and associations and create an independent Landmark Baptist tradition.'"³⁷

While the Landmark Baptists were still in the convention, before withdrawing, one of the major problems that the members of the S.B.C. had to deal with was the issue of representation in the convention itself. The Landmark people believed in the delegate methodology of representation. This means that they believed the churches could send their approved delegates to the conventions, but they could only vote according to the authority of what their churches demanded. This concept brought much resistance because "Preference for the term messenger came as a reaction to Landmarkism and was intended to make the point that the member of the S.B.C. votes his own convictions and does not come with the 'delegated' authority from the church, nor does he carry back to the church any official or authoritative instructions from the convention."³⁸

This controversy played a great part in causing the Landmark Baptists to leave the S.B.C., and it contributed specifically to the Southern Baptists' changing the name of their representatives to "messengers" instead of delegates. However, before they agreed on the name "messenger", they had contemplated using the name "brethren", but in order to include women, they chose the name "messenger". This term has been used by all Southern Baptist representatives since 1918.

The Landmarkism Movement which left the original convention just after 1859, was characterized by some quite different doctrines which they continue to practice quite legalistically to this very day. By the way, most of the Missionary Baptist Churches which exist in name today came from the Landmark Baptists and are often aligned with the present American Baptist Convention which used to be the Northern Baptist Convention.

Now, you might say, "What did the Landmark Baptist believe when they left the Southern Baptist Convention just after 1859?" Well, they believed in the delegate representation as we have already discussed, but they also believed several other unique doctrines, and many of them still practice them today. Let's just mention a few of these doctrines.

1. They believed in the in the "Baptist Bride" doctrine. This doctrine teaches that only members of the Landmark Baptist Churches can go to heaven because these Baptist churches follow their path backwards to the apostolic succession all the way to the First Century church. They do not believe in a universal church, but they believe they are the only true church, and God's plan of salvation rests with them.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid, page 2.

³⁸ The Baptist Heritage, By: Leon McBeth, Broadman, page 614.

2. They also believe in closed church membership. This means that they believe that only the Landmark Baptist members can participate in their churches. They do not receive baptisms from other Baptist churches, and they also don't allow anyone outside of their churches to participate in communion. This is called closed communion.

3. The Landmark churches also believe in separation entirely from other Baptist churches and church people. Therefore, they will not receive a church membership letter from another Baptist Church. Truthfully, they are legalists who don't know the meaning of genuine love for others outside their churches. In fact, they believe that everyone else has to be lost.

Chapter Three

Big Challenges Before The Early S.B.C.

After the Southern Baptist Convention was officially organized in May of 1845, at the First Baptist Church of Augusta, Georgia, there was an air of excitement about the expansion and effective outreach of the combined effort of the churches within the new convention. There were big dreams and even some big plans, but as is always the case, there was the problem of having to have funds to carry out the work. So, let me give you the history of the first major drive to raise funds to do the work of the Lord.

The Seventy-Five Million Campaign

After the turn of the century, prosperity and optimism prompted the Southern Baptists to project larger programs. World War I focused their attention on world needs as never before. The sale of Liberty Bonds during the war showed that vast sums could be raised for a worthy cause. Many of the denominations pushed major fund drives, so the Southern Baptists decided to do the same.

"In 1919 Southern Baptist launched their 'Seventy-Five Million Campaign,' an effort to raise \$75 million for Baptist causes over a five-year period, 1919-1924. By far the most ambitious fund-raising effort of Southern Baptists to that time, it began as an effort to strengthen Baptist education but mushroomed into a campaign to aid all Baptist causes."³⁹

"In 1919 at Atlanta, the Committee on Financial Aspects of our Denominational Program reported as follows:

In view of the needs of the world at this hour...we suggest, (1) that in the organized work of this Convention we undertake to raise not less than \$75,000,000 in five years. (2) We recommend that the Executive Committee of the Convention in conference with the Secretaries of the General Board and the State Boards be requested to distribute the amounts among the different objects fostered by the Convention..., and apportion the amount to the various states."⁴⁰

"However, the seventy-five million dollars proved easier to pledge than to collect. An economic recession hit the South in 1920, with agricultural prices, drive up in World War I, dropping sharply. Crop prices dropped by about 50 percent, and total farm income in the South plummeted from almost ten billion dollars in 1919 to less than four billion dollars in 1920. By 1922, not over half of Southern Baptists had participated in the campaign, about a half million new members added since 1919 had not been enlisted, and Baptists who moved often considered their pledges canceled. Individuals signed pledge cards, indicating how much they would give each year for five years. In case of financial reverses, the pledges could be adjusted, a provision which seemed unclear to some. The collections were also hampered, perhaps, by an erroneous impression that part of the funds would go to the Interchurch Fund, an ecumenical effort which found no favor among most Baptists in the South. The bottom line showed that at the end of the campaign, Baptists had

³⁹ The Baptist Heritage, By: Leon McBeth, B/H publisher, page 618.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

collected only \$58,591,713.69 of the amount pledged."⁴¹

"That this percentage was far better than most other denominational funds had achieved provided scant comfort to S.B.C. agencies plunged into debt. Carping criticism arose, which had remained muted during the glory days of the campaign. The financially troubled S.B.C. received another jolt in 1928 at the revelation that Clinton S. Carnes, treasurer of the Home Mission Board, had embezzled \$909,461 from the agency. That cost more than money; it dealt a severe blow to the image of the convention and the confidence of its people. The stock market crash of 1929 signaled an industrial depression, which augmented the agricultural depression Southerners had faced since 1920; the despair of the nation, and of Baptists, was complete. The two mission boards cut their work to the bone in massive retrenchment; other S.B.C. institutions, especially the seminaries, faced imminent foreclosure; and the S.B.C. and its entire assets could probably have been thrown into bankruptcy proceeding had the creditors desired."⁴²

Although the S.B.C. push for the Seventy-five million campaign did not reach its goal, there were many good things that came out of this very difficult time. I suppose that due to the depression and difficult times, people in the churches must have gotten on their knees and prayed much for spiritual revival. "During the campaign, Baptist churches experienced a major spiritual renewal. They baptized more converts than ever before and enlisted thousands of young men and women as volunteers for Christian service, over four thousand on one Sunday in a South-wide emphasis that Scarborough describes as 'calling out the called.' As a result, Baptist schools were crowded with new students, and after graduation these new pastors and other church ministers led a period of unprecedented Baptist growth. The campaign also brought a new spirit of unity, convincing Baptists they could accomplish big things. Baptists became more stewardship conscious, and many churches adopted the budget system to regulate local church finances."⁴³

I suppose that the moral of the story is that sometimes God has to allow difficult times of depression and poverty in order to get His people down on their knees and praying for revival. The truth is that God has always promised to bless His people if they will get right with Him and learn the joy of giving. There is truly a great lesson from the failure of the Seventy-Five Million Campaign. And, as we will see next, through the attempt to raise a huge amount of money for the S.B.C. in this campaign, obviously the thought of the Cooperative Program came about, even with the missed goal in the campaign.

The Beginning of The Cooperative Program: Blessing Or Curse!

Even with the attempt of the S.B.C. to raise seventy-five million dollars, which ended short of their goal, the very effort created a new excitement about collectively raising funds from the churches in order to carry on the work of the convention. The

⁴¹ Ibid, pages 619-620.

⁴² Ibid, page 620.

⁴³ Ibid, page 621.

new invention of the Conservation Committee came to be known as the Cooperative Program. The Cooperative Program was started in 1925, and it has been a weapon in the arsenal of Southern Baptists since that date. But, just like any weapon, it can be used properly in the right way and be a blessing, or it can be used in the wrong way out of character and become a dangerous object. Personally, this is what I believe about the Cooperative Program.

The Cooperative Program Became A Ticket For Participation!

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that when the Cooperative Program was first started in 1925, it was a wonderful program to help finance the ministry of the growing Southern Baptist Convention. Of course, all of the agencies of the convention were supported by this wonderful plan. And too, it was a unique way to get the churches to come together in a collective sharing effort to promote the work of the Lord. But sad to say, like so many things that start well, if not guarded properly, good things can get out of control and harm the cause it was intended to bless. I sincerely believe this is what happened with the Cooperative Program.

Let me illustrate what I am talking about by sharing a true story with you from the years at my first church, Center Baptist Church, which is located in North Wilkesboro, N.C. When Jo Anne and I went to this church back in 1968, the church was running about 80 people on Sundays. It was a mountain church with good people, but yet, not with a lot of money. When we arrived, the church was giving a small amount to the Cooperative Program—just a very small amount. While we were there for three and one half years, we were able to raise our giving to the Cooperative Program just a little, but not much. Please bear in mind that at that time, the church paid me \$70.00 per week. This will give you a picture of how tight money was.

One day I went to a local associational meeting to meet with the pastors. A representative from the Stewardship Department of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention was the main speaker. During the meeting, the speaker was urging churches to give more money to the Cooperative Program through their churches. While encouraging us to give more, the man mentioned that if we ever expected to serve on the State Convention Committees, then the more we gave to the Cooperative Program, the better chance we would have to climb the religious ladder, as I call it. So, I learned that day that participation in many activities of the convention and possibly serving on committees of the convention would be determined a lot by how much we gave to the Cooperative Program. Sarcastically speaking, I thought the Cooperative Program was for the purpose of taking the Gospel to a lost world.

Then, I remember many years later when my dear friend Dr. Johnny Hunt was running for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention, I heard many convention officials say that he shouldn't be elected because his great First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Georgia just didn't give enough to the Cooperative Program. One more indication that the Cooperative Program had become a ticket to participation. In other words, if you wanted to be a "big man" in the convention, then you better make sure that your church gave big amounts to the Cooperative Program. If you didn't lead your church to give largely to the program, then you just didn't

matter. As far as I am concerned, the Cooperative Program became the idol of the S.B.C. And you know what God says about idols!

The Cooperative Program Became A Weapon Of Manipulation!

In addition to the Cooperative Program's being used as a ticket for participation, it has been used as a true weapon of manipulation. Now, what do I mean by this? I simply mean that it has for many years been used by convention personnel to get what they want from a lot of pastors and churches. For instance, if a Southern Baptist Pastor wanted to book a convention leader or speaker, it always seemed that the churches who gave the largest percentage of their budget were the ones where the speakers would come. It didn't matter if your church was a rural mountain church or a city church, a large church or a small church, a soul winning church or just a mentoring one, it was the percentage of the church budget given to the Cooperative Program that determined where the good speakers from the convention would go.

If the church didn't give a large percentage to the C.P., then sometimes I was asked if we might give more in the coming year. In other words, the C.P. was the standard for who would get the attention or who would be given the opportunities. You see, this wonderful means of raising money for world missions and presenting the Gospel became a weapon to get back at those who would not abide by the standards. For instance, I remember a number of times when convention personnel would come to our cities, speak at an associational office, and almost demand that every church give at least ten percent of their budget to the Cooperative Program. If you did less, you were not one of the in-crowd. I saw this happen many times.

In fact, I know of many times down through the years when pastors would contemplate running for some office in the association or convention, and they would be discouraged from doing so just because their percentage of giving to the C.P. was just not high enough. So truthfully, a great program established to take the Gospel to the world became a weapon of manipulation, either positively or negatively whichever the case might be.

The Cooperative Program Became A Standard For Church Validity!

I have been in the ministry for over 53 years. I have preached over 1,000 revival meetings in 33 states, and I have been in hundreds of churches with hundreds of pastors. I have gone to scores of associational meetings, State Convention meetings, and many Southern Baptist Convention meetings all across America. And truthfully, as I have talked with many pastors, I have sensed the same thing when it came to the Cooperative Program. This program became the determination factor to whether a church was truly a Southern Baptist Church. If the church gave a large percentage to the Cooperative Program, then it would be considered a strong healthy church. But, if the church was giving a small percentage amount, then they would probably be considered an Independent Baptist Church, or at least one just on the fringe of being a Southern Baptist Church. The fact was, and I believe still is, in many places, the validity factor for determining what is a genuine S.B.C. church.

Folks, I even know of situations where in some circumstances, a low percentage giving church has not even been seriously recognized by the association

as a real Southern Baptist Church. Therefore, no associational jobs are given to the pastor or staff of these low percentage churches. Sometimes, they are not even recognized as a true member, although they may have been in that association for many years. But, I will confess that there are times that these churches are considered fringe churches because they don't participate with the other churches, or maybe they don't even turn in an annual church letter. But surely, the Cooperative Program which was created to win people to Christ should not be a standard to give validity to churches. This is very wrong, and it needs to be forbidden. Just because some pastor in a rural church somewhere can't get the local people to give more money to the Cooperative Program doesn't mean that this man of God should not be given opportunities to excel in new areas.

Before the large controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention started vividly in Houston in 1979, I saw many times that pastors and churches were alienated because of their percentage giving to the Cooperative Program. Now, I have been noticing that the people who used to scream the loudest about the Moderates or Liberals, insisting on Cooperative Program support, are now using the same criteria for determining whether a church or pastor is really a diehard Southern Baptist. It just seems so ridiculous for these people who used to scream bloody murder about the idol of the Cooperative Program, are now doing the same things with the Cooperative Program that their forefathers running the convention did. I would say this is blatant hypocrisy!

Chapter Four

The Development Of Southern Baptist Education: The Places Where The Decline Really Started!

It only stands to reason that as the S.B.C. continued to grow somewhat dramatically that it needed to provide Christian educational institutes to train those who surrendered to preach the Gospel and fulfill God's call for their lives. Of course, this would be expected within any growing denomination. "So, in 1859, an Education Convention opened the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Greenville, South Carolina. Forced to close during the Civil War, the seminary resumed classes at the close of the hostilities, moving to Louisville, Kentucky, in 1877."⁴⁴

Following the establishment of the Southern Baptist Seminary which was established in Greenville, South Carolina on the campus of Furman University, then moved to Louisville, Kentucky, five more Southern Baptist seminaries were built to help meet the rising need to train students for the service of God. After the first one was built in 1859, the following schools were built in this order. Please notice the dates for the establishment of these schools:

The second school was the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, built in Fort Worth, Texas in 1908. The third school was the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, built in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1917. The fourth school was the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, built in Mill Valley, California in 1944. Following this, the fifth school was the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, built in Wake Forest, North Carolina in 1951. And the last one was the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary which was built in Kansas City, Missouri in 1957. These six schools belong to the Southern Baptist Convention. However, there are two more independent seminaries that are close to the Southern Baptist Convention which have been very conservative school providing a large amount of pastors and Christian workers in the S.B.C. These schools are Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tennessee which was started in 1971, and also, the Luther Rice Theological Seminary which was started in Jacksonville, Florida in 1962, and then moved to Lithonia, Georgia just outside of Atlanta in 1988. I must confess that this writer is a graduate and proud alumnus of the Luther Rice Seminary.

Now, I have listed the names of these institutions where thousands of God's servants have been trained, but also I wanted to show you where some of the worst controversies in Southern Baptist History have originated. And wouldn't you believe it, Satan loves to bring confusion and disunity in the primary places where God servants are being trained to take the Gospel message to the world!

⁴⁴ baptisthistory.org. By: Robert Baker, page 11.

The Four Major Controversies That Have Contributed To The Decline Of The Southern Baptist Convention!

The First Controversy: The Nature Of Biblical Revelation

The first major controversy that started in the S.B.C. began because of the teachings of Crawford H. Toy at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky in the 1870s. The basic issue was the nature of the biblical revelation which concerned the beliefs that follow. "Such issues as the documentary hypothesis of Old Testament origins; efforts to harmonize biological evolution with biblical creation; whether the Bible speaks infallibly only in matters of faith and practice or also in details of science, history, and geography; doctrines of millennialism; and which theory of inspiration best explains the origin of Scripture have been at issue."⁴⁵

"In the 1920s these issues first resurfaced after a generation of relative quiet. J. Frank Norris of Fort Worth led the attack, alleging that Southern Baptists had accepted 'modernistic' teachings on Scripture, evolution, and the church. Norris was also perturbed that Southern Baptists would not accept his own strict views or premillennial eschatology. As the controversy progressed, the intemperate attacks of Norris alienated many. The Seventy-Five Million Campaign, despite failure to reach its financial goals, greatly enhanced denominational solidarity, and the confession of the 1925 tended to turn attention away from doctrinal concerns. During the late 1920s and 1930s, Southern Baptists gave more attention to survival than to doctrinal debate."⁴⁶

I will hesitate for a moment and tell you that I have read some of the history of the J. Frank Norris controversy, and it is my sincere opinion that although Norris was very legalistic, he did have a valid doctrinal complaint. And, to prove my point, from that time forward in the S.B.C., it seems that the stage was set for more controversy, just because the doctrinal problems Norris confronted were never really dealt with. They were just "swept under the rug". Norris left the convention and become an Independent Baptist pastor. He was probably very bombastic in the years to follow, but the truth which he was standing for should still be defended today.

The Second Controversy: The Message Of Genesis

"A second phase of the biblical controversy arose with publication of the 'Message of Genesis' in 1961. Described as a 'theological interpretation,' Ralph H. Elliott's volume advanced what some considered unacceptable views of inspiration. Opposition was immediate and severe. K. Owen White, pastor of First Baptist Church of Houston, initiated the debate in his militant article, 'Death in the Pot,' which was printed in a number of Baptist papers. White cited selected statements from the book, concluding, 'The book from which I have quoted is liberalism, pure and simple. The book in question is poison.'⁴⁷

"At first the Sunday School Board defended its right to publish books with

⁴⁵ The Baptist Heritage, By: Leon McBeth, Broadman Press, page 679.

⁴⁶ Ibid, pages 679-680.

⁴⁷ Ibid, page 680.

differing views but later agreed not to publish a second edition. For over a year the Midwestern trustees defended Elliott; but in late 1962, they yielded to mounting pressures to dismiss him. The capitulation of the Sunday School Board and the Midwestern trustees represented a victory for ultraconservative forces in the S.B.C., and no doubt encouraged them to continue their agitation."⁴⁸

"A senior Baptist editor wrote, 'Elliott Goes, Problem Remains.' Subsequent events proved him right. One reason the controversy lingered was that Elliott was dismissed on a technicality, a fact frustrating to friend and foe alike. Professors in at least three other S.B.C. seminaries came under varying degrees of suspicion of heresy at about the same time. Personal letters of sympathy to Elliott, or recommendations of his book, brought suspicious scrutiny to some; but no other dismissals resulted."⁴⁹

"Since the Elliott Controversy in 1961, conservatives have been suspicious and concerned about the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention. The first champion for the conservative cause was North Carolina Baptist pastor, M.O. Owens Jr. In his melodramatic volume 'The New Crusades, The New Holy Land,' David T. Morgan did a very fine job in documenting Owen's role in the early days of the Convention controversy. Morgan demonstrated that Owens was diligently networking conservatives and encouraging Southern Baptist across state lines to join in opposing the expanding liberalism in the Convention. Owens helped establish the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship and served as its first president. Because many conservatives were displeased with the Convention's failures to commit itself to biblical inerrancy and to root out liberalism in the seminaries and colleges, they banded together to form a core of conservatives in 1973. In its Convention issue of 1973, the 'Southern Baptist Journal,' which was the publication of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, stated, 'The purpose of this organization is to be a strong advocate of the doctrinal and theological positions stated in the Baptist Faith and Message and.....(it would be) a rallying point for men of conservative thought and feeling.' Owens, echoing Spurgeon, said with reference to the Baptist Faith and Message, 'It is time to stop playing semantic games, saying one thing and meaning something quite different.' Articles in the Journal lamented the fact that liberalism and neoorthodoxy had crept into Convention agencies and higher education."⁵⁰

I would like to slow down just a little and interject something right here. Dr. M.O. Owens was one of my professors at the Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute in 1967 and 1968. I have never, in my 70 plus years, respected a man more than I did Dr. Owens. There is no doubt that God brought Dr. Owens "to the kingdom for such a time as this" in order to give some courage to many other conservatives to step to the forefront and take a stand against the increasing liberal seminaries in the Southern Baptist Convention. Truly, Dr. Owens was one of the finest servants of God that I ever knew in my entire life.

"Eventually the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship became a rallying point for conservatives. It also constituted a second vocal minority (in contrast to those

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ The Baptist Reformation, By: Jerry Sutton, B/H Publishing, page 62.

whom they labeled as liberals). Bill Powell, who became the editor in 1973, proved to be a voracious headhunter of 'liberals.' (I would certainly not agree with this writer's description of Dr. Powell.) Nevertheless, the emphasis of the Journal, which originally was going to be against liberalism and for missions and evangelism, came to be identified only with the former, neglecting the latter emphasis."⁵¹

I would agree that the emphasis of the 'Journal' was most assuredly against liberalism, but I do know that this periodical did promote missions and evangelism to a great degree. However, things were getting so bad in the seminaries with liberalism that there needed to be a voice to cry out against the heresy.

With much persistence, Bill Powell did pursue Judge Paul Pressler from Houston to become a board member of the Baptist Message and Fellowship. Judge Pressler was somewhat reluctant to do so, but eventually, he did become a board member. However, Judge Pressler did not always agree with Bill Powell's written statements, or even his temperament. Yet, Pressler did respect Bill Powell for the courageous stand that he had taken.

"Several years later, on May 25, 1977, Homer Lindsay, Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida, responding also to Bill's invitation, became a member of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship. Dr. Lindsay wrote: 'The other night I was lying on my bed thinking and praying about you. The Lord laid heavily upon my heart His desire for me to become a part of the Baptist Faith and Fellowship. As you know, I have held out not because I have not believed in what you were doing, but because I have felt that I have more on me than I could carry, and did not want to get involved in anything else. I do feel now however, that the Lord does want me to become a part of this group.'⁵²

"Lindsay continued, 'I felt so heartsick the other day when I read a copy of the Texas Baptist Standard. They referred to Adrian Rogers as the 'Darling of the Baptist Faith and Message,' and then they referred to Jerry Vines, as the 'Darling of the Baptist Faith and Message.' This just made my blood boil. Later on as I thought about it, it made me heart sick. I cannot afford to delay any longer casting my influence and weight with you and your group.'⁵³

Dr. Homer Lindsay, Jr. was one of the greatest pastors and servants of God that I have ever met on this earth. At the time he made the commitment to become involved in the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, I was a young seminary student living in Jacksonville, and Dr. Lindsay was my pastor. He was courageous and bold, but yet, kind and compassionate. When it came to defending the Bible as God's Word, I have never met a man who did a better job.

At the time Dr. Lindsay sided with the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, our church was running over 3,500 each week. We sometimes had over 800 soul winners on outreach visitation on Tuesday evenings. The church was baptizing 1,000 people per year during this time. No wonder he was so covered up with work, but yet, God led him to join the effort to confront the liberals, and I am so glad he did. His successful pastorate and compassionate voice for truth was just matchless. And more

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid, page 64.

⁵³ Ibid.

than this, he loved the Lord Jesus more than probably any man that ever lived. Dr. Lindsay is now up in heaven, but the world is a better place because he passed through it.

The Third Controversy: Methods Of Interpretation

"The third phase of the controversy centered around the 'Broadman Bible Commentary,' especially volume 1, released in 1969. The editorial committee enlisted G. Henton Davies of England to write the commentary on Genesis. In general, that volume took account of the JEDP documentary hypothesis and used historical-critical methods of interpretation. No specific passage aroused more outcry than comments on Genesis 22 where Davies questioned whether God really commanded Abraham to kill his son Isaac. The controversy raged before and during the Denver convention of 1970. By a wide margin, the messengers voted to ask the Sunday School Board to recall volume 1 and have it rewritten from a more conservative viewpoint.

The elected board first asked Davies to rewrite the work, which he declined to do. They then enlisted Clyde Francisco, respected Old Testament scholar at Southern Seminary in Louisville, to undertake the task. Francisco's new commentary was published in 1973 as 'Volume 1, Revised.' While using more felicitous language, Francisco's revision, opponents claimed, made only minor changes."⁵⁴

While talking about this third period of controversy in the S.B.C., I want to tell you that once again, I was someone involved to a small extent in this argument. While pastoring my first church in North Wilkesboro, N.C., one of the more liberal pastors in our area brought G. Henton Davies to our town to speak on the Old Testament, including part of Genesis and Exodus. I sat there for almost two hours and listened to this man make fun of some of the stories in these two books of the Bible, and yes, even to reiterate his denial of God's telling Abraham to offer up Isaac. Truthfully, I was made so sick by this supposed scholar's doubting and denying the Word of God that I almost walked out of the room. It was an experience I shall never forget, but it was one that I pray I never have to have again. I had had enough of these rank liberals in the Community College who denied the miracles of the Bible and made fun of some of the stories Jesus told. These too, like Davies, approached the Bible from a "supposedly higher-criticism viewpoint". Well, I can tell you that it wasn't "higher-criticism" in my opinion, but it came from a much lower place than "high".

The Fourth Controversy: The Issue Of Inerrancy

"A fourth controversy, or a fourth phase of the same one, erupted at the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston in 1979. That meeting was marked by intemperate attacks upon the seminaries at the preceding Pastors' Conference, a hostile spirit at the convention [There was no hostile spirit in the Pastors' Conference. I know because I was there.], the most political maneuvering ever seen at a Baptist Convention to that time, and the first-ballot election of a presidential candidate widely regarded as representing the ultraconservative viewpoint. However, the buzzword at the Houston convention was inerrancy. Although new to most Southern

⁵⁴ Op.Cit, pages 680-681.

Baptists, that word quickly moved to the center stage and dominated the controversy after 1979. 'Inerrancy of original autographs' designates a theory of how biblical inspiration is guaranteed. While familiar in American Christianity, particularly out of Princeton Theological Seminary under A.A. Hodge, Charles Hodge, and B.B. Warfield, its roots go further back in Reformed theology. In its Princeton expression, inerrancy was limited to the original autographs of Scripture. Though the term was occasionally used earlier, inerrancy became an issue for Southern Baptists with the publication of two books by Harold Lindsell in the 1970s and its appearance at the 1979 convention. Some portrayed inerrancy as the historic Baptist viewpoint, while others contended that the concept has not shown up in any major Southern Baptist theologian, confession, or hymn. They maintained, on the other hand, that the historic Baptist view of biblical inspiration and authority is both older than and better than the Presbyterian view of inerrancy of original autographs."⁵⁵

Having been at the Houston Baptist Convention in 1979, I must tell you that for the first time in my life I was able to come away from that convention with a new hope believing that rather than the seminaries' continuing to get worse and worse because of their growing liberalism, there was hope on the horizon. Dr. Adrian Rogers was elected President, and it gave us conservatives hope that though it might take some time, the convention was now starting in the right direction to eventually get the rank liberals out of the schools and retake these institutions for the cause of Christ with a firm commitment to the inerrancy of the Word of God. In addition to Judge Paul Pressler and Dr. Paige Patterson's becoming the primary leaders of the Conservative Resurgence after the convention in Houston in 1979, I believe Dr. W.A. Criswell was the greatest conservative academician within the conservative ranks at that time, unless of course, it may have been Dr. Paige Patterson who had been the President of Criswell Bible College for many years. I remember, like it was yesterday, when Dr. Homer Lindsay, Jr. of Jacksonville, Florida sat at my dinner table in Jacksonville and told my wife and me that he believed there was not a more intellectual Christian on earth than Paige Patterson at that time. Yet, in recent days, Dr. Patterson has been lied about, harangued, castigated, and even fired from Southwestern Baptist Seminary because of the punk pastors coup attempt brought on by the "Young and Restless Reformed Calvinists", who are hell bent on taking over the S.B.C. so that they can get control of all of the seminaries, and especially the money, in the Southern Baptist Convention. They have decided to use the Beth Moore "Me Too" people to try to indict Dr. Patterson for his counseling over 20 years ago. I personally believe that this deadly attack on Dr. Patterson and any of his colleagues is nothing short of blasphemy of the God Dr. Patterson has so faithfully served for years and years. I want all of you to know that I have known Paige Patterson for a long time, and he has spoken at some of my churches. He is a precious man of God. He is smart enough to put any of his "cool punk" attackers on their backsides with his knowledge of the Bible. It is so sad to see how many of the so-called leaders have turned against Dr. Patterson, like Danny Akin at Southeastern Baptist Seminary, Dr. Al Mohler at Southern Baptist Seminary, and yes, the brand new punk pastor and President of the Southern Baptist Convention, J.D. Greer, of Summit Church in Raleigh, N.C. These pretending so-called men of God

⁵⁵ The Baptist Heritage, By: Leon McBeth, Broadman, page 681.

have viciously attacked Dr. Patterson. They just see his being fired from Southwestern Seminary as God's chastisement on him after all of these years. Of course, this is what Dr. Mohler basically said. But, the true reason is that Dr. Patterson is not a hyper-Calvinist like all of these three men. So getting rid of Brother Paige was just an undercover coup d'etat which many of these Calvinists had been planning for a long time. My prayer is that our righteous heavenly Father might bring these men into the very pits they laid for Dr. Patterson, just like Solomon prayed in **Proverbs 26:26-27**. **"Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be showed before the whole congregation. Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him."** These are pretty strong words, but they are a revelation of what happens to wicked people who hurt others without reasons.

Now, going back to Dr. W.A. Criswell, let me give you some information about how God used this wonderful conservative man of God to help the conservative resurgence get up and going. His efforts are still bearing fruit until this very day. We must respect this great servant and all of those that God used so mightily in rescuing the S.B.C. from the hands and control of the liberals.

"Without a doubt, W.A. Criswell, longtime pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, was the ideological godfather of the conservative movement. Although he himself was not instrumental in the decision-making process of building the conservative coalition that would eventually change the Southern Baptist Convention, Criswell provided several things that were essential for the movement's success. First and foremost, Criswell, who was himself a scholar and an academician as well as a preacher and a pastor, proved to be the paramount role model of what the conservatives desired in a pastor."⁵⁶

"Richard Land, commenting on the role of Criswell, related, 'I actually heard Criswell accused by another faculty member of preaching things he knew not to be true.' If he had a Ph.D. from Southern, he had to know that what he was preaching was not accurate and he was preaching for monetary gain and power. There is no question that they loathed Criswell, because Criswell is the living breathing denial of all of their straw men and their caricatures. Here was a man with a Ph.D. from Southern Seminary, a man who was an honors graduate of Baylor University, a man who was the pastor of what certainly, I think, well could be argued was the most sophisticated church in the history of the S.B.C., he was a man of culture in a church of culture and sophistication, and he believed every word of the Scripture to be inerrant and infallible, so they continued to attack him and to mock him and to question his motives because they could not live with the fact that he was such a functional denial of their caricatural type."⁵⁷

"Land went on to say, 'Criswell was in the spotlight when I was in seminary because he was the president and was elected in 1968 and had written the book "Why I Preach That The Bible Is Literally True", which Land pointed out was not Criswell's title. Land explained, 'I think this is very important to know. That was the Sunday School Board. The Sunday School Board insisted he use that title. He would have

⁵⁶ The Baptist Reformation, By: Jerry Sutton, B/H, page 65.

⁵⁷ Ibid, pages 65-66.

preferred another title because he knew what they were going to do with the word literally."⁵⁸

"Lamar Cooper, in an extensive annotated bibliography included in the book Dr. C. A. Criswell biography, said concerning the volume that Land alluded to, 'No other book elicited the praise and criticism from advocates and opponents of the doctrine of infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture as this book by Criswell. Its publication was the catalyst for the modern resurgence of conservative doctrine that was held sway in the Southern Baptist Convention in the last decade. For many years, Criswell preached against the infidels who denied the infallibility of the Word of God. Often he preached this conviction alone."⁵⁹

"Criswell slammed neo-orthodox theology: 'Many of those who are paid to stand in our pulpits and defend the truth of God are now the very ones...destroying the faith of those to whom they minister.'⁶⁰

"The Association of Baptist Professors took Criswell's book and its heavy promotion by Broadman as an attack on academic freedom. At their 1970 meeting the ABPR adopted a resolution brought by Robert Alley and W.C. Smith of the Virginia Baptist University of Richmond critical of the publicity given the book. At this same meeting Professor T.C. Smith of Furman University urged that the books in the Biblical canon be reconsidered in the light of modern scholarship. Several years later Alley would go on record as saying Jesus did not believe Himself to be divine and that the virgin birth was a myth."

So my friends, if there was any question in the minds of the Southern Baptist people about whether the seminaries were moving toward liberalism, the stand of Dr. Criswell and the printing of his book was used by God to bring more of these evil doctrines to the surface so that more and more Bible-believing conservatives would join the rally to oppose liberalism. Truly as I stated before, God brought Dr. Criswell to the leadership of the convention just at the time he was so needed. May I say that this is the kind of men that we need today to stand up for truth and oppose so many of the evil doctrines that are sweeping the convention right now. These doctrines include The Emerging Church, Wild Pentecostalism, The Orality Movement, Ecumenicalism, and yes, hyper-Calvinism. I am totally convinced that if we don't stand up and deal with these tangent movements, the Southern Baptist Convention may be sounding out its death rattles.

⁵⁸ Ibid, page 66.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ The Conservative Resurgence, By: James Hefley, Lithocolor Press, page 33.

Chapter Five

The Conservatives Begin Their Rescue Of The Southern Baptist Convention!

"The groundwork for the 1979 Houston Convention and the Conservative Resurgence can be traced back specifically to a letter written by Paul Pressler to Bill Powell of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship dated September 6, 1977. Pressler wrote: 'I do not believe in fighting a battle unless there is a good chance of winning. If we fight and lose, we lose credibility. Therefore, I think it is imperative that we plan, organize, and effectively promote what we are trying to do before attempting any strong action.' Pressler doubted if anything could be accomplished in Atlanta due to the time constraints. He went on to write: 'I believe, therefore, that our real planning and direction should be towards Houston in 1979. In this regard, I would like to see a Committee of two thousand committed to bringing ten people other than themselves to the Convention created. If we had twenty-two thousand of our messengers show up, we should be successful. I believe we should organize now with a set of leaders for each state, each one having a goal of a certain number of individuals whom they would recruit, who then would recruit ten others with a goal of a certain number of people who would come from each state. I have already made a list of the ones from the Houston area, with fifty pastors or laymen, from different churches listed. I would like to propose at our meeting in December that we adopt such strategy. If we adopt this as a specific goal in December, then we could immediately start organizing in Houston with a visit from you. We could select various state leaders, and you would have your hands full for the next year and a half. If we are going to accomplish this, it is going to take this type of organizational work."⁶¹

"Sometime in the period between Pressler's letter to Powell and early winter of 1979, a transition occurred from the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship giving leadership to the Conservative Resurgence. Without fanfare, the baton was passed from the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship to an informal coalition of pastors and laymen. As already mentioned, the two pivotal leaders of the new coalition were Houston Appeals Court Judge Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson of the Criswell Bible Institute, which would become the Criswell Center For Biblical Studies."⁶²

"The convention opened with a sense of foreboding among some. William M. Pinson, Jr., then president of Golden Gate Seminary, said it could 'mark the most serious crisis' in the S.B.C. since the financial crisis of the Depression. Our vital signs are weak. Our institutions are under attack from within. It troubles me in my gut."⁶³

"Rogers and five other men were nominated. Opponents of Rogers hoped he could be forced into a runoff and be defeated by a coalition of denominational loyalists. When Rogers won handily on the first ballot, there were gasps from stunned opponents and whoops of joy from supporters. Conservative leaders sitting in 'sky

⁶¹ The Baptist Reformation, By: Jerry Sutton, B/H Press, page 91-92.

⁶² Ibid, page 92.

⁶³ The Conservative Resurgence, By: James Hefley, Lithocolor Press, page 38.

boxes' –executive suites loaned by friends of Judge Pressler—embraced one another in joy."⁶⁴

"Adrian Rogers' election marked the end of an era in which the Convention and its elected presidents had been managed behind the scenes by a group who were more concerned about keeping the denominational machinery running smoothly and Cooperative Program money coming in, than with doctrinal purity. Although most Southern Baptists didn't realize it yet, a new leadership was already inside the gates. They would not have a majority of trustees on denominational boards and committees for several years, but they were headed in that direction. In the forefront was Adrian Rogers. By his side were Paige Patterson, the theologian of the movement and Paul Pressler, the strategist. Others coming up fast, included future S.B.C. presidents, Bailey Smith, Jimmy Draper, Charles Stanley, Jerry Vines and Morris Chapman. All were committed to realizing in the next decade what countless resolutions, motions and sermons had been unable to accomplish during the past half century."⁶⁵

The Moderates' Interpretation Of Adrian Rogers' Election

Following Dr. Adrian Rogers' reluctant consent to be nominated for President of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1979 in Houston, and because of his victory over four other candidates, the Moderate representatives in the Convention and of course, their allies within the moderate or liberal churches began to down play the election of Dr. Rogers because they thought that he could only serve for a two year term, even if he was reelected the following year. Truthfully, I believe that some of the Moderates just didn't believe that they were really going to lose the control of the convention after all. It was almost like they were living in a fantasy world thinking that one day soon they would wake up and all of this confusion would be over and they would be back in complete control. Of course, history has proven that this egotistical attitude was definitely wrong. Had they listened down through the years when periodical conservatives were trying to get their attention about the infiltration of liberalism, this major upheaval may not have ever had to have happened if the leaders of the convention would have dealt efficiently with those who denied the inerrancy of the Scriptures. But, as my father used to say, "If you don't listen, you will just have to learn." This is what happened, and Moderate or Liberal camps had to face much embarrassment.

In 1993, the Moderate Convention stalwart of the S.B.C., Dr. Grady Cothen, wrote a book entitled, "What Happened To The Southern Baptist Convention?" In this book he spent much time talking about the "take over" by the Fundamentalists. He stated and inferred many times in the book that this Conservative Resurgence was more of a political power play than it was about conservative Biblical theology and the inerrancy of the Bible. In the process of writing his book, he conferred with two of his knowledgeable friends and asked them to give him their views of the reasons why the conservatives were successful in pulling off the revolution. One of these men,

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, page 40.

Don McGregor, a longtime Baptist editor provided the following observations. I want to give you verbatim what he said in order for you to see how true one of the conservative opponents was in giving the reasons for the resurgence. Please notice carefully:

"One of the problems that I felt was paramount in the considerations of the fundamentalists was an elite attitude on the part of those leading the moderates during the seventies.

It is my opinion that we had made the Cooperative Program our creed. Everything revolved around that missions giving concept.... Churches were judged as to their loyalty according to their percentages given through the Cooperative Program. (I stated this earlier in this book.)

Some have referred to the cited elitist system as a 'good ole boy network.' I never called it that. In my consideration, those who were the central figures in the endeavors were first-class, high caliber, dedicated, God-honoring people. Their mistakes were in the perceptions of the fundamentalists and not in actuality.

The fundamentalists, however, were left out....As the....Cooperative Program became a bigger and bigger taskmaster and the separation between the 'ins' and the 'outs' became wider and wider.

.....They wanted recognition but didn't want to have to pay the price to earn it.

When the controversy began.....they became easy targets for the fundamentalist leaders looking for the troops to fuel their takeover machinery."⁶⁶

Adrian Rogers Declines A Second Term But Returns

"A month before the 1980 St. Louis Convention, Rogers asked not to be nominated, pleading that he needed more time with his church and family. His withdrawal caught the three moderates off guard. If conservatives elected another man at St. Louis, he could serve two years.

The conservative nominee was Bailey Smith, pastor of a 14,000 member church in Oklahoma. Smith had name recognition—he was a past president of the Pastors' Conference. He had averaged baptizing over 1,000 for the past several years. He was an inerrantist who believed, for example, that 'Jonah was a literal person swallowed by a literal fish and was in a literal mess."⁶⁷

"Even though his church gave only two percent to the Cooperative Program, Smith won a clear majority over five opponents, including Richard Jackson who was initially favored by many conservatives. Jackson was also an inerrantist. He had a baptismal record that compared favorably to Smith's. Unlike Smith's congregation his church gave liberally to the Cooperative Program. Jackson might have taken Smith into a runoff, had not a story swept the hotels that he had made a deal with the establishment to maintain the status quo."⁶⁸

After Dr. Bailey Smith resigned his great church in Del City, Oklahoma, he

⁶⁶ What Happened To The Southern Baptist Convention?, By: Grady Cothen, Smyth and Helwys Publishing, page 108.

⁶⁷ The Conservative Resurgence, By: James Hefley, Lithocolor Press, Page 47.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

became an itinerant evangelist. Several years after becoming a full-time vocational evangelist, I had the privilege of having Dr. Smith come to our church, Tri-City Baptist Church in Conover, North Carolina, for a revival meeting. I must tell you that God really used Bailey with over 100 people's coming to Christ during that four-day meeting. After this meeting, I developed a warm friendship with Dr. Smith. The longer I was around him, the more I respected and appreciated his preaching ministry, but even more so, I appreciated his stand on the inerrancy of the Scriptures. For several years after his presidency of the S.B.C., Bailey came to preach for us, and then when I moved to a huge church in Ohio, we brought him up there to be a blessing to our congregation. I am including this just to give a great big confirmation of the credibility of Dr. Smith and his ministry. Dr. Rogers didn't feel it was God's will for him to run for his second year in succession, but truly, God sent the convention a great leader for the next two years.

"After a few months of quiet, the controversy heated up again when Baptist Press printed excerpts from the tape of a speech given by Adrian Rogers in Georgia. Rogers stated that the S.B.C. had started 'with a moderately narrow theology,' then in 1925 adopted the unified Cooperative Program budget plan. In the years since, Rogers noted, the theology had broadened while the program had remained narrow. The S.B.C., now 'has many professors who do not believe the Bible is historically, philosophically and scientifically true,' while 'some within the denomination would like to put a steel band around our dollar. They say you do not have room to wiggle program-wise, but we've got plenty of room on the other side theologically.....I say, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.'"⁶⁹

"Rogers thought the 'best solution' would be to 'go back and narrow our theology again,' but 'I sincerely doubt that will ever happen.....The Cooperative Program has become a sacred cow.'

The 'next best thing,' Rogers proposed, 'is to allow both freedom of belief and freedom to support or decline to support various agencies and programs in the denomination.'"⁷⁰

Well folks, what I brought out early in this book about the Cooperative Program was well affirmed by Dr. Adrian Rogers' statement in Georgia. Although his statement about the Cooperative Program's being the "sacred cow" caused a lot of people to get extremely angry, what he said was so true. The Cooperative Program which was probably started for the right purpose back in 1925, surely became the idol of the Southern Baptist Convention. I brought this to many pastors and associational leaders down through the years. Even though I was strongly castigated and rebuked, it was true. This program was, and in some regards still is today, the determining factor among so many on who should be given positions and who should be allowed to do certain things. So, Dr. Rogers was correct!

I would like to add something right here. Before the Conservative Resurgence in the Convention, the Cooperative Program was the measuring rod for participating in any convention activities. In fact, this program was so pushed by the moderate convention leaders that they would never allow a S.B.C. Foreign Missionary to try to

⁶⁹ Ibid, page 50.

⁷⁰ Ibid, page 52.

raise any support in the churches just simply because they didn't want any funds to be given for missions if it didn't come through the Cooperative Program. Some of you who are older might remember when we used to ask if our churches could designate some funds to certain ministries within the convention. We were vehemently told no. They let us know over and over that ours is a cooperative effort.

But now, since the conservatives have taken back the convention, these same people who used to cry and scream because the moderates wouldn't let them designate funds are now encouraging the churches to be sure and designate money to missionaries, special causes, and other programs because the funds are now much lower and they are needing the extra money. Of course, this was shown tremendously when David Platt, the most recent International Mission Board President asked our IMB missionaries to take early retirement because of low funds. Having worked on the mission fields of Africa for the past 33 years, I have often seen the absence of Southern Baptist Missionaries where there use to be missionaries almost everywhere. My conviction is that if the Cooperative Program had not become the "sacred cow" or "golden idol", just maybe God would have continued to bless it by providing more gifts from His churches. But, when the moderate convention leaders began to include huge amounts of money for Baptist Colleges that tried to destroy the faith of our young Christian men and women, when liberal seminary professors started brainwashing our young pastors and full-time servants, money from the Cooperative Program should have been stopped. But no, the money kept flowing and still flows today to some of these wicked colleges and schools that still have the Baptist name on them. I know this for several reasons. First, I have a young senior student in our church that is attending Mars Hill Baptist College here in North Carolina. That school allows homosexual weddings on campus, demented professors who make fun of the Bible being God's Word, and drinking during Bible study times. My pastor son graduated many years ago from Gardner Webb University here in North Carolina where the same liberal wickedness is everywhere. I know for sure that Cooperative Program money is going down the drain. But yet, these schools still receive Cooperative Program money!

Also, right here in North Carolina, Fruitland Baptist Bible College, where I attended many years ago and my son later attended, is receiving \$725,000 per year to help train preachers, while a large number of the students are being brainwashed with hyper-Calvinism. It would seem that no one cares. Isn't it quite ironic that a school which is receiving mission money to train workers is teaching students to believe in predestination and election, and therefore, there is really no need to be missions minded or even to raise funds for missions.

Before moving on, we need to know that in 1986 at the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, Dr. Rogers allowed his name to be presented as a candidate for the Convention Presidency once again. He won by taking 55% of the vote, from a huge crowd of over 40,000 messengers, to defeat the moderate candidate, Winfred Moore, who was nominated by Richard Jackson.

The Mad And Angry People In Atlanta

I will never forget being at the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, Georgia

in 1986 when President Charles Stanley was moderating the convention at the moment Dr. Adrian Rogers was reelected. When Dr. Stanley announced that Adrian Rogers had been elected once more by a 55% majority of the vote, the conservatives in the house began to shout and praise God with a tremendous sense of victory. The atmosphere was celebrative among the conservatives, but then, I will never forget hearing some loud words that just broke my heart. Some of the liberal moderates sitting just two rows in front of me began cursing and even using God's name in vain. I have never witnessed such anger and hatred among professing Christians in my entire 70 plus years of life. I just couldn't believe that these words were coming from the mouths of some who pretended to be God's servants! It only took one earnest look at their faces to know that these were not servants of the God I knew. I do remember leaving the area later in the day with prayers on my heart for these wicked people who probably needed to get saved.

So, since the election of Dr. Rogers the first time in Houston in 1979, the conservatives had been working very hard under the leadership of Dr. Paige Patterson and Judge Paul Pressler, but also they had the help of scores of other Bible-believing pastors and laymen from all over America who were determined to see the liberalism in the seminaries and in the convention itself come to an end. These conservative people knew that they had a tremendous challenge before them, but the ball was now rolling, and it just seemed that God's hand was truly on this movement.

Chapter Six

Much Progress, But Wrong Priorities!

After Dr. Adrian Rogers' first election in 1979 as the conservative President of the Southern Baptist Convention, it seemed that the conservative resurgence was on its way to not only turning the convention and the seminaries away from their liberal leanings, but it just seemed that progress would surely be made to get the professors who were training our young preachers and servants of God back to the inerrancy of the Scriptures. There seemed to be the underlying motive within the conservative movement that the ultimate end of the resurgence, if it was successful, would be to create a new atmosphere of concern and compassion for the lost world, and that with the new conservative leadership, there would be greater evangelism and missions efforts. Of course, this would only stand to reason because people who believe the Bible should have on their hearts what Jesus had on His. According to **Luke 19:10**, what he had on His heart was the souls of men. Pay attention to this verse—"**For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**" So, if the new conservative resurgence realized one of its main priorities, then the entire convention would give itself to becoming the most evangelistic in its history. However, as we will see in the next several pages, good progress was beginning to be made. But, somewhere along the way, the new progressive conservative movement changed its priorities, and the ultimate end has been failure in many ways.

God Sent Some Wonderful Presidents To The Convention.

Following Dr. Rogers' second election as President of the S.B.C. in Atlanta in 1986, God sent some wonderful men of God to be elected to continue conservative leadership of the convention. Since that Tuesday in June of 1986, when Dr. Rogers was reelected, there have been 16 new Presidents in charge of the Southern Baptist Convention. I believe with the exception of a few of these men who were more neutral about theology, and the last one just recently elected as a Calvinist to lead the S.B.C., most of these servants of God were dedicated conservative preachers and leaders who God used mightily at the head of the resurgence movement. As I stated earlier, I know Dr. Bailey Smith well, and I know quite a few of these servants of God in a close way. One of these S.B.C. Presidents, Dr. Johnny Hunt, has been a dear friend of our family for a very long time. In fact, back in 1993 when I had a terrible vehicle accident in Uganda, East Africa, and one of my dear staff members, Pastor Wayne Birkhead, was killed, it was Pastor Johnny Hunt and Janet that met me and my family at the Atlanta airport when I came home in the throes of grief and injury. So, I can readily attest to the fact that the S.B.C. has had some wonderful presidents down through these years. Of course, I could spend the rest of this book talking about the leadership of a lot of these dear men of God, but time and space won't permit me to do that here. Thus, I am skipping the details of many of the actions and happenings during the leadership of these men. But, I would like to say that since I have lived through the leadership of all of these presidents of the S.B.C. except the very last one, I believe they did their best to keep the convention progressing away from liberalism toward a more conservative theology. God has surely used them in the effort to change the

seminaries and the convention itself. But I must say that a huge amount of mistakes have been made which have literally caused more havoc and uproar than was needed, and many things have happened which have surely clouded the future of the S.B.C., if it even continues to exist. Right now, that is very debatable.

Much Progress And Wrong Priorities Defined!

I would like to say that during the leadership time of the last 16 Presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention, much good was accomplished. Without a doubt, even with the many conflicts and arguments, through the appointive power of these presidents, the seminaries became much more conservative in theology. But in the process of standing up for the conservative theology of inerrancy and other Biblical truth, there was a move away from S.B.C. churches emphasizing evangelism and missions. Oh yes, there was a continuing emphasis upon world missions, but even with the progress in certain areas of world missions, there were and still are major problems today.

One of the major problems which has contributed to the decline of world missions and baptisms had been the pushed strategy change of former International Mission Board President, Jerry Rankin. Mr. Rankin retired in July of 2010, but only after seventeen years of promoting the wrong strategy of world missions. Dr. Rankin was first appointed to be a Foreign Mission Board Missionary back in 1970. His first assignment was as a church planter in Indonesia, where he and his wife served for nine years. After this, they moved to Bangkok, Thailand and later to Singapore. After spending 23 years on the international mission field, Rankin was hired to take over the IMB. He was hired by the trustees even after they knew that he believed in speaking in tongues as a private prayer language. He became the president in 1993, but my question is, "If the conservative resurgence in the convention was in progress to illuminate those who were liberal and non-Baptistic, why would they hire a nominal Pentecostal to be their President?" I don't know why, but it is certainly well known that they did it.

Of course, one thing that I don't remember that was ever mentioned about Jerry Rankin was something that happened when he was a missionary in Indonesia. As I previously stated, he went to Indonesia in 1970. While he was there, he attended the First Lausanne, Switzerland Evangelism Conference sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. There were over 3,000 missionaries and evangelists there, one of which was Jerry Rankin.

During the conference, one of the guest speakers was Dr. Ralph Winter, who was associated with the more liberal Fuller Theological Seminary in California. Dr. Winter was supposed to be an authority on missions, so he came to challenge the participants. The only problem was that he came to push these evangelists and missionaries to change their complete strategy of world missions. He taught the people that when Jesus gave the Great Commission, he didn't intend for them to go to the fields of the world, and just stay and preach the Gospel where thousands of people were getting saved, but instead, they were to go to the unreached people groups and try to get the doors open for the proclamation to people who had never heard the Gospel. Well of course, it is not a matter of either or, but the Great Commission was

given to the disciples to begin in Jerusalem and then go to the towns and villages where the people received the Gospel message, and yes, also received with hospitality the messengers. But, if the Gospel and the messengers were rejected, they were to shake the dust off their sandals and move on to where the doors were open. In other words, they were to fish where the fish were biting, not where they had to use covert action to try and force the doors open. (If you want to know more about "God's Blueprint For Missions," I have written a book which is now available on this very subject.) So, when Jerry Rankin left the Lausanne Conference, it is very obvious that he left determined to change the course of world missions. Then when he was called to be the President of the International Mission Board, he came to Richmond, Virginia and began to change everything about the way world missions should be done in order to implement this new strategy of missions. Why, even during his initial days when Dr. Rankin arrived in Richmond, I heard one IMB Missionary after another telling how confused they were with this new strategy which he was trying to promote. So, as a result of Dr. Rankin's new philosophy of missions, he moved scores of missionaries off the fields from where God sent them to fields of his choosing. More than likely, they were moved to Muslim countries, because he had an affinity for the Muslims having worked in Indonesia where they had the largest Muslim population of any one country in the world. So, during the seventeen years that Dr. Rankin was over the IMB, missionaries were moved all over the globe to new fields of unreached people groups. Now every year instead of 2,000 people getting saved, two or three Muslims would come to Christ. Yet, the budget for the International Mission Board stayed around \$300,000,000 dollars with far less people getting saved. So, the Conservative Resurgence was progressing with more conservative seminaries and schools, but because of the mistake of bringing the wrong leader to the IMB, less and less people were getting saved through the efforts of our almost 5,000 missionaries at that time. Of course, we are now down to about 3,500 missionaries because David Platt encouraged many missionaries to take early retirement in order to try and balance the budget that had been operating in the red since 2010.

Notice The Valid Fear That The Conservatives Had.

During those past years of progression, since the Conservative Resurgence began in 1979, the conservatives were very much concerned about the Foreign Mission Board, or what is today the IMB, becoming a program with less emphasis upon evangelism and getting people saved and a greater emphasis upon humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Pay attention to the following words. "Many conservatives were concerned that the direction of the Foreign Mission Board was less conversionary, following the dialogical path of the mainline denominations."⁷¹

Truly friends, it has been my observation that although a lot of people have been saved through the ministry of the IMB over the past 20 plus years, it is very plain and obvious that there is a moving away from evangelism and world missions being the main thing, while a new and greater emphasis is being placed upon humanitarian

⁷¹ A Resurgence Not Yet Realized, By: Tom Rainer, equip.sbts.edu, page 55.

assistance and disaster relief. Of course, I have seen this "mission drift" many times while working in Africa for the past 34 years. I have watched numbers of great mission organizations and ministries drift away from evangelism and winning people to Christ. And may I just be very honest with you and say, "Drifting to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief is usually a save-face move because there just aren't the numbers to brag about any more." Now, don't get me wrong! I believe we ought to do everything we can to help alleviate suffering, but all of this alleviation ministry should just be a means to the end for sharing the Gospel. As the President of Gateway International Missions, Inc. for the past 20 years, I have worked extremely hard at keeping evangelism and sharing the Gospel message as the main thing in our ministry, but we have distributed over 24 million dollars' worth of humanitarian care including rebuilding prison hospitals, providing food, clothing, blankets, and multitudes of other desperately needed assistance. But, we never provide these items without presenting the Gospel.

This would be a good time for me to sound a loud alarm concerning the tendency of churches and mission ministries to leave evangelism efforts and concentrate on the physical. Why, this is what's happening in some of the more ecumenical church movements, like the Emerging Church, which have gone so far as to change the word evangelistic to the word evangelical so that the evangelical work might even include social justice, community development, and a massive amount of other projects. These efforts may be needed, and certainly, they may be good, but if the Gospel is not priority, then what we do for now is just temporary. Our main concern should be the lost souls of men, women, boys, and girls who will spend eternity in hell without Christ unless they get the Gospel message. As my friend Dr. Johnny Hunt has said so many times, "We must keep the main thing the main thing." But of course, if you are in that Emerging Church Movement or the Ecumenical Church, you probably don't even believe in hell anyway. I heard one of the supposed strong Southern Baptist preachers say some while ago, "Who knows, maybe the other religions have a different way to heaven than we do." No, my friends! If Jesus is not the only way to heaven, then He lied when He said in **John 14:6, "I am way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes to the Father, but by me."** If there is any other way to go to heaven other than Jesus, then we might just as well close the Bible and the church doors and quit wasting our time. We are not saved by our works, but by grace through faith in the finished work at Calvary. Yes, yes, Jesus is the only way to heaven!

Chapter Seven

The Many Failures Leading To The Decline Of The Southern Baptist Convention

It goes without saying that many good things were happening after the conservatives took back the Southern Baptist Convention. After Adrian Rogers was first elected in 1979, there were three additional presidents before Dr. Rogers was reelected in 1986. Those men in succession were, Bailey Smith, Jimmy Draper, and Charles Stanley. These were all good men, but then, Dr. Rogers was reelected again in Atlanta. With his reelection, it seemed that the convention was on its way to making a lot of progress, but then, as I mentioned before, some very wrong priorities began to cause some significant failures which have contributed to the decline of the S.B.C. for many years now. And, as I have already stated, unless God sends a genuine revival to the churches in the S.B.C., it may very well be that one day there will be no more Southern Baptist Convention. Now, I want us to take a careful look at several failures which have happened in the convention and see the damage that they have caused.

There Is The Failure Of Lost Passion.

There is one amazing thing that I have learned down through my half-century plus years of ministry, and that is, if we devote a huge amount of time to conflict, regardless of how important it might be, then we lose a lot of genuine passion to give attention to the main thing of taking the Gospel to the lost world. Personally, I believe as the great preachers and church leaders in the S.B.C. continued to devote so much time to committee planning meetings and to put it very bluntly, some strong religious politics across the S.B.C., their minds were taken off of the lost world, and probably the condition of their churches at home as well. I would say what happened was that in giving their personal time and energy to a good effort, they were distracted from the most important thing—winning people to Jesus. And folks, I can tell you after trying to win people to Jesus here in America and in Africa for so many years, we can't keep passion or a burning "fire in our bones" unless we maintain an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. You see, passion comes from compassion, and compassion comes from intimacy with Jesus. So, these wonderful conservative leaders who were trying to save the doctrinal integrity of the convention by appointing conservative people in the seminaries and other ministry jobs, just simply lost a vision for the lost world. And as all of us know, if we are really saved, ***"Where there is no vision the people perish."*** (Proverbs 29:18) So, when genuine vision is gone for winning people to Jesus, then our passion will dwindle or die as well. With all of the distractions during the years from 1979, when Dr. Rogers was first elected, and more so from 1986, when he was elected for the second time, until now, there have been so many distractions. The vision is waning, and lost souls are perishing. My question is, "What good is to believe the truth of the Bible as God's inerrant Word, if we are failing to take the message of that Word to the lost world so that they can be saved?"

There Is The Failure Of Trying To Down Play The Importance Of The Local Church.

Down through the years, as we Christian baby boomers get older, I have noticed an intentional down playing of the importance of the local church. I sincerely believe that this might just be one of the most tragic happenings in this generation of believers. Why? Because God the Father has chosen to build His church, the Bride of Christ, through the death of His Son on the cross and His resurrection. I am not talking here about the word church generally, but I am talking about the importance of the local churches all around the world. Yes, even with all the hypocritical pretenders in so many of our local churches, there is yet a true remnant of believers within these churches who are genuinely saved and members of His Bride. Listen to these next few verses to get an understanding of the local church. **Ephesians 5:22-33**, *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."* So, our wonderful Lord gives us the analogy of the husband and wife representing Christ and the church. We are born into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation. Then we are to live intimately with Him in order to maintain fellowship with Him and His family, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Therefore, the local church is vital to our spiritual well-being, and it is vital for us to take the Gospel message to a lost world. Although God can and does use parachurch organizations, He has chosen to use the local church to be His sending agency to win the world for Him. But, if we try to do away with the local assembly, then we handicap the privilege of our taking the Gospel to a lost world.

Going further, I believe that there are several contributing factors that are harming the importance of the local church. With the risk of some of you readers getting mad at me, I truly believe that the life groups in the homes of church members are a hindrance to the local assembly's being God's instrument to share Christ with a lost world. These life groups started several years ago with the intent of trying to make the study of God's Word more appealing, and maybe even less threatening, to some people. But the truth is that right now in America, the effectiveness of these groups is very much waning. One of the major reasons for this is that it is almost

impossible to hold people accountable for what is being taught outside the local church house.

Also, it is sad to say, but many of these home life groups have become nothing more than fellowship or coffee times, and with much regret, I will say they easily become gossip sessions. Also, often within these home groups, instead of having trained teachers, these groups have dialogue sessions with no final authority on the Word being taught. In fact, even with a designated teacher, this person often just becomes a facilitator instead of a teacher. What the individuals believe a passage of Scripture says is more important than what the Word itself actually says. So, the idea is that frail human sinful beings end up deciding what a passage of Scripture says more so than having a trained Sunday School or Bible teacher to explain the text. Why recently, I have even heard of homosexuals and people living in adultery who have been given the role of teaching some of these home groups. Therefore, these home life groups are not bearing much fruit, and very often, when they have been used to try to plant a church, they don't work at all.

To illustrate this, in our home community around our Gateway International Missions house in Uganda, the Southern Baptist sent a young single missionary to come there and plant a church with life or home groups. The missionary was there for over five years and established 53 life groups in the immediate area. But after 53 groups and working for over five years, no church was organized. Until this day, there is no Baptist church in our community. Yet, five times each day we hear the Muslim prayer call beckoning their followers to come to the Muslim Mosque for prayers. Very frankly, the emphasis upon life groups and home groups connected with our churches today are doing much damage to the cause of Christ.

I sincerely believe that because our Lord established the local church for the benefit of its members and also, the Kingdom of God, we need to get back to allowing God to build His churches if we are going to win lost people to Christ. I will forever be a strong believer in the local church.

And just one more thing! Because of the huge emphasis being placed upon social media today, I believe it has become a substitute for many professing Christians instead of attending a local church. People can sit at home, watch U-Tube videos, and even spend hours on Facebook and other networks trying to out argue hundreds of people, and never learn to be faithful to a local church. I believe the main reason is that they just don't want a local pastor to know about how they are really living. They don't want the pastor holding them accountable for being at the church services regularly. And truthfully, I believe part of it has to do with their desire not to have to support a local church financially. So, my dear S.B.C. friends, let's get back to putting the emphasis where Jesus does, on the local New Testament Church in your local city.

There Is The Failure Of Trying To Contextualize The Gospel So It Won't Be Offensive.

Often times I mention that about two years ago, I wrote a book entitled, "The Chaotic Crisis In The Contemporary Church." In this book, I addressed the new push by the Emerging Church Movement to contextualize the Gospel so that it won't offend anyone. Of course, truth from God's Word has always been offensive. Paul the Apostle

said to the churches of Galatia, ***"Have I become your enemy because I told you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16)*** Truthfully, truth always confronts the sin of human beings because this is what God intends for it to do. If there is no confrontation and conviction of sin, then there will be no consciousness of sin. And if there is no consciousness for sin, then there will be no need seen for repentance. If there is no repentance, then there can be no forgiveness. Thus, the Gospel truth has to be presented under the power of the Holy Spirit in order for people to have a chance to be saved or even to confess individual sins as believers.

Let me illustrate this by telling you a true story. Back in 1970s, I used to be involved in a regular prison ministry at the Florida State Prison in Starke, Florida. During my many years working there, I spent many hours with Ted Bundy, one of the most notorious murderers in human history. Personally, I liked Ted very much. I prayed much for him, and I always enjoyed going back on his cellblock to talk about Jesus with him. One morning I walked down to the cell where Ted was incarcerated. When I got there that morning, I saw that he was reading his Bible and making notes on a yellow legal pad. I asked him what he was writing, and he told me that he was writing a commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. I then asked him what he was saying about the text, and he told me that he was eradicating guilt in his commentary. I then looked at him and said, "Ted, I then feel sorry for you if you are trying to do away with guilt." He said, "What do you mean Reverend?" I said, "If you eradicate guilt, you will not feel guilty for your sins. And, if you don't feel guilty for your sins, then you will not repent." I then said, "If you don't repent, then you cannot be forgiven. And, if you are not forgiven, therefore, you will die lost without Christ and spend eternity in hell." Bundy said to me, "My Reverend, that is a point well taken." But this is all truth. If we don't preach the entire counsel of God's Word, even if it offends some sinners, then, there will be no conviction, and thus, no prayer of repentance for forgiveness. By the way, I do believe that Ted Bundy did get saved when he talked to James Dobson, before he was executed. Therefore, I believe he is now in heaven.

I would like to give my strong opinion on why so many modern-day preachers like Andy Stanley, Rick Warren, Erwin MacManus, and many others have aligned themselves with the Emerging Church movement, either directly or indirectly. I just believe they are trying hard to have a "cool church" where they can hang out with every kind of person that walks on this earth. Their hope is to get these people like homosexuals, lesbians, transsexuals, and other perverted people coming to their churches without really offending them with the true Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, they believe that sermons no longer work, absolute truth from God's Word is no longer absolute, that invitations and praying to receive Christ is no longer cool, and on and on we could go. But the truth is, their Gospel is a false Gospel which doesn't demand repentance, and only results in a larger attendance at their churches of many campuses. And, God forbid that any traditional pastor teaches that people should ask Jesus into their hearts, because if this really works, then the current president of the Southern Baptist Convention must have been saved a thousand times according to his description of praying the sinners prayer and asking Christ to come into his heart. But of course, if we are hyper-Calvinists, which I will talk about later in this book, like J.D. Greer is, then we don't need to pray and ask Jesus to come into our hearts, because by election and predestination, we are already born again and saved before

we put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore my friends, let's stand up and shout—stop this foolishness! The cross has always been offensive, and it will remain so. And, no one gets saved until he or she puts their faith in the finished work of Calvary and repents of their sin. To believe otherwise makes about as much sense as saying that a baby in the womb of its mother must be born before it can be conceived. It is total heresy to believe such foolishness. Contextualize the Gospel? No, emphatically no! But to preach the entire Gospel under the power of the Holy Spirit and confront sin to bring conviction and ultimate salvation? Yes, a thousand times yes! We must return to the proclamation of the Gospel. We don't argue people into salvation by apologetics, but we just simply present the truth of the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God. If we as Southern Baptist are going to get back to winning people to Christ, we must follow God's plan, not the Emerging Church and Calvinistic pastors!!!

There Is The Failure Of Exchanging The Preached Written Word Of God For The Oral Presentation Of The Gospel.

I would like to begin this section of my book by saying that I dearly love the written Word of God. For over 60 years, I have tried diligently to study the written Word, and God has used It to bless my life, my family, and my ministry. After having studied the written Word for so long, I am totally convinced that our Lord Jesus Christ loved the written Word also. In fact over and over again, He made the statement numbers of times, "It is written." in almost all of His earthly ministry. It was through His quoting of the written Word of God that He defeated the temptation of Satan in the wilderness. Please look at the following words from His temptation in the Judean wilderness. **Matthew 4:1-11, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, IT IS WRITTEN, MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDETH OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD. Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, IT IS WRITTEN AGAIN, THOU SHALT NOT TEMPT THE LORD THY GOD. Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. THEN SAID JESUS UNTO HIM, GET THE HENCE, SATAN; FOR IT IS WRITTEN, THOU SHALT WORSHIP THE LORD THY GOD, AND HIM ONLY SHALT THOU SERVE. Then the devil leaveth Him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto Him."**

So friends, it is very obvious that Jesus Christ loved and used the written Old Testament during His entire ministry for three and one-half years while here on earth. But now, we have such super-spiritual people trying to lead our churches and mission efforts around the world by telling people that they are really not smart enough to

understand the written Word of God, but instead, they will need to hear about God through stories. Yes, you read what I said, "stories". We have this movement in our Southern Baptist Denomination, and in many other so-called evangelical denominations, that are teaching with much fervor and zeal that over four billion of our earth's population cannot possibly come to God unless they hear stories. So, they have developed the "Orality Movement," and are promoting it full-steam ahead, even while the number of people getting saved and baptized is going down rapidly. What some of our professing scholars and intellectual elite Southern Baptist leaders have determined is that we need to stop preaching sermons and printing Bibles in the different languages of the people. We just need to translate the Bible into about 250 stories and go tell everyone about Jesus. Of course, I was told years ago that you tell stories to little immature unlearned children so that they can then move on and read the books themselves. But now, we have this new "Orality Movement," telling the world that they are basically too dumb to understand the preached and taught written Word of God. So, once again in our "enlightened world," we have people that are much smarter than God, and they are brainwashing people to stay away from trying to learn to read the written Word of God. But excuse me, where did this movement come from? Well, I am glad you asked, because I am going to tell you. And if you are honestly objective, you will be shocked out of your socks. This "Orality Movement" has come from a Jesuit Catholic Priest, Walter Ong, whose mother Catholic Church used to teach that the common lay person was not smart enough to understand the written Word. So, the priests, the bishops, the cardinals, and yes, the Pope were the only ones qualified to interpret the written Word of God. And for sure, there was a sinful motive behind this practice. That motive was that this Catholic hierarchy didn't want the common man to really understand what the Bible says so that they could control the people in the Catholic Church. In other words, it was a means whereby the Catholic State Church would be able to have power over the common people. By the way, the Jesuit Priests of the Catholic Church are considered by many to be the "storm troopers" or Gestapo of the Church. Also, right now, Pope Francis is the first Jesuit Priest to ever become the Pope of the world church. Would you not at least think that something is badly wrong if our Southern Baptist Churches are pushing to spread the Gospel with another methodology adopted from the church that hates our protestant churches more than anything on Earth.

"Walter Ong was born in Kansas City, Missouri, to a Protestant father and a Roman Catholic mother; he was raised as a Roman Catholic. In 1929 he graduated from Rockhurst High School. In 1933 he received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Rockhurst College, where he majored in Latin. During his time at Rockhurst College, he founded a chapter of the Catholic fraternity Alpha Delta Gamma. He worked in printing and publishing prior to entering the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1935, and was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1946."⁷²

Please notice a brief summary of Ong's works and interests. "A major concern of Ong's works was the impact that the shift from orality to literacy has had on culture and education. Writing is a technology like other technologies (fire, the steam engine, etc.) that, when introduced to a 'primary oral culture' (which has never known

⁷² Walter Ong, Wikipedia, page 2.

writing) has extremely wide-ranging impacts in all areas of life. These include culture, economics, politics, art, and more. Furthermore, even a small amount of education in writing transforms people's mentality from the holistic immersion of orality to interiorization and individualism."⁷³

Folks, there is no doubt that this Catholic priest probably came up with some good ideas about reading, writing, and storytelling, but his method of orality should never have been accepted by Southern Baptist for a method to supplant the preaching and teaching of the written Word of God methodology which Christ emphatically gave His disciples and followers. But where did this orality movement catch on and get proliferated?

"We now come to the high point of the third Lausanne gathering on world evangelization. The Cape Town Congress is told that storytelling is the modern method by which the whole Church is to take the whole Gospel to the whole world. The session entitled, 'Communicating to Oral Learners', described the concept of storytelling (also known as the orality movement) as a breakthrough strategy for spreading the Gospel. Dr. Grant Lovejoy, Professor of Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, told the Congress that there are over four billion oral learners in the world—one billion out of necessity because they are illiterate, and three billion from choice, for they prefer not to read, and therefore are known as 'preference oral learners'. He argued that the Church needed to change the traditional way of taking the Gospel to unreached people. Christians should develop a new appropriate methods of communication, such as storytelling, drama, songs, visual arts, poetry, chants and music, for they are the most effective methods for reaching the four billion oral learners of this world with the Gospel of Christ."⁷⁴

Now, did you notice that this Southern Baptist Professor left out mentioning that the Orality Movement is also pushing dance as a way to share the Gospel. He must have thought that a few old traditional Southern Baptists might have been offended. According to the Orality Group, any methodology is permissible to use in presenting the Gospel except for the written Word of God. Notice the statement, "So in the eyes of the Orality Group it is pointless to use the printed Word of God to instruct oral learners."⁷⁵

"The Orality Group claimed that to make disciples of oral learners it is necessary to use 'communication forms that are familiar within the culture: stories, proverbs, drama, songs, chants, and poetry. Literate approaches rely on lists, outlines, word studies, apologetics, and theological jargon. These literate methods are largely ineffective among two-thirds of the world's people'. The assertion that a literate approach, which makes use of the written Word to preach the Gospel of Christ, is ineffective among two-thirds of the world's people is contrary to Scripture, for God has promised that His Word will not return to Him void (Isaiah 55:11)."⁷⁶

"Making Disciples (a booklet edited by Grant Lovejoy and former Vice-President of the International Missions Board, the late Avery Willis, points out that in

⁷³ Ibid, page 2.

⁷⁴ Ecumenism: Another Gospel, By: E.S. Williams, page 75.

⁷⁵ Ibid, page 78.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

many parts of the world there is open hostility to evangelistic activity (imagine that). 'Crusades, mass evangelism, and public preaching are not welcome. Bible studies and open witnessing draw negative responses. In these situations storying can be more fully appreciated. Storying is not confrontational. It is not preaching. It is not overt teaching. It is merely conveying the stories of God's Word, dialoguing about them and leaving the results to God! Most of the time the hearers do not even realize that their values are changing until they can no longer deny the truth. His Word says that it will not return void or empty.' Notice the assertion that crafted oral stories are 'His Word', thereby claiming that crafted oral stories have the authority of God."⁷⁷

Well, I could go on and on talking about the stupidity of any doctrine or philosophy that says it has equal or greater authority than the written Word of God. But, this is truly what is happening among many Southern Baptist today. Yet, isn't it quite ironic that the conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention was basically about the truth and inerrancy of the written Word of God, and now we are promoting this "Orality Movement" that down-plays the truth and the importance of the written Word of God. I believe this is the epitome of hypocrisy. And here again, as I have mentioned several times earlier in this book, I believe it is simply all about contextualizing the Gospel in order to make it non-offensive. These foolish people, even some of our historical great ones, like Grant Lovejoy, Avery Willis, Jerry Rankin, Mark Snowden, and others, have just bought into a Catholic man's, (Walter Ong) attempt to get control of the Scriptures back from the lay people under the guise of trying to share the Gospel. As I have already stated, the message of the Gospel will always be offensive to the lost world, because the death of Christ on the cross is very ugly and offensive. But, there is no Gospel (Good News) if we don't share the entire truth of God's written Word. It is truly a joke to believe that we will be more successful with more divine authority if we tell Bible stories rather than to preach the Word of God. Paul said that is through the foolishness of preaching that men get saved! Just remember, after this mad push to turn the Bible into just a storybook, go to the lost world, and tell these stories, salvation and baptism numbers are declining. To use an old cliché, "This orality movement is nothing more than a rearranging of the deck furniture on the sinking Titanic."

There Is The Failure Of Placating The "Me Too Movement".

Well, the great Southern Baptist Convention with all of its strong new conservative leaders since the Conservative Resurgence has now capitulated its leadership role to the "Me Too Movement" under the leadership of the twisted Evangelist Beth Moore. Truthfully, this is not just an attack against Dr. Paige Patterson, but it is a blatant attack against Biblical truth that has also been twisted by people like Beth Moore for a long time. She has gotten filthy rich within the Southern Baptist Convention and Lifeway, and now she sees an opportunity to get a lot more publicity and attention that will inevitably bring her much more money and approval from her devoted friends. The twisted attacks against an elder statesmen of the Christian faith like Dr. Paige Patterson at this point in his later years is nothing less

⁷⁷ Ibid, page 86.

than diabolical, and without a doubt, it was orchestrated in the halls of hell. It is all about placating the "Feminist Movement" in this country in order to stay politically correct. This effort by Beth Moore and her progressive colleagues reminds me of Nancy Pelosi and her vile attacks against anyone that she disagrees with.

Beth has been around so long benefiting from those "Dear Pastors" that preach the Word of God, that she now decides that it's time to tear some of them down so she can reap more financial benefits from the publicity and accolades that she will get for standing up to these "ruthless men" who believe that God teaches equality for men and women before Himself spiritually, but with different roles which no human on earth can deny. The Bible does teach that we all have equal value before God, but it also teaches that God has planned for husbands and wives to live together as compliments to each other in order to bring up our families in a Godly way. Truthfully, I have been suspect of Beth Moore for a long time because she has perverted the Word of God over and over to accommodate her misinterpretations of Scripture in order to get a greater following, more book sales, more invitations, and of course, more prestige as she goes around the world with James and Betty Robison, two Pentecostals, preaching her feminism. And isn't it ironic that she had never been so blatant to attack the men of the Southern Baptist Convention before some hyper-Calvinists decided to use political correctness and brutality to take control of the Southwestern Baptist Seminary.

As for Dr. Paige Patterson, I would like to say that I don't question anything he did in any of the incidents in counseling, in handling the alleged rape incident at Southeastern Seminary, or with the decisions he made at that time. He may have done things differently in this age, but not back then. So, these Pharisaical Calvinists and "Me Too Women" totally forget the thousands of good things that Dr. Patterson has done for the Kingdom of God and the S.B.C. They only bring up sensitive things that will make people listen to their screams and outcries today, just simply because of the progressive movement that has been going on for the past several years.

I also want to say that I am not at all surprised that Al Mohler and dear Danny Akin have turned against their devoted mentor and ripped him to shreds just because they wanted him out of the way so that they could promote their brand of false Calvinism. As I quoted early in this book, Dr. Akin was supposed to have wanted peace and tranquility in our convention, but now in this particular situation, he has chosen to side with the feminist movement. Why? Just for one reason, he, along with Mohler, wants the Calvinists to control the entire convention for years to come if the Lord delays His coming much longer. There is not a person on this terrestrial globe that can convince me that these two Calvinists don't have ulterior motives for their chiming in with Beth Moore and the other people who have crucified Dr. Patterson and those who support him. I promise you that one day at the Judgment Seat of Christ, when Calvinistic power won't mean a thing, these Satanic leaders down here on earth will answer for their destruction of a righteous man of God. Brother Al, Brother Danny, and Sister Beth, I hope you will get things right with Jesus before you stand before Him at the Bema Seat. The consequences are going to be severe. Just imagine those who supposedly teach and preach the truth of God's Word, believe it is quite all right to pervert it to harm those servants of God that they might disagree with, or have a difference of opinion. I believe they should read the following Scriptures to

learn how to respect and treat those who have given their lives to teaching and training you in the faith. **Hebrews 13:7**, "*Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation (conduct).*" Also, in **Hebrews 13:17**, "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*" Now, Mr. Mohler, Mr. Akin, and Sister Beth Moore, do you think these verses of Scripture apply to you. From a 70 year old man who has been in the ministry for 53 years, let me say, "Your time is coming, and what goes around, comes back around. All three of you, and all of the other feminists, will suffer the consequences for how you treated the man of God. If you don't believe this, maybe you should look at **First Kings** and see what happened to Ahab and Jezebel for what they did to the man of God, Elijah! Has Dr. Patterson been perfect? Of course not, and neither have you or I. In one sense, I really feel sorry for you 'elitists'."

Now, I want to share two articles written about this "Me Too Alignment" with hyper-Calvinists in order to destroy a righteous man. Hopefully, you might be able to see that what I have been talking about in the last several paragraphs is so true.

The Wrath of God Poured Out — Humiliation Of The Southern Baptist Convention May 23, 2018

"The last few weeks have been excruciating for the Southern Baptist Convention and for the larger evangelical movement. It is as if bombs are dropping and God alone knows how many will fall and where they will land.

America's largest evangelical denomination has been in the headlines day after day. The S.B.C. is in the midst of its own horrifying #MeToo moment.

At one of our seminaries, controversy has centered on a president (now former president) whose sermon illustration from years ago included advice that a battered wife remain in the home and the marriage in hope of the conversion of her abusive husband. (They didn't tell that this troubled woman's husband got saved through Dr. Patterson's counsel!) Other comments represented the objectification of a teenage girl. The issues only grew more urgent with the sense that the dated statements represented ongoing advice and counsel.

But the issues are far deeper and wider. Sexual misconduct is as old as sin, but the avalanche of sexual misconduct that has come to light in recent weeks is almost too much to bear. These grievous revelations of sin have occurred in churches, in denominational ministries, and even in our seminaries.

We thought this was a Roman Catholic problem. The unbiblical requirement of priestly celibacy and the organized conspiracy of silence within the hierarchy helped to explain the cesspool of child sex abuse that has robbed the Roman Catholic Church of so much of its moral authority. When people said that Evangelicals had a similar crisis coming, it didn't seem plausible — even to me. I have been president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for twenty-five years. I did not see this

coming."⁷⁸

"I was wrong. The judgment of God has come. (Such an arrogant statement) Judgment has now come to the house of the Southern Baptist Convention. The terrible swift sword of public humiliation has come with a vengeance. There can be no doubt that this story is not over.

We cannot blame a requirement of priestly celibacy. We cannot even point to an organized conspiracy of silence within the denominational hierarchy. No, our humiliation comes as a result of an *unorganized* conspiracy of silence. Sadly, the unorganized nature of our problem may make recovery and correction even more difficult and the silence even more dangerous.

Is the problem theological? Has the Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention come to this? Is this what thousands of Southern Baptists were hoping for when they worked so hard to see this denomination returned to its theological convictions, its seminaries return to teaching the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, its ministries solidly established on the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Did we win confessional integrity only to sacrifice our moral integrity? (What a Pharisaical statement)

This is exactly what those who opposed the Conservative Resurgence warned would happen. They claimed that the effort to recover the denomination theologically was just a disguised move to capture the denomination for a new set of power-hungry leaders. (It seems they were right, Dr. Al, you!) I know that was not true. I must insist that this was not true. But, it sure looks like their prophecies had some merit after all. As I recently said with lament to a long-time leader among the more liberal faction that left the Southern Baptist Convention, each side has become the fulfillment of what the other side warned. The liberals who left have kept marching to the Left, in theology and moral teaching. The S.B.C., solidly conservative theologically, has been revealed to be morally compromised."⁷⁹

"Among the issues of hottest theological debate was the role of women in the home and in the church. The S.B.C. has affirmed complementarianism — the belief that the Bible reveals that men and women are equally made in God's image, but that men and women were also created to be complements to each other, men and women bearing distinct and different roles. This means obeying the Bible's very clear teachings on male leadership in the home and in the church. By the year 2000, complementarian teachings were formally included within the Baptist Faith & Message, the denomination's confession of faith.

Is complementarianism the problem? Is it just camouflage for abusive males and permission for the abuse and mistreatment of women? We can see how that argument would seem plausible to so many looking to conservative evangelicals and wondering if we have gone mad.

But the same Bible that reveals the complementarian pattern of male leadership in the home and the church also reveals God's steadfast and unyielding concern for the abused, the threatened, the suffering, and the fearful. There is no excuse whatsoever for abuse of any form, verbal, emotional, physical, spiritual or

⁷⁸ Christian Headlines, *The Wrath Of God Poured Out*, By: Al Mohler, pages 1-3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, pages 3-4.

sexual. The Bible warns so clearly of those who would abuse power and weaponize authority. Every Christian church and every pastor and every church member must be ready to protect any of God's children threatened by abuse and must hold every abuser fully accountable. The church and any institution or ministry serving the church must be ready to assure safety and support to any woman or child or vulnerable one threatened by abuse.

The church must make every appropriate call to law enforcement and recognize the rightful God-ordained responsibility of civil government to protect, to investigate, and to prosecute."⁸⁰

"A church, denomination, or Christian ministry must look outside of itself when confronted with a pattern of mishandling such responsibilities, or merely of being charged with such a pattern. We cannot vindicate ourselves. That is the advice I have given consistently for many years. I now must make this judgment a matter of public commitment. I believe that any public accusation concerning such a pattern requires an independent, third-party investigation. In making this judgment, I make public what I want to be held to do should, God forbid, such a responsibility arise.

I believe that the pattern of God's pleasure and design in the family and in the church is essential to human flourishing. I believe that the Bible is the inerrant and infallible verbally inspired Word of God. I believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the great news that any sinner who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved. I believe that theology rooted unapologetically in Scripture is the only sure foundation for the home, the church, and the Christian life. And I also believe that the fruit of the Spirit "is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23). Where this fruit is not present and visible, Christ is not present.

The #MeToo moment has come to American evangelicals. This moment has come to some of my friends and brothers in Christ. This moment has come to me, and I am called to deal with it as a Christian, as a minister of the Gospel, as a seminary and college president, and as a public leader. I pray that I will lead rightly. (Too late)

In **Romans 1:18** we are told: ***'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.'***

This is just a foretaste of the wrath of God poured out. This moment requires the very best of us. The Southern Baptist Convention is on trial and our public credibility is at stake. May God have mercy on us all."⁸¹

Before I share with you this last article on the "Me Too Movement" attempt to whip the Southern Baptist Convention leaders, I just want to tell you that some of this upcoming article is utterly ridiculous. However, I just wanted you to read about the foolishness of some of these people, including Beth Moore, who have taken this terrible situation to grandstand for a while.

⁸⁰ Ibid, pages 4-5.

⁸¹ Ibid, pages 5-7.

**Southern Baptist Women Launch
Petition Against Paige Patterson
Controversy over past remarks leads Southwestern Seminary
to announce special board meeting.
KATE SHELLNUTT MAY 06, 2018 9:35 PM**

"A growing group of Southern Baptist women called for Paige Patterson to be removed as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) on Sunday, due to what they claimed was his 'unbiblical view of authority, womanhood, and sexuality.'

Patterson, one of the most influential leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention (S.B.C.), has faced widespread criticism in recent weeks for old remarks, including a discussion of divorce in cases of abuse and multiple comments on women's appearances.

'We cannot defend or support Dr. Patterson's past remarks,' stated an open letter to SWBTS trustees, which grew from 100 to more than 1,000 signatories on Sunday night. 'No one should.'

'The fact that he has not fully repudiated his earlier counsel or apologized for his inappropriate words indicates that he continues to maintain positions that are at odds with Southern Baptists and, more importantly, the Bible's elevated view of womanhood,' states the letter. 'The [S.B.C.] cannot allow the biblical view of leadership to be misused in such a way.'

The letter comes from scores of Southern Baptist women, including leaders such as: Karen Swallow Prior, a Liberty University professor and research fellow with the Ethics and Religious Liberty Convention; Lauren Chandler, an author, worship singer, and wife of The Village Church pastor Matt Chandler; Jennifer Lyell, a vice president at S.B.C.-affiliated B&H Publishing Group; Amanda Jones, a Houston church planter and daughter of Bible teacher Beth Moore; and Mary DeMuth, an author, speaker, and victims' advocate.

Some men also signed on, though the petition is intended for women at S.B.C. churches who affirm the denomination's complementarian theology."⁸²

"(Update: An accompanying petition designed for men was released three days later, on May 9. 'We are likewise grieved by the comments—heartbroken over the effect they have on our sisters in the faith, concerned about the wrong message they send to the world about the value and dignity of women, and aggrieved by the poor gospel witness,' it read. 'We should have noticed this long ago, and we were at fault for ignoring it until our sisters pointed it out.')

Signatories for the women's petition hail from a wide array of noteworthy congregations including Bellevue Baptist Church, Capitol Hill Baptist, Cross Church, First Baptist Church of Dallas, Houston's First Baptist Church, Long Hollow Baptist Church, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Saddleback Church, Thomas Road Baptist Church, and The Village Church.

Their plea to the trustees follows Beth Moore's own viral [open letter](#) posted

⁸² Christianity Today web site, Southern Baptist Women, pages 1-2.

last week, confessing her uncomfortable experiences as a woman in Southern Baptist culture and broadly decrying sexism in the church.

The Patterson controversy escalated quickly the week before SWBTS's May 4 graduation ceremony, after critics circulated archival clips of the 75-year-old former S.B.C. president and two-time seminary head saying whether a woman should leave an abusive husband 'depends on the level of abuse' and that divorce is 'always wrong counsel.' The women's letter also criticized Patterson's characterization of a 16-year-old girl as 'nice' and 'built' in a 2014 sermon anecdote.

'This is the most heartbreaking letter I've ever signed. I've been Baptist most of my life, Southern Baptist for almost two decades,' Prior tweeted. 'I made this appeal privately but was not heard.'

The statement coincides with a quiet campaign among some Southern Baptist leaders to pressure Patterson, who has led SWBTS for 15 years and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary for 11 years, to apologize and step down. Tonight, the chairman of SWBTS's board of trustees announced that 'in light of recent events,' the full board will hold a special official meeting—at Patterson's request—on May 22.

Patterson has repeatedly defended himself, most recently telling *The Washington Post* on Friday that he couldn't "apologize for what I didn't do wrong."

A week ago, Patterson released a 600-word response on a Sunday clarifying his older remarks and accusing critics of being motivated by 'hatred' and sharing a 'deliberate misrepresentation' of his position.

When Patterson stood by his stance—including in a Baptist Press interview where his quote downplaying 'non-injurious physical abuse' ended up being revised after publication—fellow Southern Baptists came out with strong statements against domestic violence.

Some Southern Baptists are also anticipating pushback among denominational representatives at its upcoming annual meeting, where Patterson is scheduled to preach.

Before Patterson led what now rank as the second- and third-largest seminaries in the US, he was best known as the leader who spearheaded the denomination's Conservative Resurgence, a decades-long effort to replace liberal-leaning leaders in the S.B.C. with conservative ones. SWBTS has also been significantly shaped by his leadership, right down to a series of stained glass windows on campus that portray prominent forces in the Conservative Resurgence, including Patterson himself.⁸³

"He has been a big enough name among Southern Baptists that he was often celebrated for his leadership but didn't face significant pushback for controversial remarks or stances over the years, wrote Ed Stetzer, executive director of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, on his CT blog. He praised Patterson's legacy at length, but called for the SWBTS president to step down for the good of the denomination.

Many Southern Baptists have publicly doubled down on their positions against sexual assault—some even calling out Patterson by name—in recent days, including LifeWay Christian Resources president Thom Rainer, Ethics and Religious Liberty

⁸³ Ibid, pages 3-4.

Commission president Russell Moore, Beth Moore, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary president Danny Akin and provost Bruce Ashford, and former S.B.C. president and suburban Atlanta pastor James Merritt.

Patterson even joined his own seminary in releasing a statement on abuse. Wade Burleson, an Oklahoma pastor who previously served as a trustee for the S.B.C.'s International Mission Board, has been vocally critical of Patterson and certain denominational policies on his blog. Following reports of deliberations among SWBTS trustees on Wednesday, he hoped and predicted younger trustees would outweigh the seminary president's loyalists.

'They comprehend the optics. They are not blinded by loyalty,' Burleson wrote. 'They understand that the [S.B.C.]—and especially [SWBTS]—cannot survive the image of thousands of Southern Baptists standing and applauding Dr. Paige Patterson at this year's convention.'

Patterson is slated to give the high-profile 'convention sermon' at the S.B.C.'s annual meeting next month in Dallas, in addition to offering reports on an evangelism task force and the state of his seminary.

Despite recent decline, the S.B.C. remains America's largest Protestant denomination by a wide margin. But in recent years, convention leaders have shown increasing attentiveness to outside perceptions on gender and race issues—particularly as social media followers and institutional heads look to public leaders to be accountable, in real-time, for regrettable remarks and decisions.

'The world is watching us all, brothers. They wonder how we could possibly be part of a denomination that counts Dr. Patterson as a leader, states the women's open letter. 'They wonder if the Jesus of the Bible is like such men. We declare that Jesus is nothing like this and that our first duty as Southern Baptists is to present a true picture of Jesus to the world.'

Patterson has drawn support from other leaders such as past S.B.C. president Johnny Hunt, who thanked him for having 'always proven to be a Man of God and a man of your word in the 40 years I have known you.' A petition in the seminary president's favor went up over the weekend, blaming 'outside sources' such as the media for trying to discredit Patterson's ministry."⁸⁴

'Dwight McKissic, an African American Southern Baptist pastor who often critiques the 'S.B.C. mainstream establishment,' asserted earlier in the week that Patterson is 'the most loved and loathed personality in S.B.C. history ... without a doubt.' Then he laid out his case for why Patterson's remarks, while worthy of critique, should not disqualify him the seminary president from his leadership role or from speaking at the S.B.C. annual meeting.

To retroactively punish Dr. Patterson for remarks he inarticulately and wrongly made years ago is unfair in my judgment and not a way to treat a modern day patriarchal figure in S.B.C. modern history,' wrote McKissic. He explained: Which one of us, who've been preaching any length of time, could be subject to someone pulling a tape/video from the archives of something we've said many years ago; but we would not say the same thing today, or certainly, not in the exact same way. Yet, if brought to public light today, it would create for us a similar PR crisis?

⁸⁴ Ibid, pages 4-6.

Again, that's not to excuse, or agree with, what Dr. Patterson unwisely spoke (in my judgment); it's to say, 'The punishment is much greater than the crime.' Let the SWBTS Trustees rebuke Dr. Patterson for his remarks, if they must. Let the S.B.C. in session adopt a strong statement making it crystal clear that we do not support spousal abuse of at any level of gradations—Period—if we must. But to punish and embarrass him on the Convention floor, a venerated figure like Dr. Patterson, by denying him a well-earned slot of being the Annual Convention preacher in the sunset of his life and ministry, is simply overkill. Separate the punishment from the sermon.

Beth Moore's open letter to her Christian 'brothers' on her Living Proof Ministries blog on Thursday explained her experience of being a conservative Southern Baptist woman called to teach other women yet being disrespected by male leaders—or as she put it, being 'the elephant in the room with a skirt on.'

'I accepted the peculiarities accompanying female leadership in a conservative Christian world because I chose to believe that, whether or not some of the actions and attitudes seemed godly to me, they were rooted in deep convictions based on passages from 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14,' she wrote.

'Then early October 2016 surfaced attitudes among some key Christian leaders that smacked of misogyny, objectification and astonishing disesteem of women and it spread like wildfire. It was just the beginning,' she wrote. 'I came face to face with one of the most demoralizing realizations of my adult life: Scripture was not the reason for the colossal disregard and disrespect of women among many of these men. It was only the excuse. Sin was the reason. Ungodliness.'

She gave an example: About a year ago I had an opportunity to meet a theologian I'd long respected. I'd read virtually every book he'd written. I'd looked so forward to getting to share a meal with him and talk theology. The instant I met him, he looked me up and down, smiled approvingly and said, "You are better looking than _____." He didn't leave it blank. He filled it in with the name of another woman Bible teacher.

She asked that complementarian male leaders have an 'increased awareness of some of the skewed attitudes many of your sister's encounter,' and that they 'would simply have no tolerance for misogyny and dismissiveness toward women in your spheres of influence.'"⁸⁵

"Her tweet drew more than 1,000 comments, including affirmation from other conservative women leaders such as Hannah Anderson, Trillia Newbell, Prior, and Jen Wilkin.

Later that day, Gospel Coalition-affiliated pastor Thabiti Anyabwile published an 'apology to Beth Moore and my sisters,' asking their forgiveness for having 'picked up the attitude—the patronizing and chauvinistic attitude—of some professing 'complementarians.'" He acknowledged scoffing at and being suspicious of women in ministry and encouraging others to do the same, passing on a "sinful attitude rooted in the very misogyny and chauvinism you describe in your post."

'I do now commit to being a more outspoken champion for my sisters and for you personally. Not that you need me to be but because it is right," he wrote. 'I hope, with God's help, to grow in sanctification, especially with regards to any sexism,

⁸⁵ Ibid, pages 6-8.

misogyny, chauvinism, and the like that has used biblical teaching as a cover for its growth.'

Many observers will be paying attention for what happens next, particularly at the seminary trustees meeting in May and the denominational conference in June. 'Ultimately, we trust the S.B.C..... When our leaders make mistakes, I think there are appropriate channels to respond," said Jim Richards, executive director of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, in an interview with CT.

'The S.B.C. is made up of messengers of the churches, who will be at the annual meeting. They will make a decision about whether or not Paige Patterson will preach that sermon,' he said. 'They will make a decision about the trustees at SWBTS.'"⁸⁶

And yes folks, the decision was made to fire one of the greatest men God ever gave to humanity, regardless of how much damage was done to him and his family. There is one thing that I can say emphatically, and that is, "We live in a world where everybody is now offended by whatever happens to them, but no one ever sees the beam in their own eyes." They love to castigate, criticize and condemn others, but they forget that whatsoever we sow, we shall reap. To all of you Beth Mooreites, Al Mohlerites, and Danny Akinites, get ready, your time is coming. Dr. Patterson, we still love you because of your love for Jesus and your faithfulness to the work of God. You are a giant of a man, and one day it will be acknowledged at the Judgment Seat, and some of your "Me Too, and Island of Me People", will be tremendously ashamed when we all get there.

There Is The Failure Of Reinventing The "Good Ole Boy" Buddy System.

One of the greatest complaints that I ever heard from my conservative brethren down through the years was that the liberals or moderates running the Southern Baptist Convention had a "Good Ole Boy" Buddy System, which they relied on to make sure that the right people were elected, the proper people where hired, and that the "establishment system" as I will call it, continued to be in complete control of the S.B.C.. Year after year until 1979, the convention hierarchy just ran everything, and they were threatened by anyone basically trying to cut in line to get in front of their buddies. In fact, I have read many books about the Conservative Resurgence written from the conservatives' side, and also, from the moderates' side. Truthfully, just about two weeks ago I was reading Dr. Grady Cothen's book entitled, "What Happened to The Southern Baptist Convention?" There is a note in the book written by Cecil Sherman, former Pastor of Broadway Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Texas. Please pay close attention to the following quotes.

"Cecil Sherman, pastor of Broadway Baptist Church of Fort Worth and an early leader in resistance to the fundamentalists, wrote a brief review of some of the events of those early days. He said that he wrote it in response to a request from his daughter to explain to her what had happened. In the paper he wrote of the 'old politic' of the S.B.C.

Was there a politic in the S.B.C. back in those innocent days? Yes. The politic was arranged. Those bureaucrats (denomination leaders) knew who loved

⁸⁶ Ibid, pages 8-10.

and supported the S.B.C.. They knew who gave the money. They knew those churches that sacrificed some of their own needs for the good of the S.B.C.. They marked the preachers who led those churches to sacrifice. Editors were a part of that politic. The pastors who loved and supported the S.B.C. plus the bureaucrats plus the editors made common cause to put before the Southern Baptists the people who loved, cared about, and gave themselves to the S.B.C.. 'It was a sort of ecclesiastical 'good ole boy' system. After describing the 'old politic' let me say a word for it. I think it was not only 'old politic,' I think it was also a good politic. It was used in all the churches I have ever served. The people who love the church and attend the church three times a week and give sacrificially to the church have an inordinate influence in the church."⁸⁷

Read more of what Cothen said, "While I would disagree with Sherman that the system was dominated by the bureaucrats, I would agree that this was the spirit of the system, and usually it worked well. While I was a bureaucrat for twenty-three years, I very seldom had any active input as to who my trustees were to be. I can remember only two or three instances in all of those years. Some of the other bureaucrats seemed to have more access to the system than I had, but it seemed to me that they sought those opportunities by talking to the members of the nominating committees. In no case known to me was a committee coerced into choosing someone to serve."⁸⁸

Folks, what we have here are two men, Cecil Sherman and Grady Cothen, two strong supporters of the early convention hierarchy, who both made some unbelievable confessions. They both admitted that the S.B.C. used to be run with a "good ole boy" buddy system, and neither of them were one bit ashamed. I surely think it is quite utterly ridiculous to say that the S.B.C. was no different than even our churches, because they are basically operated the same way. So, there was no embarrassment or shame for the way things were conducted in the early S.B.C. And yet, as a long time pastor for more than 50 years, I don't ever remember picking and choosing church leaders and workers just based upon them being my good buddies. Yes, we select people who are faithful, dedicated, and live clean lives, usually, those who give tithes and offerings. But, we don't select church leaders according to the percentage they give to certain special programs, like the convention used to select leaders based upon their percentage of giving to the Cooperative Program. I don't ever remember choosing church leaders who might totally and completely agree with me in everything they believe. But obviously, Sherman and Cothen, felt that it was quite alright for the bureaucrats to only choose the people that would align themselves with the standing leaders, and only support what the others would decide to carry out. I would like to say this is very inconsistent with what the S.B.C. hierarchy was practicing when it came to doctrine, theology, or even inerrancy. For you see, it seemed to be concerned about how much money people gave and what efforts they

⁸⁷ What Happened To The Southern Baptist Convention? By: Grady Cothen, Smith/Helwys Publishing, pages 72-73.

⁸⁸ Ibid, page 73.

supported, but obviously it didn't matter what seminary professors and administrators believed about the Bible and its content. This was, and still is, total hypocrisy! These convention leaders believed that if anyone wanted to work with them or for them, they had to abide by the moderates' mandate or rules. It seems that other people with varying beliefs and practices just were never up for consideration, especially if the person wanting to serve happened to be a conservative. Therefore, whoever was considered for a position of leadership had to be singularly focused on supporting those who were already behind the desks, even if it didn't matter whether they believed that the Bible was inerrant and God's Word. I will say sarcastically, that truth didn't matter, but protocol and adherence to a system did.

Well, I believe by now that you will agree with me that before the Conservative Resurgence took place the system was rigged, and only good buddies and friends got the first chances at positions and jobs within the convention. Way back there in 1979, all of this was supposed to have changed, but I don't believe it did! It may have started out well, but I have watched carefully the development of the conservative leadership over the past 39 years, and I must say that I am very sad about the situation. Although I know that we have had some good people serving in various positions and places of leadership within the convention, the conservatives seem to have reinvented the "good ole boy" buddy system. It is just like it was back when the moderates, or liberals, had control. Now, you might say, "What do you mean by that statement?" Well, what I mean is since the beginning of the conservative resurgence, the new conservatives have been choosing their good buddies to serve in positions of leadership, many of which were not competent in the roles they were given. Therefore, the convention has suffered tremendously because of the renewal of the good ole buddy system. Let me try to explain.

Chapter Eight

Some Real Examples Of Incompetent Leaders

At this point in our discussion, I am sure that I am about to make some of you readers angry because I am giving the names of certain people who have been put in leadership in our Southern Baptist ranks who I believe have done much harm. By giving this information, it doesn't mean that I don't like these people or that I despise them. But, I must be candid and tell you that the following list of people, in my opinion after 53 years of ministry, have done irreparable damage to the name, the work, and the future of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Dr. Al Mohler, Jr., “Good Ole Boy” Number 1

The first man that I want to mention who was appointed as a Southern Baptist leader since the Conservative Resurgence is Dr. Al Mohler, President of the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. If you read the biographical description of this man on the seminary's website, you would believe that this must be a man only second to Jesus Christ, but yet, when all is said and done, this man will have done more harm to the cause of Christ and the Southern Baptist Convention than any human in history. I want you to read the following long biographical description from the seminary's website. I hope you can see the egotistical presentation of this man and his outstanding accomplishments. But yet, following this biographic description, I will tell you why this man is so dangerous to the S.B.C. and the cause of Christ. Yes, he was a “good ole boy” buddy to many people before he was chosen to come to Southern Seminary.

Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr. Serves As President Of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary – The Flagship School Of The Southern Baptist Convention And One Of The Largest Seminaries In The World.

“Dr. Mohler has been recognized by such influential publications as Time and Christianity Today as a leader among American evangelicals. In fact, Time.com called him the “reigning intellectual of the evangelical movement in the U.S.”

In addition to his presidential duties, Dr. Mohler hosts two programs: “The Briefing,” a daily analysis of news and events from a Christian worldview; and “Thinking in Public,” a series of conversations with the day’s leading thinkers. He also writes a popular blog and a regular commentary on moral, cultural and theological issues. Called “an articulate voice for conservative Christianity at large” by The Chicago Tribune, Dr. Mohler’s mission is to address contemporary issues from a consistent and explicit Christian worldview.

Widely sought as a columnist and commentator, Dr. Mohler has been quoted in the nation’s leading newspapers, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, The Washington Post, The Atlanta Journal/Constitution and The Dallas Morning News. He has also appeared on such national news programs as CNN’s ‘Larry King Live’ and ‘AC360’, NBC’s ‘Today Show’ and ‘Dateline NBC’, ABC’s ‘Good

Morning America', 'The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer' on PBS, MSNBC's 'Scarborough Country' and Fox's 'The O'Reilly Factor'.

Dr. Mohler is a theologian and an ordained minister, having served as pastor and staff minister of several Southern Baptist churches. He came to the presidency of Southern Seminary from service as editor of *The Christian Index*, the oldest of the state papers serving the Southern Baptist Convention.

A native of Lakeland, Fla., Dr. Mohler was a Faculty Scholar at Florida Atlantic University before receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree from Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. He holds a master of divinity degree and the doctor of philosophy (in systematic and historical theology) from Southern Seminary. He has pursued additional study at the St. Meinrad School of Theology and has done research at University of Oxford (England).

Dr. Mohler also serves as the Joseph Emerson Brown Professor of Christian Theology at Southern Seminary. His writings have been published throughout the United States and Europe. He has received numerous awards and recognition including the Edwin Meese III Originalism and Religious Liberty Award from the Alliance Defending Freedom (2015), Christian Standard Bible award from Lifeway Christian Resources (2017), Award for Biblical Counseling Achievement from The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (2015), M.E. Dodd Denominational Service Award from Union University (2009), and a Doctor of Laws degree from Bryan College (2016).

He is the author of several books, including *We Cannot Be Silent: Speaking truth to a culture redefining sex, marriage, & the very meaning of right & wrong* (Thomas Nelson); *Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters* (Bethany House); *Culture Shift: Engaging Current Issues with Timeless Truth* (Multnomah); and *Words From the Fire: Hearing the Voice of God in the Ten Commandments* (Moody). From 1985 to 1993, he served as associate editor of *Preaching*, a journal for evangelical preachers, and is currently editor-in-chief of *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*. He has contributed to over 100 other published works.

A leader within the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. Mohler has served in several offices including a term as Chairman of the S.B.C. Committee on Resolutions, which is responsible for the denomination's official statements on moral and doctrinal issues. He also served on the seven-person Program and Structure Study Committee, which recommended the 1995 restructuring of the nation's largest Protestant denomination. In 2000, Dr. Mohler served on a blue-ribbon panel that made recommendations to the Southern Baptist Convention for revisions to the Baptist Faith and Message, the statement of faith most widely held among Southern Baptists. Most recently, he served on the Great Commission Task Force, a denominational committee that studied the effectiveness of S.B.C. efforts to fulfill the Great Commission. He currently serves as chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's Council of Seminary Presidents.

Dr. Mohler has presented lectures or addresses at institutions including Columbia University, the University of Virginia, Wheaton College, Samford University, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, the University of Richmond, Mercer University, Cedarville University, Beeson Divinity School, London School of Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, The Master's Seminary, Geneva College, Biola University,

Covenant Theological Seminary, The Cumberland School of Law, The Regent University School of Law, Colorado Christian University, Grove City College, Vanderbilt University and the historic Chautauqua Institution, among many others.

Dr. Mohler is listed in Who's Who in America and other biographical reference works, serves on the boards of several organizations including World News Group, and previously served on the board of Focus on the Family. He is a member of the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, serves as a council member for The Gospel Coalition, and is a teaching fellow for Ligonier Ministries. In addition, he is a co-founder of Together for the Gospel.

He is married to Mary, and they have two children, Katie and Christopher. In 2015 Dr. and Mrs. Mohler welcomed their first grandchild, Benjamin, born to Katie and her husband Riley."⁸⁹

I have started with Dr. Mohler because it seems that this handsome, articulate, appealing professional man would be the greatest thing that ever happened to the S.B.C., but my how wrong that is. As his resume states, he is just super with so many accolades, but just remember this information came from the schools own website. Therefore, for sure he has been recognized by almost the entire world as God's choice servant, but behind the scenes there is much that has not been discussed. Let me give you a recent discussion of Dr. Mohler with a different slant. Please pay attention to the following discussion by Seth Dunn.

Al Mohler And The Conviction To Lead From Behind

BY Seth Dunn. PUBLISHED MAY 24, 2018 · UPDATED MAY 25, 2018

"The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, But the righteous are bold as a lion."
Proverbs 28:1

"I am tired of Al Mohler.

For years, I listened to his various podcasts: every month, every week, every day. Every month or so, I listened to his literary podcast, Thinking In Public in which he discussed culturally relevant books with their authors. All the discussions were interesting. Every week, I listened to his sermon podcast, Powerline. All the sermons were sound. Every day, I listened to his news podcast, The Briefing, in which he gave a daily analysis of news and events from a Christian worldview. All his analyses were astute. Each of Mohler's podcasts provided a consistent critique of theological liberalism and unbiblical ideas. I learned from them and I agreed with them. Then, one day, I just stopped listening.

I got tired of Al Mohler criticizing the Anglicans about being gay-affirming. I got tired of him criticizing the Methodists for having female pastors. I got tired of him criticizing the world for its naturalistic bent. It's not that I didn't agree with Mohler's condemnations. I did. It's that he polemicized every theological problem under the sun, so long as it wasn't shaded by the big tent of the Southern Baptist Convention. It is under that big tent that Mohler earns his lucrative living. In the wake of his denomination's conservative resurgence, every Bible-believing Southern Baptist already rejects apostate mainline denominations and godless liberals. I grew weary

⁸⁹ The Southern Baptist Seminary's website, pages 1-6.

of being the crowd to which Albert Mohler was preaching as he decried the biblical offenses of what is left of Protestant liberalism. What about the problems in his own house? LifeWay, Ergun Caner, a Muslim enrollee at Southwestern Baptist, the MLK50 Conference, Russell Moore's progressivism, the emergence of Karen Swallow Prior. Mohler, the president of the S.B.C.'s flagship seminary, has remained silent time after time. He'll address a Hillsong or an Andy Stanley, but when Baptist luminary David Uth invites a Seventh Day Adventist to preach at First Baptist Orlando, Mohler is busy critiquing liberal Presbyterians or the secular media. A couple of years ago Ronnie Floyd, a sitting President of the Southern Baptist Convention who was nominated for the office by Al Mohler, went and spoke at an International House of Prayer Conference. IHOP is considered a cult by many. Mohler's many podcasts and blogs were silent on that issue and many others. Mohler, perhaps more than no other, knows Southern Baptist problems. Yet, when does he choose to speak of them? When it's safe.

Paige Patterson was fired as President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary this week. Mohler took the opportunity, to write a Jeremiad entitled "The Wrath of God Poured Out – The Humiliation of the Southern Baptist Convention." When the coast was clear and the beachhead was safe, Albert Mohler spoke out against the actions, the nearly two decades old actions, of Paige Patterson. For twenty-five years Mohler has harvested the field that Paige Patterson and Paul Pressler planted during the Conservative Resurgence. Arguably, Albert Mohler wouldn't have a job in the Southern Baptist Convention if not for Patterson's fight against the liberals. When Patterson was finally sacrificed upon the altar of public relations, the latest idol in the S.B.C.'s temple, Mohler finally took the opportunity to criticize something related to the S.B.C....after the trustees had already fired Patterson. Make no mistake, Patterson was fired...but he was "Baptist Fired." Like Joe Aguillard at Louisiana College, Patterson was granted the lifelong honorific title "President Emeritus." To boot, Patterson and his wife were given the title "Theologians in Residence" and a house in which to live on the SWBTS campus. To the adulation of the Southern Baptist Twittersphere, Mohler addressed the problems at SWBTS, without so much as having the fortitude to mention Patterson, his long-time rival in soteriological theology, and SWBTS by name. Mohler's timing, to say the least, is suspect.

In Mohler's younger days, the seminary he now heads was known for its liberalism. Mohler, then a student, was too. The winds of conservatism, in the personage of Paige Patterson, Adrian Rogers, and the architects of the S.B.C. Conservative resurgence blew. All of the sudden, it was safe to be a conservative at SBTS. All of the sudden, Al Mohler was conservative. A few years ago, my county's associational Missionary David Frankin, himself an SBTS alumnus from the old days, told me that Al Mohler was liberal and he would never invite him to our county to speak. I, the faithful consumer of all his podcasts, Mohler scoffed at David. Today, I'm left remembering David's words and wondering if Al Mohler would have been president of SBTS whether Patterson had rid the convention of its liberals or not."⁹⁰

⁹⁰ The Pulpit and Pen, By: Seth Dunn, May 24, 2018, pages 1-6.

By: The Christian Commute

Well now, we have just read all the accolades and acclaim about Al Mohler, and then the article by Seth Dunn, giving another view of this man. But now, let me tell you why I believe that putting him in the Presidency of Southern Baptist Seminary was one of the greatest mistakes in Christian History.

When Mohler came to Southern Baptist Seminary in 1993, it is obvious that he not only came there to lead this institution, but he also came to control it and change everything about it under the guise of freeing it from liberalism. So, when he arrived, he decided that he would have all of the professors and administration, then working there, sign a document of compliance to the "Abstract Of Principles", which everyone was required to do if they expected to keep their jobs. Well, some did, but many refused to sign it, along with the Baptist Faith and Message document of the S.B.C. It is known that over 100 professors and staff members refused to sign both of these documents, and thus, they lost their jobs. After this, Mohler brought in replacements who agreed to sign the documents. Therefore, he had all of his staff where he wanted them—going along with whatever he, as their president, decided to teach and embrace. And truthfully, what happened at Southern is exactly what many of the moderates had said would happen after the Conservative Resurgence in the convention. Please notice the following article from Southern Baptist Life Magazine.

"In 1993, the seminary's president, R. Albert Mohler, Jr. came into office re-affirming the seminary's historic 'Abstract Of Principles,' part of the original charter of the Southern created in 1858. The charter stated that every Professor must agree to 'teach in accordance with and not contrary to, the Abstract of Principles hereinafter laid down' and that 'a departure' from the principles in the Abstract of Principles would be grounds for resignation or removal by the Trustees.

Dr. Mohler, following these instructions, required that current professors affirm, without any spoken or unspoken reservations, the Abstract of Principles. Professors were also asked to affirm the Baptist Faith and Message (BF and M), the doctrinal statement of the S.B.C.), since Southern is an agency of the S.B.C. and the S.B.C. mandated affirmation of the BF and M as requirement for continued employment. An overwhelming majority of faculty affirmed the Abstract of Principles, but declined to affirm some of the doctrines stated in the BF and M which had recently been amended to bring it in line with more conservative positions held by the S.B.C. In the wake of the subsequent dismissal or resignation of a large percentage of the faculty, Southern has replaced them with new professors who agree to adhere to the BF and M in addition to the seminary's Abstract of Principles."⁹¹

So, Southern Baptist Seminary now had professors and leadership that had sworn to abide by these two documents, "The Baptist Faith and Message" and "The Abstract of Principles". Please notice the following excerpts from both of these documents.

⁹¹ Southern Baptist Life web site, page 1.

God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Election

Election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life-not because of foreseen merit in them, but of His mere mercy in Christ-in consequence of which choice they are called, justified and glorified.

Folks, what these professors and other staff had to agree to included following Mohler's teaching of what I would call hyper-Calvinism. Dr. Mohler is a very strong Calvinist, and one that Satan is using terribly in the Southern Baptist to brainwash the minds of a large amount of young preachers and others of God's new servants. As Calvinism teaches, Southern Seminary now teaches that God the Father has predestined millions of people to die and burn in hell, while He has predestined that others who are chosen will go to heaven. As this false doctrine teaches, mankind basically has nothing to do with his or her own salvation because their destiny is already planned. And, those who are not chosen to go to heaven cannot change their destination, because they really can't repent. This teaching from the influence of John Calvin in Geneva, Switzerland back in the 1500s is a damnable doctrine which is not what the Southern Baptist Convention was built upon. Oh yes, there have always been some Calvinists, but not like what is happening today. Calvinism is basically a Presbyterian doctrine and not a Baptist doctrine. Truthfully, I am not even sure that John Calvin was saved because he thought the sprinkling of infants (a Catholic Doctrine from his hero, Augustine) was the means of salvation. And very emphatically, a lot of modern Calvinists are just as cruel and mean as was Calvin. You see, there in Geneva when people didn't believe on or agree with his doctrines, he had them put to death for their heresy.

Of course, we are not now seeing people slaughtered for the doctrine of Calvinism, but we are seeing this horrible belief destroy or kill multitudes of S.B.C. churches today where they are being led by "punk pastors" who have come out of Southern Baptist Seminary or some of the other seminaries that have been contaminated with this plague. I was saved in a Southern Baptist Church just over 60 years ago, and we never heard this damnable doctrine preached or taught in our rural country church. But now, the "The Young, Restless, Reformed Generation", like Collin Hansen, is preaching that God doesn't love the whole world, or that if He does, it is with two kinds of love; one serious agape love for the elect and another lesser love

for the hell-bound non-elect. Could I tell you that this perverse teaching makes me want to vomit! Yet, this wonderful new leader, called Dr. Al Mohler, is mesmerizing a younger generation until these young preachers and servants of God almost worship this god.

To illustrate this, let me share with you a true story that happened several months ago. I was in the waiting room of Day Surgery at one of our hospitals when I met a bright young pastor who pastors a church with about 300 in worship. As we talked, while waiting for our church members to get out of surgery, he began to discuss with me that he was presently working on a Doctor of Ministry Degree at Southern Baptist Seminary. In the process of the conversation, he told me that he had never sat under such a godly man as Al Mohler and that Dr. Mohler had taught him some wonderful new doctrine on how to really walk with God. I would say, "Yes, he did." He taught this young preacher how to neglect the lost and allow them to burn in hell! And I might just add as an old fashioned traditional Southern Baptist, that I am totally convinced that a lot of young, and maybe some old, preachers enjoy being Calvinists just because they are extremely lazy with no work ethic. Therefore, they don't want to go soul winning. I will close talking about the Southern Baptist Seminary President by the name of Dr. Al Mohler, by just simply saying, "I would not want to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ one day as Al Mohler and give an account for stopping multitudes of preachers from winning multitudes to Christ." I fear for Mohler, one of the great failures of the Southern Baptists when they put him into office at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. May God have mercy on Dr. Mohler and all of his Calvinistic cohorts for the damage they are doing worldwide! Truthfully folks, if we still had liberals leading our seminaries, as we used to, there would not be as many people dying lost every day, as they do now, because of the twisted doctrine of Calvinism. Just imagine for a moment that right now in every semester of the SBTS, over 5,000 precious servants of God are being brainwashed by the idol of Al Mohler. Do you think Satan is happy? I do! And in fact, I think he probably celebrates every day that classes are in session at SBTS.

Dr. Jerry Rankin, "Good Ole Boy" Number 2

In the same year, 1993, that Dr. Al Mohler was becoming the new President of the Southern Baptist Seminary, Dr. Jerry Rankin became the President of the International Mission Board in Richmond, Virginia. He was selected to this position after serving on the foreign fields for 23 years. No doubt he was a really good man, and one well experienced, but during the Conservative Resurgence, there has always been the tendency to recommend our "good ole buddy" friends, even if they don't have a consistent doctrinal belief system that aligns with the truth of the "inerrant Bible", which of course caused the resurgence in the S.B.C. in the first place. When Dr. Rankin was considered for the presidency of the IMB by the IMB Trustees, it was brought to the attention of the board that Dr. Rankin spoke in a "private prayer language", yet, he emphatically stated that he was not a charismatic glossolalia tongues speaker. So, the Trustee Board sidestepped the issue and appointed him as the new president, with total disregard for his belief and practices. Yet, these were the same conservatives that adamantly opposed so many of the moderates who didn't share

their Baptist beliefs about the inerrant Word of God.

The decision by the Trustees to hire Dr. Rankin was one that would later be questioned by newer people on the Trustee Board over this same issue of speaking in tongues. This issue not only was about Dr. Rankin's private prayer language, but also about new missionaries who would be commissioned to the S.B.C. fields even if they spoke in tongues, just like Rankin. So, the way I see it, it would be very hard to refuse to send tongue speaking missionaries to the fields while back in the main headquarters, the President had charismatic tendencies. Of course, when you consider that Al Mohler, the President of the SBTS in Louisville, Kentucky, is a strong Calvinist, yet he is known to meet with many charismatic preachers within the realm of the Emerging Church, then I suppose it would be alright for Southern Baptist to send tongue speaking missionaries to the fields. If this sounds confusing, so it is, because I just don't understand how the Conservative Resurgence could stand for the inerrancy of the Bible and yet allow its missionaries and the IMB president to be charismatic, which is totally foreign to the Scriptures. I would say this is truly a double standard.

Well, before moving on, let me ask you to please read carefully the following article from Baptist News Global back in 2006, when the IMB Trustees clashed with Dr. Rankin over these doctrinal issues.

IMB Trustees Clash With Rankin Over Doctrinal Charges

Information Access NEWS: MARCH 23, 2006

TAMPA, Fla. (ABP) — "The often-contentious relationship between Jerry Rankin, president of Southern Baptists' International Mission Board, and his trustees boiled over again during the board's March 20-22 meeting in Tampa.

Trustees clashed with their CEO over accusations of doctrinal deviations among missionaries, Rankin's handling of trustee requests, and how much access trustees should have to internal IMB information.

Trustee relationships—with their president and with each other— dominated the two-day meeting, overshadowing encouraging news about missions giving, disaster-relief ministries and new missionary appointments.

Trustees met behind closed doors for much of their three-day meeting, first in a "trustee forum" about undisclosed topics and later to debate disciplinary action against new trustee Wade Burleson. (see related ABP article)

In the board's first plenary session, Rankin showed trustees a videotape of his chapel address to employees delivered soon after trustees approved new policies in November defining a proper baptism for new missionaries and prohibiting their use of a 'private prayer language' (a form of speaking in tongues).

Some IMB trustees have said privately the new policy prohibiting 'private prayer language' — which applies only to new missionaries — was an attempt to embarrass Rankin, who has acknowledged using the practice, or force him to resign.

The videotaped message has become a point of controversy between Rankin and some trustees, including one who was denied a copy of it before the board meeting. On the tape, Rankin said he 'did not agree with these policies', which are 'more restrictive'. Nonetheless, he said, he will enforce the policies because God has

placed him under the trustees' authority.

'I can't control the actions of our board or the statements that others make,' Rankin said. 'There is only one thing I can control and that's my heart. Whatever is happening around us, whatever it is, however harmful or hurtful or painful it might be, or however untrue or slanderous it might be, we don't lash out. We can't attack. We can't defend ourselves. That's the fleshly nature. All we can do is guard our heart.'

Rankin said such differences, which 'can disrupt our focus' on spreading the gospel, are evidence of spiritual warfare. 'The spiritual nature of our task of reaching a lost world is so critical and important to the heart of God that our enemy is not just going to roll over and relinquish the dominions of darkness and power becoming the kingdoms of our Lord,' he said. Rankin added, 'It's not our trustees [causing the disruption]. These are men and women who love the Lord.'

After the videotape was shown, Rankin said he was 'compelled' to add: 'We are not aware, on the field, of any doctrinal problems' with missionaries. If there are problems, he said, they are dealt with swiftly through an established process.

'You screened them,' he told trustees. 'You examined their denominational loyalty, their faith, their church background and commitment, their affirmation of the 'Baptist Faith and Message.' And our [staff] regional leaders are in touch with them, monitoring them. If there were any problems of doctrinal aberrations, of charismatic influences or practices, or even tolerance, or anyone not [properly] practicing baptism, or contributing in any way to ecumenical-type practices, we would know about it and deal with it.'

'It is disrespectful to missionaries, those giving their lives and sacrifices and taking their families and laying their lives on the line, that anyone, without identifying and verifying facts, would spread rumors and innuendoes about doctrinal issues on the field. I want to make a public comment and stand for our missionaries in defense of their faithfulness.'

Trustee Jerry Corbaley, a director of missions from California, told Rankin his statement there are no doctrinal problems on the field 'seems to be in direct conflict with the fact we are dealing with several such instances now.'

Rankin said the two controversial policies were adopted in part because of accusations that the IMB was sending out missionaries who were 'not truly Baptists' or who were supporting ecumenism or charismatic practices.

'I've asked for evidence, for verification,' he said. 'If that is so, then tell us who and where, and we'll deal with it. But I have yet to have anyone document where there is a problem that we aren't dealing with or haven't dealt with when we became aware of it.'

'That's not true,' trustee chairman Tom Hatley shot back. 'We've done that in several instances.'

When those problems have been identified by trustees, Hatley said, the staff has dealt with them appropriately. But to say no doctrinal problems have been identified is an overstatement, the chairman added.

'My point is,' Rankin said, 'we do have a process and are dealing with the [problems].'

Hatley, a pastor from Arkansas, said trustees have avoided naming names in their accusations because of the need for confidentiality in trustee proceedings, not a

desire 'to cover up fact.' 'We must speak in generalities,' he said.

Earlier in the meeting, after Rankin showed his videotaped address, trustee David Button of New York complained that his request for a copy of the tape in early February was denied four times by Rankin.

'I never once questioned your motives,' said Button. 'As a trustee, I think information that comes out of the board ought to be information we ought to have as trustees. ... I believe the request of this tape was a reasonable request.'

'I wasn't making a public statement,' Rankin said. His message to employees was an internal communication 'on a very sensitive subject,' he said. 'I felt I had the prerogative of how that is to be distributed.'

Rankin said that he was worried excerpts from the message could be taken 'out of context' and that it was best to show the full speech to all trustees at the same time.

'Trustees are not to involve themselves in administration,' he reminded the board, adding later, 'do not have accountability to 89 trustees' but to the full board. Several trustees said Button's request for the tape should have been honored, while others said Rankin handed the situation 'prudently.'

Button is one of at least three former IMB employees elected in recent years as trustees of the agency. A former vice president for public relations under Rankin, Button left the IMB in 2000 under strained relations with the administration.

Button, a local radio-TV executive, brought up the videotape request two other times during the trustees' meeting. 'I don't believe that a trustee should act unilaterally on any information they receive, but a trustee should receive everything they ask for,' he said.

Near the end of the meeting, Button made a motion that the IMB staff 'shall honor all trustee requests for information, subject to the discretion of the chairman.' 'How do we prevent the egregious overuse of privilege like we have seen in the last few months?' he argued. He accused Rankin's administration of 'arbitrary and excessive' control 'to keep trustees from receiving the information that they request.'

After the board's lawyer warned such a policy might present 'a host of issues' and encroach 'somewhat on the prerogatives of the president,' chairman Hatley referred the motion to the trustees' administration committee for study. 'We don't want to limit information at all,' Hatley said, but a review of the motion would be 'advisable.'"⁹²

Now, in order to show you one more incidence concerning the question of Dr. Jerry Rankin's handling of the doctrinal issues at the IMB during his time there, please notice carefully the following long article from the Baptist Press from back in 2006 just one month before the previous article. This discussion took place in Alberta, Canada with a collection of Baptist State paper editors. Once again, we can see how this supposedly very competent man who led the IMB for 17 years truly contributed to further turmoil, even after the Conservative Resurgence to take back the SBS from the moderates had extinguished some of their controversy. And remember, the purpose of the IMB was to take the Gospel to the lost world, not to provide more doctrinal controversy.

⁹² IMB Article From Baptist News Global, March, 2006, pages 1-5.

**IMB President Speaks Plainly with State
Editors About Private Prayer Language**
By: Staff, posted Friday, February 17, 2006 (12 years ago)

BANFF, Alberta, Canada (BP)—"International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin answered questions about recent IMB trustee actions regarding a private prayer language and local church baptism practices in a Feb. 17 question-and-answer session with Baptist state paper editors.

Rankin's comments were made at a breakfast meeting hosted by the IMB for editors attending the annual meeting of the Association of State Baptist Papers in Banff, Alberta, Canada.

The following Q&A transcription was preceded by Rankin's overview of the IMB's work.

RANKIN: What would you like to ask about? Go in any direction you want. You know I've been here before. I know you guys. We'll try to help out in whatever you'd like to talk about.

Trennis Henderson (Western Recorder, Ky.)—Jerry, just to jump right into it I suppose—you referenced issues that are distractions. It seems like one of those distractions of recent has been the discussion of policies related to private prayer language. Private prayer language certainly sounds like something that you don't discuss publicly, but [laughter from editors]

RANKIN—I'm impressed, you're coming along. [more laughter]

Henderson—However, however, it seems that your practice of private prayer language has become a public issue. I know there was the discussion at the time of your election as well some discussion of what your current practice remains today. And just interested in a clarification from you to the extent that you're comfortable, just about what your current practices are related to that area.

RANKIN—Well, I would really prefer to be very guarded in what I share. You know in our discussion with our board, just sharing—I do have a private prayer language, have for more than 30 years. I don't consider myself to have a gift of tongues. I've never been led to practice glossolalia, you know, publicly, and I think the spiritual gifts clearly in the didactic passage of the Scriptures are talking about the public uses, edification and gifts in the church. I'm certainly not a cessationist and because I believe in the inerrancy of the Scripture, that the Scripture's eternally relevant, that, you know as long as the Holy Spirit is operable in our lives and in the church and in the world, you know, what the Bible tells about the work and functioning of the Holy Spirit is applicable. Now that may change historically, but I certainly don't think we have the latitude to just disregard it, you know.

Of course, others take issue with that. I made comment that I just don't see how you can be an inerrantist and be a cessationist. I was talking with a person—'well, I don't see how you can be an inerrantist and not be a cessationist.' So you know, those have different interpretations—you don't even need to try to go there, but I've never."⁹³

⁹³ IMB President Speaks Plainly With State Editors About Private Prayer Language,

"You know, really, there may be similarities and a gifting of Spirit, but I've never viewed personally my intimacy with the Lord and the way His Spirit guides me in my prayer time as being the same as glossolalia and subjected to that criteria. And yet there are those who do see it as one and the same and because of how they position themselves doctrinally and what they believe the Scripture teaches, you know, then they have difficulty in reconciling it and dealing with it, but like you said, I mean, I've been very open with the board. I don't talk about it. I don't advocate it. I don't see it as normal or that I should propose that anyone ought to pray in tongues. It's just what God had chosen to do in my life and maybe it's, mine is just psychological make-up or my needs, but goodness, my morning devotional time—[it's] not frequent, but I just want God to have freedom to do everything that He wants to do in my life and I'm going to be obedient to that. I don't see it as a public issue or something I should talk about. You know, it was all out there when I was elected. I mean, just go back and read your files, and some of you have. I mean it was headlines in all your papers—Baptists selecting a charismatic [some laughter]. Well, how do you define a charismatic? I don't consider myself a charismatic. I know what neo-pentecostalism charismatics believe and I preach against that. But anyway— people where they're coming from.

But even in [the] recent thing, whatever motivated the board to move in this direction, you know, I can't control that. I'm under their authority. They have the prerogative of doing what they feel is in the best interest of our board and our missionary work. They're very conscientious about their sense of accountability to the Southern Baptist Convention and it's not the first time, in fact, quite frequently; I mean, I clearly recognize if God has put me in this position to lead the international mission efforts of Southern Baptists, I do serve under the authority and submission to our board and to Southern Baptists and I have to recognize that that's going to have an expression and parameters that I have to accept. I would never compromise or violate personal integrity and convictions. But every leader sometimes has to do things that they wouldn't necessarily prefer to do or even be in agreement with. But there's an accountability to implementing the policies of our board and carrying them out and I'm going to do that to enable us to fulfill our mission task. Yeah, we've shared my personal perspective openly, and as one trustee said, Trennis, said, 'Well, you've just told us you have a private prayer language so it's not private anymore.' Well, I think it is because no one's ever heard me pray in anything other than English so I think it is still very private and it will remain so, but it's nothing to deny. You may have been asking more than that."⁹⁴

"Alright, having gotten that out, that pretty much opened the door anywhere you want to go.

Bob Terry (The Alabama Baptist)—Jerry, yesterday, I was told that the discussion of, uh, behind the new policy that the board has adopted concerning private prayer language was really advocated by board members who favored using a private prayer language and they were hoping to get it approved so there could be a broader use of a private prayer language. Do you have any feeling as the president

Baptist Press, By: Staff, 2006, pages 1-3.

⁹⁴ Ibid, pages 3-5.

of the organization that that scenario is founded in reality?

RANKIN—Uh, that could be, Bob, uh, it has been, I mean, well, it's been divisive. It's been controversial. I was very surprised at many of the trustees who voted for it. I was surprised by some who voted against it. You know, so it's not unlikely that that was kind of maybe the motivation of some who encouraged it to go through the process in anticipating we can put this to bed and it not be an additional restrictive policy on the missionaries we've processed. If that was, you know, a motive of any who had a part in it, they were very much in a minority and not outspoken so that that was noticeable. But maybe in retrospect saying well I'd really hoped this would really be the outcome, but it wasn't and so. But it's been, in fact I think a lot of the questions and suspicions have risen because I can't remember in my tenure when the board pushed forward to actually adopt something that was as divisive and controversial and questionable in terms of the compelling, you know, why do we need to do this? I mean, always in the past it seemed to back off you know if it wasn't just a consensus and obvious something to advantage that needed to be done, a compelling reason, they back off, but it didn't happen this time, so it's kind of generated other, a climate that we hope we can resolve and get over."⁹⁵

"Jim Smith (Florida Baptist Witness)—To follow up on Bob's question. Actually, what I've understood and perhaps you can correct the record here and tell me my misunderstanding was wrong—but my understanding was that you pressed the question; that a committee had acted on this, and had created guidelines, that it was you who believed that it was necessary for the full board to act on this. And, so, therefore it was you who really put it before the full board.

RANKIN—Well, I did insist it come before the full board because I think you have to be very circumspect in your processes. And, you know it was just a matter of bylaws and process. No committee of the board has the empowerment to act on behalf of the board. In fact, there is no board action apart from full board in plenary session, you know of the full board. And yet the personnel committee had adopted this as a guideline. And yet it was drafted in a way there wasn't really any wiggle room. I mean it was pretty explicit—anyone who had a private prayer language, practiced it, was disqualified from serving. But more than half of our board didn't have a voice in saying that's where we want to go and what we want to do.

So, I said, if we're going to be expected to carry this out, our personnel staff and implement this, then the full board needs to act on it, so that's why, yeah, it was at my insistence that the full board act on it rather than it just being a committee that puts this in place.

Greg Warner (Associated Baptist Press)—A couple of your trustees and some other observers have speculated part of motivation was directed at you. That the policy was intended to scare you or force you out or in some way directed to embarrass you. Are you aware of any of that being true and if so or if not, what do you think about that?"⁹⁶

"RANKIN—I would just refer to the comment earlier, that I think one of the reasons that that allegation or at least suspicion was there is that it was so difficult to

⁹⁵ Ibid, pages 5-6.

⁹⁶ Ibid, pages 6-7.

identify any compelling reason why we needed to do this. Certainly biblically it goes beyond the doctrinal parameters of the Baptist Faith and Message. It was restrictive in appointing missionaries; so whether or not that was a motivation, you know, I think it did create suspicion, you know, with that regard because of an awareness of my personal practice. But no one on the board has admitted to that. And uh, folks you always got to be guarded about judging anyone's motives. I mean, you can see they do something, that's clear. But why they do it, you just can't go there. And so, it's certainly not in my interest to go there. [some laughter] And, uh, in fact they're now being confronted with that and saying, no, this isn't an effort to get at Jerry. I kind of consider it as having assured my tenure for as long as I want to serve. [more laughter] I mean who's going to stick their neck out and say it really was now you know and we want to use this against you. So, I think, I don't think it's a dead issue. I think there's a lot of reaction momentum, uh, to the publicity and the reaction that's been generated across the convention to revisit it and look at it. Is it really advisable? Do we need it? I don't know, you know, they may choose to live with it, but I kinda sense that we're going to continue to be dealing with this.

Jim White (Religious Herald, Va.): Just to clarify what Jim had asked—If I understand your response correctly, the personnel committee of board had said this is what we will—these are the parameters we will use and your feeling was that needs to be acted on by the full board before those parameters are set in concrete?

RANKIN—Right.

White—So, you're taking it to board then was not because you wanted to get this out in the open for the board to act, so much as you wanted to see if the full board supported this narrow interpretation?

RANKIN—Well you know, you'd just seen two years of work in a committee that had kind of generated this, and I, along with others just wasn't confident that that represented the conviction and consensus of the full board and we shouldn't have to implement what is in essence a policy, even if they call it a guideline, you know, and then deprive most of the board members from being able to even speak to this. So, whichever way it went, you know, it just needed to be affirmed, voted up or down by the full board.

White—So, if board members were to say, 'well, the only reason we acted on this was because Dr Rankin insisted on it,' that would be a little misleading wouldn't it?

RANKIN—Well, yes, in fact, if that was actually said, you know, well, the only reason we're doing this is our president wanted this adopted as a policy, not a guideline—I said, 'excuse me [laughter]—it was not that I wanted it as a policy, but I just wanted the full board to vote on it.'

White— Well, I was one of those editors and I'm sure there were others, who was told that very thing?

David Williams (Minnesota-Wisconsin)—Are there others? This became public because it was pressed to a board vote, so what are the guidelines?"⁹⁷

"RANKIN—Well, until further action is taken the guideline is that any candidate who acknowledges practicing a private prayer language disqualifies

⁹⁷ Ibid, pages 7-8.

himself from being, moving forward in the appointment process.

Williams—I mean in other areas, are there other guidelines that we would not be aware of that maybe people need to know before they pursue an appointment with the IMB.

RANKIN—Oh yeah, well the qualifications and criteria—I mean you can go to our webpage [or go inside] and find that, and our contact, our initial contacts in personnel and can get further expansion, clarification. Yeah, they're extensive—the criteria and qualifications—always have been. In fact, I've gotten some interesting letters. You know this is outside, so you've got all kind of public, you know. But those who said, you know, 'Dr. Rankin, you really need to step down. I mean, since you wouldn't even qualify in being a missionary for the board.' I said, 'Listen, I was disqualified by my body mass index a long time ago.' Our health department said, 'we've got a problem because none of our administrators could qualify for appointment because of their weight ratio or whatever.' [laughter]

Smith—Correct me if I'm wrong here. It sounds as if you hold out some hope or perhaps desire that this policy will be reversed. If it is not reversed, does that create a crisis of conscience for you so you that you would not be able to serve?

RANKIN—Uh, no it doesn't, Jim, and I'm not confident it will be reversed. I mean, as much as there's been reaction against it, there's been a lot of support for it as well. And I think even controversy strengthens the resolve of our board, you know, to kind of justify or defend what they've done.

If it is reversed—you know, I may be surprised. I mean, they may come to our March board meeting with their guns loaded and just shoot that out of the water. I'd be surprised if they did. I think if it is, I think we're going to be looking at a year or two down the road to allow this to subside, and you know, with the rotation of trustee, you know, you get a different makeup every year and they may deal with it differently, but maybe not.

I will be very candid that, yeah, it was a personal struggle. You know, but they very, I think, graciously and deliberately said this is grandfathered. It doesn't have anything to do with people on the field. We're not going to start a witch hunt. How many of our missionaries have a private prayer language? It doesn't apply to our president or to staff, but we just feel like we need to be guarded and our future missionaries, you know, draw the line as we bring them in. Guard what some feel is a tendency toward charismatic influences and tolerance that's unacceptable, that here's a way we can draw the line. And for them to at least be gracious and respectful to say, 'this doesn't apply to you,' I have to accept it doesn't apply to me. And it may grieve me that we have to implement something that I feel comfortable with and feel is [of] the Lord, as a restrictive policy, but if that's what our board and the accountability as Southern Baptists feel like we ought to do, my role is to lead the organization, stay focused on the vision and, you know, keep us moving forward in that context."⁹⁸

"Smith—May I follow up on that? At what point does action of the board in your mind become final enough that you are no longer publicly arguing against it, as you are here?

⁹⁸ Ibid, pages 8-9.

RANKIN—Well, I hope you don't hear me arguing against it. I'm just being very candid that my personal practice and convictions, you know, are not necessarily congruent. But I understand and accept the rationale and the arguments and the authority of those who implemented it. And it's, to me, it's no violation of my integrity and my responsibility to be accountable to them to implement it. I've never made any public statements or press conferences with missionaries at these annual meetings, you know, to say otherwise, other than 'we will support the policy. This is what it means and this is what we'll support.' I've tried to be very guarded about speaking against it. I'm just being candid as far as my personal practice and some of the background in process here.

Warner—When you put this with the other policy that was adopted about baptisms, proper mode and place of baptism, there are some people that are interpreting those two as indicating a narrowing within the mindset of IMB and the larger convention. Is that valid, and are you concerned about the larger narrowing of the scope of the convention?

RANKIN—I think that is indicative of that and I will say that that does concern me. My position is that as a denominational entity we're charged with serving our denomination. In fact, every ministry assignment begins with assisting the churches in sending forth missionaries to plant churches overseas. Uh, I don't think we can fulfill that assignment and say we're going to only assist certain churches or an element of our convention. You know, we're not the ones to determine, you know, the criteria by which a denominational entity serves them. If they're cooperating members of the Southern Baptist Convention, we have an opportunity to serve them.

And my main concern, avoiding speaking to the policy of the baptism and issue itself is again, that it does go beyond what Southern Baptists have defined in our confession of faith which should be our doctrinal guidelines and we operate within that. And it does alienate and offend a large segment of our churches. So that's where I'm concerned about the inconsistency is, uh, you know some would say we've even imposed a sacerdotal role over churches who we all recognize baptism is an ordinance of the church. It's the local church's prerogative to authenticate what is a valid baptism and for us to pass judgment on that and alienate and offend churches, I think there is a "disconnect" there that's unfortunate. And whether it signals a direction of the convention, a trend, I'm fearful that may be so, but I'm continuing to advocate very strongly as a denominational entity accountable to the convention, we're accountable to the whole convention and to serve and assist our churches. If the convention wants to deal with it, if associations want to deal with it, you know, alienate them, you know, draw the line, that's where it ought to be done, not at the International Mission Board."⁹⁹

"John Loudat (Baptist New Mexican; President, Association of State Baptist Papers)—Let me say, we're going to go 'til about 10 after, if that's OK, because we do have some other stuff, so.

Terry—Jerry, you've made the—I'm going in a different direction. You've made the observation that many in the Bible started well, but not many of them finished well. As you view your ministry, what will be necessary for you to finish well

⁹⁹ Ibid, pages 10-12.

as the president of the IMB?

RANKIN—Umm, well, that's interesting, Bob, I'm not thinking in terms of finishing [laughter]. Get that down. You can quote me on that.

Terry—You referenced five years a while ago.

RANKIN—Yeah, very valid question. You know we've had visionary goals—a few years ago we were projecting 8,000, 10,000, you know, missionaries. Certainly, we have the potential of that in our candidate pool. We could open up the short-term flow and send a thousand a year of just ISC, journeymen, masters. I mean the interest and commitment is just phenomenal and I think we just have to accept the reality it's unlikely that the financial support is going to multiply at a rate to enable us to do that. I think just with growth comes challenges that these kinds of distractions and so forth. And you know, for three years now we've kinda plateaued. We haven't kept the momentum of growth.

I'm pleased with the level that giving has maintained. As you're aware, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering last year, we were really concerned it would be maintained and phenomenal increase of the year before and we're encouraged, even with all the hurricane and tsunami relief, at this point—and we'll be able to get [a] report after the first of March the Lottie Moon offering—is running way ahead of last year.

So, I'm just encouraging. Southern Baptists are going, 'this is who we are' and is going to keep the priority. What that's going to be reflected in growth? You know, we're having to say OK, do we need to look at strategies of how to use 5,000 missionaries rather than projecting we can complete the task if we have 8,000 missionaries when we won't have 8,000 missionaries.

I don't link my effectiveness finishing well with statistical numbers. You know, I've always, we never projected those kinds of goals and objectives. I've told our staff we want to be obedient to whatever God chooses to do through us in any given year and we'll rejoice and celebrate. But to set arbitrary goals and numbers, I think you know the criteria of—well, two things I want to say in that. I learned very early, whatever I'm able to accomplish in my tenure of leadership is because of some innovative new directions and approaches that Keith Parks led our board to take—CSI, non-residential missionaries, seeing the whole world. That was set and in place. If we had had to start over and generate that we wouldn't be near where we were. He was able to do what he did because of 25 years of Baker James Cauthen and a global vision."¹⁰⁰

"And I realize when I finish, yes, you can look at my tenure, statistically or whatever, here's what was accomplished there, but that's not what it's all about. My success in finishing well will be determined—what we're positioned to do by my successor and his leadership. And that's why, very conscientiously, I think it's a real mark of leadership and something I'm very conscious of, I don't want to feed and generate controversy that would disrupt the credibility of our board and the momentum even with, you know, things that we may not be in agreement with or are happy with, to the detriment of our board just to win some arguments or points. You want to position the board to keep the momentum moving forward. There will come a time, whether because of all of this or later, you know, it's time for me to step down.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, pages 13-14.

What have I positioned us to continue doing at that time? If somebody has to put together the pieces and reconstruct, you know, a disintegrating organization, [then] I've failed, no matter what we've done.

So, I think to maintain the leadership, to stay focused on the vision, to keep the passion and ethos of our missionaries and our staff, and in mobilizing Southern Baptists to come alongside us in partnership—whatever else is going on—just keep that on track for whatever God wants to do with it.

Now if there's one measure of pride I'd like to see as representing my tenure is to be able to say there are no more people groups in the world that don't have access to the Gospel. Man, what an awesome level of missions advance to be able to say, 'we were faithful to push to the edge and we can no longer identify a people group that doesn't have access to the Gospel.' So, I don't know if that answers your question or not.

Alright, maybe one more?

Cameron Crabtree (Northwest Baptist Witness)—Jerry, you spent some time at the last board meeting I think it was, I don't know if defending is the right word, but you addressed the issue of the board's commitment to theological education. What I lacked in reading through that, however, was where did that necessity of that defense come from? I don't have the background so could you elaborate on what led you to spend that kind of time talking about that in your report?

RANKIN—Well, where it's coming from—you must be new—but editors who have been around realize there is always an issue. Where it's coming from, I mean I have my suspicions, but I'm not going there. Where it's coming from and why, but you know when we launched New Directions at the end of the '90s we were abandoning the harvest fields. Well, we were doing nothing of the kind. You know, still, a majority of our missionaries are going where churches are established, the harvest and so forth, just because we were giving a priority to pushing the edge of lostness.

Then we came, you know, our missionaries weren't aligned with the new Baptist Faith and Message and, were, you know, we were doing a cover-up and all of that and you know what we had to go through to affirm, 'yes we are aligned with the Baptist Faith and Message.'

And then that's followed with, well with all of this church growth we're not planting Baptist churches, you know, the issue of the role of women, missionary assignments, and recently I think that kind of gave rise to this policy as the perception and just stirring out there that we have a lot of missionaries practicing glossolalia and endorsing charismatic practices. You know, my response is we've got a policy against this. We have terminated people who have advocated, you know, spiritual gifts, and you know, and created problems. I mean, we'll deal with it."¹⁰¹

"Tell us where we're not starting a Baptist church. Tell us where a woman missionary is fulfilling an inappropriate role; identify missionaries in glossolalia. And no one's ever come up with anything like that. But the issue—whatever it is about, the grapevine, rumor-mongering, our convention, it just gets out there.

And the current issue is we're abandoning theological education which is, uh, you know kind of preposterous because more than ever the contemporary

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pages 15-16.

missionary role is not what the missionary does, but what he trains and equips others to do. Last year we reported, I mean, 150,000 people engaged in theological education that we were related to, over 250 Bible schools and seminaries that we're supporting and have teachers in and relating to. And so, where's it coming from? Well I think the perception's coming from the fact that a lot of our historic seminaries and institutions on mission fields have been nationalized. They have national staff, national administrators, they are self-supporting. They've always belonged to the churches. You know, they weren't ours to abandon. We were just partnering with local churches and conventions.

And so many who go overseas see us no longer present and involved in self-supporting, nationalized, indigenous seminaries and feel like that we've just abandoned that. And we have changed a lot of our methodology. You know, the effectiveness is not the western model, classic, institutionalized theological education. But by no means have we abandoned it. So that's the latest issue that we're responding to—so we just try to stay out in front of those issues and clarifying them.

Thank you very much for [the] opportunity to share with you. As always, I hope you do recognize and appreciate, I trust you guys. I try to be candid and open. I just have to trust you to be respectful of my position and the issues and tensions we deal with so that whatever information. You know, we hadn't said this is background rules, but I hope you will respect, you know, how critical it is—our mission task, the credibility of the IMB, and I just trust you not to do anything to bring harm or just, you know, especially to me and my leadership and we can maintain this kind of relationship. And you can call me any time and be assured of absolute candor. I mean there will be sensitive issues that you just have to be guarded in your comments and what you say, but I appreciate the opportunity to share with you this morning."¹⁰²

James A. Smith Sr., executive editor, Florida Baptist Witness, and Art Toalston, editor, Baptist Press, contributed to this report.

Well for certain, the meeting of Dr. Jerry Rankin back there in 2006 with the Baptist Editors was truly a lengthy discussion. It was a discussion of many things and happenings at that time, but it just seems to me that just like in the previous encounter we discussed, the discussion was because these editors had heard that there were many people asking questions about Jerry Rankin's belief in speaking in tongues, and also, about the sending forth of missionaries who may not have qualified by their baptisms and their neo-charismatic behavior. But having read this long discussion, I have just come to believe even stronger that Jerry Rankin was a good man, but one that had been chosen as the President of the IMB for the wrong reason. I just believe he was recognized as a good friend of some of the leaders, and they compromised their stand on Biblical doctrine in order to give him a job that lasted for seventeen years.

¹⁰² Ibid, pages 16-18.

Jerry Rankin Almost Destroyed World Missions By His Blatant Switch In Strategy For World Mission Outreach

There are many other things that I could say about why I believe Dr. Jerry Rankin's choice as the President of the S.B.C. was a bad one, but I will just deal with what I believe is the worst decision this man has ever made. I believe multitudes of people in the world will die lost without Jesus because of this bad decision.

Way back in 1974, Dr. Billy Graham conducted his very first World Evangelism Conference in Lausanne, Switzerland. During this meeting over 3,000 people from all over the world attended. At this particular time, Dr. Jerry Rankin was on the field as an IMB appointed missionary. From all that I have been able to discern, Dr. Rankin attended this Lausanne meeting, and like so many others, he came away from the meeting stirred up to completely change the strategy of missions. This change came about because one of the primary speakers at the convention was Dr. Ralph Winter, a professor from Fuller Theological Seminary in California who was considered an expert on world missions. However, as he spoke several times at the conference, he challenged all of the participants to go home with a new missions strategy. That new strategy was to move the missionaries from the fields where thousands were getting saved annually and start putting them with unreached people groups in the 10/40 Window of the world. Of course, much of this window is in the Middle East and other countries where the masses of Muslims live. He used the word, "ethne," from the Greek which means nation, and he sold the participants on going home and redirecting their mission activities away from the places where the fish were biting, and move them to the unreached people groups where two people per year might get saved, instead of the thousands that may have been getting saved where the fields were ripe unto harvest. So, the participants at the conference bought Winter's false argument, and they went home to begin changing the strategy of world missions. One of these participants was Jerry Rankin.

After this meeting many things changed in world missions, most which was the huge drop in the number of souls that were getting saved annually. So, Jerry Rankin went home to his mission field determined to change the course of world history by changing the strategy of world missions.

Later on in 1993, when Rankin was appointed to be the new President of the International Mission Board, he decided the time was ready to try and upright the supposedly sinking ship of missions in the S.B.C.. When he got to Richmond, Rankin indeed did start trying to convince and train all of the almost 5,000 IMB missionaries to learn the new strategy which he had heard about in Switzerland. He sincerely began to push the IMB missionaries to move from some of their very fruitful fields of service, and go to some unreached people group. Oh, this idea really sounded great, but it was truly against what the Bible teaches. When Jesus sent His disciples out to start doing missions as we are told in Matthew 10, He sent them first to the Jewish people in and near Jerusalem. He told them to go to the fields and preach the Gospel in places where they and their message would be received. Then, He told them that if their message was rejected and they were not treated with hospitality, they were to shake the dust from their shoes and go to where the message would be received and they would be welcomed. Nowhere did Jesus tell these disciples that they should go

anywhere covertly and try to slip up on the blind side of the unsuspected people. This thought brings me to another one.

Many years ago when Dr. Johnny Hunt of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Georgia, was the President of the Southern Baptist Convention, I asked him to share an article I wrote entitled, "Is Covert Mission Activity Biblical?" with Dr. Jerry Rankin. Of course, the thesis of my article was that it is never right to deceive or lie to anyone in order to try and get the doors open to preach the Gospel. Well, Dr. Rankin read my article, and he called me a neo-colonialist because he indeed believed in covert mission activity. But folks, don't you think it is so hypocritical to say that you are a Calvinist and believe in the Sovereignty of God to order our lives, and yet, you don't believe that God can open the doors where He has planned for His Gospel to be preached and taught. However, this covert mission activity going to countries of unreached people groups where the doors are not open is truly foreign to the Biblical principles for sharing the Gospel. And yet my dear friends, this is what Jerry Rankin did for seventeen years at the IMB. You don't have to agree with me, but I would say this man truly was given a job by his buddies, but he surely didn't carry out the proclamation of the Gospel according to the Scriptures. Now, since he left back in 2010, the IMB is trying to function with less money, and far less people are coming to Christ on the foreign fields.

I would share one more thought in order to represent those missionaries that were taken from the fields where God sent them and moved to an unreached people group, just because Ralph Winter and Jerry Rankin decided this was a better way to do missions. My wife and I had dear friends who were working on the field in the Islands of the Philippines where they were winning scores of people to Christ, even from the Catholic Church. However, Dr. Rankin and his colleagues moved this wonderful couple to an unreached people group undercover in China where they had to learn a new language and acclimate to a new culture. Well, it didn't take very long until they were discouraged, so they came back to America. Dr. Rankin should have left the missionaries on the fields where God sent them so that they could have a fruitful ministry in places where God sent them, instead of trying to carry on a ministry in the place where Dr. Rankin and his colleagues decided to send them. I would say that our wonderful Lord is much better at placing missionaries where they need to be, rather than the President or Trustees of a mission organization. I sincerely believe that even if Jerry Rankin was somewhat successful, his good old boy choice was not the best one!

Dr. Tom Elliff, "Good Ole Boy" Number 3

Following Dr. Rankin's timely retirement, Dr. Tom Elliff, a former IMB missionary for a short while in Zimbabwe, and most recently, a very respected conservative pastor from Del City, Oklahoma, came to be president in 2011. After serving as the president for a three-year period, Dr. Elliff felt it was God's call to ask the IMB Trustees to form a Search Committee and look for his replacement. Let me ask you to read the following article from Baptist News Global about Dr. Elliff's decision to leave his role as the President of the IMB.

IMB's President Tom Elliff To Step Down

NEWS ROBERT DILDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2014

By Robert Dilday:

"Tom Elliff announced Feb. 26 he will step down as president of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board after a newly-appointed search committee finds his successor.

Elliff, a former missionary who was elected president three years ago, made the announcement during a regular meeting of IMB trustees in Austin, Texas.

In an open letter distributed by IMB staff, Elliff, 70, attributed his decision to 'the Lord's clear leading.'

'Based on what we believe to be the Lord's clear leading, today I am asking our chairman to appoint a search team to seek my successor,' he wrote in the open letter. "I pledge my eager and devoted service as your president until my successor is chosen and in office. But I am urging the search team to act with utmost expediency — not with careless haste or abandon, but with all prayerful and tireless deliberation. We must work and pray together, just as we have these past years, to make this transition as seamless and effective as possible.'

In a conference call with reporters this afternoon, Elliff characterized his leaving as neither resigning nor retiring. Asked if God was directing him to ensure a smooth leadership transition or simply to leave, he replied, 'Both.' 'To comply with God is my obligation,' Elliff said.

Elliff and his wife, Jeannie, served as missionaries to Zimbabwe in the early 1980s. He was president of the Southern Baptist Convention 1996-1997 and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., from 1985 to 2005."¹⁰³

Please notice the following article written about Tom Elliff's tenure and retirement from the IMB Presidency written by Tess Rivers at Baptist Press back in September, 2014. This is a very positive observation or analysis.

Elliff's IMB Tenure One Of Energy And Prayer

By: Tess Rivers, posted Monday, September 08, 2014 (3 years ago)

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) – "There are three qualities that many would say characterize former IMB president Tom Elliff: boundless energy, a passion for prayer and a heart broken over lostness.

When IMB trustees unanimously elected Elliff to lead the missions agency in March 2011, the then 67-year-old former missionary, pastor, two-time Southern Baptist Convention president and IMB vice president made it clear that he had big plans.

'I'm coming with a vision,' Elliff said at the time, 'and I will serve as long as God gives me grace and energy.'

¹⁰³ Baptist News Global, "IMB President, Tom Elliff, To Step Down, Feb. 26, 2014, page 1.

Heart For Ministry

Born in Texas, Elliff is a fourth-generation Oklahoman and third-generation pastor. He served with his wife Jeannie as an IMB missionary to Zimbabwe in the early 1980s. They resigned in 1983 after their daughter Beth was seriously injured in a car accident there.

He was twice elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, in 1996 and 1997. He shepherded several key churches in the denomination, including First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., where he was pastor from 1985-2005.

Elliff then served as IMB senior vice president for spiritual nurture and church relations from 2005-09. In that role, he taught and counseled missionaries and helped mobilize churches throughout the convention for missions involvement. From 2009-11, he led Living in The Word Publications, a writing and speaking ministry he founded in 2005. He is the author of numerous books about prayer, spiritual awakening and family life.

In his years as International Mission Board president, Elliff never seemed to slow down. He introduced a number of initiatives at the missions agency, including Embrace, in which churches commit to make disciples among previously unengaged, unreached people groups; Ready Reserve, which allows former field personnel to volunteer for overseas missions; Marketplace Advance, where business leaders and other professionals leverage their skills for the sake of the Great Commission; Global Connect, in which IMB partners with churches who are fully funding and sending out their church members as a part of their ongoing work among a people group, and the School of Prayer for All Nations, which equips churches in prayer for the nations."¹⁰⁴

Chasers Of Darkness

"'We are chasers of darkness,' Elliff often said, 'looking for the black holes of sin in our world and thrusting into that darkness the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ.'

Elliff's urgency and passion for the lost grew from an experience he had as a young pastor and swim coach. After a particularly grueling practice with his swimmers, Elliff jumped into the pool to relax. Floating on his back, he heard a voice: "I hear you're a preacher.' Elliff opened his eyes and saw one of his swimmers standing on the edge of the pool. The boy had questions about God, Elliff recalled, and asked if they could talk.

'I didn't take the time to talk with him then,' Elliff said. 'Instead, I told him that we would set up a time.'

That meeting never happened, and later Elliff learned the boy took his own life. That experience instilled in the young Elliff a deep sense of urgency to make Christ known at every opportunity. It also drove him to his knees in prayer.

Passionate In Prayer

In remarks at a farewell luncheon for the Elliffs on Aug. 27, IMB executive vice president Clyde Meador noted Elliff's passion for prayer.

¹⁰⁴ Baptist Press, September 30, 2014, By: Tess Rivers, Pages 1-2.

Shortly after arriving at IMB as president, Elliff asked that a portion of his office suite be converted into a prayer room. Outfitted with a kneeling bench and a map of the nations on the wall, he spent time on his knees every day interceding for a lost world and those working to share the Gospel of Jesus with them.

'You prayed for 10 IMB staff members every day and devoted so much of our meeting times to prayer,' Meador told Elliff during the luncheon. 'Thank you for praying.'

David Uth, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla., and former IMB trustee board chair who led the search for Elliff's successor, also noted Elliff's passion.

'I'll never forget the day we sat together ... and I watched as you wept for the nations,' Uth said. 'Your passion for the lost is greater than any I've ever seen in anyone.'

Humble Cheerleader

At his final S.B.C. annual meeting as IMB president, in Baltimore, Md., in June, Elliff thanked Southern Baptists for the opportunity to serve but acknowledged that God was leading him to step aside.

'We believe people support what they help create,' Elliff said. 'And it seems we have an entire generation of Southern Baptists who've yet to have an opportunity to help us create who we are. There comes a time when leaders need to be cheerleaders.'

During the Aug. 27 IMB trustee meeting, amid cheers and applause, Elliff, 70, handed the reins of Southern Baptists' international missions organization to Platt who, at 36, is the youngest president in the history of the 169-year-old institution.

Fighting back tears, Elliff called Platt's election one of the most exciting moments of his life, adding that he and his wife Jeannie have been praying for Platt and his wife Heather since before Elliff became IMB's president in 2011.

The next day, Elliff sent a parting email to IMB personnel.

'I've never been a fan of long goodbyes,' Elliff wrote, as he welcomed Platt to his role. "There is a world of darkness awaiting the arrival of folks like us who chase darkness away with THE Light ... Let's all join him in his fervent determination to take the Light to the ends of the earth."¹⁰⁵

Tess Rivers is an IMB writer. Erich Bridges contributed to this article

Having known of Dr. Tom Elliff for many years, I knew that he was a wonderful man with a heart for Jesus and for souls. I learned of his great ministry through Dr. Bailey Smith, the former pastor before Dr. Elliff at the First Baptist Church of Del City, OK. And truthfully, I was somewhat shocked when Dr. Elliff left that great church to become the IMB President back in 2011. I know of nothing questionable about Dr. Elliff's tenure of service at the IMB, except for two things. First, I am very concerned about the very fact that Tom Elliff graduated from Southern Baptist Seminary in 2007

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, page 3.

when Al Mohler was the President. Honestly, I don't trust Al Mohler because I am seeing the horrible damage that he has done by pushing Calvinism in so many places within the Southern Baptist Convention.

I suppose I am implying that Dr. Elliff might be guilty by association, but this has been what I have seen in so many situations since Dr. Mohler became the President of Southern Baptist Seminary. His Calvinistic influence has affected South Eastern Seminary, Southwestern Seminary, NAMB, and many other positional leadership roles since he went to Southern. So, if Dr. Elliff is not a Calvinist, praise the Lord. But, I am truly very leery of anyone who has been associated with SBTS in Louisville, Kentucky.

Also, I am still trying hard to understand how the IMB could get so much in debt under Dr. Elliff's leadership for those three years as obviously it was when David Platt took over. Maybe the responsibility for this indebtedness and operation in the red was left over from Dr. Jerry Rankin's tenure, but without a doubt, it was a serious situation when David Platt came to assume his role as President.

Dr. David Platt, "Good Ole Boy" Number 4

Following Dr. Rankin's 17 year stay in charge of the IMB, things were in quite a disorderly condition when he stepped down in 2010. He had spent seventeen years of his life trying to convince people that he had a better way than all of those predecessors who would have differed with him tremendously over his newfangled strategy and methodology he had tried to implement in the IMB. I have already addressed many of the problems that were evident during those many years of Dr. Rankin's service, but it is for sure that whoever would follow him as President of the IMB was going to have his hands full. Just as a reminder, there was the problem of the new mission strategy that came from Ralph Winter. Then, there was the disagreements over the doctrine of speaking in tongues which Dr. Rankin said he practiced as a "private prayer language". Also, there was much debate about what kind of baptism an IMB missionary had to have if he or she was sent to the field as a missionary representing the Southern Baptist Convention. Obviously, Dr. Rankin was inclined to allow other modes of baptism besides immersion, while most of the IMB Trustees totally disagreed.

So, by the time David Platt was appointed as the new IMB President, he had to try to clean up the mess from all of these previous problems, and in addition to that, the IMB was in the hole financially due to lower giving through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas offering.

I believe if we take a look at the following article, we will be able to get a good understanding of Dr. David Platt who took over the IMB for just a few years after the resignation of Dr. Rankin. Let's look at the article and pay attention to Dr. Platt's belief about praying the sinner's prayer, what it really takes to be saved, and several other very important beliefs. Personally as I have already said, I believe David Platt is truly a strong Calvinist, and his message at the S.B.C. in 2012 is truly an indication of this false doctrine.

David Platt's Message At The 2012 Pastor's Conference Of The S.B.C.

Posted on June 27, 2012

"Dr. David Platt's name was on the program to address the 2012 Pastor's Conference. I have Dr. Platt's book, *Radical* and found it to be very inspiring and especially challenging as he talks about the importance of being radical for Jesus in our part of the world that is dying and headed for a devil's hell. I do need to transform the way I live so that the world will see the Good News that Jesus came to bring to us all! I have also listened to the video clip of his message at the Verge Conference where he talked about the misuse and irresponsible use of 'the sinner's prayer.'

I understand that it is very easy to be overly critical of things people say because of comments they may have made in the past and because of comments made by other people or groups they may be closely associated with. It is easy to read too much into some statements. I am very much aware of that tendency.

However, when I listened to Dr. Platt blast 'inviting Jesus into your heart' I was certainly taken back. To assert that this practice is unbiblical was in fact, incorrect. To suggest that it is a superstitious practice is insulting and that it is in fact damning was simply inexcusable. While much of Dr. Platt's message may have had merit, it is interesting that this 3-minute clip was what was chosen to encourage people to order the digital version of his message in its entirety. Needless to say, I did not do so. Had Dr. Platt's comments been made apart from the theological implications surrounding this new emphasis on 'The Gospel' and getting the gospel right, and this revival of Calvinism in the S.B.C. and its effort to correct decades of incorrect theological foundations being taught in the church today, Dr. Platt's words might have gone unnoticed. However, when you factor in the controversy over Calvinism that is growing by the minute in the S.B.C. and the reluctance of some to the theological differences posited in the varying soteriological positions now being promoted, his statement was especially significant and I believe deliberately stated.

With that in mind, I reluctantly decided to go and sit down to listen to David Platt's message to the 2012 Pastor's Conference. His second paragraph referenced his comments in the popular 3-minute internet video clip and his effort to be more deliberate. I thought, ok; let's see what he has to say and as he goes to a very familiar text, John 3, prefaced by the last 3 verses of John 2."¹⁰⁶

"After reading the text, Dr. Platt said, *Let us beware of the danger of spiritual deception. Verse 23 - 'Many trusted in his name.' Verse 24 - 'Jesus, however, would not entrust himself to them.' Many trusted. Many people in John 2 believed in Jesus, but Jesus did not believe them. Many people in John 2 accepted Jesus, but Jesus did not accept them. Clearly, from the beginning of the gospel of John—this gospel that revolves around the necessity and centrality of belief in Christ—John makes clear to us that there is a kind of belief, a kind of faith, that does not save.*

It was at this point that I decided to get up and leave the conference center. This is all I heard of Dr. Platt's message to the pastors that afternoon. 'Many people in John 2 accepted Jesus, but Jesus did not accept them.' This reverberated in my mind

¹⁰⁶ A Private blog, By: Harry, a Southern Baptist, pages 1-2.

and given the reluctance to even bother sitting down in the first place, I admit, I simply decided to exit instead of sitting through the remainder of his message. I have since coming home, read Dr. Platt's message in its entirety and my comments will come from the manuscript provided of that message.

Platt indicates that John employed the 3 verses of chapter 2 to intentionally set the stage for Nicodemus' encounter with Jesus. It is true that Nicodemus' statement is similar to the statement in chapter 2 in that there is a common reference to the signs that Jesus had done; but understand something; everyone, those who were on the street as well as those in the Sanhedrin were talking about Jesus. So, while there are similarities in the two statements, the former does not necessarily set the stage for the latter as Platt attempts to assert in the opening part of his message."¹⁰⁷

Let's Look At The Second Chapter In John.

"Jesus has not fed the 5000. There is no Biblical record that He has healed anyone. The record of His first miracle is recorded for us by John beginning in verse 1. John is the only writer to record this event. Jesus is at a wedding with His mother. She comes to Him and says, ***'They have no wine.'*** ***Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.'*** (John 2:3-4) This is an interesting statement and one that has perplexed me for years. What was Jesus saying to Mary? Perhaps He knew that the moment He performed a miracle publically, His ministry would be set into motion and His date with destiny at Calvary would be set. I believe that is exactly what Jesus was saying to His mother. Note **verse 11: *'This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.'***

Apparently the wedding feast at Cana was just before the Passover celebration in Jerusalem and Jesus went. His popularity had begun to spread. There was excitement in the air. People knew about Jesus even though they may have never actually seen Him or heard Him speak. Rumors began to spread that He could be the long awaited Messiah. He went into the Temple and ran the money-changers out. ***'So the Jews answered and said to Him, What sign do you show to us, since You do these things?'*** (John 2:18) Everyone heard what had happened!

Jesus' coming into Jerusalem was a lot like Dr. Platt's statement on the sinner's prayer; everyone was talking about it. ***'Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.'*** (John 2:23) John does not tell us what signs Jesus did that caused people to 'believe in His Name.' I do not believe it is an accident that John deliberately used the phrase, 'believed in His Name.' The Bible tells us Jesus taught the people and I believe they no doubt 'believed in His Name' and I unlike Dr. Platt believe they were saved. Listen to John's next statement: ***'But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.'*** (John 2:24-25)

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, pages 2-3.

John Does Not Say Jesus Rejected Their Faith.

We can debate the interpretation of John's statement here concerning Jesus' response to those who believed in His Name but one thing is crystal clear to me; John does not say Jesus rejected their faith. John says, Jesus did not commit Himself to them. I believe John is simply noting Jesus' reluctance to let this outbreak become an influential event at the Passover celebration which could lead to a public promotion of Him as the Messiah! John simply says Jesus knew their thoughts; He knew once again, His hour had still not yet come. I see this reluctance on Jesus' part as being similar to His telling people on a number of occasions, to go and tell no one about the miracles He had just performed.

So what about Nicodemus' coming to Jesus and the dialogue that ensued in chapter 3? Nicodemus did acknowledge the signs that Jesus had performed, although I believe the signs he was referring to may have been very different from those the people on the street saw. I believe Nicodemus probably was explicitly referring to Jesus' cleansing of the Temple, although that is not specifically mentioned in the text. Nicodemus complimented Jesus: ***'Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him. Jesus responds immediately to Nicodemus' compliment and says to him, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. He repeats Himself in verse, Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again.'***

I believe Dr. Platt takes a very liberal stab at this early dialogue as he says, *So Jesus looks back at Nicodemus and says, 'Your belief, your trust is insufficient for salvation. 'You must be born again' (John 3:7). This is shocking. Here is a devout, passionate, respected, law-following, God-fearing man. He has devoted his entire life to entering the kingdom of heaven. He prays to God. He studies God's Word—he teaches it and he lives it. And he does all of this in an effort to honor God. Yet Jesus says he has no spiritual life in him whatsoever. This man of faith who believed in Jesus was dead in sin, and at that moment he was destined for condemnation. That is frightening. It is frightening in John 2-3 to see people who would have thought that they believed in Jesus and said that they believed in Jesus, people who would have thought that they were entering the kingdom of heaven, but they had no spiritual life in them, and they would not enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Now, there is a serious hermeneutical problem with the following statement that Platt makes; "This man of faith who believed in Jesus was dead in sin and at that moment he was destined for condemnation." **Nicodemus was not saved. He was not a believer in Jesus.** Platt is correct in saying that he is dead in his trespasses and sin but he is in serious error when he suggests that Jesus is rejecting Nicodemus as a believer in His Name. Platt completely steps out of bounds in this statement to try to justify the theme and thrust of his message.

Now, Platt changes direction and asks, *'Is this possible? Is it possible for people to say they believe in Jesus, to say they have accepted Jesus, to say that they have received Jesus, but they are not saved and will not enter the kingdom of heaven? Is that possible? Absolutely, it's possible. It's not just possible; it is probable.'* Here Platt gets on track and he is absolutely correct. He accurately quotes Matthew 7:12-22. However, he

immediately gets off-track in his next statement. *'Jesus is not talking, in **Matthew 7** or in **John 3**, about irreligious pagans, atheists, or agnostics. He's talking about deeply, devoutly religious people who are deluded into thinking that they are saved when they are not. He's talking about men and women who will be shocked one day to find that though they thought they were on the narrow road that leads to heaven, they were actually on the broad road that leads to hell – people who believed, but were not born again. Beware the danger of spiritual deception.'*

John 3 is not speaking of people who are deluded into thinking they are saved when they are not. **Matthew 7** does, but not **John 3**. Dr. Platt has simply erred in his effort to flesh out the text.

Dr. Platt changes direction in his message to speak of the beliefs and lifestyles of those who consider themselves to be 'born-again Christians.' His message here is on track and dead on. I will point out that he is speaking of people in general and not those in the S.B.C. specifically. That distinction being made, the condition of those confessing to be 'born again in the S.B.C.' will not fare much better. The distinction however, must still be noted. Here is what is especially interesting. Dr. Platt moves from the wayward 'born-again' condition to the use of a 'sinner's prayer' that he was so critical of just a short time ago. Dr. Platt has meticulously set the stage to justify his position on the misuse of 'inviting Jesus into ones heart.' Dr. Platt offers the testimonies of two of his church members who as youngsters prayed a sinner's prayer only to come to the realization later in life that they in fact had not really been saved and following a more accurate presentation of the gospel they were truly saved and now were on fire for the Lord and doing great things for Him."¹⁰⁸

Listen To Platt's Preconceived Conclusion To All This.

"I don't think Tom and Jordan's stories are unique. They represent a pandemic problem across contemporary Christianity, and some of you have the same story. You made a decision, prayed a prayer, signed a card, got baptized. You were told that you were a Christian, and you know now that you were not. You were deceived.' Well, I am sorry but the fact that these individuals were still in the race may well indicate that they were actually saved in the beginning; they have simply persevered as the 5th tenet of Calvinism contends. Who is Dr. Platt to determine who was or was not saved at an early age, simply because someone later in life came to question their original decision to trust Christ; especially when the preaching they are sitting under questions the validity of those earlier decisions in the first place.

Platt goes on to state, 'The question that **John 2-3** begs us all to ask is, 'What kind of faith are we talking about?' What kind of faith are we calling people to? Are we calling people to biblical faith?'

No one would disagree with this statement however, it would be prudent to remember conversion is the beginning point; not the final destination. No one becomes a Christian understanding the full ramifications of a relationship with Christ that is to grow and mature. So this criticism of what is and what is not 'Biblical faith' has a lot of implications. There is no question that there is an attitude of 'easy

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, pages 3-5.

believism' that creates casual or cultural Christians or what Paul calls carnal Christians. Platt concludes that these are not 'true Christians.' He says these folks are 'Christians who do not know Christ, who have never counted the cost of following Christ; we must be biblically clear about saving faith, lest any of us lead people down a very dangerous and potentially damning road of spiritual deception.' Platt demonstrates his determination to continue his original position that the sinner's prayer is dangerous and damning.

Platt then goes back to his original thesis of trying to tie **John 2** to **John 3**. He says, 'What is the difference, then, between spurious faith that marked the crowds in **John 2**, and saving faith according to Christ in **John 3**?' What is the difference between false, superficial faith, and true, saving faith?' As I have already pointed out, I am not sold on the correlation that Platt has attempted to build between the references to 'believing' in these two chapters and I am confident Platt's insinuation of Jesus' rejection of the two types of believing is completely baseless.' Platt is correct that we need in our preaching and sharing of the gospel to point out man's problem with sin and his inability to do anything about it. This is absolutely essential in the presentation of the gospel message.

I might also point out, **the sinner's prayer itself is always a response to a message and is virtually never the message itself** and that is a point that is skimmed over in most of these discussions related to its use or misuse.

In giving credit where credit is due, Dr. Platt nails it as he says, 'This is man's problem, and we must make it clear. Our problem is not that we've messed up a few times. Our problem is not that that we've made some bad decisions. Our problem is that we are dead in sin.'

So what can save us from this state – raise your hand, say these words, sign this card, walk this aisle? We all know that none of these things can save us. What we don't need is superficial religion; we need supernatural regeneration. We are dead in sin, and we need to be born again.

*So how can a man be born again? Scripture resounds with a clear answer to that question. Two primary words: repent and believe." Repent and believe. '**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved' – Acts 16:31. The Gentiles in Cornelius' home 'believed' in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 11:17).** And that's the word that's used all over John 3 and this entire Gospel. Seven times from **verses 11-21: 'believe, believe, believe, believe, believe, believe, believe.**' Repent and believe.'*

We tell men and women, boys and girls everywhere: repent and believe in Christ. Whether we say, 'Pray this prayer after me,' is not the issue. The issue is that together we say, 'By the grace of God in the cross of Christ, turn from yourself and trust in Jesus. Come from darkness to light. Come from death to life.' We urge people, 'Believe in Christ. Follow Christ.' We tell them, in a day of rampant easy-believism, 'Following Jesus will cost you everything you have, but He is worth it!' Repent and believe in Him. Receive new life, eternal life. Look to Him and live.

Amen and Amen!

This section is as solid a message as anyone could preach. It is indeed the gospel message. Repent and believe. 'We tell men and women and boys and girls

everywhere to repent and believe in Christ! Turn from yourself and trust in Jesus. Believe in Christ; follow Christ. Receive new life, eternal life. Look to Him and live.' If this is the appeal at the end of a gospel filled message, then whether or not one calls it a sinner's prayer or invitational evangelism, I am all for it and I will continue to employ it until the Holy Spirit tells me different! I will continue to till the ground, plant the seed, water and weed the ground and leave the results up to the Father! To God be the glory, AMEN."¹⁰⁹

May I just interject a statement here? Folks, if every leader in the Southern Baptist Convention is a Calvinist like David Platt and all of the other Calvinists who are connected to Dr. Al Mohler and the Southern Baptist Seminary, then there is no wonder that the S.B.C. has a Calvinist Conspiracy going on to overthrow the convention. If this happens, world evangelism and missions will be lost forever, and someday there will be no S.B.C. It will have died from corrupt doctrine within which has taken away the need for evangelism and missions because "God just predestinates who He wants to save, and our human efforts are unnecessary."

Dr. Bob Reccord, "Good Ole Boy" Number 5

As we begin the discussion of the "Good Ole" Boy 5, Dr. Bob Reccord, I just want to mention that I have never met this man. But during the time that he became the President of the North American Mission Board, I was finishing up eight years of wonderful ministry at a church here in North Carolina that my wife and I planted. The marvelous church grew from the original group of 42 people to over 2,000 in membership in just eight years. This church was the Tri-City Baptist Church in Conover, North Carolina. During those years at Tri-City, I had heard about Dr. Reccord, as he was then pastor of the First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Virginia. Everything I had heard about him was very good, and it seemed that he was a fine servant of God. But then in 1997, I heard that he had been appointed to the new Presidency of the brand new North American Mission Board in Atlanta, Georgia. He came to NAMB and stayed there until 2006 seemingly serving very well, but then, the Christian Index newspaper in Georgia came forth with some tremendous allegations against Dr. Reccord, indicating that some unidentified trustees had called for his resignation. I have enclosed an article about these accusations from *Baptist News Global*. Please read the following article and see if you can agree that just maybe he should never have been put in this position as one of the "good ole boys".

NAMB President Bob Reccord Resigns Over Allegations Of Poor Management

News ABPNEWS- APRIL 16, 2006

ATLANTA (ABP) — "After a trustee investigation produced a scathing report of numerous examples of poor management, Bob Reccord resigned as president of the North American Mission Board, effective immediately.

'I regret that events of recent weeks have created an environment which makes it difficult to lead the organization and to stay on mission,' Reccord, 54, said in

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, pages 5-7.

a statement April 17.

Allegations first surfaced in a February expose by the Christian Index newspaper. NAMB's trustees, after their own investigation, put Reccord under strict 'executive-level controls' March 23, which many observers thought would prompt his resignation.

In an Associated Baptist Press article April 13, several unidentified trustees called for Reccord to resign or face a possible ouster at their May 2 meeting. Also April 13, Reccord met with several prominent Southern Baptist pastors seeking advice. Three days later, he resigned.

The trustees' investigation faulted the missions leader for poor management, autocratic decision-making, extravagant spending on failed ministry projects, apparent conflicts of interest in no-bid contracts for a friend, and creating a 'culture of fear' that prevented staffers from questioning the abuses. They also said Reccord spent time and money on events and projects on the periphery of NAMB's mission and was absent so much he couldn't provide consistent, day-to-day oversight 'to properly manage the agency', which directs and coordinates Southern Baptist mission work in the United States and Canada."¹¹⁰

"Yet some trustees were most upset by Reccord's blurring of the line between NAMB and personal interests, such as his extensive non-NAMB speaking schedule and a trip to London for Reccord and his wife to attend the premiere of the *Chronicles of Narnia* movie, which cost NAMB \$3,800.

As the dust settled from the investigation, calls for Reccord to resign grew louder.

'There is an outcome that we all believe is necessary,' one trustee, who spoke only on the condition of anonymity, told ABP April 13. 'Everybody gets it except Bob Reccord.'

'I hope he does resign,' said another trustee the same day. 'I'm ready to fire him. If I had [an investigation] report that my leadership wrote like that, I'd be looking for a place to go.'

Reccord did finally get the message. He reportedly resigned to trustee chairman Barry Holcomb over the weekend, then informed NAMB employees April 17 in a hastily called staff meeting. Holcomb, a pastor from Alabama, was on hand to read a statement praising Reccord's accomplishments and integrity.

Holcomb said the trustees' investigation and audit found 'no evidence that Dr. Reccord had done anything unethical in his role as president,' adding Reccord's 'integrity is strong and solid today.'

'Contrary to some opinions, Dr. Reccord is in no way being asked to resign, let alone forced to resign,' Holcomb said. 'First, he is taking this step for what he feels is best for Christ's kingdom. While others might have placed their own personal well-being ahead of what was best for NAMB, Dr. Reccord is doing just the opposite. I believe that this is one of the strongest evidences of his personal character and integrity. He has a strong love for our missionaries, for those who work within NAMB and for our trustees. And so taking the high road of leadership on behalf of our

¹¹⁰ NAMB President Bob Reccord Resigns Over Allegations of Poor Management, Baptist News Global, April 16, 2006, pages 1-2.

missionaries, our agency, and our convention, he is resigning today as president."¹¹¹

"Carlos Ferrer, recently named interim chief operating officer, will also assume acting executive officer duties, Holcomb said. No interim president has been named.

Trustees are expected to continue with policy reforms to ensure they are not caught off guard again, regardless of who is president, several told ABP. A task force will make sure specific rules will now govern the president's travel, speaking engagements, and office time. A system of competitive bidding for outside contracts will be established. And new initiatives will require 'appropriate oversight and approval by the board.'

Most trustees and employees who talked to ABP predicted Reccord, a former megachurch pastor who is used to free rein as an administrator, would choose not to live under those constraints. There's 'no question' such close scrutiny runs counter to Reccord's personality, one trustee leader said.

Reccord alienated many state-level denominational leaders with his go-it-alone decision-making style, according to the NAMB investigation. Trustees told ABP Reccord gave too much attention to his own public profile, seeking media exposure and speaking engagements that would bring him—and the agency—into the spotlight.

'Bob wanted someone to get him on CNN,' explained one trustee leader. Reccord hired two outside public-relations firms—contracts totaling \$12,000 a month; more than \$75,000 to date—to get him 'secular media placements' like other S.B.C. leaders Al Mohler and Richard Land.

Reccord and his administrators developed a pattern of launching expensive, often innovative, ministry projects without specific approval from trustees, who found out only after million-dollar losses resulted. Questionable contracts, like the ones with Reccord's friend and neighbor Steve Sanford of InovaOne that brought charges of conflict of interest, weren't disclosed until reported by the *Christian Index* newspaper.

However, Reccord's innovations also brought some successes, his supporters say, pointing to high-profile urban-evangelism strategies as an example.

'He could have gotten approved, through the trustee board, anything he wanted in the way of ministry projects, but he tried to do it without approval,' one trustee leader concluded.

While some trustees—particularly pastors following the same leadership model—could accept those lapses, others could not, the trustee said. In the end, the 'megapastor' leadership style proved a poor fit for a denominational agency dependent on donations and collaboration from churches and conventions all across the spectrum, he concluded.

'He's always flying at 40,000 feet,' said one trustee who supported Reccord in the past. 'The majority of trustees love Bob and would not disagree with his style. But his unwillingness to involve trustees more [was the biggest failure]. There was not a lot there that couldn't have been defended. The largest offense was we didn't know so much was going on.'

¹¹¹ Ibid, pages 2-3.

Chairman Holcomb, in his statement to employees April 17, defended Reccord's leadership style: 'Dr. Reccord has aptly noted that in convention life, entrepreneurial leadership and denominational requirements may be at odds with one another. This is no one's fault—it is simply a reality. There is no question God has some special things in store for the next chapter of this 'out-of-the-box thinker.' Reccord told employees he is undecided about his future plans but has been contacted about several possibilities."¹¹²

"In his statement, Reccord reflected on his tenure at NAMB: 'I am thankful for the countless number of people we have seen come to Christ and the thousands of churches we have seen planted and nurtured. On the other hand, I regret we were not able to complete a number of things we started or dreamed about.'

Reccord was the first president of NAMB, which was formed in 1997 as part of a restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention and included remnants from three S.B.C. agencies — the Home Mission Board, Radio and Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission. Reccord led the implementation task force that oversaw the S.B.C. restructuring.

Prior to coming to NAMB, he was senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Norfolk, Va., and Bell Shoals Baptist Church in Brandon, Fla."¹¹³

I think this would be a good time to mention that many times in our Baptist Churches we have senior pastors with strong personalities who get to the point, after their churches have tremendous growth, that they just don't think they need the input of others in their congregation in order to make decisions and carry on the work. But, there is always the temptation to become a dictator and just totally disregard the opinions and suggestions of others. I know this can be true because I had one of those experiences where God dropped a huge church in my lap, and I almost thought I had arrived. But then, I didn't know what to do with my "monster" until I spent a lot of time seeking input from wise laymen and consultants. For a senior pastor to assume the leadership of a huge ministry like NAMB, it would be very tempting to begin trying to be number one without considering the ideas of others. Of course I don't know this is what happened with Dr. Bob Reccord, but it does sound to me, from the accusations that were made against him, like his ego may have gotten in the way (as it is so easy to do), and that he began running roughshod over the people who worked with and under him. This especially was evident when he started giving his "good old boy buddies", contracts to do work at NAMB without the approval of others. So, it would just seem to indicate that here once more, a fine man was picked to head up this brand new combined NAMB ministry, and he got in over his head. And, there is probably a good reason for this.

So very often during the days when the moderates controlled all the leadership positions in the convention, these dedicated conservative preachers and leaders were out winning people to Christ and building dynamic churches. Then, when the Conservative Resurgence took place, there weren't very many well-trained and competent leaders to come and replace those who had been dismissed from their jobs or roles by committee leadership and trustees.

¹¹² Ibid, pages 3-5.

¹¹³ Ibid, page 5.

When I think about this, it reminds me so much of what happened in Zimbabwe in South Africa years ago. Let me try to explain. For years and years, Robert Mugabe had been the President of this country. It had hundreds and hundreds of huge flourishing farms under the control of white farmers. Because of Mugabe's racial prejudice, jealousy, and hatred for them, he decided to steal the farms from the white farmers and run most of them out of the country. Then, when the white farmers were gone, he put black African men in control of all of the farms. But you see, there was just one major problem, the new, black farmers didn't know how to farm or run the farms. Thus, he just almost destroyed the country because he destroyed the farms, crops were no longer produced, and the inflation rate went out of sight.

This is what happened within the S.B.C. when former great pastors, who were leading thriving churches and winning multitudes to Christ before the resurgence, were taken from those churches and put into convention roles. A lot of these "good ole boys" just didn't know how to do the jobs where they were placed, and beyond this, many of them didn't even know how to connect with the people in the convention positions. So they came in full-speed ahead and just caused havoc. A lot of this is still going on today, but it is harming the convention, and it has put the S.B.C. in a "spiraling-out-of-control" condition. The "good old boy buddy system" rarely ever works. I can attest to this because there have been a few times in my long ministry that I put someone in a position just at the recommendation of a friend or family member, and the situation never worked out positively.

Dr. Danny Akin, "Good Ole Boy" Number 6

Well, we now continue on with our study of the seemingly "good ole boy" network which came to the Southern Baptist Convention leadership after the Conservative Resurgence moved ahead, following the election of Dr. Adrian Rogers in Houston, Texas in 1979. I will mention again that these same conservative leaders in the newly reformed S.B.C., were the same people that had criticized the moderates and liberals for their "good ole boy" control for many years in the convention. After 1979, several years went by, the different conservative presidents appointed committee members and trustees until finally, they had won the victory. Now the convention, supposedly, was going to be right theologically and ethically because it had people in authority who would select the right people to fill the new positions emptied by the resurgence. The only problem was that they followed the path of the former moderates and began to appoint and select their friends, their buddies, and people that their friends and buddies recommended. Of course, many of those chosen were not competent for the roles they were put in. They didn't have any hands-on experience for the roles they now were to play. Another one of those chosen by friends and buddies was Dr. Danny Akin.

As I stated about Dr. Bob Reccord earlier, I don't know Danny Akin personally, but I have heard him speak a few times since he came on the scene in the S.B.C. I know that he has had a good testimony about his work, and he seems to be respected by a lot of people, especially those who agree with his theology. But having read his article on "Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility, How Should Southern Baptists Respond to the Issue of Calvinism", written back in 2006, I would like to observe that

Dr. Danny Akin is a Calvinist, but because he wants to keep his job, he is a compromising Calvinist. Beyond this, it is obvious that his idea of being balanced about Calvinism and Arminianism is just simply a way to cover up how he really stands and also to give him a way out of being directly indicted to be a Calvinist.

Now, when we stop and consider that Danny Akin spent several years at Southern Baptist Seminary with the king of Calvinism, Dr. Al Mohler, is it any wonder that he came to Southeastern Baptist Seminary as a nice middle-of-the-road Baptist professor without proclaiming how strongly Calvinist he really is? In other words, he is just like those he warns about coming in under the radar to local churches as Calvinists and not really telling the Pastor Search Committees that they are indeed Calvinists but instead, tell them that they are of the Reformed movement. Danny Akin is trying to take the balanced approach so that more young ministerial students and full-time workers will come to Southeastern. In other words, he is saying, "Stand by your guns on what you believe, but just don't be so emphatic or dogmatic."

And as you will see shortly in his article, he said that John Calvin was the great theologian of the Reformation who heralded the theology of both Paul and Augustine. But, what Dr. Akin doesn't tell us is that John Calvin worshipped Augustine who was a Catholic Monk in Hippo, North Africa and never left Catholicism. In fact, there is no genuine record of where John Calvin ever truly got saved, but like a Catholic, he was sprinkled as a child believing that is what baptized him into the body of Christ. Beyond this, as I stated earlier in this book, Calvin so strictly enforced his Calvinistic doctrines in Geneva, Switzerland that he had hundreds of people killed if they disagreed with his doctrine. And this is the man that one of our distinguished seminary leaders calls upon us to find a balance with.

Before I give you Dr. Akin's discussion of the Calvinism in our churches, let me share with you something that happened just a couple years back. One of my dear young preacher friends is a student at Southeastern Seminary, doing his work on line. One day while he was in a discussion with another SEBTS student who goes to the classes on the campus, they had a strong discussion about Calvinism. The classroom student told this young friend of mine that one of the professors at SETBS told his class that one day Billy Graham would have to apologize to Jesus for the damage he did by conducting these large crusades and then drawing the net with evangelistic invitations. This is totally absurd, but yet, Danny Akin is allowing these kinds of hyper-Calvinists to teach on the campus of Southeastern Baptist Seminary. Thus, I suppose Dr. Graham has now apologized to Jesus since he went home to heaven not very long ago. Folks, I just want to scream, "What kind of foolishness is this?" But, this is what Dr. Akin, Al Mohler, and now others are teaching and allowing to be taught in our S.B.C. seminaries. I am completely ashamed. Many of my wonderful friends who were great Southern Baptist pastors and evangelists would truly be ashamed of how far things have spiraled out of control since the Conservatives took over the convention. What do you think, Dr. Homer Lindsay, Sr., Dr. Homer Lindsay, Jr., Dr. Adrian Rogers, Dr. J. Harold Smith, Dr. E.J. Daniels, and Dr. Percy Ray, who are already in heaven, would think? What would those spiritual giants still living, who have given their lives to winning the lost to Christ, think about this ridiculous situation we are now facing? For instance, what about some of my best friends like Dr. Junior Hill, Dr. Bill Stafford, Dr. Bailey Smith, and many others think about this

mess we are in? This "good ole boy" system has gotten us in a confused mess. Is it any wonder that we can't get Southern Baptist pastors and associations to come together and conduct the giant crusades like we used to? And, is it any wonder that church baptisms are dropping in number regularly, and no one seems to know why? According to recent statistics, over one third of Southern Baptist Churches baptized no one last year! Well, let's move on with the enclosed compromising article by Danny Akin.

Article

Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: How Should Southern Baptists Respond To The Issue of Calvinism?

By: Daniel L. Akin, Ph.D.

"Few issues are more likely to ignite a lively debate than a discussion of the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in this subject in Southern Baptist life, to the delight of some and chagrin of others. The Conservative Resurgence which began in 1979 was about the authority of the Bible. Those who believe the Bible to be the inerrant and infallible Word of God will take its doctrines seriously. Issues like predestination and election, freewill and human responsibility will naturally require our careful study.

Thankfully, our theological discussions are not those of other denominations in our day. Issues like the deity of Christ, the exclusivity of the Gospel, open theism, abortion, and homosexuality are settled for Southern Baptists because of our commitment to the clear teachings of Scripture.

However, some issues in the Bible are more obscure. There is often a mystery and tension to what we find when we examine all that the Bible says on some subjects. This is clearly the case when it comes to understanding God's sovereignty and human responsibility in salvation.

Unfortunately, there is more heat than light in many instances with shrill voices and unhealthy rhetoric—on both sides of the issue—getting too much attention. On one side you hear people saying that God hates the non-elect and damns babies to hell. They say that Jesus was a Calvinist and that Calvinism is the Gospel. On the other side you hear voices stating that Calvinism is heresy and that Calvinists do not believe in missions and evangelism. Some even suggest that the Southern Baptist Convention could split over this issue, though I am convinced this will not happen.

I believe we need to tone down the rhetoric. We need to seek biblical balance, theological sanity, and ministerial integrity in the midst of this discussion. Let me attempt to set the playing field for this important issue and then make some theological and practical suggestions as we work together for the glory of God and the cause of Christ."¹¹⁴

A Look at Calvinism

"The issue that is being debated today almost always revolves around the idea of Calvinism. To some, this is a theological landmine to be avoided at all cost, even if

¹¹⁴ Baptist 21, By: Danny Akin, pages 1-2.

they are not sure what it means. For others it signals a recovery of biblical truth growing out of the Reformation of the 16th century and its emphasis on the great solas: Scripture alone, Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone, for the glory of God alone. John Calvin (1509-64) was the great theologian of the Reformation. An outstanding biblical scholar, he heralded the theology of both Paul and Augustine (354-430). Like Martin Luther (1483-1546), he emphasized the sovereignty of God, the sinfulness of man, and the necessity of grace for salvation.

Later in the 17th century, followers of Calvin would systematize his theology and go beyond what Calvin himself taught. This system would ultimately be codified through the now famous acrostic TULIP.

The history of Southern Baptists includes those on one side of the theological spectrum who have flatly rejected three or more of Calvin's five points and those at the other who have enthusiastically embraced all of them, with many Baptists falling somewhere in between. The reality is that the S.B.C. has included 'Five-Point Calvinists' and 'Modified' Calvinists from the start. It should be stressed here that, from a denominational standpoint, in this discussion there is no 'right or wrong'. Southern Baptists have always been diverse in many regards, and the theological realm is no exception. Neither the Southern Baptist Convention, nor its seminaries, endorse or promote a particular theological system or stance on areas not addressed in the Baptist Faith and Message.

Frankly, I don't foresee that ever changing. So what follows is not an endorsement or promotion of Calvinism, but rather a review and condensed explanation of what some of our Southern Baptist brethren believe on the five points of the Calvinistic system. My hope and prayer is that a fuller understanding will help set the stage for what follows in the final section."¹¹⁵

Total Depravity

"This view holds that man is born with a nature and bent toward sin. Every aspect of man's being is infected with the disease of sin so that he cannot save himself, neither can he move toward God without the initiating and enabling grace of God. Man is not as bad as he could possibly be, but he is radically depraved. Most Baptists would agree on this point, at least in some measure. It is hard to deny it in light of Romans 3:9-20 and Ephesians 2:1-3.

Unconditional Election

According to this view, God, in grace and mercy, has chosen certain persons for salvation. Those who hold this view believe that His decision is not based on human merit or foreseen faith, but in the goodness and providence of God's own will and purposes. Many would add, however, that the electing purpose of God is somehow accomplished without destroying human freewill and responsibility. Accordingly, no one is saved apart from God's plan, and yet anyone who repents and trusts Christ will be saved. The French theologian Moise Amyraut (1596-1664) referred to this as God's secret or hidden decree. There is an admitted tension in this position, but a tension

¹¹⁵ Ibid, pages 3-4.

that need not be viewed as contradictory. Calvinists commonly cite John 6:37-47 at this point.

Of course, this view is hotly debated among some Southern Baptists, with alternative interpretations of scriptural passages being offered and both sides genuinely believe they are operating from a biblical basis. The reality is Southern Baptists will likely debate this point until the Lord returns, but there is certainly no need for division or ill will over it.

Limited Atonement

Most Calvinists view this as an unfortunate phrase, preferring the term 'particular redemption' instead. The original stance of Calvin's followers was that the intent of the atoning work of Christ was to provide and purchase salvation for the elect. Thus the work of Christ would be limited to the elect, and His atonement was made for a particular people (e.g. His sheep, the Church, His Bride).

This is a real point of contention for many, and, in fact, most Modified Calvinists cannot embrace this teaching in its classic form.

However, let me offer a crucial observation that hopefully will foster some unity on this point. All Bible-believers limit the atonement in some way. To not do so is to advocate Universalism, the view that eventually everyone will be saved. Most Baptists would say the Bible teaches that the atonement is limited in its application, but certainly not its provision. In other words, in His death on the cross Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world (John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:4-6; 4:10; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:1-2; 4:9-10) making a universal provision. However, the application is limited to those who receive the free gift of salvation offered to them by their personal faith in Christ. One can see then that all evangelicals limit the atonement in some sense, but do so in different ways.

Irresistible Grace

Most Calvinists would see this as another unfortunate choice of words that stirs up unnecessary debate. Instead, they would prefer the phrase 'effectual calling.'

This doctrine asserts that those who are predestined to be saved are called to salvation (Romans 8:30) effectually or effectively. They are not forced to come but are set free to come and they do so willingly. Timothy George strikes the balance of this teaching with human responsibility when he writes, 'God created human beings with free moral agency, and He does not violate this even in the supernatural work of regeneration. Christ does not rudely bludgeon His way into the human heart. He does not abrogate our creaturely freedom. No, he beckons and woos, He pleads and pursues, He waits and wins.' (Amazing Grace, p. 74).

Perseverance of the Saints

Those God saves, He protects and preserves in their salvation. Baptists have historically referred to this as the doctrine of 'eternal security,' or in popular terminology as 'once saved, always saved.' This is one point of Calvinism that almost all Baptists affirm. Sometimes misunderstood and falsely caricatured by those rejecting this doctrine, perseverance of the saints does not teach people can live any way they want and take advantage of God's grace. Rather, because of the greatness of

the gift of our salvation, true believers will be grieved when they sin and will pursue a life that is pleasing to the God whom they love and Who keeps them safely in His hand (John 10:27-29).

This is a summary of 'five-point Calvinism' or what its advocates call 'the Doctrines of Grace'. Though it is not as popular among Southern Baptists as it was in the past, there has been a rise in interest in its teachings. And one should honestly acknowledge many wonderful and significant Baptists in the past followed these doctrines. This includes men like William Carey, Andrew Fuller, Luther Rice, Adoniram Judson, Charles Spurgeon, John L. Dagg, Basil Manly Jr., and James Boyce. John Broadus and B. H. Carroll would also have considered themselves Calvinists, though both would have affirmed only four of the five points. They did not advocate particular redemption.

How then should Southern Baptists, with such a rich and diverse theological heritage, respond to this controversial issue at the dawn of the 21st century? As people of The Book who rejoice in a remarkable history, how might we move forward together in unity in the days ahead?"¹¹⁶

Finding Biblical Balance: Theological And Practical Considerations

"Grasping the magnitude of this issue is a daunting task for finite, sinful humans. A good dose of humility is certainly in order. As we attempt to both understand the Bible's teaching and work alongside of those with whom we may not see eye to eye, what are some theological and practical principles that can guide us? I would offer seven suggestions.

1. In our doctrine of salvation, we should start with God and not man. The Bible affirms that salvation is from the Lord (**Jonah 2:9**) and by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift — not from works, so that no one can boast (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). We should be God-centered in all of our theology, especially the doctrine of salvation. The Bible teaches that salvation is God's work. He is the author and finisher of our faith (**Hebrews 12:2**). He takes the initiative. He is the true Seeker!

2. We should affirm the truth both of God's sovereignty and human freewill. "The Abstract of Principles" was the founding confession for The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. It was penned by Basil Manly Jr. in 1859. Manly was a Calvinist, and yet Article IV on Providence reveals a healthy, theological balance in our Baptist forefather. Manly wrote: "God from eternity decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not in any wise to be author or approver of sin nor to destroy *the freewill and responsibility of intelligent creatures*" (emphasis mine).

Many Baptists believe the Bible teaches that God predestines and elects persons to salvation, but that He does so in such a way as to do no violence to their freewill and responsibility to repent from sin and believe the Gospel. Is there a tension

¹¹⁶ Ibid, pages 4-9.

here? Yes. Is there divine mystery? Absolutely! Many believe this is what Paul felt when, at the end of his magnificent treatment of this subject in **Romans 9-11**, he concludes with a doxology of praise and says, Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments and untraceable His ways (**Romans 11:33**). If you find it a challenge to fathom the depths of this doctrine then you are in good company!

3. Recognize that extreme positions on either side of the issue are biblically unbalanced, theologically unhealthy, and practically undesirable. Biblically, we affirm the truth of all of God's Word. Words like called, chosen, election, foreknowledge, and predestination are in Holy Scripture. We should embrace them, examine them, and seek to understand them, always remembering that intelligent and godly people will likely embrace differing interpretations. Words like believe, evangelist, go, preach, receive, and repent are also in the Bible. Biblical balance requires that we embrace and affirm these as well.

Theologically, we dare not be seduced into living in a theological ghetto that may espouse a nice, neat doctrinal system, but that does so at the expense of a wholesome and comprehensive theology.

Practically, we must not become manipulative and gimmicky in our presentation of the Gospel as if the conversion of the lost depends ultimately, or even primarily, on us. Neither should we be lulled into an antipathy toward personal evangelism and global missions. Attempting to construct a doctrine of double predestination wherein God elects some to damnation, hates the lost, and consigns non-elect infants to the fires of hell would be viewed by most in the S.B.C. as irresponsible and lacking in biblical support. Any theology that does not result in a 'hot heart' for the souls of lost persons is a theology not worth having. I fear that some extreme forms of Calvinism have so warped the mind and frozen the heart of its advocates that if they saw a person screaming at the top of their lungs 'what must I do to be saved?', they would hesitate or even neglect the Gospel for fear of somehow interfering with the work of the Holy Spirit.

If the initials J.C. bring first to your mind the name John Calvin rather than Jesus Christ and you fancy yourself more of an evangelist for Calvinism than Christ, then this latter word of concern is particularly for you. Never forget that the greatest theologian who ever lived was also the greatest missionary/evangelist whoever lived. His name is Paul.

4. Act with personal integrity in your ministry when it comes to this issue. Put your theological cards on the table in plain view for all to see, and do not go into a church under a cloak of deception or dishonesty. If you do, you will more than likely split a church, wound the Body of Christ, damage the ministry God has given you, and leave a bad taste in the mouth of everyone. Let me give an example. I am pre-tribulational/premillennial in my eschatology. It would be inappropriate for me to interview with a church and continue the discussion if I discovered that it was committed to an amillennial position.

Now, let me address our topic. If a person is strongly committed to five-point Calvinism, then he should be honest and transparent about that when talking to a

church search committee. He should not hide behind statements like 'I am a historic Baptist'. That statement basically says very little if anything and it is less than forthcoming. Be honest and completely so. If it is determined you are not a good fit for that congregation, rejoice in the sovereign providence of God and trust Him to place you in a ministry assignment that is a good fit. God will honor such integrity.

5. Teach the issues to your people, especially your youth. Sometimes pastors get frustrated when they send their students off to college and seminary, and they come back different. Sometimes they go to a liberal institution, and they return questioning or jettisoning the faith. Other times they go to a conservative school and return as double predestinarian, supralapsarian extreme Calvinists. They now question the public invitation and personal evangelism training and redefine into insignificance the Great Commission. It has been my experience that this latter malady is more often caught from immature fellow students than from godly professors.

This observation is not intended to absolve our colleges and seminaries of their responsibility. It is to say, however, that we do our people no favors with a dumbed-down theology in the local church. I believe we should raise the biblical and theological bar in our churches, and we should do so immediately. I believe we should train our people so they mature to the point that we can consider the great theological debates between Augustine and Pelagius, Luther/Calvin and Erasmus, Calvinists and Arminians.

I also believe we should help them mature to the point that we can familiarize them with the five points of Calvinism, the humanism of the Enlightenment, and the destructive criticism of rationalism/antisupernaturalism and the Jesus Seminar.

Some may protest that these issues will be over their heads. I would strongly disagree. If our schools can teach our children chemistry and biology, physics and geology, algebra and geometry, political science and economics, then we can certainly teach them theology and apologetics, Christian ethics and philosophy. We, as the local church, can prepare them in advance for what they will encounter so that various ideologies can be carefully critiqued and extreme positions intelligently rejected for the errors they contain. Again, it requires a gradual and intentional maturing process — you don't teach calculus to a first grader—but to neglect this area is to fail in preparing them to deal with the critical theological and social challenges of our day.

6. Recognize that our Baptist Faith and Message 2000 is a well-constructed canopy under which varying perspectives on this issue can peacefully and helpfully co-exist. Pelagians, Arminians, and Open Theists will not feel at home in our Southern Baptist family. We will love them while also disagreeing with them. Is there a place for differing positions on the issues of election, the extent of the atonement and calling, as well as how we do missions, evangelism, and give the invitation? I am convinced that the answer is yes.

Further, I believe we will be the better for it theologically and practically as we engage each other in respectful and serious conversation. As one who considers himself to be a true compatibilist, affirming the majestic mystery of both divine sovereignty and human responsibility, I have been challenged and strengthened in my own theological understanding by those less reformed than I as well as those more

reformed than I happen to be. Because of our passionate commitments to the glory of God, the Lordship of Christ, biblical authority, salvation by grace through faith, and the Great Commission, we work in wonderful harmony with each other, and I suspect we always will.

7. Finally, as a denomination we must devote as much passion and energy to studying the Word as we have to defending it. Let us be known for being rigorously biblical, searching the Scriptures to determine what God really says on this and other key doctrinal issues. For the most part, we are not doing this, and our theological shallowness is an indictment of our current state and an embarrassment to our history! Furthermore, let none of us seek to be recognized so much for being Calvinists—five-point, modified, or otherwise—but rather for being thoroughgoing Biblicists and devoted followers of Jesus Christ!"¹¹⁷

Conclusion

"The great Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon was a five-point Calvinist. He was also a passionate evangelist and soul winner. On August 1, 1858, he preached a sermon entitled, 'Sovereign Grace and Man's Responsibility.' The words of wisdom that flowed from his mouth on that day could only come from a capable pastor/theologian with a shepherd's heart and a love for the lost. We would do well to heed the counsel of this Baptist hero upon whose shoulders we stand today.

'I see in one place, God presiding over all in providence; and yet I see and I cannot help seeing, that man acts as he pleases, and that God has left his actions to his own will, in a great measure. Now, if I were to declare that man was so free to act, that there was no precedence of God over his actions, I should be driven very near to Atheism; and if, on the other hand, I declare that God so overrules all things, as that man is not free enough to be responsible, I am driven at once into Antinomianism or fatalism. That God predestines, and that man is responsible, are two things that few can see. They are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory; but they are not. It is just the fault of our weak judgment. Two truths cannot be contradictory to each other. If, then, I find taught in one place that everything is fore-ordained, that is true; and if I find in another place that man is responsible for all his actions, that is true; and it is my folly that leads me to imagine that two truths can ever contradict each other. These two truths, I do not believe, can ever be welded into one upon any human anvil, but one they shall be in eternity: they are two lines that are so nearly parallel, that the mind that shall pursue them farthest, will never discover that they converge; but they do converge, and they will meet somewhere in eternity, close to the throne of God, whence all truth doth spring You ask me to reconcile the two. I answer, they do not want any reconciliation; I never tried to reconcile them to myself, because I could never see a discrepancy Both are true; no two truths can be inconsistent with each other; and what you have to do is to believe them both.'

Here is a good place to stand. Here is a theology we can all affirm in service to our Savior.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, pages 9-18.

Dr. Daniel L. Akin is president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

'Beware of becoming enamored with any particular theological system lest it deteriorate into a doctrinal greenhouse that cultivates theological arrogance, which, when in full bloom, produces a fragrance that is sweet in the nostrils of Satan, but is at once a revolting stench in the nostrils of God.'

Glossary of Theological Terms

Editor's note: While most pastors would recognize and understand the theological terms used in these articles, we have a growing number of readers who have not had formal theological training and might be unfamiliar with such terms and phrases as these.

Calvinism – A theological tradition named after sixteenth-century French reformer John Calvin that emphasizes the sovereignty of God in all things, man's inability to do spiritual good before God, and the glory of God as the highest end of all that occurs.

Doctrines of grace – Another term for the theological tradition commonly referred to as Calvinism.

Arminianism – A theological tradition named after seventeenth-century theologian Jacob Arminius that seeks to preserve the free choices of human beings and denies God's providential control over the details of all events.

Supralapsarianism – The belief held by some Calvinists that God decided first that He would save some people then decided to allow sin to enter the world so He could save them from it.

Double predestination – The belief that God predestines some to salvation and others to damnation.

Atonement – The work Christ did in His life and death to earn our salvation.

Providence – The doctrine that God is continually involved with all created things so that He maintains their existence, guides their actions, and directs them to fulfill His purposes.

Pre-tribulational/pre-millennial – The view that God will rapture believers into heaven secretly during Christ's first return prior to the great tribulation.

Amillennial – The view that there will be no literal thousand-year bodily reign of Christ on earth prior to the final judgment and the eternal state.

Pelagians – Those holding the theological beliefs of the fifth-century monk Pelagius, who believed that man has the ability to obey God's commands and take the first steps to salvation without God's assistance.

Open Theists – Those who believe that God does not know with certainty all future events."¹¹⁸

It is truly obvious that Dr. Danny Akin has done a lot of good things for the

¹¹⁸ Ibid, pages 18-19.

Kingdom of God down through the years, but it is quite sickening that at this time, when there is so much confusion and conflict about Calvinism in the S.B.C., that instead of taking a stand for truth, his so-called, "balanced approach", has contributed to the "Young, Restless, and Reformed" movement. And more than this, Southeastern Baptist Seminary has become another hotbed for training young Calvinists. This would never have happened if there had not been a "you help me, and I will help you, "good ole boy" buddy system. The damage is being done, and the outcome doesn't look good unless the churches of the S.B.C. experience genuine spiritual revival, and the leaders of the churches say, "We don't want any more of this Calvinism divide," and get back to winning people to Christ who are waiting for the Gospel message. It really did use to seem that the conservatives believed it mattered about Bible doctrine when the moderates had control of the seminaries, but now, we are being told that it really doesn't matter what you believe unless its Calvinism, just as long as you support those "good ole boys" who are now in control!

Dr. Geoff Hammond, "Good Ole Boy" Number 7

Following the forced resignation at the North American Mission Board of President Bob Reccord, Dr. Geoff Hammond became the second president after being elected by a unanimous vote of the NAMB board in March, 2007. Dr. Hammond was the son and grandson of missionaries. Before coming to NAMB, Dr. Hammond served with Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia for five years.

I must say again that I don't know Dr. Geoff Hammond, but from all indication he has been a faithful servant of God down through many years. He would be special to me because he was born in Nigeria, and he went to school in Zimbabwe, and he was the son of African missionaries, which is dear to my heart because my wife and I have worked in Africa for 33 years. However, from the information I have been able to glean, there is an implication that once again, Dr. Geoff Hammond is a Calvinist just like most of the connected recent leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention, with the exception of such men as Dr. Paige Patterson, and a few others historical Biblicists that are still living. My inference that Dr. Hammond is a Calvinist is because he attended Spurgeon's Seminary in London, England, where almost every student is a Calvinist. So, the Calvinistic connection continues on, but there seems to be something very unstable about the NAMB, because they are constantly in conflict about something, and no leaders stay very long.

I am going to include some brief articles about the forced resignation of Dr. Geoff Hammond so that you can get a picture of this man, and of course the unstable condition at NAMB. The conflict, just continues on because of the "good ole boy" buddy system.

SCBC President Releases Statement On Hammond Resignation

By The Courier, Published on August 12, 2009

Rudy Gray, president of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, released the following statement to The Baptist Courier regarding Geoff Hammond's resignation as president of the North American Mission Board on Aug. 11:

"Most of us do not know the details of Dr. Hammond's resignation. What we do know is that the North American Mission Board has served an important role in evangelism and church planting in the past. An organization of this size (5,600 missionaries in North America, 279 employees, and a budget of about \$130 million) needs a leader with exceptional organizational and leadership abilities. It needs a board of trustees who take that fiduciary responsibility seriously.

The talk leading up to this meeting of NAMB trustees in Atlanta seemed to pose some serious doubts about Dr. Hammond's leadership. David Thompson spent 10 years as a NAMB trustee. He pointed out that there was a lot of nepotism and cronyism at NAMB and that people were being brought in who were not qualified. He also pointed out that morale issues were involved due to Dr. Hammond's intense micromanagement style.

I have spoken to some leaders within our denomination and get a consistent message: Geoff Hammond is a good man but lacks the administrative and leadership skills to operate effectively at the level of president of NAMB. It was pointed out to me that he did not seem to connect with the people who were at NAMB which in turn caused people who work at NAMB to feel marginalized which in turn led to a lowering of morale.

This resignation was not a complete surprise. In April of this year the trustees met with Dr. Hammond in a closed session to discuss his leadership style. The general consensus I get from several leaders within our denomination is that this is a time of dismay and even discouragement but that, by God's grace, the work of NAMB will continue and even grow stronger and better. I have talked with no one who did not respect Dr. Hammond or his heart for evangelism. No one questioned his faith or his integrity but that he simply was not the leader NAMB needs.

When something like this happens, all kinds of feelings are generated and a great deal of talk typically circulates. We do need to pray for Dr. Hammond and his family as well as the three associates who are resigning with him. We need to pray for the trustees at NAMB and the task that is before them in finding a new president. We need to pray for the work of NAMB that in spite of these difficult times, the work of Christ will continue and that what will emerge from this will be a stronger force for evangelism and church planting than we have ever seen before.

God is sovereign. This is the time to seek His guidance and find comfort and direction from His Word. **Romans 8:28** can be a source of real help and encouragement for everyone who cares about these events and the future of NAMB and our denomination.¹¹⁹

I believe we can truly assume that Dr. Geoff Hammond is basically a very fine man who was probably recommended to become the President of NAMB by some of his good friends, but obviously, according to the trustees report about his resignation, he was not qualified or competent to carry on this great ministry. And if it is as I assume, that Dr. Hammond is truly another Calvinist, then he is just one more in the "Calvinist Conspiracy Movement," that is trying desperately to take over the convention. Yet, he only lasted two years, supposedly because of the lack of leadership

¹¹⁹ The South Carolina Baptist Courier, August 14, 2009, By: Rudy Gray, pages 1-2.

skills. To quote David Thompson again, he said that during Dr. Hammond's presidency, there had been "a lot of nepotism and cronyism at NAMB and that people were being brought in who were not qualified. He also pointed out that morale issues were involved due to Dr. Hammond's intense micromanagement style." The nepotism and cronyism are just different words for the "good ole boy" buddy system, which now seems to be in place everywhere in the S.B.C.

Now, before I move on to talk about another NAMB President, Dr. Kevin Ezell, I want to include an article written in August, 2009, along about the time of Dr. Hammond's forced resignation. This article was written by Norman Jameson, Editor of the Biblical Record, the State Baptist Paper in North Carolina. After we see this article, then we will pick up with a discussion of a few more "Good Ole Boys".

Dr. Geoff Hammond's Resignation **August 14, 2009 by Norman Jameson, BR Editor**

"Geoff Hammond's resignation Aug. 11 after just two years as president of the North American Mission Board continues a three-decade pattern of leadership turmoil in the agency charged with establishing a Southern Baptist national missions and evangelism strategy. According to **former staff and observers** with a perspective of 50 years watching the Home Mission Board and its successor, the North American Mission Board, the domestic missions and evangelism ship has not enjoyed a steady hand at the helm through the full tenure of an executive since the leadership of Arthur Rutledge, who retired in 1976 and died nine months later. Bill Tanner followed Rutledge, a man Walker Knight, who retired in 1983 as director of the department of editorial services, called 'pleasant but not decisive.'

Tanner led the organization for 10 years before tiring of the tensions inherent in a shifting political landscape and he returned to his native Oklahoma in 1987 where he led the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma until retirement in July 1996. He died in June 2007. Larry Lewis, a leader in the 'conservative resurgence', was rewarded with the HMB presidency 1987-96 following Tanner. When he did not purge the staff as the new political majority of the Southern Baptist Convention expected of him **they reorganized the S.B.C.** around him. He was left without a job when the Home Mission Board (HMB), Brotherhood Commission and Radio and Television Commission were merged, forming the North American Mission Board.

Norfolk pastor Bob Reccord chaired the task force to implement that merger and was named president of the new entity, a position he held until he was pressured to resign in 2006. He was followed in 2007 by Hammond, who received a unanimous vote of confidence from his trustees in May and was **forced to resign** Aug. 11. So it has been since 1976 that a president of the national mission entity has finished his tenure and departed on his own terms. Such instability at the top could lead Southern Baptists to question NAMB's effectiveness. **Messengers consider HMB future** Southern Baptists historically have been attuned **to measure their own** effectiveness. In 1958 the Committee to Study Total Southern Baptist Convention Program, known as the Branch Committee, after its chair, North Carolina Executive Director Doug Branch, brought a series of recommendations to reorganize and strengthen the work. Six of the recommendations pertained to the HMB and directed

it to work cooperatively with Baptist state conventions. At that time some HMB services were redundant to state conventions and the HMB operated within states without consultation with the local state conventions. Rutledge, then state missions director for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, joined the staff of HMB Executive Director Courts Redford, himself a strong leader, to direct that reorganization. Rutledge created and tirelessly promoted the cooperative ministry agreements that still govern relationships between NAMB and state conventions. He became executive director when Redford retired. Walker Knight, who preceded Rutledge to the board by six months in 1959, spoke to the *Biblical Recorder* from his home in Decatur, Ga. Knight, 85, is most noted for leading Missions USA magazine, the HMB's flagship publication, to address race and other social issues well ahead of the pace Southern Baptist churches and institutions were facing them. Knight said Redford was 'a penny pinching and heavy fisted leader, but his heart was in the right place'. National travel in that era was mostly by train. Redford often would return to Atlanta after midnight and sleep in his office, rather than get a hotel room or spend the time going home and back a few hours later. Knight also recounted with laughter an ante-office Redford kept that he called "Memphis." When his secretary fielded a call that he did not want to take she was to say Redford couldn't come to the phone because he was 'in Memphis'. Rutledge succeeded Redford in 1965. 'Rutledge was soft spoken but had a backbone of steel', Knight said. 'All the staff admired him. He did not have a big ego, and his whole heart was in missions,' Knight said. ¹²⁰

"More study". In June 1968 the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution stemming from a work commissioned to Willis Bennett, a sociology and religion professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. His work revealed an urban crisis that required Southern Baptist response. The highly regarded Rutledge was asked to coordinate Southern Baptist agency response to that 'crisis in the nation'. Thirty-year HMB veteran Don Hammonds, who retired in 1997 as interim vice president for the ministry section just as Bob Reccord was being elected as new president, said there is 'no doubt' that Rutledge was 'hands down the strongest executive' ever at the HMB. Hammonds said one trait that made him a strong leader was that 'he got people who knew something about what they were asked to do and he let them do it. He trusted his staff.'

Hammonds served several years with Rutledge, and was on staff during the full terms of Bill Tanner and Larry Lewis. He and Knight both said Tanner's reputation among staff was that the staff member who spoke to him last about an issue was the one most likely have his way. Tanner, who had come to the HMB from the presidency of Oklahoma Baptist University, was not necessarily pushed out, Hammonds said, but there was a general feeling his effectiveness was limited and his leaving was timely. Others say he was a good executive, in that he encouraged staff and let them do their work while he presented the face of national missions. He came to the HMB with no missions administration background, and he left a position of national prominence for one with less. Larry Lewis, president of a very small Baptist college, succeeded Tanner. He came to the post as the first leader elected to HMB since the recent conservative majority and carried with him the burden of high expectations to purge

¹²⁰ The Biblical Recorder, August 14, 2009, By: Norman Jameson, pages 1-2.

staff. There was still significant moderate representation on his board, and his first several years were tumultuous trying to work with a divided board and a divided Convention, he said in an Aug. 13 interview."¹²¹

"Hammonds appreciated Lewis' leadership because 'he knew something about missions', having been involved in church planting and in student work in Ohio, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Lewis' three priorities were church starting, evangelism and ministry,' Hammond said. 'Ministry' included the Christian social ministries, leisure ministries, chaplaincy and interfaith witness, areas that 'always had more professions of faith than any other area', Hammonds said, 'but which were "lumped with evangelism" and diminished in the reorganization as NAMB.

Lewis wrestled with turmoil and a gnawing suspicion that the merger of three entities being proposed in the Covenant for New Century reorganization was a mistake. He wanted to be a 'team player' he told the *Recorder* and did not want to appear to be afraid of losing his job, so he kept silent about his premonition. Instead, he recognizes now that "my problem was conservative denominational leaders who thought I hadn't been true to the cause, of the 'conservative resurgence'.

Wayne Allen, a Memphis pastor and key leader in the 'conservative resurgence' movement, told a longtime denominational worker and son of an HMB employee, who prefers to remain anonymous because he is still active in denominational work, that conservatives were disappointed in Lewis, and that they were going to have to organize around him. They could not oust Lewis because he had been their compromise candidate, but Allen implied that the impetus for the entire reorganization was to build a structure that would have no place for Lewis. 'I would hate to think that was true,' Lewis said. 'But it may well be.'

Bob Reccord, pastor in Norfolk, Va., and briefly an evangelism staff member at HMB, led the reorganization task force that eventually would pull in the Radio and Television Commission from Fort Worth, and the Brotherhood Commission from Memphis. He eventually allowed himself to be elected president of the new organization, named the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Nine years later, after several years of turmoil among staff, low morale, major initiatives opened to great fanfare then dropped, and questionable spending Reccord's tenure closed with his resignation.

After just two years of Hammond's tenure, he too was forced to resign. Three associates closest to him followed in resignation because there was enough sentiment on the board that they risked being fired if they did not resign, according to a source directly affected. One of the fears for those who love NAMB and believe it has a vital purpose in evangelization of America is that Southern Baptists will become so disenchanted with the constant turmoil there that they will stop supporting it. It is particularly exposed as an agency since the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force has begun meeting to discover efficiencies and effectiveness in S.B.C. spending. NAMB board chair Tim Patterson, a Florida pastor, has already suggested one efficiency might be to merge NAMB and the International Mission Board. His suggestion, the work of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force and the seemingly constant turmoil at the top may lead Southern Baptists to revisit their 1958 consideration of

¹²¹ Ibid, pages 2-3.

the domestic work. The Home Mission Board was first located in Marion, Ala., and relocated to Atlanta, in 1882. The following men served as corresponding secretaries of the Board: Russell Holman (1845-1851; 1857-1862), T. F. Curtis (1852-1853), Joseph Walker (1853-1857), M. T. Sumner (1862-1875), W. H. McIntosh (1875-1882), Isaac Taylor Tichenor (1882-1899), F. H. Kerfoot (1900-1901), F. C. McConnell (1901-1903), B. D. Gray (1903-1928), J. B. Lawrence (1929-1953), S. Courts Redford (1954-1964), Arthur B. Rutledge (1965-1976), William G. Tanner (1977-1987), Larry Lewis (1987-1996), Bob Reccord 1997-2006 and Geoff Hammond 2007-2009."¹²²

Dr. Kevin Ezell, "Good Ole Boy" Number 8

Well, we now move on and come to "good ole boy" number 8. I believe this one is Dr. Kevin Ezell, the present President of the North American Mission Board. As we have already seen, things have not been going very well for NAMB all the way back to the time the first president, Dr. Bob Reccord, was elected. Things just seem to have been in turmoil, and sometimes completely out of control. The "good ole boy" buddy system has not been working well, but it has truly been used time after time after time. And just remember, this was the same scheme of things when the conservatives were accusing the moderates of poor leadership before the 1979 convention when the first conservative, Dr. Adrian Rogers, was elected in Houston. So, let me share some astonishing things with you concerning Dr. Kevin Ezell. But do remember that Dr. Ezell came to NAMB from his previous church, Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, where he served for 14 years. Of course, it is worth noting that Dr. Ezell was the pastor of Dr. Al Mohler and the many other Calvinists at Southern Baptist Seminary. So, isn't it just ironic that once more, a close friend of Al Mohler was appointed to the position at the top of the second biggest S.B.C. ministry. Could you possibly believe that there was and still is a "Calvinist Conspiracy"? I surely can, yes, I still do. Now, let's take a closer look at Dr. Kevin Ezell and his reign at the top of NAMB since 2010.

Before I give you some articles from others, I want to say once more that I don't know Dr. Ezell personally, but I have heard and read much about him and his ministry, both positive and negative. But, because he fits in with the scheme of all of these other "good ole boy" Calvinists, I am going to share this information about him and the so-called progress of the North American Mission Board since 2010. I am doing this because I sincerely fear that the disintegration of the S.B.C. is coming soon. And, I will say adamantly that I don't have a personal vendetta toward anyone that I have written about in this book, but I do have a tremendous burden and fear for what is happening right before our very eyes.

The first article I will share with you concerning Dr. Kevin Ezell was written by Dr. Al Mohler, the President of Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. As I just told you, Dr. Ezell is Dr. Mohler's pastor in Kentucky. Therefore, this first article will be a positive one coming from his church member. Then, the second article following this first one will give a different slant to Dr. Ezell's references.

¹²² Ibid, page 3.

**Al Mohler's Pastor Recommended
As New NAMB President
NEWS ABP NEWS-- SEPTEMBER 2, 2010**

"Kevin Ezell, pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., was announced as a presidential search committee's nominee Aug. 31, in a letter to NAMB trustees from board chairman Tim Dowdy, according to the *Florida Baptist Witness*. Dowdy is pastor of Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough, Ga.

The trustees will meet Sept. 14 to vote on Ezell's recommendation. Ezell, 48, 'has served at Highview since June 1996, when he stepped into a difficult situation to rebuild consensus and lead the church to flourish into what is now one church with seven locations in Kentucky and Indiana,' said Dowdy. The reference is apparently to the 1995 resignations of Highview's longtime pastor and music minister who, according to the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, both quit within weeks of each other and both confessed to adultery.

Dowdy said Ezell 'is a gifted preacher and teacher and a faithful ambassador of the Lord with a passion for reaching the lost and touching the world for Jesus Christ'.

At Highview, Ezell serves as pastor to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Al Mohler, a nationally prominent Calvinist theologian and conservative commentator on social issues.

The church has grown significantly in recent years, expanding to multiple campuses beyond its main location in a transitional part of Louisville that was formerly suburban.

According to S.B.C. records for 2009, Highview had 7,721 total members and 4,740 resident members. Its average Sunday-morning worship attendance was 3,260, and the congregation gave \$140,100, or 2.23 percent, of its undesignated receipts of \$6.3 million through the S.B.C.'s Cooperative Program unified budget.

The congregation—which includes a campus that meets in Louisville's Indiana suburbs—is primarily affiliated with the conservative-dominated State Convention of Baptists in Indiana. It also maintains an affiliation with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Several S.B.C. leaders praised Ezell's character and record in recommending him for the position, according to Dowdy's letter. 'Words are not sufficient to express my enthusiasm concerning Kevin Ezell as the next president of the North American Mission Board,' said Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. 'He was my pastor for almost eight years and his impact on my own family has been quite significant. He is one of the godliest men I know. He is an exemplary husband and father. He is also an outstanding pastor, leader, and visionary. His love for the nations is exemplified in his own family with his three adopted children from China, Ethiopia and the Philippines.'

Ezell and his wife, Lynette, have six children — three biological and three internationally adopted.

A native of Paducah, KY, Ezell is a graduate of Union University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southern Seminary. He has served as pastor of churches in Kentucky, Illinois, Tennessee, and Texas.

If elected, he will succeed Geoff Hammond, who resigned just over a year ago after clashing with board members amid allegations of cronyism and low staff morale at NAMB. Hammond himself replaced Bob Reccord, who resigned in 2006 after allegations of mismanagement."¹²³

Folks, I hope you didn't miss the fact that Dr. Danny Akin, President of Southeastern Baptist Seminary, and a former professor at Southern Baptist Seminary under Dr. Al Mohler, recommend Dr. Ezell highly, because this man had been their family's pastor for eight years while the Akin family lived in Louisville. Talking about the cronyism during the reign of Geoff Hammond, what are we seeing in this crony Calvinism connection?

The second article that I will show you was written by Dr. Will McRaney, the former Executive Director of the Maryland/Deleware Baptist Convention. Dr. McRaney has held several respectful positions in various State Conventions, but after his conflict with Dr. Kevin Ezell and NAMB, he has filed a law suit against NAMB and Dr. Ezell. Therefore, read the following article carefully, and make your own judgment, I can see from this article that there are major problems with the North American Mission Board in Atlanta.

IS THE NEW NAMB Really Working?

Summary: *The Evidence is Before You...*

"At the 2016 Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis, Kevin Ezell, the President of the North American Mission Board spoke to S.B.C. Messengers. He asked the question: 'Is the New NAMB Working?' Dr. Ezell answered the question with anecdotes, stories about good things happening in the lives of individuals and families who were connecting with Christ through the ministries of new churches. His answer to the question he raised was 'YES!'

Yet, while we rejoice that people have come to Christ through new church plants, deeper questions need to be asked. Questions that are answered by analysis, not anecdotes. When 47,000 Southern Baptist churches, by their mission giving, entrust \$120 million per year to NAMB, and when actions by the NAMB leadership can have a deep and broad impact on the life of the S.B.C. and its mission, we need to evaluate the New NAMB by taking a serious look at its *actual performance* compared to the years before 'the New NAMB' was put in place. And we need to seriously evaluate its impact on the cooperative spirit that has been the genius of S.B.C. mission efforts.

In this series of articles I have tried to ask serious questions and take an intelligent look at the actual results of the New NAMB.

Evangelism

S.B.C. baptisms have dropped by 45,000 per year after NAMB virtually eliminated our national Evangelism Team, slashed evangelism budget by two-thirds,

¹²³ Baptist News Global, Al Mohler's Pastor Recommended To NAMB Presidency, pages 1-2.

and stopped the historic practice of jointly funding evangelism staff with state partners. These ministry areas were focused on helping local churches to evangelize. NAMB justified the cuts by saying that by focusing on church planting, greater evangelism would be done because new church starts are 3 to 4 times more effective in evangelism than existing churches. I demonstrated by data and analysis how that idea simply is not factual.

Baptisms have dropped 18.7% per church during the last six years. Investing two times more in 2017 in purchasing homes for planters than we are nationally on evangelism (\$12 million to \$6.3 million).

Church Planting

In spite of successful public relations campaigns and public releases, the church planting results and the baptism results of the church plants are quite troubling and on a steep decline.

The S.B.C. under the New NAMB is **planting 444 LESS churches per year** over the last six years than the previous NAMB—while SPENDING THREE and HALF TIMES more ANNUALLY than what the previous NAMB spent.

Church planting in non-southern states has been taken over by NAMB in ever increasing nationalization and centralization efforts moving the staffing, financial, and strategic decision making responsibilities to NAMB as opposed to state and local leaders who are closer to the mission field. Joint funding and partnership for church planting at the local and state levels has been eliminated for the “NAMB Knows Best” approach.”¹²⁴

Partnership and Cooperation

“In the arena of Partnerships and Cooperation in S.B.C. relationships, there is strong evidence that NAMB has... Used its financial assets to buy favors, threaten people who raise questions, and undermine the ministries and careers of leaders who will not 'bow' to its demands—which eats away the cooperative spirit that has helped the S.B.C. mission efforts flourish. My own case was merely one of those.

Replaced the cooperative spirit characteristic of the previous NAMB with strong-arm moves to dominate State Conventions and Associations. Eaten away the cooperative culture built in the S.B.C. over generations. One State Executive Director said to me, referring to the actions of NAMB leaders: 'Partnership is dead in the S.B.C.'

Financial Stewardship

In the arena of financial stewardship, questionable new realities have emerged. While sending some money on to the mission field the New NAMB has kept back large amounts, swelling its 'unrestricted reserves' from \$204 million in 2010 when the New NAMB was installed, to about \$285 million in 2014. By its operating guidelines, it should only carry \$60.5 (1/2 of annual budget) in reserves. Why has this massive amount of money been accumulated when the current mission need is so high and S.B.C. experiencing such declines?

Around \$62 million has been committed to buy 'houses for church planters' in

¹²⁴ Ideas For Leading the 21st Century Church, By: Will McRaney, willmcraney.com, pages 1-4.

various states, effectually putting NAMB into the real estate business. Some have questioned if this is actually an attempt to hang onto large amounts of money without it being accounted for as part of the NAMB reserve holdings.

The Character of the President

Because we serve a Holy God who is intimately engaged in our lives and ministry efforts, the character of our leaders is of utmost importance. The reverse of a biblical passage is true: if God be against us, it does not matter who is for us or what strategies we employ. It pleases Jesus to have righteous leaders who lead righteously. In the arena of the Character of our NAMB President, he... Communicated with deception and falsely about himself, others and church planting, Violated his word and Strategic Partnership Agreements Abused and Misused Power, Position and S.B.C. Money. Demonstrated Punitive, Vindictive and other related behaviors against fellow servants. Factual evidence has been presented that Dr. Ezell lied in writing multiple times, made false accusations against a sister S.B.C. State Executive Director, and made public and then secret financial threats against a State Convention (staff, planters, and evangelistic ministries and mission efforts). Ezell secretly tied the withholding of \$1 million annually to the BCMD (Baptist Convention Of Maryland) on my removal as the Executive Director which was later revealed in personal and public settings by the BCMD President Bill Warren. Warren was privy to Ezell's threat.

Financial records and BCMD minutes reveal that Ezell virtually immediately paid off the BCMD after my termination. These actions serve as part of the basis of legal complaints of libel and contractual interference filed against Dr. Ezell/NAMB. As Pastor Wolverton exhorted, 'Dr. McRaney is telling the truth....Please don't continue to sweep this under the rug.'¹²⁵

Oversight and Accountability

"Off the record, national leaders verbally acknowledge it. **The S.B.C. Trustee system is broken.** The Trustee men and women who are serving are not broken and are people of goodwill, but the systems and the climates that surround their work is broken.

It is apparent that the NAMB Trustees were too trusting of Dr. Ezell's accounts and 'asleep at the wheel' initially. However, when the Trustee officers wrote a full denial 20 hours after receiving my 'Letter of Concern' they moved into neglect of their duties as Trustees functioning on behalf of all Southern Baptists. When the entire Trustee Board released a public statement in June 2016 that they had completed a 'thorough examination and review' and found nothing of concern without a single conversation with me or cross examination of Dr. Ezell's testimony, they moved into realms of cover-up and public damages to me. As BCMD Pastor Steve Wolverton wrote Dr. Ezell and the Chairman Herring, NAMB Trustees' claims of a complete investigation is a 'charade'.

Regarding the declines in baptisms and church planting, along with damages to local and state partnerships, cooperation, and financial stewardship, and their own

¹²⁵ Ibid, pages 4-6.

oversight and accountability, concerns are glaring. The negative impact will affect both the short-run and the long-term effectiveness and mission capacity as the New NAMB has contributed to the dismantling of the S.B.C. mission supporting ecosystem.

Informed S.B.C. leaders recognize once the local, state, and national arms are separated or eliminated, they will never be put back together again. As times surely get tougher in North America, local and regional will matter more than national on the frontlines.”¹²⁶

Broader Awareness

“Many S.B.C. leaders are aware of the New NAMB’s problems. They see the deteriorating trust and the possibility of serious damage to the S.B.C. cause. When will the leaders who see the damage compounding finally speak up? I know that some do not want to ‘create a mess’ and others simply fear the consequences of raising their voice. They have seen others damaged who have spoken up. But, how many more hundreds of millions of S.B.C. mission money must be used to prop up NAMB prestige amid its failing strategies? How many more millions must be used to destroy the S.B.C. cooperate spirit as the money is used to pay for the threats, “pay offs” and subterfuge that are advancing domination from a national level rather than cooperation across all levels?

Since the publication of this series began, more and more stories have come to me about the damage done to ministry leaders by the actions of the New NAMB and its leader, Dr. Kevin Ezell.

When will S.B.C. leaders who ‘know the score’¹²⁶ finally have the courage to call for a serious outside investigation of the actions of the NAMB President and his subordinates? When will they finally call for an accounting by the New NAMB for its stewardship of money and people?

Proverbs 24:11-12 reminds us that when we see the damage being done to others, pretending not to see will not satisfy God.

Prov. 24:11-12 Deliver those who are being taken away to death, And those who are staggering to slaughter, Oh hold them back. If you say, ‘See, we did not know this,’ Does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul? And will He not render to man according to his work?

May God grant us men of goodwill who will courageously exercise the stewardship that has been entrusted to them by Southern Baptists—and the Lord!”¹²⁷

Russell Moore, “Good Ole Boy” Number 9

I must tell you that one of my favorite preachers in the S.B.C. is Dr. Jack Graham. I have watched this dear man of God as the Lord has used him to build one of the greatest churches in America, the Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas. Dr. Graham has been a faithful preacher of the Word through expository preaching, and he hasn’t diverted from his faithfulness and genuineness as long as I have known

¹²⁶ Ibid, pages 8-9.

¹²⁷ The Capstone Report, February 18, 2017, Prestonwood Fights Against Russell Moore, Growing Liberalism, pages 2-3.

of him. Therefore, I must tell you that if this dear servant of God is displeased with one of our so-called leaders in the S.B.C. who has been hand-picked to serve in a very high position with much recognition and publicity, then I will agree with Dr. Graham and show my continuing disdain for the 'good ole boy' system that has put so many of these people in high positions since the Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention. Please read carefully the following report which came out with the February 18, 2017 edition of *The Capstone Report*, Christian newspaper from Alabama.

Prestonwood Baptist Standing Up To Southern Baptist Elites: Russell Moore Receives Dreaded Vote Of Confidence!

"The time for deference is over. The time for action is now. The Southern Baptist Convention is beset by a ruling class of men like Dr. Russell Moore, Dr. David Platt and Dr. Kevin Ezell who are trying to turn the conservative, pro-life, pro-family S.B.C. into an autocratic, progressive, liberal social justice warrior organization that enables the enemies of Christ and attacks your conservative values. It must stop. Thanks to the brave leadership at churches like Prestonwood Baptist Church and its pastor former S.B.C. president Jack Graham, we have a chance to stop the madness and return the S.B.C. to its conservative roots.

Prestonwood Baptist Church announced that it would hold in escrow about \$1 million of funding paid to the Southern Baptist Convention through the Cooperative Program—the shared funding mechanism that supports everything from mission work to seminaries to paying Russell Moore's salary to insult conservative, Republican Southern Baptist voters. The reason for escrowing the funds is that Prestonwood is alarmed at the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention.

According to Will Hall's report, 'Mike Buster, executive pastor for the Plano, Texas, church, provided a statement to the Baptist Message explaining that the action had been taken because of various significant positions taken by the leadership of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission that do not reflect the beliefs and values of many in the Southern Baptist Convention' and that it is a temporary move 'until a decision can be made on current and future funding.'"¹²⁸

"Clearly, the Southern Baptist Convention's denominational insiders are in crisis mode. Earlier this week before the Prestonwood decision was announced, S.B.C. President Steve Gaines gave beleaguered ERLC president Russell Moore the dreaded confidence. 'I hope the kind of talk we have been hearing is not the direction in which we are going. I hope Russell will remain in his position and that we have reconciliation with a lot of people,' S.B.C. President Steve Gaines said in a report published by Baptist Press."¹²⁹

"Ouch. That sounds an awful lot like an athletic director exasperated with the incompetence of his football coach.

¹²⁸ The Capstone Report, February 18, 2017, Prestonwood Fights Against Russell Moore, Growing Liberalism, page 3.

¹²⁹ Ibid, page 3.

And Russell Moore is about as popular and feckless as Mike Shula at Alabama right before his termination.

However, this is about more than Russell Moore. They are doing strange things in the Southern Baptist Convention. NAMB's president used money as a lever to force the termination of a state DOM, and the IMB chief decided to aid the enemies of Christ by helping spread Islam in the US and used IMB resources to further that aim by using IMB lawyers to join an amicus brief in favor of building a mosque. Platt apologized for being divisive and promised to never do this again; however, it raises serious concerns about the festering problem of liberal progressive values spreading throughout our top leadership. If you doubt Dr. Platt is succumbing to liberal thinking, then check out his sad theology regarding refugees.

There is a growing autocracy, and there is a growing group of voices trying to legitimize the centralization of power and entitlement of these progressives. One [blog](#) decries Prestonwood's action as an attack on cooperative work and the entire Cooperative Program. However, this type of thinking seems to view CP giving by a local church as an entitlement. Yet, our denominational insiders are not entitled to their salaries or our support if they stray so far outside our expectations. And to put Cooperative Program giving into perspective, it didn't mean the end of cooperative work when Dr. Platt's church in Birmingham showed a total lack of commitment to the cooperative program. Why is it such a big deal when a local, autonomous church decides paying a liberal progressive's salary is not helpful to the cause of Christ nor the church in America?

This is a stewardship issue. It is neither right nor wise for a person or church to support a theology or practice that stands against its views. Bluntly, Dr. Moore has a childish view of moral reasoning regarding presidential elections and a progressive view of church-state relations based on moral communitarianism. Neither of these views match the political theology of your typical Southern Baptist—who view these issues more like Mike Huckabee or Todd Starnes rather than Russell Moore.

The only threat to the Cooperative Program are the denominational elites who hide behind the enabling trustees and refuse to reform. Change is coming whether Southern Baptist insiders, experts and elites like it or not.

Well done Prestonwood. There will be many, many more like you unless the elite heed the voices crying out in the wilderness of flyover country."¹³⁰

Now, in the just presented article about Russell Moore, many things were also said about Dr. David Platt once more. Since we have already listed Dr. Platt as one of the "good ole boys," we will not discuss him any further. However, there is more information, much more, about Dr. Russell Moore and the damage he is doing to the S.B.C. by his blatant attacks against other S.B.C. people. He is even implying that if they voted for Donald Trump, then they are hicks and ignorant. Here is the man who is supposed to be representing the Southern Baptist Convention people before the world, and he looks at them with a condescending disdain just indicating that he is better than the most of us. He portrays an elitist attitude that is just like the Pharisees in the Bible. Now, let's take a look at a couple more articles about Dr. Russell Moore. Then you decide if you think he should be representing the Conservative Resurgence

¹³⁰ Ibid, pages 3-5.

S.B.C. people. Please remember that the reason there was a Conservative Resurgence was because of moderates or progressives like Russell Moore. But folks, please notice in the first article which I will now show you that once again right out of the blue, here comes Dr. Al Mohler with a flattering endorsement of Russell Moore.

Russell Moore: Eighth President Of ERLC

"Russell Moore serves as the eighth president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. The ERLC is the moral and public policy entity of the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

The Wall Street Journal has called Moore 'vigorous, cheerful, and fiercely articulate'. He was named in 2017 to Politico Magazine's list of fifty influence-makers in Washington, and has been profiled by such publications as the Washington Post, the New Yorker, and the Weekly Standard.

Moore's book *Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel* was named Christianity Today's Book of the Year in 2015. He has also written *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches* and *Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ*. His book *The Storm-Tossed Family: How the Cross Reshapes the Home* will be published in 2018.

Prior to his election in 2013, Moore served as provost and dean of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, where he also taught theology and ethics. He currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Christian Ethics at Southern Seminary, and as a visiting professor of ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

A native Mississippian, Moore and his wife Maria are the parents of five sons."¹³¹

Well folks, did you read the above short article about Dr. Russell Moore? A lot of good things were said about this influential man, but the most important thing in this short article is that he was the Dean of the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. So once more, this brief article is a revelation of Dr. Moore's connection with the "big man", Dr. Al Mohler, of Southern Baptist Seminary. Everywhere you look in the S.B.C. today, you will almost 99% of the time find a connection with Al Mohler and the Southern Baptist Seminary. I am totally convinced that this seminary, the largest one we have, is the hotbed for hyper-Calvinism, the zenith of persuasive power, and the habitation of the "good ole boy" conspiracy that has been going on in the Southern Baptist Convention since the early nineties after the Conservative Resurgence began. Is it possible that someone will cry out, "Enough is enough!"

Now, let's move on with another article about "good ole boy", Russell Moore, who has continued to make a fool out of himself, while at the same time being applauded by the big men of the convention. This article is about his anger at Donald Trump expressed by Moore after the last election. It is just so obvious that Dr. Moore can't believe that any evangelicals endorsed Trump for his election. Of course, as we all know, President Trump doesn't take harsh criticism very well, and so, Dr. Moore received the fire of President Trump's tweets. Now the article:

¹³¹ Russell Moore.com, pages 1-2.

Russell Moore And The Fight For The Soul Of The Southern Baptist Convention

By: EMMA GREEN MAR 14, 2017

"Russell Moore, the head of the Southern Baptist Convention's political arm, interviews then-presidential candidate Jeb Bush in August 2015 MARK HUMPHREY / AP.

On Monday, *The Washington Post* reported that Russell Moore—the leader of the Southern Baptist Convention's political arm—might lose his job. The denomination's executive committee had asked Moore for a private meeting to discuss an unfolding controversy: More than 100 churches are considering cutting off funding from the Convention, according to the *Post*, and the influential Prestonwood Baptist Church in Texas announced in February that it will temporarily withhold roughly \$1 million from the Convention's cooperative mission programs. The executive committee has recently begun an investigation into why these funds are being withheld.

The proximate cause for the backlash is the election: Moore was hypercritical of Donald Trump, while roughly 81 percent of white evangelicals—which includes a lot of Southern Baptists—ended up voting for the president. Page told the *Post*, 'If the meeting doesn't go well, I'm fully prepared to ask [Moore] for a change in his status.'

While the controversy might seem like routine bureaucratic in-fighting in the country's largest Protestant denomination, it is symbolic of deeper tensions. 'The S.B.C. is in the middle of a huge identity crisis,' said Dave Miller, the senior pastor of Southern Hills Baptist Church in Sioux City, Iowa, who edits the blog *S.B.C. Voices*. 'We don't know who we are.'¹³²

"The Russell Moore backlash saga has by now had a few waves. *The Wall Street Journal* reported criticism of Moore from a number of prominent evangelical leaders in December, suggesting 'a potentially dramatic rebuke' ahead. Monday's *Post* story was the latest update—for the first time in a few months, it really looked like Moore's job might be on the line.

But once the *Post* story broke, the executive committee started walking things back. After Moore met with the committee, they put out a joint statement, saying, 'We deepened our friendship and developed mutual understanding on ways we believe will move us forward as a network of churches. Roger 'Sing' Oldham, the executive committee's spokesman, claimed Page hadn't really suggested he might ask Moore for his resignation: Page 'received a call from a reporter on Sunday afternoon while he was returning from church,' Oldham said, and 'he indicated [his] desire was to build bridges going forward. He said, 'Well, nothing is off the table, but my goal is to build bridges in this private meeting.'

Short of Moore deciding he was going to resign, it was unlikely he would have lost his job on Monday. The governing structure of the Southern Baptist Convention is complex: Only the board of trustees that specifically oversees Moore's organization, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, has the power to ask him to resign; Page couldn't have fired Moore even if he wanted to. Ken Barbaric, who chairs the ERLC's

¹³² The Atlantic, By: Emma Green, March 14, 2017, pages 1-2.

board of trustees, has openly praised Moore and emphasized his support for Moore's work."¹³³

"The fight over Moore is not just about him, though. The Southern Baptist Convention is changing, and Moore represents the denomination's shift in orientation. Moore has frequently spoken out against the old-guard religious right, which was led in the 1990s and 2000s in part by his predecessor at the ERLC, Richard Land. Moore has called on the denomination to divorce itself from Republican politics, especially as younger evangelicals show themselves to be more politically diverse, and has moved his organization in that direction. He is part of a new generation of pastors, who tend to be more Calvinist in orientation, who have taken over leadership roles.

'When I was young, there was a culture that the S.B.C. had,' said Miller. 'You could go into any S.B.C. church, and there just was a way we did things. The preachers dressed alike, and we sang from the same hymnbook, and there was a culture that bound us together. That's been blown completely to pieces.'

The denomination is also looking ahead to a future membership that will be less white and more black and brown: Some of the most vibrant, growing communities in the church include Hispanic evangelicals, for example. During his nearly four years in his position with the ERLC, Moore has focused on racial reconciliation as a key part of his job.

This may be why some in the S.B.C. are pushing back, said Thabiti Anyabwile, a black pastor who leads the Anacostia River Church in Washington, D.C. 'Things are motivated by either a desire to quiet conversations around race in the Convention, or are motivated in some places by a kind of racial animus in opposition to the positions Dr. Moore has taken.' A number of prominent African American pastors have warned that Moore's dismissal would send a bad signal to their churches, which make up a minority of the S.B.C. 'The vast majority of black Southern Baptist Convention church leaders and pastors ... are not Trump-leaning, blindly loyal Republican voters,' wrote Dwight McKissic, the pastor at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Texas, in a post for *S.B.C. Voices*. 'Therein lies the potential for the outcome of this investigation to be tremendously and racially polarizing.'

But Moore's detractors say that his comments before and during the election were equally polarizing. 'I don't think Dr. Moore's comments about Donald Trump are what have [him] in hot water,' said Lewis Richerson, the pastor at Woodlawn Baptist Church in Baton Rouge. 'He has singlehandedly caused more division in Southern Baptist life than what we've seen in the last 30 years over a tertiary issue: politics.'

Richerson said he believes Moore was condescending toward Southern Baptists who disagreed with him about Trump—something Moore apologized for after the election. But it was more than that: On issues from the Convention's stance toward the Confederate flag to its recent decision to file a religious-liberty brief in favor of a mosque, he thinks Moore has been dismissive of those who think differently from him. And he sees Moore's rhetoric on race as inflammatory. 'I personally believe Barack Obama is solely responsible for increased tensions in race relations in America,' Richerson said. 'In the same vein, Russ Moore is responsible for the current

¹³³ Ibid, pages 3-4.

flare-up of negativity in race relations in Southern Baptist life.'

As the Convention works through its changing identity, the controversy over

Moore's job is likely to continue as a flashpoint. The leadership of the S.B.C. may be trying to 'build bridges' within the denomination. But many believe those bridges were already burned in 2016."¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Ibid, pages 5-7.

Chapter Nine

The Growing Infestation Of Calvinism

Well friends, throughout this book thus far, I have said a lot about those strong Calvinists, who have shown themselves pompous and elite, and how they have used this false doctrine to contaminate the Southern Baptist Convention, especially since the Conservative Resurgence which started back in 1979. After having been a full-time pastor, evangelist, and missionary for over half a century, I must tell you that I am very sickened by the infestation of Calvinism that just seems to get bigger and bigger in the S.B.C. Every time I talk to a pastor, or every time I meet a seminary student, the subject of Calvinism rises up. Why, even yesterday while talking on the telephone to a very fine young pastor who has been doing online seminary work with one of the S.B.C. seminaries, the subject of Calvinism became the main subject of our conversation.

As I talked to this precious young man, my heart was truly broken because he transparently shared with me the terrible dilemma he had experienced trying to determine if he should become a Calvinist based upon what he had been being taught at Southeastern Baptist Seminary where he was doing courses. Of course, this is where Dr. Danny Akin, whom we have already talked about in this book, is the President. You see folks, here is a precious young pastor who had already graduated from a four year so-called Baptist College. He is now working on a Master of Divinity Degree. What is the primary challenge he is faced with? It is "whether to believe in the heresy of Calvinism or to return to the historical tradition and faith of the Bible which Southern Baptist have stood for down through the years", while they have given themselves to winning the lost to Christ Jesus. But now, rather than concentrating on winning people to Christ here in America and doing missions around the world, the emphasis is upon what John Piper, R.C. Sproul, Al Mohler, John MacArthur, Jonathan Edwards, Lorraine Boettner, and many more have said about Calvinism. I sincerely believe that Satan is using the spiritual mirage of Calvinism to distract God's people from what they should be focusing on, and that is the Great Commission. I want to mention one more time what I said earlier in this book. I doubt very seriously if John Calvin, the so-called great reformer, was even saved. I say this because there seems to be absolutely no testimony to where Calvin ever got genuinely saved, but instead, he was a believer in infant sprinkling just like his hero, Augustine, the Catholic monk from North Africa, did. Let me ask you to really pay attention to the following quote written by Dr. Dave Hunt.

"Calvinism is experiencing resurgence today. Yet there is widespread ignorance of what both Augustine and Calvin really taught and practiced. Has the truth been suppressed to further a particular theology? Consider Boettner's declaration that 'Calvin and Augustine easily rank as the two outstanding systematic expounder of the Christian system since Saint Paul.' Spurgeon, also declared: 'Augustine obtained views, without doubt, through the Spirit of God, from the diligent study of the writings of Paul, and Paul received them of the Holy Ghost, from Jesus Christ.'"¹³⁵

¹³⁵ What Love Is This? By: Dave Hunt, the Berean Call, page 63.

"One cannot but view such statements with astonishment. How incredible that Loraine Boettner, one of the foremost apologists opposing the Roman Catholic Church, praised Augustine, who gave the Roman Catholic Church so many of its basic doctrines that he is among the most highly honored of its 'saints' to this day.

As for Spurgeon, would he have considered that Augustine's teaching of salvation by the Roman Catholic Church, through its sacraments alone, beginning with regeneration by infant baptism; the use of force even to the death against 'heretics'; acceptance of the Apocrypha; allegorical interpretation of creation and the prophecies concerning Israel; a rejection of the literal reign of Christ on David's throne; and so much other false doctrine, had also all been received from the Holy Spirit? How could Augustine—and Calvin, who embraced and passed on many of his major errors—be wrong on so much and yet be biblically sound as regards predestination, election, sovereignty, etc.? Is there not ample cause to examine carefully these foundational teaching of Calvinism? One can only respond in the affirmative."¹³⁶

Friends, it is my firm conviction to believe that no man could be a born again child of God if he had a huge number of people put to death for not embracing his doctrinal teaching as John Calvin did in Geneva, Switzerland. Calvin was a merciless man. While talking about God's amazing sovereign grace, he never seemed to get around to showing any grace to others who disagreed with him. And yet, we find now in the Southern Baptist Convention an entire Calvinistic Conspiracy headquartered in Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, under the direction of Dr. Al Mohler, which seems to be infesting the S.B.C. like a plague. And, I hear some of these cowardly people and so-called bridge builders saying that there are not many Southern Baptist churches which have embraced Calvinism. Even recently, I heard one of the Calvinist defenders say that only about 10% of the 47,000 churches are in actuality Calvinist. But, let me tell you that I have preached 1,000 revival meetings across thirty-three states here in America, and I venture to say that there are far more Calvinistic churches than 10%. In truth, I believe that the number would be more like one third of the churches. I say this because I have seen church after church destroyed by Calvinism, and I have watched pastor after pastor, down through the years, that went crazy over Calvinism only to destroy their churches.

A good example of this was a church in Central Florida many years ago. A dear friend of mine was the pastor of this church. When I first started going there to conduct revival meetings, the church ran over 300 in attendance, and it was really growing. In fact, during the first revival meeting there, we saw almost 30 people get saved. Just about one year after that first revival meeting, the pastor started moving into Calvinism. About one year later, I went back for another revival meeting, and I could not believe how small the attendance was. There were not over 120 people at the church on the Sunday morning of the revival meeting. After the meeting was over, the pastor got absolutely obsessed with Calvinism, and the last I heard from the church, the pastor had to resign. The attendance was down to 70 people on Sundays. All this took place because of Calvinism.

So, the truth of the matter is this—wherever Calvinism is promoted in a Baptist

¹³⁶ Ibid, pages 63-64.

Church, the church dries up, the attendance of the church is devastated, and the soul winning and missions ministries are destroyed. I have never seen the opposite anywhere across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Now, to prove my point, I want to share with you an article that I read from the archives of the Christian Index, the State Baptist newspaper in Georgia. This article was written back in February of 2012, by the Editor, Gerald Harris. Truly, Mr. Harris saw the Calvinism Conspiracy back then. I just wish that more would have seen it and would have spoken up like he did. Please read this article very carefully.

The Calvinists Are Here!

By J. Gerald Harris, Editor

Published February 9, 2012

"John Calvin (1509-1564) was an influential French pastor and theologian during the Protestant Reformation. He is best known for his doctrine of 'predestination,' which became the foundation of his theology – suggesting that God predestined certain individuals to be saved.

Calvinism is known for its five basic tenets summarized by the acronym TULIP. Those five points of Calvinism are (1) Total depravity of man, (2) Unconditional election, (3) Limited atonement, (4) Irresistible grace and (5) Perseverance of the saints.

There are some Calvinists who suggest that unconditional election means that God chooses, or 'elects,' His children from before the foundations of the earth – that God does not just 'know' what decision people will make, but that God causes them to make the decision to seek Him.

There are also those who hold to Reformed theology who believe limited atonement means that the death and resurrection of Christ is the substitutionary payment for the sins of only those who are God's elect children, but not the entire world.

Many who embrace Reformed theology are motivated to allow it to influence their church polity by substituting congregational church government with an elder system of church government. While that works well for some churches, James MacDonald, a self-proclaimed Calvinist and member of the advisory board for LifeWay's new Sunday School curriculum, writes, 'Congregational government is an invention and tool of the enemy of our souls to destroy the church of Jesus Christ.'

Calvinism also influences other areas of theology and ecclesiology, but newspaper real estate prohibits a further exploration of all the facets of Reformed theology."¹³⁷

"In 2007 Mark Dever, pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., who has served as chairman of the Trustees at Southern Seminary and is one of the most notable Calvinists in S.B.C. life, wrote a series of blog posts titled, 'Where'd All These Calvinists Come From?' In his blogs Dever listed ten reasons for the blossoming of Reformed theology's TULIP within evangelicalism.

Frank Page, chief executive officer of the S.B.C. Executive Committee, was quoted in S.B.C. Today, saying, 'I think the challenges confronting the S.B.C. today are

¹³⁷ The Christian Index website, By: Gerald Harris, pages 1-2.

different than they have been in decades past. I think one of the issues, which is a tremendous challenge for us, is the theological divide of Calvinism and non-Calvinism.'

'Everyone is aware of this but few want to talk about this in public. The reason is obvious. It is deeply divisive in many situations and is disconcerting in others. At some point we are going to see the challenges ensuing from this divide become even more problematic for us. I regularly receive communications from churches who are struggling over this issue.'¹³⁸

'Former S.B.C. President Jerry Vines was also quoted in S.B.C. Life, proclaiming, 'Theologically, will the issue of Calvinism create further division in the S.B.C.? I have been an S.B.C. preacher over 50 years. I have worked quite well with my Calvinist friends, many of whom I invited to preach for me. I have no desire to run all Calvinists out of the S.B.C.; I think it would be divisive and wrong. But, current attempts to move the S.B.C. to a Calvinistic soteriology (doctrine of salvation) are divisive and wrong. As long as groups and individuals seek to force Calvinism upon others in the Convention, there will be problems. There is a form of Calvinism that is militant, hostile and aggressive that I strongly oppose.

'I have stated before, so it's not new news, that should the S.B.C. move towards five-point Calvinism it will be a move away from, and not toward, the Gospel.'

So, apparently the Conservative Resurgence and the Great Commission Resurgence has been joined by a Reformed Resurgence. The Calvinists are here. Their presence is evident in many phases and places in Southern Baptist life."¹³⁹

"Many great preachers and theologians have embraced Calvinism through the years, but today some greet the rising tide of Calvinism with delight, others with disdain.

The Economist reports, 'Since 1990 the [S.B.C.] has been losing ground, relative to America's population, to other evangelical churches. So cadres of Young Turks are looking back to the 16th century for fresh inspiration.'

According to LifeWay Research, the S.B.C.'s, statistical arm, 10 percent of all S.B.C. pastors now identify themselves as Calvinists and a third of recent graduates from S.B.C. seminaries espouse Reformed doctrines, with Southern Seminary in Louisville, KY, a particular source.

It would be surprising if The Gospel Project, a Sunday School curriculum for all ages that LifeWay will soon be rolling out, were not marked by an unmistakable Reformed theology.

Trevin Wax, who works at LifeWay Christian Resources as managing editor of The Gospel Project, admits that he has been influenced by Reformed pastors and authors like John Piper, Mark Dever, J. I. Packer, C. J. Mahaney, Jerry Bridges, Sinclair Ferguson, Tim Keller and others. The advisory council and writers for The Gospel Project (including D.A. Carson, Matt Chandler, James MacDonald, Eric Mason, Joe Horn, Juan Sanchez, Collin Hansen, former North American Mission Board missionary to the Internet Afshin Ziafat and Geoff Ashley – for the most part looks like a Who's

¹³⁸ Ibid, pages 2-3.

¹³⁹ Ibid, page 3.

Who of Reformed theologians."¹⁴⁰

"The average Baptist who sits in a Sunday School class or a small Bible study group has depended on LifeWay to provide Bible study materials that are true to the Word of God and representative of historic Baptist theology. However, for bane or blessing LifeWay President Thom Rainer seems to have led the S.B.C. literature-producing agency to become more and more Reformed in its theological content.

North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell has a goal to plant thousands of churches over the next ten years, but there seems to be a shortage of church planters. According to a LifeWay study in 2006 nearly 30 percent of S.B.C. seminary graduates between 1998 and 2004 now serving as pastors describe themselves as Calvinists. Since the LifeWay study is now over five years old the number of Reformed pastors has doubtlessly increased by now. The most recent NAMB On Mission magazine highlights several church planters, two of whom could be seen as Reformed in their theology.

Won Kwak has planted Maranatha Grace Church in Fort Lee, NJ. North Shores Baptist Church in Bayside, NY, Kwak's mother church, has developed a ministry called Doctrines of Grace Church Planters. On their website they proclaim, 'Sovereign Grace Church Planters exists solely for the purpose of planting sovereign grace churches in and around the New York City area. 'Reformed leaders James White and D.A. Carson endorse this church-planting ministry.

The second church mentioned in On Mission magazine is City on a Hill in Brookline, MA, in metro Boston where Bland Mason is pastor. I had the privilege of meeting Bland in December and really like him. He is also the chaplain of the Boston Red Sox, which makes him particularly special to me.

Some have been critical of City on a Hill being featured in On Mission because it is also included on the Acts 29 Network website as one of its churches. NAMB President Kevin Ezell recently explained that Mason's church was recommended for inclusion in the magazine by the leadership of the Baptist Convention of New England, that Mason is a soul winner, and that the church is an ardent supporter of the Cooperative Program.

Some contend that churches associated with the Acts 29 Network are anathema because of their identification with the Network's founder and lead visionary, controversial Seattle pastor Mark Driscoll. The Network is also admittedly evangelical, missional and Reformed in its approach to church planting."¹⁴¹

"Others will find it interesting that St Louis is targeted as one of the focus cities in Send North America. In St. Louis NAMB will encounter a Baptist association that has already launched 15 church plants, seven of which are listed as Acts 29 Network churches.

In an exclusive interview with Ezell in our June 2, 2011 issue titled 'Filling the Blanks,' The Index reported, 'Missionary participation (with the Acts 29 Network) does not concern Ezell one way or the other; he neither endorses nor criticizes such involvement. And since NAMB trustees have not set policy on the issue, he does not involve himself with the discussion.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, pages 3-4.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, pages 4-5.

Ezell emphasized, 'We plant Southern Baptist churches that adhere to the Baptist Faith and Message and support the Cooperative Program.'¹⁴²

"Although Acts 29 only has 288 churches in its network in the U.S., Driscoll seems to have a significant influence in the lives of some Southern Baptists. It should be noted that Mark and Grace Driscoll have written a book entitled 'Real Marriage: The Truth About Sex, Friendship and Life Together. The book has shocked conservatives with its graphic sexual descriptions and alarmed liberals because of its degradation of women.'

Writer and blogger Rachel Held Evans stated in the Nashville Tennessean that the Driscolls give too many intimate and specific details about sex. She added, 'I don't need my pastor to tell me whether or not I should use sex toys. I don't feel like I needed all of those details.'

The Tennessean also reported, 'In short, the Driscolls say sex is only for married couples, and that those couples should be best friends, have lots of sex and skip the birth control pill, using alternate sex acts that don't cause pregnancy when necessary.'

Denny Burk, associate professor of Biblical Studies at Boyce College, the undergraduate arm of Southern Seminary, has reviewed the Driscolls' book. Burk indicates that the book is sexually explicit in some ways, but the Driscolls' offer a disclaimer by stating that anyone uncomfortable with the book's content must be either a rube or uninterested in reaching the culture for Christ.

Call me a rube or a hick.

Burk adds, 'To those with legitimate concerns, these remarks come across as dismissive at best and patronizing at worst.'

The book would hardly be worth mentioning except for the fact that Southeastern Seminary President Danny Akin and his wife Charlotte endorsed it. In recent years Driscoll has been a chapel speaker at SEBTS and his influence at the seminary cannot be ignored.

There is a growing perception that Southern Seminary has become a seedbed for a brand of Calvinism that is quite different from the Reformed theology of its founder, James Petigru Boyce, and also a training ground for Reformed church planters. Therefore, it appears that some of our institutions and agencies are giving, at the least, tacit approval to Reformed theology or are, at the most, actively on a path to honor, if not implement Reformed theology and methodology in their institutions.

While most of the Reformed pastors and churchmen I know are gracious and godly people with a profound devotion to the Word of God, Southern Baptists must decide if they are satisfied with what I would call the presumable encroachment of Calvinism in S.B.C. life.

By the way, Southern Baptists must also soon decide if they want to fulfill their ministry under another name. There are at least four possibilities: Evangelical Baptist Convention, Continental Baptist Convention, International Baptist Convention and Great Commission Baptist Convention. At least, those four domains were purchased through GoDaddy.com in September 2011.

I personally think the Great Commission Baptist Convention is more likely to

¹⁴² Ibid, page 5.

be the recommendation of the S.B.C. name change committee. Leaders may reason that Southern Baptists could no more reject the recommendation of the Great Commission Baptist Convention than they could reject the Great Commission Resurgence recommendations. The subliminal implication is 'to reject the new name is to reject The Great Commission and Southern Baptists would never do that.' If that is the suggested name and if we dare vote for it to be our new appellation we dare not defame it with half-hearted evangelism and church plants that wither away in five years."¹⁴³

Many of you, my readers, may think that I have already shared too much about the present Calvinism problem in the Southern Baptist Convention, but let me say that the more I learn about this Calvinism Conspiracy that is pushing to completely control and take over the S.B.C., the more I want to share with you from different writers about what is happening. Bear in mind, that I have watched this convention go from one of tremendous vision to win the world to Christ to now continuing the arguments and conflicts which were started way back there with the moderates or liberals. So, please bear with me as I present some more articles to hopefully help us understand the rapid decline and ultimate disintegration of the Southern Baptist Convention. Please forgive me for repeating several times some of the things about this new form of Calvinism that is sweeping the country, and yes, believe it or not, one that is mixing with Ecumenicalism, the Emergent Church, and the Neo-Charismatic Movement. If you don't believe we have a mess spinning out of control, please read carefully the following articles.

Characteristics of New Calvinism

By: Dr. E.S. Williams

"New Calvinism is a broad church, with a wide range of beliefs, doctrines and practices. The Gospel Coalition (TGC), which started in 2007 with a conference headlined by Don Carson, Tim Keller and John Piper, was a significant event, for the Coalition has become a national network for the New Calvinist movement. Theologian Don Carson wrote the original draft of the confessional statement, while Pastor Tim Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, wrote the theological call to ministry. The Gospel Coalition Council boasts familiar names like Tim Keller, John Piper, Matt Chandler, Mark Driscoll, Mark Dever, Al Mohler and Joshua Harris. Coalition leaders explain that they are not a 'boundary set', for that would mean nailing down the outer limits of who is 'in' and who is 'out', and that they do not want. As a consequence just about everyone is welcome to join the TGC Network, whatever their doctrinal beliefs.

While there are certain characteristics around which New Calvinists are united, it is a broad movement, and not all practice their faith in the same way. While most claim to be faithful to Scripture, and to follow the essential tenets of Calvin's theology, many are marked by a love for the ways and things of the world, which manifests itself in unbecoming conduct that is far removed from the ways and beliefs of traditional Calvinists and Puritans.

¹⁴³ Ibid, pages 6-7.

Here are some of the key characteristics of New Calvinism:

1. Doctrinal Errors

New Calvinism has a reputation for teaching the biblical doctrines of Calvin (TULIP). Charles Haddon Spurgeon and Jonathan Edwards are held up as heroes of the movement. But the reality is that while paying lip service to Calvin, Spurgeon and Edwards, New Calvinism, in fact, is weak in matters of doctrine.

New Calvinists seek to contextualize the gospel of truth to make it relevant to the postmodern world. Tim Keller is a major protagonist of this view. He teaches that for an inner city church to be successful it must contextualize the gospel to make it relevant to the needs of a multi-ethnic population. The message must be crafted to make it sensitive to the cultural trends of the day. So shaky is Tim Keller's theology that in an interview with Martin Bashir, he says that he is unsure whether God has provided a trap door for unbelieving Muslims and Hindus.

John Piper's concept of the Christian hedonist is doctrinally flawed, as will show on this website. While Mark Driscoll claims to be a Calvinist, he separates doctrine from conduct. He hates rules and much of his ministry is antinomian in approach."¹⁴⁴

2. Antinomianism

"The New Calvinism movement is characterized by a careless attitude towards God's moral law. A common assertion is that Christians are no longer under God's law, but under God's grace. It follows that the Christian life is not to be governed by a set of rules, or a set of commands, or a list of do's and don'ts, for Christ's grace has set us free. Obedience is not a popular concept. The subject index of Piper's blueprint for Christian Hedonism, *Desiring God* (1987), contains over twenty references to happiness, but only one to obedience.

New Calvinism wants us to believe that God's grace means that New Testament Christians are free from bondage to God's moral law. Mark Driscoll uses this interpretation of Scripture to justify what he refers to as New Covenant tattoos. He declares in a sermon: 'You are free in Christ to be weird... How about this one, tattoos? How many of you grew up in that fundamentalist church where they told you about the one verse on tattoos? Where is it? What book? Leviticus... It's right here in Leviticus, don't get a tattoo. Okay. But the thing is if you read the whole context it actually doesn't apply—its old covenant, not new covenant, so Jesus has fulfilled the law.'"

The idea that believers should strive to live in obedience to God's moral law is dismissed as legalism. No, says the New Calvinist, we are free in Christ. Driscoll says that he hates religious people who have rules to obey, and lists of do's and don'ts. He teaches that grace and works are antithetical. 'Works is me boasting, grace is me boasting about Jesus. Works is me looking at what I've done; grace is looking at what

¹⁴⁴ The New Calvinists web site, Characteristics of New Calvinism, By: E. S. Williams, pages 1-2.

Jesus has done.' And while Scripture teaches that we are saved by grace alone, it goes on to say that the person who is saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus is saved 'unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them' (Ephesians 2.10)."¹⁴⁵

"In his book, *Paths to Power* (1911), AW Tozer defined antinomianism this way. 'The creed of the Antinomian is easily stated: We are saved by faith alone; works have no place in salvation; conduct is works, and is therefore of no importance. What we do cannot matter, as long as we believe rightly. The divorce between creed and conduct is absolute and final. The question of sin is settled by the Cross; conduct is outside the circle of faith and cannot come between the believer and God. Such in brief, is the teaching of the Antinomian... It takes the teaching of justification by faith and twists it into deformity.'

The Reformed faith teaches that the moral law of God has three uses. The first is to convict of sin and drive the repentant sinner to the Lord Jesus Christ. The second use of the law is to restrain lawlessness in society. The third use is to function as the rule of life for the believer. One of the most famous statements of this truth comes from the Puritan Samuel Bolton in *The True Bounds of Christian Freedom*: 'The law sends us to the gospel for our justification; the gospel sends us to the law to frame our way of life.' The Puritan way of thinking and conduct is diametrically opposed to the ways of New Calvinism."¹⁴⁶

3. Worldliness

"The fruit of New Calvinism's antinomian tendency is a mindset that finds pleasure in the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2.15). Worldliness is a state of mind that conforms to the pattern and pleasures of the world; it does not seek to separate from the things of the world, or the entertainments of the world. This pattern of thinking allows great leeway in Christian conduct and is common among New Calvinists. Many New Calvinists teach that Christians are free in Christ to do anything that is not specifically forbidden in the Bible. So smoking and tattoos, reading worldly magazines, watching adult rated movies and salacious TV programs, immodest dress, crude language, coarse joking are regarded by some as acceptable behavior, for in the eyes of New Calvinists these forms of conduct are not specifically forbidden in the Bible. All forms of contemporary music, even punk rock, and hip-hop are accepted as permissible for Christians to enjoy. Those who say that these forms of conduct are not right for Christians are labeled as legalists, just like the Pharisees."¹⁴⁷

4. Contemporary Worship

"What flows from the New Calvinist's worldly mindset is a love for the music scene of the world. And so it is entirely predictable that contemporary worship is the most universal characteristic of New Calvinism. Mars Hill Church, Seattle, leads the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, pages 2-3.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, pages 3-4.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, page 4.

way by claiming that God loves punk rock. Holy hip-hop is embraced by many New Calvinists and rap artists are regarded as the missionaries of the 21st Century, according to Mark Driscoll. Contemporary worldly music is an essential ingredient of the Passion Conference (Louie Giglio and John Piper), The Resolved Conference (John MacArthur) and the Legacy Conference. The Gospel Coalition National Conference 2011 ended with a concert to celebrate the contemporary music scene. Delegates were invited to join Lecrae and the rest of the Reach Records rap artists as they 'exalted Christ' through the medium of hip-hop. The effect was to profane the Name of Christ, the Name which is above every name, and the Name to which every knee shall bow, on the altar of holy hip-hop.

5. Emerging Church

New Calvinists tend to be ambivalent about the emerging church movement. Mark Driscoll was involved with the emerging church, and claims to be on the Reformed end of the emerging spectrum. His book *Confessions of a Reformation Rev* (2006) is described as 'hard lessons from an Emerging Missional Church'. Many are sympathetic to the emerging church movement and contemplative prayer is encouraged by some, such as Keller's Redeemers Presbyterian Church in New York, which promotes the Monk's prayer."¹⁴⁸

While we are finishing up this article on the Contemporary Worship, let me give you a couple more articles on this wild worship and music of the New Calvinists. If it affects you the way it does me, you will probably get angry as I have at the unholy audacity of these weird contemporary ideas about worship.

Christian Rap – Music of the New Calvinists

By: Dr. E.S. Williams

"When Christians employ music that originates from the world, and appeals to the flesh, they are promoting worldliness in their midst. The latest fad of the contemporary Christian worship scene is rap music that is being performed by a large number of 'Christian rap artists'. Rap music is the musical dimension of hip-hop culture that has become an important element of New Calvinist conferences. And to make rap music appear to be acceptable by the Church, the term holy hip-hop has been coined. In 2011 *Christianity Today* carried a story on the marriage between holy hip-hop (Christian rap) and Calvinism (Reformed Theology). According to the article, contemporary Reformed theologians such as John Piper and John MacArthur are having a major influence on holy hip-hop artists such as Lecrae and Flame.

Pastor Thabiti Anyabwile

Pastor Thabiti Anyabwile of First Baptist Church Grand Cayman extols the virtues of holy hip-hop in a video produced by 'Desiring God Ministries' of John Piper: *'The thing that excites me about holy hip-hop and folks like Curtis 'The Voice' and Lecrae is that those brothers are doing it well. And yet, are giving people in the message, in the music, in the lyrics, deep God honoring, culture piercing and worldview shaping*

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, pages 4-5.

information. I mean it's preaching, it's lyrical theology, as one of the brothers has coined the term, and it ministers to the soul in the opposite way and more profound way than does secular hip-hop minister to the flesh.

I love that the Lord has raised up a generation of hip-hop artists who love Him, are committed to Him, and are sowing to the Spirit for people who listen to that word... For an urban hip-hop generation, with the birth of robust Reformed theology, and the entrance of that theology into that community, I think the Lord seems pleased to accompany that revival of theological truth with a musical revival of sorts – I think its taken the form of holy hip-hop, the kind of lyrics and music that speak to that generation, and speaks to it powerfully from a gospel and Christ-centred perspective.'

To make rap music more acceptable to Christians, the concept of holy hip-hop has been developed. Leading New Calvinists, such as John Piper, Al Mohler, Mark Driscoll, and JC Mahaney, have formed a close association with the culture of hip-hop, and coined the term 'holy hip-hop'.¹⁴⁹ (May I say this is some of the most wicked music action that I have ever read about? I pray that while you read this book, you will feel the same way I do—horribly awful!)

John Piper And Desiring God

"John Piper, of the 'Desiring God Ministries', is in the forefront of the holy hip-hop scene. He is closely associated with the annual Passion Conference, a large gathering of young people who are given over to the contemporary music scene. To emphasize his commitment to holy hip-hop, Piper invited rap artist Lecrae to perform during a morning church service at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN. Lecrae rapped 'Don't Waste Your Life' and received a standing ovation from the enthusiastic congregation. Such is his commitment to the contemporary music scene that at a recent Passion Conference Piper, interviewed rap artist Lecrae and prayed for his 'ministry'.¹⁵⁰

Albert Mohler Of Southern Baptist Seminary

"Dr. Albert Mohler, President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is one of the biggest names in the evangelical camp. He is a conservative theologian committed to the doctrines of Calvin. The Albert Mohler Radio Program has given prominent air time to two well known Christian rap artists, namely Marcus Gray, also known as Flame, and Lecrae. These radio programs, hosted by Dr. Russell Moore, Dean of the School of Theology (Now, Head of The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission Of The S.B.C.) openly promoted hip-hop culture and Christian rap music. Dr. Moore spoke about how the church can dialogue with the hip-hop culture. He said: 'There is something in hip-hop that we can learn from in all kinds of ways, in our evangelism, in our discipleship, in our preaching, especially in our preaching.'

He asserted that the lyrics of rap music are really very deeply doctrinal and theological. He also claimed that the church has much to learn from hip-hop culture about proper biblical contextualization. He even invited Lecrae to recommend a list

¹⁴⁹ New Calvinists Web Site, By: Dr. E.S. Williams, pages 1-2.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, page 2.

of Christian rap artists. The effect of these programs, with the blessing of Southern Baptist Seminary, is to endorse rap and hip-hop culture among theological students and young Christians.

Dr. Mohler has made worldly music acceptable to thousands upon thousands of young theological students, who are taking the messages of rap music and hip-hop culture into churches around the USA."¹⁵¹

Mark Driscoll Of Mars Hill Church, Seattle

"Pastor Mark Driscoll, during an interview with Lecrae, said of Christian rap artists: *'You guys are missionaries; you guys are 21st century missionaries. You are doing the same stuff that Paul did, that Jonah did, that Daniel did, that Joseph did and that Jesus did.'* So the lie that rap music is a tool for evangelism is being propagated by some church leaders. *(Well folks, can you believe such foolish statements like this one? This is blasphemy of genuine missionaries.)*

Moody Bible Institute

A holy hip-hop concert held at the prestigious Moody Bible Institute in Chicago is described by Collin Hansen, the editorial director for The Gospel Coalition, a network of leading American evangelicals.

Hansen writes: *'The auditorium pulsed with youthful energy for nearly three hours... During the sold-out concert, they shouted out familiar lines and danced with abandon among friends and new acquaintances who shared a common affinity for the music... The concert—featuring rappers Lecrae, Trip Lee, Sho Baraka, Tedashi, Pro, and DJ Official—made Jesus Christ the star of the show.'* (Blasphemy)

Here is clear evidence that rap music has penetrated to the very heart of evangelical Christianity. The embedded video, dear reader, will give you some idea of a Christian holy hip-hop concert. You will see examples of rap music if performed by Lecrae and friends."¹⁵²

"Hip-hop culture, which is associated with violence, drugs, and rebellion, has come to dominate youth culture in the USA, the UK and other parts of the world. The ungodly spirit of hip-hop culture is well documented and beyond dispute. It has generated a multi-billion dollar industry of music, clothes, jewelry, movies, and more. Hip-hop culture is a bastion of filth—it appeals to the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and is grounded in rebellion and lawlessness. Almost all hip-hop is delivered with an aggressive, arrogant, confrontational cadence. Rap music mirrors the brutality of rap lyrics in its harshness and repetition. It is not difficult for a true believer to discern that hip-hop is a worldly culture guided by the spirit who works in the sons of disobedience."¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Ibid, pages 2-3.

¹⁵² Ibid, page 3.

¹⁵³ Ibid, page 4.

Pastor Scott Aniol

"Pastor Scott Aniol, who holds a bachelor's degree in church music from Bob Jones University, a master's degree in musicology from Northern Illinois University, and has studied theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary (Plymouth, MN) and Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, comments on the meaning of rap music in his article 'Can Rap be Christian? Evaluating Hip Hop': *'The rhythms, sonorities, timbres, and movements of rap all 'feel' like (to one degree or another dependent upon the specific song) rage, violence, aggression, sex, agitation, and rebellion... So the kinds of messages the culture of rap is naturally associated with in our society is not due merely to convention, it is due to the sounds and rhythms of the music itself.'*

Let's consider the performance styles as well. Of course, there is a certain range among performers, and Christian artists certainly would not perform the more explicit bodily expressions of sexuality or rebellion. But what do the bodily movements and vocal tones of most rap performers naturally communicate? If you were to watch a video of a rap artist (Christian or not) with the volume turned down, what would you naturally assume they were communicating? Once again, rage, self-assertion, rebellion, and aggression.

Add to all this the dress, mannerisms, graffiti, slang, speech styles, and attitudes of hip-hop culture, and we come to the unavoidable conclusions that this culture cannot and should not be combined with God's holy truth.

The idea that this wicked culture can be brought into the Church, and turned into holy hip-hop, is against the teachings of Scripture. Because hip-hop music cannot be separated from its immoral associations it invariably corrupts God's people, for they have disobeyed God's command to separate from evil. ***'Therefore, Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.'*** (2 Corinthians 6:18).¹⁵⁴

A Biblical Response

"So how should Christian believers respond to the 'holy' hip-hop movement? As with all moral questions, we need to start with Scripture, not with the opinions of men. The issue of whether hip-hop culture and music is acceptable in the Church of Jesus Christ cannot be decided by rational arguments put forward by human wisdom. We cannot simply accept the wisdom of those who are involved in promoting the holy hip-hop industry.

Scripture commands believers to test everything, and to abstain from all appearance of evil (**1 Thessalonians 5:21-22**). Believers are instructed to test, prove and examine everything; and everything includes doctrine and conduct. In the context of the holy hip-hop movement, it means testing the music, the dress, the lyrics, the fashion trends and ecstatic conduct associated with hip-hop concerts that come together to make up holy hip-hop culture.

Spiritual Discernment

To help Christian believers test all things, God has given to believers the

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, pages 4-5.

spiritual gift of discernment. Mature Christian believers, who study and seek to live by the Scriptures, **'have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil' (Hebrews 5:14).**

Spiritual matters are to be spiritually discerned. **'But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For 'who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?' But we have the mind of Christ' (1 Corinthians 2:14-16).** A.W. Tozer writes: *'Among the gifts of the Spirit scarcely one is of greater practical usefulness than the gift of discernment. This gift should be highly valued and frankly sought as being almost indispensable in these critical times. This gift will enable us to distinguish the chaff from the wheat and to divide the manifestations of the flesh from the operations of the Spirit.'*

The apostle Paul prays for believers that their **'love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God' (Philippians 1:9-11).** Discernment means doing the necessary investigation to distinguish between right and wrong. To be faithful to God, and to live a godly life, all true believers must use spiritual discernment, for to do so enables them to approve excellent things, to avoid sin and to bear the fruits of righteousness (Philippians 1:11).

The gift of discernment allows believers to recognize the genuine from the fake, to understand what is of God, and what is of the flesh, the world and the devil. We are to embrace wholeheartedly what is inherently genuine and true, and we are to reject every appearance of evil. The Christian mind, transformed by the Holy Spirit, rejects the lusts and passions of the old sinful nature, for in Christ we have a new nature and all things are new. The way of the world, or worldliness, is an attitude of the heart and mind that desires the lusts and corrupt pleasures of the flesh. In Old Testament times God's people were commanded to distinguish (discern) between the clean and unclean. **'And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean' (Ezekiel 44: 23).**

True believers, with spiritual insight, and a renewed mind, are able to discern what is of the world (worldliness) and therefore opposed to God. Here we must stress the importance of Christian young people using the spiritual gift of discernment when it comes to music. And church leaders have a grave responsibility of ensuring that the music used in the Church is pleasing to God."¹⁵⁵

Discerning The Spirit Of Holy Hip-Hop

"The idea that this wicked culture can be brought into the Church, and turned into holy hip-hop, is to put no difference between the holy and the profane.

Scripture describes, in some detail, the Israelite rebellion at the foot of Mount

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, pages 6-7.

Sinai. When Moses delayed coming down from the Mount, Aaron and the Israelites built a golden calf. Aaron then built an altar, and proclaimed a feast to the Lord. In effect, the rebellious Israelites were worshipping both the Lord and the golden calf. The people ***'rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.'***

As Moses approached the camp he heard shouting and singing, and he saw the golden calf and the dancing of the people. The scene was one of revelry—all moral restraint was gone as the people rose up to entertain themselves in wild dancing and carousing. Likewise, holy hip-hop concerts arouse the same rebellious spirit of gay abandonment with wild dancing, ecstatic arm waving and shouting. This is a spirit of wickedness and rebellion against God's holy law. Our spiritual gift of discernment tells us that what we are witnessing is not the fruit of the Holy Spirit, but the works of the flesh. Scripture says that the works of the flesh include ***'revelries, and the like'*** (Galatians 5:21).

The warning of Scripture is that we must worship the true God with reverence and awe. We must not bring strange fire into the House of God. We must be very careful of the spirit behind contemporary worship, for it is a spirit that inevitably leads to more worldliness and will eventually destroy a local church.

Yet we should not be downhearted, for Christ is building His true church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it. The call is for a reformation that preaches the authentic Gospel, the sinfulness of sin, the need for repentance; a reformation that emphasizes holy living, and resists worldliness in the church. Christ loves the church and gave Himself for her, ***'that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish'*** (Ephesians 5:25-27).¹⁵⁶

A Vivid Exposure Of Al Mohler And Hip-Hop

By: Dr. E.S. Williams

"Dr. Albert Mohler, President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is one of the biggest names in the New Calvinist camp. He is a conservative theologian that is committed to the doctrines of Calvin. *Time* has called him the 'reigning intellectual of the evangelical movement in the U.S'. Dr Mohler is on the council of The Gospel Coalition and a member of the Board of Directors of Focus on the Family.

Widely sought as a columnist and commentator, Dr. Mohler has been quoted by the *New York Times*, *The Wall St. Journal*, *USA Today* and the *Washington Post*, among others. He has appeared on many national news programs in the USA, and until recently (July 3, 2010), hosted The Albert Mohler Program, a nationwide radio show devoted to engaging contemporary culture with Christian beliefs. As the head of the Southern Baptist Convention and President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Mohler has pursued a conservative version of the Christian faith. In most areas he is doctrinally orthodox and faithful to Scripture.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, pages 7-8.

Al Mohler Endorses The New Calvinism

Mohler is on record claiming to be a five point Calvinist. In a discussion with other Gospel Coalition council members, Kevin De Young and Ligon Duncan, Al Mohler said that no convictional, thinking evangelical who wants to embrace the apostolic faith will come to any other conclusion than 'The Reformed'.

Al Mohler: 'Where else are they going to go? If you're a theological minded, deeply convictional young evangelical, if you're committed to the gospel and want to see the nations rejoice in the name of Christ, if you want to see gospel built and structured committed churches, your theology is just going to end up basically being Reformed, basically something like this new Calvinism, or you're going to have to invent some label for what is basically going to be the same thing, there just are not options out there, and that's something that frustrates some people, but when I'm asked about the New Calvinism—where else are they going to go, who else is going to answer the questions, where else are they going to find the resources they are going to need and where else are they going to connect?. This is a generation that understands, they want to say the same thing that Paul said, they want to stand with the apostles, they want to stand with old dead people, and they know that they are going to have to, if they are going to preach and teach the truth".¹⁵⁷

Compromised Conduct

"But when it comes to conduct, Mohler is not always consistent with the Calvinistic theology that he proclaims. Herein is the dilemma—while teaching sound doctrine for the most part, Dr. Mohler's teaching on Christian conduct does not always match his doctrinal stance. Let us examine what the Albert Mohler Program has to say about hip-hop culture. But first, we need to remind ourselves of the nature of hip-hop culture.

Mixing The Holy And The Profane

The ungodly spirit of hip-hop culture is well documented and beyond dispute. Hip-hop has come to dominate youth culture in the USA, the UK and other parts of the world. It has generated a multi-billion dollar industry of music, clothes, jewelry, movies, and more. It is not difficult for a true believer to discern that hip-hop is a worldly culture guided by the spirit who works in the sons of disobedience. Hip-hop culture is a bastion of filth—promoting violence (Cop killer by Body Count), drugs, irresponsible sex, (Na Palm's debut album 'Late At Night', we love sex, drugs and hip-hop), excessive materialism, and delinquent behavior. It appeals to the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and is grounded in rebellion and lawlessness. Almost all hip-hop, gangsta or not, is delivered with an aggressive, arrogant, confrontational cadence. Rap music mirrors the brutality of rap lyrics in its harshness and repetition; it is the music of the sons of disobedience (**Ephesians 5:6**).

The idea that this wicked culture can be redeemed and brought into the Church, and turned into holy hip-hop, is wrong because the music style cannot be separated from its immoral associations. Hip-hop music invariably corrupts God's people, for they

¹⁵⁷ New Calvinists Web Site, Al Mohler and Hip-Hop, By: Dr. E.S. Williams, pages 1-2.

have disobeyed his command to separate from evil. 'And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them' (Ephesians 5:11) Our Christian duty is to 'abstain from every appearance of evil' (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Therefore, as Christian believers we are not to be 'unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? **'...Therefore, Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.' 'I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.'** (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

As we have already noted, the uncleanness of hip-hop culture is beyond dispute, and Scripture is clear that Christian people are to separate themselves from the works of wickedness, and every appearance of evil. Yet, leading New Calvinists have formed a close association with the wicked culture of hip-hop, and even coined the term 'holy hip-hop'.¹⁵⁸

The Albert Mohler Program Promotes Hip-Hop Culture

"The Albert Mohler Program has given prominent air time to two well known Christian rap artists, namely Marcus Gray, also known as Flame (2008), and Lecrae (2009).

These two radio programs, hosted by Dr. Russell Moore, Dean of the School of Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (presently Head of Ethics and the Religious Liberty Commission), openly promoted hip hop culture and Christian rap music. Dr. Russell Moore spoke about how the church can dialogue with the hip-hop culture. He said: 'There is something in hip-hop that we can learn from in all kinds of ways, in our evangelism, in our discipleship, in our preaching, especially in our preaching.' He asserted that the lyrics of rap music are really very deeply doctrinal and theological. He also claimed that the church has much to learn from hip-hop culture about proper biblical contextualization. He even invited Lecrae to recommend a list of Christian rap artists. The effect of these programs, coming from the Albert Mohler Program, with the blessing of Southern Baptist Seminary, is to endorse rap and hip-hop culture among theological students and young Christians. The Albert Mohler Program has welcomed the world into the church—it has put no difference between the holy and the profane."¹⁵⁹

Interpreting Mohler's Position On Hip-Hop Culture

"For Dr. Mohler to allow his radio program and the Southern Baptist Seminary to be used to promote hip-hop culture is difficult to understand. As President of a Theological Seminary, Dr. Mohler is a mature Christian leader, and therefore should be able **'to discern both good and evil' (Hebrews 5:14)**. He knows the command of Scripture, **'Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil' (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)**. Surely with his deep knowledge of Scripture, and the gift of discernment that God gives to mature Christians, he must be able to recognize

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, pages 2-4.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, page 4.

the wickedness of the hip-hop scene. Surely he must be able to discern the worldly spirit of rap music. Surely he knows that friendship with the world is enmity with God.

Yet despite his vast knowledge of theology, and his prominent position as a leader of the Church, he has chosen to allow the Southern Theological Seminary to promote the Christian hip-hop movement. And by doing so he has made worldly music acceptable to thousands upon thousands of young theological students who are taking the perverted messages of rap music and hip-hop culture into churches around the USA. All this, dear reader, is difficult to understand. But Scripture, through the prophet Ezekiel, helps us to understand the appalling significance of a Baptist Theological Seminary that promotes hip-hop culture in the name of Christ.

In **Ezekiel chapter 8**, God shows the prophet Ezekiel 'the image of jealousy' in the Temple (Ezekiel 8:3). God's hand brings the prophet 'to the door of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy' (v.3). God then instructs Ezekiel to dig into the wall of the Temple to see the wicked abominations that were being worshipped in the temple. 'And He [God] said to me, ***'Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there.'*** ***So I went in and saw, and there—every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls. And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel'*** (vs.10-11).

Matthew Henry interprets the appalling scene that met Ezekiel's eyes. '*All the idols of the house of Israel, which they had borrowed from the neighboring nations, were portrayed upon the wall round about, even the vilest of them, the forms of creeping things, which they worshipped, and beasts, even abominable ones, which are poisonous and venomous... He sees this chamber filled with idolatrous worshippers. There were seventy men of the elders of Israel offering incense to these painted idols. Here was a great number of idolaters strengthening one another's hands in this wickedness.'*

In the same way, Albert Mohler and his Southern Baptist Theological Seminary have brought 'the image of jealousy' (hip-hop culture), with its vile images, into the Church of Jesus Christ. The Lord God of Scripture is a holy God and will not be associated with images of wickedness. As God withdrew his glory from the Temple of Israel, so he will remove his blessing from those who provoke him with the abomination of hip-hop culture."¹⁶⁰

Further Explicit Explanation Of The New Calvinism

I sincerely don't want to be redundant, but I just feel that we need to take an even closer look at Calvinism which is causing such a terrible upheaval in the Southern Baptist Convention. Thus, I am going to include two long articles yet in this chapter in order to get an objective evaluation of Calvinism from someone outside of the Southern Baptist Convention. I have already shared some of Dr. E.S. Williams' writings, but in these two additional articles, Dr. Williams will expose some of the many leaders of the "Calvinists Conspiracy," that is absolutely deceiving multitudes with this brand of New Calvinism. Now, let's look carefully at these long articles.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, pages 4-5.

The New Calvinists: Part 1

By: Dr. E.S. Williams

New Calvinism, The Gospel Coalition And Dr. Tim Keller

"This is the transcript of the first lecture on New Calvinism given at the Summer School of Theology at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, on 4 July 2012. The lecture, prepared by Dr. ES Williams, was read by Darren Cadapen, a member of Metropolitan Tabernacle.

New Calvinism is a movement that is sweeping across the Church in the USA and moving to the UK, and into other countries around the world. Many Christians may not be familiar with the term, and so my task in two talks, is to explain the phenomenon of New Calvinism, a movement that claims to be behind a resurgence of the reformed teachings of John Calvin, Charles Spurgeon and Jonathan Edwards. Led by some of the biggest names in the evangelical world, New Calvinism gives the appearance of doctrinal soundness. But on closer examination, we see a different picture. We see a movement that is bringing the world into the church—a movement that puts no difference between the holy and the profane. I hope to demonstrate that the problem of New Calvinism lies in both doctrine and conduct.

The apparent success of New Calvinism comes from a number of influential ministries, many with mega-church organizations, whose leaders are willing to work with one another. This unity, based in pragmatism, is rapidly changing the evangelical landscape in the USA and other countries. Such is the influence of this new movement that even *Time* magazine has noticed its impact on the evangelical world. Yet it is wrong to think of New Calvinism as based on a clear doctrinal stance, for, as we shall see, it is a broad tent, with an assortment of different ideas, teachings, practices and doctrines.

I shall first describe the origin of New Calvinism, and its association with the Gospel Coalition, and then discuss four theologians widely accepted as standing at the center New Calvinism, namely Dr Tim Keller, Pastor John Piper, Pastor Mark Driscoll and Dr. Albert Mohler. While the term New Calvinism is seldom used in the UK, the philosophy of this movement is being eagerly adopted by many churches in this country.

Time Magazine (2009)

So how significant is New Calvinism? While many people in the UK are unfamiliar with the term, New Calvinism is massively influential and having a major impact on the Christian church. *Time* magazine, the world's largest circulation weekly news magazine, in an article in 2009, listed 10 ideas changing the World Right Now and placed New Calvinism third on their list. Ted Olsen, a managing editor at *Christianity Today*, is quoted: 'everyone knows where the energy and the passion are in the Evangelical world — with the pioneering new-Calvinist John Piper of Minneapolis, Seattle's pugnacious Mark Driscoll and Albert Mohler, head of the Southern Seminary of the huge Southern Baptist Convention.'

Young, Restless, Reformed

The New Calvinist story probably started in 2006, when Collin Hansen, a junior editor of *Christianity Today*, published an article describing what he believed was a

revival of Reformed theology that was taking place among young Christians in the USA. He formed this conclusion after travelling around the USA, visiting leading churches and institutions, and talking with theologians, pastors, and parishioners.

Collin Hansen, author of *Young, Restless, Reformed*, Hansen's book, *Young, Restless, Reformed, A Journalist's Journey with the New Calvinists*, published in 2008, tells the story of a Calvinistic resurgence among young people in the USA. Hansen is greatly impressed by the Passion Conference, a large annual event based on contemporary worship, with John Piper the keynote speaker. Twenty thousand college students, who dig modern praise music, are eager to hear Piper's reformed message. And Piper says that the worship songs that are being written today are about a great God. Quote: 'They [the songs] have set the stage for the theology; I still don't understand why many churches don't follow that with preaching that gets the theology of the songs. But at least for the Passion movement, that music is very God-exalting'. Hansen says that in Piper's preaching and Passion music, young people are experiencing the nearness of God. 'This powerful combination at conferences like Passion blows apart stereotypes of Reformed theology as a cold and detached study of God.'

Next Hansen discovers that the Sovereign Grace churches have joined charismatic worship with Calvinist theology. He concludes that 'the growing network of charismatic Calvinists led by JC Mahaney is one sign of the Reformed resurgence'. Hansen says that as evangelical Christians graduate from high school and leave the church of their youth, many end up at contemporary worship conferences like Passion or New Attitude, and are transformed by the music, and by the transcendent God they behold through the Reformed theology of John Piper and others."¹⁶¹

"Hansen's book pays homage to the celebrities of New Calvinism. He believes that a genuine religious revival is taking place, and makes the following observations: 1) John Piper is the chief spokesman for the resurgence of Calvinism among young people. 2) Pastor Mark Driscoll and Mars Hill Church are evidence of the missional emphasis of the New Calvinism. 3) Al Mohler and Southern Seminary in Louisville, KY, are leading a resurgence of Calvinism in the Southern Baptist Convention. 4) The New Attitude Conference, led by Joshua Harris and featuring Reformed rap and rock music, is reaching young people with New Calvinist teaching. 5) New Calvinism has succeeded in combining traditional doctrine with charismatic teaching and practice of CJ Mahaney and the Sovereign Grace churches. 6) Tim Keller, of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, a leader of the Gospel Coalition, is the leading cultural analyst of the New Calvinist movement.

Hansen's book was well received by many evangelicals. Pastor Tim Challies comments: 'Collin Hansen invites us on a voyage of discovery, learning how our restless youth are discovering anew the great doctrines of the Christian faith.' The editor in chief of *Christianity Today*, David Neff, is effusive in his praise: 'Collin Hansen has uncovered a fresh movement of young Christians for whom doctrine – particularly the Calvinist kind – fuels evangelism, kindles passion, and transforms

¹⁶¹ The New Calvinists, Website, Part 1, By: Dr. E.S. Williams, pages 1-3.

lives. Read it and rejoice.'

In the UK, Hansen's book was reviewed with enthusiasm in well-known magazines such as *Banner of Truth*, *Evangelical Times*, *Evangelicals Now* and *Reformation Today*. The Gospel Coalition has appointed Hansen as their editorial director.

Dr. Peter Masters' Review Of Young, Restless, Reformed

Dr. Peter Masters, Pastor of Metropolitan Tabernacle, however, was very deeply saddened to read Hansen's book, quote: 'because it describes a seriously distorted Calvinism falling far, far short of an authentic life of obedience to a sovereign God. If this kind of Calvinism prospers, then genuine biblical piety will be under attack as never before.

Dr. Peter Masters, Pastor of Metropolitan Tabernacle (Spurgeon's Church), London, 'The author begins by describing the Passion Conference at Atlanta in 2007, where 21,000 young people reveled in contemporary music, and listened to speakers such as John Piper proclaiming Calvinistic sentiments. And this picture is repeated many times through the book – large conferences being described at which the syncretism of worldly, sensation-stirring, high-decibel, rhythmic music, is mixed with Calvinistic doctrine.

Dr. Peter Masters makes the point: 'You cannot have Puritan soteriology without Puritan sanctification. You should not entice people to Calvinistic (or any) preaching by using worldly bait. We hope that young people in this movement will grasp the implications of the doctrines better than their teachers, and come away from the compromises. But there is a looming disaster in promoting this new form of Calvinism.'

To understand New Calvinism we need to examine the teaching of four of the most influential men in the movement. First, is Tim Keller, Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian church in New York, who co-founded the Gospel Coalition with Don Carson. Second, is Pastor John Piper, of Desiring God Ministries, and regarded by many as the chief spokesman for New Calvinism, and third is Pastor Mark Driscoll, of Mars Hill Church in Seattle, who is reputed to be the most downloaded pastor in history. Fourth, is Dr Albert Mohler, President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. But first, we need to look at The Gospel Coalition, an organization that is at the forefront of New Calvinism.

The Gospel Coalition, established in 2007, is the brainchild of Dr. DA Carson, Research Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, who wrote the confessional statement, and Dr. Tim Keller, who produced the theological call to ministry. Pastor Mark Driscoll was involved in the founding of the Coalition. He was invited to attend a small theological gathering, led by Carson and Keller, which included men from a number of prominent evangelical churches, such as Alistair Begg, Kent Hughes, Philip Ryken, Mark Dever, Ray Ortlund, and Ligon Duncan.

Also represented were organizations such as The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, Desiring God, Together for the Gospel, 9Marks, Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, Sovereign Grace Ministries, along with Acts 29 and The Resurgence.

The vision of the Coalition is to create a movement that by long-term effort could renew and reform evangelical thought and practice, both in the USA and worldwide. Hansen writes about the first Coalition meeting: 'As Carson told me today, this group could not have come together five years ago. Make of that what you will, but something's stirring in the evangelical movement. The Gospel Coalition seeks nothing less than a return to the theological consensus enjoyed in the days of neo-evangelicalism, led by Billy Graham, Carl Henry, Harold John Ockenga, and many others.'

The Coalition seeks to motivate pastors and theologians to subscribe to a policy of social activism. The theological vision for ministry urges Christians to become a counterculture for the common good. The 'doing of justice and mercy' is an important aspect of the Coalition's gospel centered ministry. 'The resurrection of Jesus shows that he is going to redeem both the spiritual and the material. Therefore God is concerned not only for the salvation of souls but also for the relief of poverty, hunger, and injustice.' In reality, this is little more than the old social gospel, dressed up in language of New Calvinism.

Contextualization

The Coalition is concerned about how the Church relates to culture, which is referred to as the contextualization issue. 'We believe that every expression of Christianity is necessarily and rightly contextualized, to some degree, to particular human culture... The gospel itself holds the key to appropriate contextualization.' The Coalition aims to get the right cultural balance in presenting the gospel.

Truth

The Coalition propagates what it calls 'a 'chastened' correspondence-theory of truth that is less triumphalistic than that of some in the older evangelicalism.' The correspondence theory of truth is a philosophical construct that argues that 'truth' is whatever corresponds to reality. Truth corresponds to the facts. It is a traditional model which goes back to some of the classical Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. It was also followed by many philosophers in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The Coalition has attached the word 'chastened' to its theory of truth. The clear inference is that the Church cannot proclaim absolute truth, revealed in Scripture, but only a chastened apologetic version of what may be truth. To declare absolute truth is labeled pejoratively as triumphalistic, something to be avoided at all costs. Rather, Christians are to be humble in their proclamation of the truth for they may be wrong. But this is not biblical understanding of truth. The Coalition appears to be apologizing for the absolute truth revealed in God's Word, of which the Christian church is the custodian."¹⁶²

Contemporary Worship

"The Coalition is completely given over to contemporary worship and many Coalition Conferences have included hip-hop concerts. An article by Collin Hansen,

¹⁶² Ibid, pages 4-11.

entitled ‘The Hip-hop Opportunity’, published on the Coalition website, describes a hip-hop concert held in the Moody Bible Institute: **The auditorium pulsated with youthful energy for nearly three hours. A diverse crowd of nearly 2,000 had formed large lines long before the doors opened to general admission seating. During the sold-out concert, they shouted out familiar lines and danced with abandon among friends and new acquaintances who shared common affinity for the music. But the message took priority over the music and even the musicians on this evening. And that’s just the way everyone wanted it... The concert—featuring rappers Lecrae, Trip Lee, Sho Baraka, Tedashi, Pro, and DJ Official—made Jesus Christ the star of the show.’** The one thing that appears to bind New Calvinists together is their devotion to contemporary worship and holy hip-hop.

Doctrine

New Calvinism is a broad tent that encourages doctrinal freedom, and discourages doctrinal disagreements. Both charismatic practices and some emerging church ideas have found an eager welcome in the New Calvinist tent. Despite lip service to the doctrines of Calvin, few in the New Calvinist movement adhere to the Westminster Confession of Faith, or the 1689 Baptist Confession. We shall see that the doctrines of New Calvinism bear little relationship to the doctrines of grace associated with Calvinism.

New Evangelicalism

Here we need to understand the relationship between New Evangelicalism and New Calvinism. The ideas of new evangelicalism, which developed in the 1940s and 50s, openly repudiated the beliefs of fundamentalism, and sought for a more liberal, accommodating faith that did not practice separation from unsound doctrine. Leaders of the new evangelicals were Dr Harold Ockenga, who coined the term, and theologian Dr Carl Henry. In 1956, with the urging and support of evangelist Billy Graham, Henry began publication of *Christianity Today*, which became the voice of the New Evangelicals, and has now become the mouth-piece of the New Calvinists.

New evangelicalism is characterized by four distinctives. First, is a low view of Scripture that compromises on biblical inerrancy. New Calvinism, as we shall see, is a careless, and even irreverent, in the use of Scripture. Second, new evangelicalism compromises on the biblical command to separate from false doctrine, and is eager to form spiritual alliances with all who profess to be Christian, whatever their beliefs. Likewise, New Calvinism is profoundly ecumenical. Third, new evangelicalism seeks acceptance by the world and strives for intellectual respectability. New Calvinism is even more openly worldly in its appetites and conduct. Fourth, new evangelicalism adds social activism to the gospel of Truth. Likewise, New Calvinism promotes social activism.

Worldwide Influence

We must appreciate that the influence of New Calvinism is worldwide. Although there is no New Calvinism organization as such in the UK, the ideas and practices are rapidly gaining ground, as they are imported from the USA. Significantly,

three of the most influential New Calvinists, Tim Keller, John Piper and Mark Driscoll, are hugely influential in the UK. Mark Driscoll is so popular that he was invited by a group of evangelical leaders to address the London Men's Convention in 2011. Tim Keller is popular with the Proclamation Trust in the UK, and has been invited to speak at three conferences of Anglican Evangelical Ministry Assembly, in 2004, 2007 and 2011, when he spoke on how preaching can be both contemporary in its application (that is, contextualization) and rooted in orthodox Christianity.

Tim Keller – The Intellectual Giant of New Calvinism

Tim Keller is a pillar of New Calvinism. As the senior pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York, he claims to promote Reformed Christianity. Newsweek has dubbed him 'The C S Lewis of the 21st Century'. He is regarded by many as a great intellectual, an expert in Christian apologetics and skilled in arguments that demonstrate the truth of Christianity in a postmodern world. In a sermon, Keller helps his listeners to see Jesus Christ as 'existentially satisfying' and 'intellectually credible'.

Tim Keller is a best-selling author and popular conference speaker. He has written a number of books, including *The Reason for God* (2008), which reached the top 10 on the *New York Times* list of best-sellers. He is so highly regarded in evangelical circles that he was a keynote speaker at the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization held in Cape Town in 2010. He gave the eulogy at John Stott's memorial service in the USA.

Under Keller's leadership Redeemer Presbyterian Church has prospered and now has approximately 5,000 members. Redeemer City to City is a worldwide church planting movement. The network comprises around 150 congregations, scattered around the USA and in other countries. It collaborates with a growing number of church planters and leaders around the world. Those who join the church planting movement are expected to propagate Keller's philosophy, books, sermons and articles. In an article 'Coming Together on Culture', Tim Keller says the first thing we need to tell people when they come to church is 'believe in Jesus', and the second thing is to 'do justice'.

Despite Keller's massive reputation and popularity among evangelical Christians, we need to carefully examine the gospel that he preaches.

Keller's Theistic Evolution

Tim Keller is a firm believer in what he calls 'progressive evolution'. In *The Reason for God* (2008) Keller seeks to help Christians overcome their doubts by persuading them of the 'truth' of theistic evolution, a theory that allows Christians to claim that they believe in both creation and evolution.

In Keller's mind, the science of evolution is beyond question, and so the Bible must be made to conform to the 'truth' of science. Keller does this by asserting that the first chapter of Genesis is a poem, and therefore cannot be taken literally. He writes: 'I think Genesis 1 has the earmarks of poetry and is therefore a 'song' about the wonder and meaning of God's creation... For the record I think God guided some kind of process of natural selection, and yet I reject the concept of evolution as All-

encompassing Theory.'

Asked to clarify the apparent contradictions in his theory of theistic evolution, Keller responds: 'How could there have been death before Adam and Eve fell? The answer is, I don't know. But all I know is, didn't animals eat bugs? Didn't bugs eat plants? There must have been death. In other words, when you realize, 'Oh wait, this is really complicated...'

Keller openly admits that his account of theistic evolution is confused. And because he realizes that there are insurmountable difficulties with his theistic evolution theory he says that he prefers what he calls the 'messy' approach. And his messy approach is without logic, incoherent and full of contradictions.

Keller's View Of Salvation

In 2006 at an 'Entrepreneur's Forum' sponsored by Redeemer Church, Keller expressed his disenchantment with conservative Christians. Quote: 'Conservative churches say 'this world is not our home—it's gonna burn up eventually and what really matters is saving souls... so evangelism and discipleship and saving souls are what is important'. And we (that is, Redeemer Presbyterian Church) try to say that it's the other way around almost. That the purpose of salvation is to renew creation. That this world is a good in itself...'

In the *Reason for God* (2008), Keller elaborates further. Quote: 'Christianity is not only about getting one's individual sins forgiven so we can go to heaven. That is an important means of God's salvation, but not the final end or purpose of it. The purpose of Jesus' coming is to put the whole world right, to renew and restore the creation, not to escape it. It is not just to bring personal forgiveness and peace, but also justice and shalom to the world... The work of the Spirit of God is not only to save souls but also to care and cultivate the face of the earth, the material world... In short, the Christian life means not only building up the Christian community through encouraging people to faith in Christ, but building up the human community through deeds of justice and service.'

Born Again Fanatics

Keller expresses his dislike for what he labels Christian fanatics. He says that the biggest deterrent to Christianity for the average person is the shadow of fanaticism. Quote: 'Many non-believers have friends or relatives who have become 'born again' and seem to have gone off the deep end. They soon begin to express loudly their disapproval of various groups and sectors of our society – especially movies and television, the Democratic Party, homosexuals, evolutionists... When arguing for the truth of their faith they often appear intolerant and self-righteous. This is what many people would call fanaticism.'

Keller argues that these born again Christians are 'overbearing, self-righteous, opinionated, insensitive and harsh'. He appears to be highly irritated by those who have been born again, and who oppose evil and take a stand for righteousness. The very tolerant Keller appears to be intolerant of born again Christians.

The Veritas Forum

In August 2011, he was invited by the Veritas Forum, a gathering of university academics and students in the USA, to deal with issues raised in his book, *The Reason for God*. Interviewed by NBC journalist Martin Bashir, Tim Keller presented his intellectual arguments for believing in God. Keller is asked whether Jesus Christ is the only way to God.

Bashir: I'm talking about the millions of Muslims, Sikhs and Jews who have heard about Jesus. Where does your thesis leave them?

Dr. Tim Keller ' So if there's some trapdoor, I haven't been told about it'.

Keller: If Jesus is who he says he is, then, long term, they don't have God. If on the other hand... all I can always say about this is, God gives me, even as a minister with the Scripture, information on a need-to-know basis... If right now, a person doesn't have him, he or she needs to get him. If they die, and they don't have Jesus Christ, I don't know... I certainly know that God is wiser than me, more merciful than me, and I do know that, when I finally find out how God is dealing with every individual soul, I won't have any questions about it.

Pushed by Bashir on what happens to people of other religions, Keller responds: 'People in other religions, unless they find Christ, I don't know any other way; but I also get information on a need-to-know basis, so if there's some trapdoor, or something like that, I haven't been told about it.'

Keller says to be a Christian means that your soul has to 'get Jesus'. And he makes the remarkable statement, before a large audience, that God may have a trap door for unbelievers that he has not told us about. Keller is surmising that God may actually have a secret way to heaven for those who do not repent and place their faith in Christ. But Keller's 'trap door' possibility is unbiblical and deeply heretical, for it implies that Christ died in vain.

And the final shock—Keller says that he does not know what happens to unbelievers who die without Christ. He says: 'If they die and they don't have Jesus Christ, I don't know' what happens to them. But how can he say he does not know when Scripture is clear? Scripture says: ***'He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him'*** (John 3:36). Note that he does not refer to Scripture in attempting to answer Bashir's questions.

Keller's Affinity with Rome

In *The Reason for God*, Keller seeks support for the dogma of theistic evolution, by looking to the Church of Rome. Quote: 'For example, the Catholic Church, the largest church in the world, has made official pronouncements supporting evolution as being compatible with Christian belief.' Note that Keller refers to the Catholic Church as the largest church in the world.

Keller's definition of Christianity includes all Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians who affirm the traditional creeds of the Faith, such as the

Apostles Creed. He writes: 'What is Christianity? For our purposes, I'll define Christianity as the body of believers who assent to these great ecumenical creeds... I am making a case in this book for the truth of Christianity in general – not for one particular strand of it.'

From the above two statements we see that Keller makes no distinction between the Protestant faith and Roman Catholicism—he claims to defend the whole Church, which includes the Roman Catholic Church, and not just one particular strand."¹⁶³

Catholic Author – Mary Flannery O'Connor

"Keller writes that he could show the way of God's grace 'in a hundred famous spiritual biographies, such as those of St Paul, Augustine, Martin Luther, John Wesley... But my favorite example of the trauma of grace is the one depicted by Flannery O'Connor in her short story 'Revelation'.

Keller spends two pages summarizing O'Connor's short story, before concluding: 'What a radical idea! The 'freaks and lunatics' going to heaven before the morally upright tribe?' Keller makes three further references to the writings of Mary Flannery O'Connor.

The *New World Encyclopedia* describes O'Connor as a life-long Roman Catholic, whose writing was deeply informed by the sacramental. 'She wrote ironic, subtly allegorical fiction about deceptively backward Southern characters, usually fundamentalist Protestants, who undergo transformations of character that, in O'Connor's view, brought them closer to the Catholic mind...'

The fact that Keller chose to use O'Connor's writing to illustrate the meaning of grace tells us much about his theology. From the vast ocean of Reformed literature that explains salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, Keller chose to use a Catholic novelist, who subtly undermines the Reformed faith through her caricatures of fundamentalist Protestant Christians.

Keller quotes Catholic celebrities Malcom Muggeridge, GK Chesterton and JR Tolkien in support of his theological and philosophical arguments. In his interview with *First Things*, America's premier Roman Catholic journal, Keller says: 'I don't want to defend just one kind of Christianity. I think I want to defend the Apostles Creed.' He wants nonbelievers to buy the Apostles' Creed, and then figure out where they want to go. In this interview Keller is clear that his intention is to defend what he calls the 'whole Faith', and that, in his mind, includes defending the Church of Rome. In effect, Keller has publicly repudiated the Reformation.

Mysticism in Keller's Church

The fruit of Keller's embrace of the Church of Rome is the promotion Catholic mystical practices in his Redeemer Church. In 2009 Keller's Presbyterian Church ran a series of talks to teach the congregation how to practice 'The Way of the Monk', a method of prayer and worship that is grounded in Catholic mysticism.

The Redeemer website explains the Catholic meditation technique of Lectio

¹⁶³ Ibid, pages 11-19.

Divina, or Divine Reading. The Redeemer website also provides advice on the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. Quote: 'Loyola's methods, recorded in his book *Spiritual Exercises*, have been used for hundreds of years. He urged people to enter into Scripture with all five senses: sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell.'

One of the Redeemer flock was so disturbed by what was happening that she wrote: 'I had to finally leave Redeemer because I learned they are holding classes on how to pray by way of lectio divina, contemplative prayer/meditation, and even how to create your own private monastery (class was called *The Way of the Monk*). This most definitely did/does not sit well with me and I wrote a letter to the Pastors and Elders of the church about my concerns a couple of months ago but have not yet received a response.'

The Gospel and Culture

Keller's book *Generous Justice* (2010) is a polemic on social activism. To support the assertion that that God is on the side of the poor, Keller quotes Gustavo Gutierrez, a Dominican priest, author of *A Theology of Liberation* (1971), and regarded as the father of Liberation Theology. Yet Keller does not mention that Gutierrez is a Catholic theologian. Keller defines what he means by justice and equates it with helping the poor. He argues that 'if it is true that justice and mercy to the poor are the inevitable signs of justifying faith', then the church has a corporate duty to the poor. He concludes: 'A life poured out in doing justice for the poor is the inevitable sign of any real, true gospel faith'.

Contextualizing The Gospel

Keller stresses the importance of making the gospel culturally sensitive. He asserts that man's resistance to the Gospel is inherently cultural. Therefore, he says the gospel must 'be presented in connection with baseline cultural narratives – Jesus must be the answer to the questions the culture is asking. Don't forget—every gospel presentation presents Jesus as the answer to some set of human-cultural questions...every gospel presentation has to be culturally incarnated, it must assume some over-riding cultural concern... Christianity must be presented as answers to the main questions and aspirations of our culture.' In presenting the gospel, says Keller, we must answer the question: What puts the world right? We must also explain how we can be part of putting the world right.

Keller's theology can be summed up in the phrase 'the primary purpose of salvation is – cultural renewal – to make this world a better place'. This idea is central to all of Keller's teachings.

Conclusion

Dr. Tim Keller is a big name in the New Calvinist movement. His teachings are widely propagated through The Gospel Coalition, the Redeemer Network, the Proclamation Trust in the UK, and conferences around the world. While he has a reputation for being a sound Protestant Christian leader, the truth is that he does not abide by the orthodox doctrines of the reformed faith. He uses a pseudo intellectual,

philosophical approach to propagate a man-made gospel. He is promoting a version of the gospel that is far from biblical truth.

We have seen that while he is deeply ecumenical in approach and sympathetic to the Catholic cause, he is irritated by the fanaticism of those who claim to be born again Christians. Like the New Evangelicals, he has a low view of Scripture that allows him to promote the doctrine of theistic evolution. He seeks to contextualize the gospel to make it culturally acceptable. He seeks to combine evangelism and social activism. He is an archetypical New Calvinist, who in fact, has repudiated the Reformation.

The Apostle Paul warned of the danger of those who promote philosophical ideas in the name of the Christian faith. ***'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him'*** (Colossians 2:8-10). We must not be taken captive by the empty deceit and man-made philosophy of New Calvinism that pays only lip service to the doctrines of the Reformation. Rather we proclaim sound biblical doctrine."¹⁶⁴

The New Calvinists: Part 2

By: Dr. E.S. Williams

Pastor John Piper, Pastor Mark Driscoll And Dr. Albert Mohler

"In my first talk, we saw that New Calvinism, while claiming an allegiance to the doctrines of Calvin, did not always abide by the doctrines of the Reformed faith. We saw that the Gospel Coalition, the flagship of New Calvinism was ecumenical in approach. Dr. Tim Keller, the intellectual giant of New Calvinism, and co-founder of the Gospel Coalition, defined Christianity as the body of believers who assent to the great ecumenical creeds, and that included Roman Catholics.

Another feature of New Calvinism is that it seeks to combine evangelism with social activism. The Gospel Coalition, the citadel of New Calvinism, believes that the Gospel should be contextualized to make it relevant to the culture of the day. We concluded that New Calvinists have a passion for contemporary worship.

In today's talk I will focus on three men who are enormously influential in the New Calvinist movement, namely, Pastor John Piper of Desiring God Ministries; Pastor Mark Driscoll of Mars Hill Church, Seattle, who is also the founder of the Acts 29 church planting network, and Dr. Albert Mohler, President of Southern Baptist Theological College in Louisville, USA.

John Piper

Who is Piper? John Piper is the eloquent preacher who stands at the very center of the New Calvinism movement. His charismatic personality and powerful, eloquent preaching style has made him extremely influential among young evangelical Christians. Piper has a reputation of being a five point Calvinist. His *Desiring God* website affirms: 'We begin as Bible-believing Christians who want to put

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, pages 20-25.

the Bible above all systems of thought. But over the years we have deepened in our conviction that Calvinistic teachings on the five points are Biblical and therefore true.'

Piper's bestselling book, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (1986), claims to help readers embark on a different and joyful experience of their faith. The book has been called a 20th century classic that changes lives. Some reviews declare that, next to the Bible, *Desiring God* is the most life-changing book they have ever read. Such is the attraction of the term, 'Desiring God', that Piper has successfully created a thriving industry that promotes his vision of Christian hedonism. Such is the influence of this book, that to much acclaim, Piper has recently celebrated its 25th anniversary.

Piper is highly regarded as a conference speaker. He is a keynote speaker at the annual Passion Conference, attended by many thousands of students and young people. He was invited to address a plenary session of the third Lausanne Congress in Cape Town (2010), one of the largest gatherings of evangelical Christian leaders in church history.

His annual *Desiring God Conference* in the USA attracts speakers from across the theological spectrum. In 2007, Piper spoke at the inaugural meeting of the Gospel Coalition, of which he is a council member. Despite his massive popularity, there is much in Piper's ministry that compromises the Reformed faith he claims to proclaim.

A Flawed Foundation

Three important influences have shaped Piper's thinking and theology. First, John Piper studied theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, and openly acknowledges the important influence of Fuller Seminary on his theological thinking, despite the Seminary's flawed view of Scripture and liberal theology. In *Desiring God*, Piper explains: 'As with almost everything I do, the influence of Daniel P Fuller pervades'. Piper openly acknowledges the influence of Fuller Seminary on his theological thinking, yet Fuller's view of Scripture was seriously compromised and by the end of the 1960s, 'limited inerrancy' was the dominant view of Fuller Seminary. Daniel Fuller, Dean of the Seminary, promoted what may be called a doctrine of the partial inspiration of Scripture. He argued that there are two kinds of Scripture—revelational Scripture that is wholly without error and non-revelational Scripture that is not without error. Undoubtedly, Piper is the product of Fuller's liberal, compromised view of the Christian faith.

The second influence came from the Catholic philosopher Blaise Pascal. At Seminary Piper was introduced to the philosophy of Pascal, who declared: 'All men seek happiness. This is without exception.' For Piper, this was good enough. He developed his theory of Christian hedonism, by scanning the Scriptures to find verses that appeared to support Pascal's theory. In doing so he committed a cardinal error, for he started with the ideas of man, and then turned to Scripture to justify a philosophical system. (This is so blatantly wrong.) But this is the wrong way round—sound Christian thinking always starts with God's Word, not with man's ideas. 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man' (Jeremiah 17.5).

The third influence on Piper was that of CS Lewis. Piper grew to love the work of CS Lewis, and one of Lewis' sermons, 'The Weight of Glory', had a profound

influence on him. 'I had never in my whole life heard any Christian, let alone a Christian of Lewis' stature, say that all of us not only seek (as Pascal said) but also ought to seek our own happiness.'

But Oxford Professor CS Lewis was not a sound guide, for he had a confused understanding of the Christian faith. He rejected the inerrancy of Scripture and justification by faith alone, as well as the doctrines of total depravity and the sovereignty of God.' Lewis taught and believed in purgatory, said prayers for the dead, and much of his writing is deeply mystical."¹⁶⁵

Piper's Yearning For Happiness

"Based on the ideas of Pascal and CS Lewis, Piper developed a philosophy of life, which he calls 'Christian Hedonism'. In *Desiring God*, Piper explains: 'All those years I had been trying to suppress my tremendous longing for happiness, so I could honestly praise God out of some 'higher' less selfish motive. But now it started to dawn on me that this persistent, and undeniable yearning for happiness, was not to be suppressed, but to be gluttoned – on God.' Piper's tremendous longing for happiness, was to be nurtured and cultivated, and God was to be the source that satisfied his yearning. No surprise then, that the index of *Desiring God* has twenty references to happiness and only one to holiness.

Here we should note that it is the unregenerate heart that sees happiness as the prime purpose of life. The Apostle Paul prayed that the Colossian saints would desire to be 'filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing' (Colossians 1.9-10). Piper's flawed theology allowed him to integrate human philosophy with the Christian faith, and the result was Christian Hedonism, and the *Desiring God* industry, which is a main promoter of New Calvinism.

Piper's handling of Scripture is disappointing. When attempting to show how the Bible not only supports, but commands Christians to be hedonists, Piper makes use of partial quotations, takes passages out-of-context in ways that can change their meaning. Proof texting is not a sound approach for creating a philosophy of life. Dr. Master's, in a review of *Desiring God*, writes that the result of Piper's system of thought has been to distort the biblical concept of Christian sanctification.

Piper Hears God

Piper has placed on record, on his *Desiring God* website, his experience of hearing God speak to him, audibly, from Psalm 66:5-7. 'Let me tell you about a most wonderful experience I had early Monday morning, March 19, 2007, a little after six o'clock. God actually spoke to me. There is no doubt that it was God. I heard the words in my head just as clearly as when a memory of a conversation passes across your consciousness. The words were in English, but they had about them an absolutely self-authenticating ring of truth. I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that God still speaks today.' Piper claims God said to him: '*Come and see what I have done.*' God's voice also said: '*I keep watch over the nations—let not the rebellious exalt themselves.*'

¹⁶⁵ The New Calvinists, Part II, Website, By: E.S. Williams, pages 1-5.

Piper interprets his ecstatic experience: 'He [God] may as well have taken me by the collar of my shirt, lifted me off the ground with one hand, and said, with an incomparable mixture of fierceness and love, 'Never, never, never exalt yourself. Never rebel against me.' 'In effect, Piper is putting words in God's mouth that are not in Scripture.

It is surprising that an eminent Reformed theologian should place on public record his experience of 'hearing God's voice' speaking personally to him. The historic Protestant position affirms 'that the Word God, spoke through apostles and prophets, and intended for the direction of his church, is now found only in sacred Scripture'. (Amen)

The Folly Of The Contemporary Music Scene

At the center of Piper's ministry is a commitment to contemporary, worldly, irreverent worship. Piper's annual Desiring God National Conference promotes contemporary worship. Piper is closely associated with the annual Passion Conference, a huge gathering of young people who are given over to the contemporary music scene. Each year Piper delivers a message to the thousands of young people who are gathered to be entertained by loud beating music, flashing strobe lights and energetic rap artists.

Piper is also committed to the holy hip-hop scene. He publicly demonstrated his support by inviting a popular rap artist Lecrae to perform during a morning church service. The rap artist received a standing ovation from the eager congregation. So close is the relationship between John Piper and rap artist Lecrae that their respective organizations, *Desiring God* and *Reach Records*, have worked together to produce a holy hip-hop DVDs.

Piper Really Likes Rick Warren

In 2010 Piper invited Pastor Rick Warren to address the Desiring God National Conference. Explaining his reason, Piper said: 'I do think he [Warren] is deeply theological, he's a brilliant man... So I don't think he's emergent; at root I think he is theological and doctrinal and sound.' (This is absolutely false. Rick Warren is part of the Emergent Church Movement)

In 2011, Piper sat down with Rick Warren in the studios of Saddleback Church to discuss the doctrine surrounding Warren's book, *Purpose Driven Life* (2002). Piper made it clear that he has no problem with *Purpose Driven Life*, which he says has been much maligned by most Reformed theologians. Piper says: 'Frankly, I'm appalled at the kinds of slander that have been brought against this book...'

Piper has used his position as a leader within the church, to persuade Christians that Rick Warren has been misinterpreted and misunderstood. So close is the fellowship between Piper and Warren that a regional Desiring God Conference in April 2011 was held in Warren's Saddleback Church in California.

John Piper is undoubtedly at the center of New Calvinism. He has used his Desiring God ministry to proclaim his flawed philosophy of Christian Hedonism. He has also promoted contemporary, irreverent worldly worship in the Church, even supporting holy hip-hop. He is deeply ecumenical in outlook and makes no attempt

to separate the true from the false."¹⁶⁶

Mark Driscoll

"Who is Mark Driscoll? Mark Driscoll, pastor of the mega Mars Hill Church in Seattle, and co-founder of the Acts 29 church-planting network, is one of the most influential men in the New Calvinist movement. He has the reputation of being the world's most downloaded and quoted pastor. Preaching magazine named Driscoll among the '25 Most Influential Pastors of the Past 25 Years'.

The Acts 29 Network, which has planted over 400 churches, is active in the UK and thirteen other nations. Driscoll has also founded what he calls The Resurgence, a theological cooperative that works with the Acts 29 Network of church planters to produce resources for the Church. Driscoll is invited to talk at Christian Conferences in the USA and across the world. In May 2011, he was invited by evangelical Christians in the UK to preach before 4,000 men at the London Men's Convention in the Royal Albert Hall. He was a council member of The Gospel Coalition, until he resigned recently.

Driscoll claims to be firmly in the Calvinist camp. He says that John Calvin is one of the greatest teachers in the history of the Church. Quote: 'I really appreciate his work, and I named my middle son Calvin Martin, after John Calvin and Martin Luther. This tells you what team I'm on.'

Driscoll is also a great admirer of Charles Spurgeon. In many ways he has attempted to model himself on Spurgeon, whom he refers to as 'arguably the greatest Bible preacher outside of Scripture... the writing of Spurgeon is incredibly inspiring to me... I find a mentor with whom I can relate...'

Driscoll has suggested four ways in which New Calvinism has improved on the older version. First, Old Calvinism was fundamental and separated from culture, whereas New Calvinism is missional and seeks to create and redeem culture. Second, Old Calvinism fled from the cities, while New Calvinism is flooding into cities. Third, Old Calvinism was cessationistic and fearful of the presence of the Holy Spirit. New Calvinism is continuationist and joyful in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Fourth, Old Calvinism was fearful and suspicious of other Christians and burned bridges. New Calvinism loves all Christians and builds bridges between them.

But despite his popularity in the evangelical world, Driscoll's ministry has proved to be controversial because of his unconventional methods, which he describes as 'theological conservative and culturally liberal'. Here are some of the main characteristics of Driscoll's ministry.

1. Perverse Language And Corrupt Communication

Driscoll has frequently used perverse and crude language. His language—even in his sermons—is crude, and at times lewd and vulgar. He was so well known for using profane language that in *Blue Like Jazz*, Donald Miller, popular author and icon of the 'Emerging Church' movement, nicknamed him 'Mark the Cussing Pastor'. In recent years, however, Driscoll has somewhat modified his language.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, pages 5-8.

A feature of Driscoll's ministry is his casual dress. When preaching in Mars Hill Church he often wears jeans and a large range of provocative t-shirts. Examples include a T-shirt with the slogan 'Body piercing saved my life'; an image of Drag Queen Jesus, with the caption, 'Jesus watches you download porn'. Other T-shirts include images of Mickey Mouse, Jesus is my homeboy, Mary is my home girl, Skull and Cross bones, and Jesus as a DJ.

2. Mocking Scripture

Driscoll often mocks Scripture and makes fun of biblical characters. He calls Gideon, the Lord's warrior, a complete coward; he calls John the Baptist a freak. In a sermon on humor in the Bible, he says the book of Genesis is where all things begin including good comedy... Quote: 'I mean the whole book is a redneck, hillbilly saga, par excellence. It's like all of Genesis takes place in a trailer park... the whole book is filled with redneck comedy... That's how I see it. It's kind of funny that after God kills everyone, the one 'righteous' guy passes out naked in his tent.'

Driscoll's book *Vintage Jesus* (2008), while containing some doctrinal truth, contains much which is crude and offensive. It is widely available in Christian book shops in the USA and UK and other countries around the world. Many church book stalls are promoting this book and thousands of young people will have read it. To gain insight into the tragedy and compromise of New Calvinism, we need to understand what is being written by some of its leading proponents.

Now a few quotes from pages 43-44, 'In the first chapter of Mark, Jesus starts off by yelling at complete strangers to repent of their sin... In the second chapter, Jesus picks a fight with some well-mannered religious types...' 'In the third chapter, Jesus gets angry and also grieves, and apparently needs Praxil... Then he ignores his own mom... In chapter 5, Jesus kills two thousand pigs, sending the animal rights activist blogosphere into a panic, and creating a bacon famine... In chapter 6, Jesus offends some people and apparently needs sensitivity training. In chapter 7, a few religious types have some questions for Jesus, and he cruelly calls them 'hypocrites' and goes on a lengthy tirade about them...' And so it goes on, with vacuous comments about each chapter in Mark's Gospel.

Driscoll draws his conclusion. 'In summary, the Jesus of Mark's Gospel is not fitting for old ladies in hats and men in suits like those we see at church.'

Throughout his ministry Driscoll reveals an intense dislike for what he calls religious people, which means traditional church goers, and takes every opportunity to condemn those, who in his eyes, are fundamentalists, for they are 'prone to legalism, moralism, and a general lack of love, grace or patience'.

In *Vintage Jesus* he describes our Lord as an intolerant, aggressive, depressive who needs sensitivity training. He also says, 'Jesus was actually a pretty fun guy because he got invited to a lot of parties...' The picture he paints of our Lord Jesus Christ is irreverent, and blasphemous. Driscoll's approach to Scripture is flippant and mocking.

Yet *Vintage Jesus* has been widely praised by many prominent evangelical Christian leaders. Professor of Christian theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Bruce Ware, endorses the book. "Vintage Jesus offers a fresh, engaging, and

insightful discussion of some of the oldest and most crucial truths about Jesus Christ that constitute the very core of the gospel itself. As I read, my heart leapt for joy, for the wonder and brilliance of the truths being developed...'

Professor Wayne Grudem, Research Professor of Bible and Theology, Phoenix, is equally fulsome in his praise: 'Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears combine profound understanding of modern culture with weighty Christian doctrine that is faithful to the Bible. It's written in such an interesting style that it's hard to put down. I strongly recommend it!' This book has also been endorsed by John Piper and the Desiring God organization has promoted *Vintage Jesus*.

3. Sexual Licentiousness

From the beginning of his ministry, Mark Driscoll has sought to promote lasciviousness in the Church. His writing is full of sexual innuendoes and sexually provocative language. Driscoll built his ministry, in large part, by preaching and teaching about sex, and by using crude and provocative language. In his book, *Confessions of a Reformission Rev* (2006), he explains his technique for achieving church growth—he assumed young people were all interested in sex and so he preached through the Song of Songs, which he interpreted as a sex manual.

Although he is careful to say that sex is for marriage, his handling of sexual matters is sensuous and impure. In his book *Radical Reformission*, as part of a cultural immersion project, he suggests that men should read 'Cosmo Girl' magazine and to listen to salacious sex talk radio programs.

The Mars Hill Church website has provided hyperlinks to two pornographic websites. Dr. Judith Reisman (an expert on the discredited research of Alfred Kinsey), having viewed Driscoll's recommended websites, commented: 'Well, this is, at best, tragic. I don't know if it is worse to think that these are phony church sites put out by pornographers, or that they are real church sites put out by pornified churches. Words cannot describe the ignorance, arrogance and flagrant homoeroticism of these sites.'

In 2007, Driscoll preached a sermon, entitled 'Sex, a Study of the Good Bits from Song of Solomon', in two Scottish churches. He offered the congregation a choice of three sermons, and asked them to choose. Amid cheers and laughter, the congregation chose sex in the Song of Solomon. The sermon was so crude and vulgar, even by Driscoll's standards, that it caused outrage.

Driscoll's latest book, *Real Marriage* (2012), again deals with sex in the most provocative, lewd and indecent way."¹⁶⁷

4. God Loves Punk-Rock Music

"Driscoll's underlying philosophy assumes that Christians should engage with the culture of the day. Worldly punk-rock music forms a major part of Driscoll's life and ministry. He has called hip-hop artist Jay-Z as a genius, and referred to Christian rap artist Lecrae as a missionary of the 21st Century. Driscoll's love of hard rock music has had a large impact on Mars Hill Church. 'I envisioned a large church that hosted

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, pages 9-18.

concerts for non-Christian bands...'

He writes in *Radical Reformation*. 'I was torn between buying the 'secular' music that I enjoyed and the Christian music that I did not. After much prayer, I decided that God loved me and allowed my [Christian] music to be stolen so that I could buy back the old albums that I enjoyed. And so I did, and as pastor of a church filled with 'secular' bands that hosts 'secular' concerts, I have not had a regret since.' (*Radical Reformation*), Piper described the music in Driscoll's church the loudest he had ever heard.

5. Jesus Loves Tattoos (Straight Out Of Hell)

Driscoll's church supports tattoo artists in their work. The issue of tattoos is discussed on the Mars Hill Downtown Campus under the headline: Jesus Loves Tattoos. Driscoll has no objection to Christian people being tattooed. In a sermon Driscoll boldly asserted: 'You are free in Christ to be weird... Let me just say our position is this—tattoos are not a sin, right. Jesus Christ is going to have a tattoo—Revelation says on his second coming. (Total Blasphemy) It says that down his right leg will be written King of Kings and Lord of Lords, which will be really freakish for all for the fundamentalists to see Jesus all tattooed up. I can't wait for that day...' (This is one of the most absurd statements, and it leads me to believe that Driscoll is not even saved.)

6. Supernatural Visions

Driscoll claims that he has the gift of discernment that allows him to see the sins of people in his congregation. In a seminar on counseling, Mark Driscoll makes the statement: '*Some people actually see things. This may be gift of discernment. On occasion, I see things. I see things.*' Driscoll claims that he saw a person being sexually abused as a child. Driscoll: '*It's like I got a TV right here. I'm seeing it... But some of you have this visual ability to see things.*' (*Driscoll truly must be demon possessed.*)

Driscoll explains: '*It's the supernatural. It's the whole other realm. It's like the Matrix. You can take the blue pill, you take the red pill. You go into this whole other world. And that's the way it works... I see things too. I've seen women raped. I've seen children molested. I've seen people abused. I've seen people beaten. I've seen horrible things done. (And yes, Driscoll seems to be on drugs, so indicated by his behavior.)*

Is Mark Driscoll a false teacher? (Without a doubt, he is a false wicked teacher!) *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them* (Matthew 7:20). *For the tree is known by his fruit* (Matthew 12:33). Mark Driscoll presents himself as theologically conservative and culturally liberal. He says that, 'The emerging church proclaims a gospel of freedom.' Driscoll's gospel of freedom appears to be a gospel that is free from the rules and conduct of biblical Christianity. So is Driscoll a false teacher? This is a question that confuses many people.

In practice we see a vast gulf between the doctrine that Driscoll claims to proclaim and the conduct that he promotes through his culturally liberal ministry. Those who support Driscoll's ministry refer to sermons that are doctrinally acceptable. But what about the conduct that Driscoll not only approves of, but also promotes? What is the value of doctrinal soundness when it is combined with

licentious behavior? Is this not the dangerous heresy referred to in the book of Jude, where false teachers secretly slip into the church and turn the grace of God into sensuality (Jude 4). (Yes, yes, yes.)

The Test For False Teachers

So is Driscoll a false teacher? Our Lord gave us the test for false teachers to help his disciples identify them and avoid their teaching. ***'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them'*** (Matthew 7:15-20).

Here we should note that a false teacher is to be *judged by his fruits, not by his words*. This is the crucial point. Our Lord explains: ***'Not everyone who says Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in your name?'*** (Matthew 7:21-22). So we see that the false prophet is one who speaks about the things of God in Christ's name. But, his fruit is corrupt.

Therefore, as a corrupt tree produces corrupt fruit, so a false teacher (one who speaks and teaches in the name of the Lord) produces corrupt conduct. So we should expect a false teacher, who is a messenger of Satan, (2 Corinthians 11:14) to disguise himself as a servant of righteousness by using sound words, for that is part of the deception. Therefore we must examine the conduct that results from the ministry of a teacher. The toxic message of a wolf in sheep's clothing is a mixture of truth and error that produces corrupt conduct. So what are the fruits of Driscoll's ministry? As we have heard in this talk, the fruit of Driscoll's ministry includes the following corrupt fruit: 1) Perverse language and corrupt communication. 2) Mocking Scripture. 3) Sexual licentiousness. 4) Punk-rock music. 5) Tattoos 6) Supernatural visions.

There is no doubt that Driscoll's ministry promotes sinful behavior in the church. He has turned the grace of God into licentiousness. His teaching perverts holy living by encouraging worldliness in the church. He is promoting a carnal, fleshly version of Christianity that revels in the lusts of the flesh. He encourages Christians to walk according to the ways of the flesh, to set their minds on the things of the flesh, which are licentiousness, immorality, impurity and sensuality (Galatians 5:19). So is Mark Driscoll a false teacher? Our Lord said, 'Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.' As a corrupt tree brings forth corrupt fruit, so a false teacher produces sinful conduct in the church. Therefore Mark Driscoll must be judged by his fruits.

How Has Driscoll Become So Popular Among New Calvinists?

Driscoll has gained a position of pre-eminence in New Calvinism because he has received enormous support and encouragement from a number of evangelical leaders in the USA and in the UK. In the USA, Driscoll is a regular speaker at large evangelical conferences, such as the Gospel Coalition and the Desiring God

Conference. In the UK, he was invited by evangelical Christians to speak at the London Men's Convention in the prestigious Royal Albert Hall to 4,000 men.

Perhaps the greatest supporter of Mark Driscoll's ministry is John Piper. He has twice invited Driscoll to speak at the Desiring God Conference. Piper said the reason he invited Driscoll was because he loves Mark Driscoll's theology, and because Mark is his friend. He helps Driscoll like a father helps his son.

Significantly, Driscoll has often preached at the annual Gospel Coalition Conference. In 2009, the titled of Driscoll's sermon was 'Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth'. Driscoll started his sermon: 'I want to thank Dr. Carson, whom I love and appreciate very much, and Dr. Tim Keller for bringing us all together... what holds us together is theological conviction and that's really what matters most...' In 2011 Driscoll preached on 'The Spirit-Filled Missional Ministry of Jesus', promoting his Act 29 version of ministry. The Gospel Coalition has fully endorsed Driscoll's ministry, and he has been a council member for years, until he resigned a few months ago.

Mark Driscoll was so influential in the Gospel Coalition that at the 2011 National Conference, he was part of a panel discussion dealing with the issue of 'Training the Next Generation of Pastors and Other Christian Leaders'. The Panel was chaired by Don Carson, with Mark Driscoll comfortably seated in the middle of some of the biggest names in the evangelical world, namely, Dr. Albert Mohler, David Helm, and Ligon Duncan."¹⁶⁸

Dr. Albert Mohler

Dr. Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is widely recognized as a leader among American evangelicals, and prominent among New Calvinists. *Time* magazine referred to him as the reigning intellectual of the evangelical movement in the U.S.' (Totally a false statement.)

Mohler made a name for himself when appointed to head Southern Baptist Seminary in 1993, by requiring faculty members to affirm without reservation the school's confession of faith, derived from the reformed doctrines of the Westminster Confession. Mohler explains: 'I said, in sum, if this is what you believe, then we want you to stay. If not, then you have come here under false pretenses, and you must go.' Only 4 faculty members—from more than 100—stayed with Southern after Mohler arrived. (**A Day In Infamy for Southern Baptists.**)

Of significance is the fact that Billy Graham spoke at Mohler's inauguration in October 1993. Southern Seminary, having cleaned out the liberals, invited in the New Evangelicals. No surprise that Mohler's first major initiative was the establishment of the Billy Graham School of Evangelism, Mission and Church Growth, heartily endorsed by Graham. Today the Southern Baptist Seminary, which has more than 4,300 students, turns out a steady flow of young pastors. But all is not quite what it appears to be. There are three concerns.

Mohler's Ecumenical Spirit

First, Al Mohler has shown himself to be deeply ecumenical, and sympathetic to New Evangelical thinking. In 2001, Al Mohler chaired the executive committee of

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, pages 19-23.

the Greater Louisville Billy Graham Crusade, despite the fact that the ecumenical compromise of Billy Graham had been well documented. It was widely known among reformed Christians that Graham was a leader of the new evangelical compromise, and profoundly sympathetic to the Church of Rome.

According to theologian Dr. Kevin Bauder, writing in *Baptist Bulletin*: 'Al Mohler has been willing to cooperate with Billy Graham and honor him on his campus. We are not willing to honor Billy Graham. (Billy Graham was a good man, but did push Ecumenicalism.) We think this is a man who deserves reproof and censure for what he has done to the gospel. (I disagree with this statement.) Mohler responded that Dr. Graham spoke at his inauguration, and played a very important role in the conservative resurgence at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, for which Mohler was deeply grateful.' **(Al Mohler used Dr. Billy Graham for his own self-centered purposes.)**

Dr. Mohler was one of the first to sign the ecumenical Manhattan Declaration, together with leaders from the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches. Mohler said he signed the Declaration because it dealt with the sanctity of human life, the integrity of marriage, and the defense of religious liberty, on which the Christian conscience cannot be silent. Quote: 'Finally, I signed The Manhattan Declaration because I want to put my name on its final pledge — that we will not bend the knee to Caesar.' Mohler declared that, together with Roman Catholic leaders, he will refuse to bow the knee to Caesar. (How horribly absurd.)

Mohler again revealed his ecumenical spirit by serving as a council member of the compromised Gospel Coalition. In June 2011, he appeared on a Coalition panel discussion on training pastors, seated next to Pastor Mark Driscoll.

In December 2011, when asked to comment on Mark Driscoll's controversial ministry, Al Mohler responded: Quote: 'I'm thankful that Mark Driscoll believes in, teaches and preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. I appreciate and admire his boldness and his tenacity... The Gospel has implications. Pastor Driscoll and I would not agree on all those implications. I have great concerns about what I would consider to be excessive contextualization... I want to say there are certain things that pastor Driscoll speaks about that I would never speak to anyone about.'

Here Mohler was given the opportunity to warn of the danger of Driscoll's worldly ministry, (as John MacArthur had done) but he chose not to do so. Significantly, as mentioned above, only a few months previously Mohler and Driscoll had been comfortable seated together on a Coalition panel, discussing how to train the next generation of pastors and Christian leaders.

Promoting Worldly Hip-Hop Culture

The second concern is that Dr. Mohler's radio program has given prominent air time to two well-known rap artists, namely Marcus Gray, also known as Flame, and Lecrae. These programs, hosted by Dr Russell Moore, Dean of the School of Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, openly promoted hip hop culture and Christian rap music. Dr. Russell Moore spoke about how the church can dialogue with the hip-hop culture. He said: 'There is something in hip-hop that we can learn from in all kinds of ways, in our evangelism, in our discipleship, in our

preaching, especially in our preaching.’ He asserted that the lyrics of rap music are really very deeply doctrinal and theological. He also claimed that the church has much to learn from hip-hop culture about proper biblical contextualization. He even invited Lecrae to recommend a list of Christian rap artists. The effect of these programs, coming from the Albert Mohler Program, with the blessing of Southern Baptist Seminary, is to endorse Christian rap and hip-hop culture among theological students and young Christians. Dr. Mohler’s radio program has welcomed the world into the church—it has put no difference between the holy and the profane.

Conclusions

Having described the doctrines and practice of New Calvinism, we must draw together our conclusions. New Calvinism is a movement that has emerged out of the compromises of the New Evangelicals, the practices of the Emerging Church, and the false thinking of a New Ecumenism that regards the Roman Church as simply another branch of the Christian faith. It is a movement that, while paying lip service to the doctrines of Calvin, in practice has repudiated the Protestant Reformation.

Here are the five features of New Calvinism.

1) Doctrinal Shallowness.

New Calvinism, despite its claims of being a resurgence of the Reformed doctrines of Calvin, is doctrinally shallow. Its message of salvation, while may at times be technically correct, is delivered in a way that lacks conviction; that seldom mentions the awful offence of sin and the need for genuine repentance unto salvation that leads to new life in Christ. New Calvinism’s teaching on sanctification is deficient. It downplays the need for holy living, while emphasizing the freedom, pleasures and benefits of the Christian life.

2) Loves The Things Of The World

New Calvinism has brought the ways and thinking of the world into the church. It does not usually separate from the attitude, desires and things of the world. New Calvinism is given over to the desires and thinking of the flesh. It is deeply committed to contemporary worship and the holy hip-hop scene. In matters of dress, language and entertainment, New Calvinism accepts and follows the way of the world.

3) Profoundly Ecumenical

New Calvinism is a broad tent that embraces all shades of doctrine. Assent to the apostle’s creed is all that is required for one to be accepted as a Christian. This means New Calvinism is sympathetic to Roman Catholicism. Its inclusive attitude readily accepts charismatic and emerging church errors. The pursuit of false ecclesiastical unity is the cardinal error of New Calvinism that leads to all manner of compromise. New Calvinists refuse to separate from unsound doctrine, and even the most extremely forms of false teaching. Many form spiritual alliances that are about pragmatic advantage, rather than about the proclaiming the true gospel. Like the New Evangelical, so the New Calvinist, do not practice separation from those manifestly in error, and thus violate Scriptural principles as stated in 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

4) Social Activism

New Calvinism adds the social gospel to the gospel of salvation. It believes that a central aspect of the gospel is an attitude of social activism that aims to redeem culture and save the world. It promotes social programs to care for the poor, and the human rights agenda to improve social justice.

5) Low View Of Scripture

New Calvinism has moved beyond the inerrancy of Scripture debate, for its approach to Scripture is characterized by irreverence and flippancy. Some in the New Calvinist camp even use the Bible as a source of good comedy. The lyrics of rap artists are regarded as being profoundly doctrinal, able to teach the church how the Word of God should be preached. Scripture is contextualized to make the gospel world view sensitive and acceptable to the latest cultural trends in society. Jesus must be presented as the answer to the questions the culture is asking.

New Calvinism is a movement that is characterized by flippancy to holy things. It has no fear of God; it puts no difference between the holy and the profane. Puritan Thomas Watson gave this advice: 'Take heed whom you listen to! It is our dear Savior's counsel, **'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves' (Matthew 7:15)**. Let me tell you, the Devil has his ministers – as well as Christ. There are some, who by the subtlety of their wit have learned the art of mixing error with truth, and to give poison in a golden cup.'

Our response to this onslaught against the truth of the gospel is first to examine every new teaching, and to expose that which is false. We must contend for the gospel once for all delivered to the saints. We must preach and teach sound doctrine."¹⁶⁹

One More Chapter Note!

I am sure that by now, some of you readers believe that I have truly lost my mind because I have put several articles in this book from Dr. E.S. Williams and others that are surely repetitious. However, I make no apology for this because this has been done intentionally. Why? Because the best way to come to understand something clearly is to read it over and over in order to get it very precisely. And, I do want to say that I beg all of you to not only read these materials which have been given to us by others, but please take it to heart in order to see just how bad things really are in the deteriorating S.B.C., because of so many things, but especially the resurgence of this so-called new Calvinism. Don't you think that it is rather paradoxical that the "Conservative Resurgence", which started way back there in 1979, is now being outclassed by this damnable doctrine called Calvinism? I would honestly never have believed in a million years that this would have been possible. But, with the wicked leadership of men who have professed to be great Christians and brilliant scholars, and yes, even some of which have been given great fanfare and applause by thousands of people, have now brought false doctrine, demonic wickedness, Hitler-like

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, pages 23-29.

dictatorship, and many other negative factors into the formerly great Southern Baptist Convention. Truthfully, I am so embarrassed by these “wolves in sheep's clothing” that I just can't accept the diabolical infestation of this evil plague which has infiltrated every level of the S.B.C.

As I sit here writing on a Monday evening, I can't help but think about the comparison of the Southern Baptist Convention's present on-going destruction with the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, East Africa. My wife and I have worked there for many years. I can still hear the many vivid testimonies of the people who survived that genocide as they told me about what happened when the radio disk jockeys stayed on the air and screamed at the people. They told them to get out of their houses and “go kill those cockroaches” that had been their neighbors for 40 plus years. This went on constantly for 100 days. During those 100 days, it is believed that over one million people were slaughtered throughout that beautiful “Country of 1,000 Hills” called Rwanda.

This is truly what is happening right now, and sad to say, it has been going on more and more rapidly over the past 25 years since Al Mohler became the President of the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. That seminary is the hub of the great big wheel that is rapidly rolling down hill to the total destruction of the Southern Baptist Convention, as this older generation of historical traditionalists remember how good it was when the Conservative Resurgency took over from the moderates or liberals back there in 1979. Truly, if this rolling wheel or rolling snowball is to be stopped, then some Godly conservatives who are truly Baptist and not newly reformed Presbyterians, must stand up and say, “Enough is enough, and we are not going to sit back and see the greatest Protestant denomination in history destroyed by wicked and worldly ‘wolves in sheep's clothing!’”

Chapter Ten

Take A Look At The New Image Of The Southern Baptist Convention

I want to begin this chapter by doing something that I don't like to do, but I have done it in some of the previous chapters of this book because of the tremendous importance of sharing the truth in an effort to hopefully expose the continuing decline of the Southern Baptist Convention. What I am talking about is sharing some negative thoughts about someone whom I have never met, but whom I feel presents a terrible image of the present Southern Baptist Convention and whose image will probably contribute to the rapid demise and disintegration of the S.B.C. What I am talking about is the new image of the S.B.C. as revealed in the new S.B.C. President, Pastor J.D. Greear. Dr. Greear is the pastor of the Summit Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, right here in my home state where I sit writing this morning. Pastor Greear was elected as the new Southern Baptist Convention President back in June of this year, 2018, in the annual meeting in Dallas, Texas. Pastor Greear was nominated by Dr. Ken Whitten, pastor of the Idlewild Baptist Church, in Lutz, Florida, right next door to Tampa.

From most of the things I have read about Dr. Greear, it seems that he is a respected young pastor of 46 years old, with a beautiful young family. I am happy for the good things that have happened for and through him at the Summit Church in Raleigh, but when I saw him on T.V. receiving the Presidency of the Convention in Dallas, Texas, my heart just dropped. I thought, "Is this how low we as God's servants have sunk to unconsciously select a young man that presents the image that he has just come off the baseball field or just come from a Saturday afternoon shopping spree at the local mall? Here is a young man of God supposedly representing over 15 million Southern Baptists, and he is not respectful enough of this tremendous role to wear a suit and tie and present himself as the leader of the largest evangelical denomination on earth. Of course, I believe I can rightly attest that his appearance on that Tuesday in Dallas, was nothing more than his doing what so many young professing pastors are trying to do today. He, like the others, was trying to make an impression with an uncouth and ill-kempt generation of young people who "just don't get it". They believe that they need to get the attention of observers to make sure that everyone knows they are just simply themselves, and no one, no event, no prestigious award, or any other thing will demand that they conduct themselves according to any code of ethics, no standard of respect, no requirement to live up to the rules of others, and no obedience to what others expect. Yet, these same young "punk pastors", like J.D. Greear, have the audacity to go to their platforms (no longer pulpits) every week and tell people that God expects them to live by His plans. I don't know about you folks, but this seems to me like the greatest hypocrisy I have ever heard. No rules for them, but surely rules and standards for others. My belief is simply that they are trying to prove their point, "Don't try to make me live my Christian life according to your interpretation of what is right and wrong." If you remember from one of the early chapters of this book, this attitude sounds like the "cussing preacher, Mark Driscoll", who is going to do it his way, even if the rest of the world goes to hell if they

don't like his methodology or plans. I am quite sure that probably J.D. Greear is not another Mark Driscoll, but he seems to have something to prove, just like Driscoll.

Is J.D. Greear Truly A Southern Baptist?

Is Dr. J.D. Greear truly a Southern Baptist? This is quite a question when you consider the fact that this man is presently the President of the S.B.C. According to many things that I had read before the June, 2018 Southern Baptist annual meeting in Dallas, Texas, and also, because of many things I have consulted since his election as the new president of this 15 million member Baptist denomination, I must tell you that I doubt very seriously that he even knows what a true Southern Baptist is according to the concept of the true historical traditionalist who have lead the S.B.C. for years and years. I must tell you folks that I see very little in Dr. Greear that reveals that he is truly a Southern Baptist preacher like the patterns I have spent my entire life with. So, let's take a look at this new president and see if there are characteristics of a true Southern Baptist. Please notice the next few articles that I want to share with you to see if you will join me in assessing that a Southern Baptist, J.D. Greear is not!

J.D. Greear: We Are S.B.C. But Don't Wear It On Our Sleeve

"J.D. Greear is the wrong man to be President of the Southern Baptist Convention for one simple reason—he doesn't really like being a Southern Baptist. His church doesn't know it is Southern Baptist. So, what keeps him in the Southern Baptist Convention?

Here are the facts. Many members of Greear's church The Summit Church were not even aware the church was part of the Southern Baptist Convention. Shocking, but Greear said as much in his February 4, 2018, sermon: 'The third question some of you just asked is, 'Since when did we become Southern Baptists?' And I get that. **That's not something we really wear on our sleeve here.** There are obviously parts of the Southern Baptist Convention that we're not excited about, that we don't really feel represent who we are as a church. But I will tell you that on the whole, we are very grateful to be a part of a network of churches that cooperate for the purpose of mission.'

This echoed something Greear said to The Gospel Coalition in a November 2017 podcast. Greear told TGC, 'I think very quickly after I had grown a little disillusioned with the S.B.C., I found out that every other network I started to get in, there was like: They have crazy uncles in here too.'

How can someone who doesn't lead a church steeped in a commitment to the being Southern Baptist be expected to lead an organization that needs a spokesman for being a Southern Baptist?"¹⁷⁰

"My wife made a great analogy. This is like a man who is ashamed of being an American, doesn't identify himself as an American citizen because he 'doesn't wear it on his sleeve' and then wants to be President of the United States. She carried the analogy even further and pointed out how Greear would be like a governor of a state whose people don't even know they are part of the United States.

¹⁷⁰ capstonereport.com, 2/13/2018, pages 1-2.

It is staggering that someone who doesn't educate his church about the Southern Baptist Convention is the presumptive choice of Southern Baptist insiders. Why? Politics.

J.D. Greear dislikes Southern Baptist common folk because of their politics. He is cozy with the Southern Baptist elites in their Ivory Towers. The Southern Baptists he praises and holds up as an example are the likes of progressive Russell Moore. He told **The Gospel Coalition** podcast, 'Kevin Ezell at North American Mission Board is fantastic. I think he is very humble and approachable, and of course David Platt at the IMB. Russell Moore is a great representative at the ERLC.

For the record, Ezell is facing a lawsuit for allegedly un-Christian conduct in retaliating against a Southern Baptist. David Platt had IMB join an amicus brief in support of a mosque and later apologized for the error, and Russell Moore is, well everyone knows Russell Moore insulted Southern Baptists who voted for Donald Trump. That's a triumvirate of bad. Yet, in Greear's mind these are 'great representatives" of Southern Baptists.

If Greear's idea of how great is Russell Moore, then it is no wonder he wants to hide his S.B.C. affiliation. Southern Baptists are far closer to Dr. Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Dallas than Greear. And Greear even mocked the First Baptist Church of Dallas pastor on that same, **The Gospel Coalition** podcast. Shameful. You might not like Dr. Jeffress, but Southern Baptists shouldn't go on other media platforms and trash one another over politics.

Southern Baptists must ask if Greear is even capable of representing the Southern Baptist Convention given his lack of enthusiasm for its people and its politics.

Also, Southern Baptists must ask about Greear's commitment to the Cooperative Program. What is Greear's, The Summit Church percentage of giving to the CP? How much does the CP benefit The Summit Church and its members?

Southern Baptist messengers should compare Greear's history with Dr. Ken Hemphill's history of participation and pride in the Southern Baptist Convention. When weighed in the balance, one is found wanting in enthusiasm for being a Southern Baptist.

The church Hemphill attends has a two-year CP giving average of 12.2 percent, according to **The Baptist Message**. Hemphill's record of service to the Southern Baptist Convention includes running a seminary and top positions with the North American Mission Board and The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee."¹⁷¹

I would like to interject here that this article was written back in February of 2018, before the Southern Baptist Convention, which was held in June of 2018, in Dallas, Texas. Obviously, The writer and many other people were concerned about J.D. Greear's commitment level to the Southern Baptist Convention, but yet, we know now that he was elected by a large majority of the votes, and he is now the "presented image of the S.B.C. Therefore, my heartfelt question is, "Is this the appearance of the Southern Baptist Convention for the future?" And truthfully, I would like to ask where

¹⁷¹ Ibid, pages 2-3.

Dr. Greear has been for the past 16 years since he started pastoring the "non-denominational" church in Raleigh, North Carolina? He says he is a Southern Baptist, but yet, you would never know it by the name of the church. And folks, it has always been my conviction that if you are ashamed of who you are and what you believe to the extent of not putting it on your sign, then you either don't know what you believe, or you are ashamed of what you believe. So, whatever happened to the churches who have been proud of what they believe?

Pastor J.D. Greear Is A Calvinist!

Well now, I am reluctant to bring up Calvinism again, but if the President of the Southern Baptist Convention is a Calvinist, then what hope do those who have been traditional S.B.C. members have in the Southern Baptist Convention if we strongly disagree with Calvinism? Dr. Greear seems to try and hide the fact that he is a Calvinist, but I believe it is very obvious that he is, if this man is a dear friend of Dr. Danny Akin, David Platt, and Kevin Ezzell, then he has to be a Calvinist. So, it would seem that much of the Southern Baptist Convention has become Presbyterian instead of Baptist. But yet, it surely sends a great message when 68% of the Messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention will adamantly vote against a great traditional Southern Baptist like Kenneth Hemphill and elect a grungy looking Calvinist as their president. Something is mighty wrong.

Now, I am going to include a couple of articles about J.D. Greear's belief about Calvinism so that you can come to a conclusion about whether he is or is not a Calvinist! I am totally convinced that he is, and thus, we just see another important leader of the S.B.C. who is taking this denomination down the drain from its traditional stand as a body of Baptist churches. And by the way, I would rather be a moderate or liberal doing some things right than to be a stubborn Calvinists who believes he or she knows all there is to know about God. Why? Because moderates and liberals seem to be more teachable, and open to the truth of God's Word, than are the stubborn closed-minded Calvinists who have all the answers and believe that everybody else is totally ignorant. In other words, once again, we see this theological elitism of those who believe they have reached the epitome of theological knowledge because they are unshakeable Calvinists. Now, let's look at the articles.

"Pastor J.D., Are You A Calvinist?"

LEADERSHIP PASTOR J.D.OCT 26, 2012

"I get this question about once a week. To be honest, I'm actually grateful that I get it, because I hope I preach in such a way that makes people wonder—that is to say, I wrestle with the glory of God and the awesomeness of the gospel to such an extent that would imply to some that I'm a Calvinist, and then I plead for people to come to Jesus in a way that suggests I think it's all up to me, which would imply that I am not a Calvinist.

Often Calvinists will say that Calvinism is the essence of the gospel (see Piper, Sproul, Spurgeon, etc.). Unfortunately, that statement often gets translated to mean that the particulars of the 'five points' are the essence of the gospel—which they clearly are not. But I don't think that's what those guys mean.

There *are*, however, four things Calvinists often teach that really do get to the heart of biblical theology. Regardless of where you come down on the 'five points,' these are things I think gospel-centered Christians should agree on.

The “priority” of God’s work in salvation.

The Bible teaches that no person can come to God unless Jesus first works in him. Our own hearts are naturally so dark and hard that they hate God rather than love him. It takes a work of God’s grace in us before we desire to know God. How that happens and what role our cooperation plays in that are things we might disagree on. But we must agree that God’s work must come before we can choose him (John 1:13, John 6:44, Philippians 2:13).

The preeminence of God’s glory in salvation.

Calvinists often correctly emphasize that the biggest reality in the universe and the priority among God’s purposes on earth is his own glory. Thankfully, God’s glory is most shown in our salvation, but God’s glorification takes priority over our salvation because God takes priority over us. This is made very clear, for instance, in Ezekiel 36:22-23 and Romans 3:24-25. God is so incredible that he glorified himself by emptying himself, being trampled on and crucified for us (Philippians 2:5-11). This is important, because if the fact that God’s glory is ultimate in the universe were *not* true, then a lot of things in the Bible wouldn’t make sense to us (e.g., Why is there an eternal hell? Why isn’t everyone saved?).

The sovereignty of God in the spread of the gospel.

Even if you don’t believe that God determines, individually, who will be saved and who will not, we have to recognize that God has maintained control of when and how the gospel has been preached. It was Jesus who chose to choose 12 (He could have chosen more than 12 or even an army of angels). He also chose where to send them: He told Paul to go certain places and steered him away from others. He transported Philip into the desert. He chose to let me be born to Christian parents. God has an agenda he is pursuing and is ultimately in charge of. That is a promise to me that even the places most closed to good news will one day experience the gospel.

That God owes no man salvation.

We all deserve hell—no exceptions. The fact that God saves any of us is an act of lavish grace. God does not award salvation or even the chance to be saved because of any good he sees in us. He didn’t choose me because he saw I’d believe. From start to finish, his work in those he saves is *all* grace.

That’s my two cents. I try to pray like it’s all up to God and then preach Christ like it’s all up to me. The strange thing is, the more people I share Christ with, the more people seem to keep getting elected."¹⁷²

Now folks, unless you are very naïve, you, like myself, can surely see from this article by J.D. Greear that he is indeed a Calvinist, but he tries hard to cover it up like all of the "young, restless, and reformed" preachers who won't admit that they are

¹⁷² The Summit Church Website, By: J.D. Greear, Oct. 26, 2012, pages 1-3.

really Calvinists, especially when they try to come in under the radar with a "Pulpit Search Committee" in a local church. I cannot tell you how many horror stories I have heard in the past few years where some young preacher tells the Search Committee he is dealing with that he is a Reformed Preacher, and because of their naiveté or ignorance, they don't discover that this pastoral candidate is truly a Calvinist until he is on the field and starts preaching the Five Points of Calvinism in his pulpit, only to eventually destroy or split the church. So yes, J.D. Greear is a Calvinist. If you still don't believe this, then please read the following article from the "Pulpit and Pen" website. I don't have the date this article was written, but it is truly worthy of our reading it carefully.

J.D. Greear Is A New Calvinist

"Greear is also a part of the New Calvinist Acts 29 network, currently under Matt Chandler's leadership. Acts 29 is a network of (supposedly) independent churches whose primary purpose is to plant more churches. Their website states that they are characterized by 'Theological Clarity, Cultural Engagement, and Missional Innovation.' Sounds okay, right?

But...Acts 29 was founded by the befallen pastor, Mark Driscoll. The network is comprised of churches that promote charisma, have a low tolerance threshold for discernment, and a general taste for popularity. Most of the members of the network are regular traveling speakers, with personalities that attract attenders (read:titers) to their events. Their focus on 'cultural engagement' takes priority over their other 'characteristics.' Ear-tickling personalities like, Joseph Prince and Rick Warren, are the norm. Generally, if you can preach an *almost-solid* sermon, that isn't too far off base, and you have a personality that can attract multitudes of people, you're in. In reality, the characteristics of the Acts 29 Network are 'Theological Pragmatism, Cultural Conformity, and Missional Unity,' and they have no problem promoting whoever they need to promote to rake in the numbers.

Greear has been highly influenced by people such as Tim Keller, who promotes Roman Catholic mysticism and favors evolution over creationism, and John Piper, who unrepentantly partners with unsound teachers like Rick Warren, Mark Driscoll, and Hillsong pastrix, Christine Caine. These personalities are the face of New Calvinism, and Greear is right in the midst of it."¹⁷³

Well folks, we have now seen one article where Dr. Greear denies he is a Calvinist. Then he covers up the truth by talking generically about salvation and the sovereignty of God. He does a good job hiding his Calvinism, but in the second article we discover that he is indeed one of the new Calvinists. Now, let's look at a third article that should seal the truth for our understanding.

Please notice that the following article was written in Saint Louis, just after the 2016 S.B.C. election, when J.D. Greear withdrew his name from presidential candidate in contest against Steve Gaines, Pastor of Belleview Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. Just remember that during this past annual meeting, Dr. Greear was elected as president in Dallas, Texas. Please notice how once again, Dr. Greear seems

¹⁷³ The Pulpit and Pen website, unknown Author, pages 1-2.

to direct attention away from Calvinism and tries to change the direction of the convention to the Great Commission. Once more, this Calvinist tries to cover up what he really believes by taking the blame for declines in baptisms and church plants away from the Calvinist movement. It surely amazes me just how these Calvinists don't want to accept any blame for the destruction of their false doctrines.

J.D. Greear Says Calvinism Is Not to Blame for Southern Baptist Decline.

By Brandon Showalter , Cp Reporter | Jun 29, 2016 1:23 Pm

"J.D. Greear, who was a strong contender for president at the recent Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, says it's unfair to blame declining baptism numbers in the S.B.C. on a resurgence of 5-point Calvinism in Southern Baptist life. Greear graciously stepped aside in a razor close race with Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis and a more moderate Calvinist — a contest that many say rested on how 5-point Calvinism affects church growth.

In an interview with The Christian Post last Thursday, Greear, pastor of Summit Church in Durham, North Carolina, said it doesn't matter how many 'points' of Calvinism one holds because 'Jesus gave every one of us the Great Commission, and if we're not carrying it out, that's just plain unfaithful.'

CP also reached out to several other prominent strict Calvinists within the S.B.C., such as Albert Mohler Jr., Russell Moore, Mark Dever, and David Platt for their comments for this article but all were either traveling or otherwise unable to respond by press time. [Imagine that!]

A chart highlighting a sizable disparity between the number of Southern Baptist church plants and number of baptisms was circulated last week during the S.B.C.'s annual meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, preceding the election for president.

After the first round failed to produce a victor, Greear, **a strong Calvinist, threw his support behind Steve Gaines**, who is more moderately Reformed.

Using the TULIP acronym as shorthand for the five points of Calvinism, moderately Reformed Southern Baptists believe in major portions of T (total depravity), U (unconditional election) and I (irresistible grace); reject L (limited atonement); and fully embrace P (perseverance of the saints). Moderately Reformed Southern Baptists generally believe everyone can be saved but not everyone will be saved.

Though the voting process ended in a spirit of great unity, sources told CP that the chart was one of the main reason for Gaines' ascension. At issue is the degree of evangelistic zeal and the theological orientation that underpins the historic Southern Baptist emphasis on sharing the Gospel with nonbelievers.

Are critics correct who say 5-point Calvinist theology produces a 'frozen chosen' mindset and that stricter Calvinist views yield less outreach and altar calls? Or is that, as others assert, a silly myth?

'In my experience, it's too simplistic (and unfair) to blame one group of people for our collective failure to evangelize,' said Greear, noting that he has never been comfortable with 'Calvinist' and 'non-Calvinist' labels. (Straddling the fence)

Greear added that his own staff and congregation comes down on different places on the theological spectrum, but all of them are sincerely 'committed to preaching the Bible, doing the work of evangelism, and giving God all the credit.'

The famous chart hailed from Dr. Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, who also could not be reached for comment by press time. On his website Kelley outlines the crisis Southern Baptists are facing."¹⁷⁴

"'Lostness in North America is having a bigger impact on Southern Baptists than Southern Baptists are having on lostness. Put another way: The world is having a bigger impact on the behavior of Southern Baptists than we are having on the behavior of the world. In addition to the decline in baptisms, we are down in membership, down in worship attendance, and down in Bible Study attendance.'

Amid the nervous chatter about the waning influence evangelicals have over politics — with some prominent evangelical leaders saying that the Christian Right is effectively dead because of their willingness to support Donald Trump — the discussion about the failure to equip and evangelize is arguably the most important one occurring within evangelical ranks.

American evangelical Christians in general do not appear to be actively sharing the Gospel with nonbelievers, seeing conversions, and baptizing them very much at all and the best available data confirms this.

According to John S. Dickerson, author of the 2013 book *The Great Evangelical Recession*, not only is evangelical influence overblown — at best they represent 10 percent of the population of the United States and are concentrated in certain regions of the country — most do not evangelize.

Referencing George Barna's *Revolution* wherein Barna observes that 'most churched Christians believe that since they are not gifted in evangelism, such outreach is not a significant responsibility of theirs,' Dickerson also highlights the work of Brad Waggoner who conducted a survey of 2,500 churchgoing Protestants and found that over a six month period, only 29 percent had shared how to become a Christian with someone more than twice, and 57 percent had not done so at all.

Of particular concern to some Southern Baptists is the trend of S.B.C. churches forgoing altar calls and invitations to receive Christ for the first time in their public services.

But Greear contends that in a post-Christian context fewer and fewer people are making their way into a church anyway and that most will be reached outside its four walls. The greatest evangelists, Greear adds, are not our staff but sitting in the pews, and expressed the need 'to equip them to see their neighborhoods, families, and workplaces as the mission fields that they are.'

'We only have so much 'bandwidth' as a Convention, so we should seek to be known for the Gospel and the Great Commission, not for a particular stance regarding Calvinism. What unites us is so much greater than what threatens to divide us. We are united by a Gospel too great and a mission too urgent to let any lesser thing stand in our way,' Greear said."¹⁷⁵

Well folks, once more, in this article, J.D. Greear was trying to take the blame

¹⁷⁴ The Christian Post Website, June 29, 2016, By Brandon Showalter, pages 1-2.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, pages 2-3.

away from the Calvinism Conspiracy in the convention, while in the previous brief article, he was trying to convince the Southern Baptist Church members that he was not a Calvinist at all. So, I suppose you could say that Calvinism has a great defender in J.D. Greear! Now, please read one more article about J.D. Greear, the new Calvinist image of the S.B.C. This article was from an interview on July 16, 2018, just after Greear was elected to be the President of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Seeking Unity, J.D. Greear Assumes Southern Baptist Presidency

July 16, 2018 8 Min Read

By: Adelle M. Banks

"J.D. Greear, newly elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, accepted the gavel from outgoing S.B.C. president Steve Gaines, as newly elected officers and their spouses, are recognized on stage during the closing of the 2018 S.B.C. annual meeting in Dallas on June 13, 2018.

(RNS) — J.D. Greear has big intentions as he begins his presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention. He hopes to help the denomination step away from partisan politics and lean more on its bedrock mission of preaching the gospel and saving souls.

The first Generation X president of the nation's largest Protestant body said he wants to focus more on what Southern Baptists embrace than what divides them. 'We have a lot of variety in our ranks when it comes to ethnicity and when it comes even to politics and age, Greear, 45, told Religion News Service in an early July interview. 'But what we're unified around is gospel, gospel doctrine and gospel mission.'

How much the North Carolina mega-church pastor will succeed depends on how he responds to the challenge of the **#MeToo movement that roiled the Southern Baptists'** annual meeting in June, as well as declining membership, historical ties to slavery and linkages with the Republican Party.

'He's at a starting point where he's saying to the denomination, one of the reasons that the culture is not listening to you the way they once did, particularly in the South, is that you have become so politicized as a denomination and in American politics,' said Bill Leonard, professor emeritus of Baptist studies at Wake Forest University School of Divinity. "¹⁷⁶ [Foolish Assertion!]

"People are distancing themselves from you because it looks as if in order to choose Jesus, you have to choose the Republican Party.' [Total Lie! I have never even heard anyone insinuate such foolishness!]

J.D. Greear speaks during the Pastor's Conference on June 11, 2018, at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center in Dallas.

The day Vice President Mike Pence spoke to the S.B.C.'s June meeting — a scheduled 15-minute time slot that became a 35-minute address, including a list of Trump administration accomplishments — Greear tweeted that it sent 'a terribly mixed signal.' Weeks later, he remained concerned about the impression it could

¹⁷⁶ Religious New Service Web site, By: Adelle M. Banks, July 16, 2018, pages 1-2.

leave on observers. (J.D. Greear is not a Trump supporter, and yet, Trump has brought many good things for believers in his first year and one half.)

'Right or wrong, a lot of our people of color are wondering: Is this what the S.B.C. is about, that kind of white populism?' (Very Sick Question) Greear told RNS.

'There's a place for that discussion, but it's not in a convention of churches who come together to focus on the gospel and mission.' (But the race card always gets brought up.)

While some of Greear's Southern Baptist colleagues have made several trips to Washington to meet with the Trump administration, the new S.B.C. president said he has made one. During his visit with aides to the president, he emphasized the administration's need to 'speak with clarity on our respect for people of different races and different cultural backgrounds.'¹⁷⁷

"Despite appearing in a group photo outside the White House, Greear said he does not consider himself to belong to an ad hoc advisory council to the president. 'I was there to try to speak God's word and say 'thus says the Lord' in places where it was asked of me,' said Greear, who has authored six books, including, 'Not God Enough: Why Your Small God Leads to Big Problems.'

But critics say Greear may have stepped on his nonpolitical emphasis just a month after his election when he signed two statements supporting President Trump's nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to succeed retiring Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy. Greear said that he and the two S.B.C. vice presidents believe Kavanaugh's record demonstrates his support for the 'sanctity of life, the value of religious liberty, the dignity of all peoples.'

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, a fellow North Carolinian and Christian activist who differs with Greear on cultural issues, questioned what he considered the narrow focus of the S.B.C. officers on core conservative issues. 'That's to completely ignore the way this Supreme Court nominee has voted on the circuit court on voting rights, on access to health care, on equal protection under the law for women and for LGBTQ people, said the author of 'Reconstructing the Gospel: Finding Freedom from Slaveholder Religion.'

Wilson-Hartgrove, a white evangelical who was raised in a Southern Baptist church, said the commitments to racial inclusiveness like the ones voiced by Greear and other leaders may be 'cosmetic,' especially if there is not enough attention to social justice issues.

But others are praising Greear, who pastors a multiracial church, for his commitment to be inclusive in his congregation and to see more people of color in positions of power within the S.B.C..

The Rev. Dwight McKissic, a black Arlington, Texas, pastor who was the original author of last year's S.B.C. resolution that **ultimately condemned** 'alt-right white supremacy,' said Greear's nonpolitical aims distinguish him from many S.B.C. presidents who have been more committed to supporting the GOP. He considers Greear's support of Kavanaugh, especially in light of conservative hopes about overturning Roe v. Wade, a 'principled move' rather than a political one.

De-emphasizing politics in the denomination doesn't mean that Greear won't

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, pages 2-3.

be 'prophetic' when it comes to justice issues, McKissic said. 'He's expressing a desire for equality, empowerment, inclusion of women and different ethnic groups in S.B.C. life.'

McKissic hopes that the percentage of racial and ethnic minorities serving on S.B.C. agency trustee boards — who can hire and fire heads of seminaries and mission boards — will increase under Greear's leadership after recent decreases. Statistics show undulating results in recent years: 16 percent in 2015; 25 percent in 2016; 14 percent in 2017; and 12.6 percent in 2018."¹⁷⁸

"In the aftermath of a scandal involving Paige Patterson, an S.B.C. luminary ousted in May from the presidency of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for allegedly mishandling rape allegations by students, Greear is looking to include more women as well. Longtime admirers of Patterson, Greear said, are grappling with seeing him in a new light while recognizing that everyone should be held accountable. (Dr. Patterson was framed by politically correct Calvinists who wanted control of Southwestern Seminary; a tragic happening for this great man of God.) But he also said a recent letter from donors seeking a reconsideration of Patterson's termination was not beneficial.

"I did not think that the letter pointed a helpful way forward because it basically is like, 'hey, put us on your investigative committee or we're going to stop giving our money,'" he said. [You see Dr. Greear, the only thing wicked Calvinists understand is the loss of money.]

Last week, a month after anti-abuse activists demonstrated outside the Southern Baptists' meeting in a 'For Such a Time As This Rally', a Greear representative met with a protest organizer to hear about the group's continuing push for training to address domestic abuse and sexual assault.

Greear's calls for repentance on the S.B.C.'s failings — from mishandling reports of abused women and adulterous behavior by male leaders to its need for more people of color at boardroom tables — are signs of a 'fresh wind blowing' in the S.B.C., said Karen Swallow Prior, one of the signers of an online letter urging seminary trustees to take action against Patterson. She said Greear is modeling a way to deal with the complexity of the Patterson scandal.

Yes, Greear is capitulating to the "Me Too Movement," in order to be politically correct as he has started off his presidency. I suppose he doesn't want to offend the Beth Moore crowd who have lied about the truth of the Scriptures in order to promote the feminist agenda. And yes, while Dr. Greear says he is promoting the Great Commission, he instead is promoting racial rights and feminism. He is a man of Calvinism promoting feminism. I wonder if old John Calvin, the near Catholic, would be pleased with Dr. Greear?

'It takes that kind of wisdom of Solomon to distinguish the good from the bad and to not brush in broad strokes but to still work toward changing the things that need to be changed,' said Prior, a professor of English at Liberty University.

Greear, she said, is 'separating conservative theology with the cultural baggage that has resulted in the oppression of women and minorities. Those two are not the same thing.'

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, pages 3-7.

Russell Moore, (A Liberal Democrat and Calvinist), leader of the S.B.C.'s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission and another official who has challenged the denomination's ties to the GOP, said Greear is riding a wave of younger people attending the annual meeting while people of multiple generations are embracing his vision for the S.B.C.'s future. The 2018 registration report from the S.B.C. Executive Committee found that a quarter of surveyed attendees were 18 to 39 years old, compared to about a fifth the previous year.

'There's definitely much more excitement and engagement on the part of younger people that's been building for several years,' said Moore. 'And the sign of a healthy denomination is a denomination that has both strollers and walkers. We need both and we need everything in between.' (But the S.B.C. is not a healthy denomination when faithfully proved seniors have been forgotten as they have.)

As Greear juggles his new role as president while continuing to pastor his college-student-dominated mega-church, he said he hopes to make progress but that he doesn't have all the answers for the challenges ahead for Southern Baptists. 'I'll be one chapter in a conversation that will take an entire book to tell,' he said.¹⁷⁹

The Double Standard Of The S.B.C. President

As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, I don't know Pastor J.D. Greear personally. Yet, it is very obvious to me that he seems to want to "have it both ways". What do I mean by this? I mean that while he talks about wanting to push unity in the Southern Baptist Convention, he conducts himself in such a way that he alienates the older more traditional members of the S.B.C. churches. He talks about acceptance of most everyone, but yet without much regard or consideration, he dresses in such a way that most all older traditional Southern Baptists would be offended. I say this because of the way he, and others like him in this Next Generation Movement, dress when they come to worship or stand to preach the Gospel on the stage or platform. There is just no obvious respect for the house of God, the Word of God, his role as a man of God, and for others who might be non-Calvinists, traditional genuine Baptists, or just simply from the old school of believers.

I can honestly make these statements because once again this week I viewed one of his sermons on how we can treat the LGBTQ community like Jesus would treat them. I was utterly appalled at his arrogant, condescending attitude toward those who might not agree with him, and truthfully, because of his twisted interpretation of some passages of Scripture. Yet, I know that in this modern day Emergent Church Movement, these young pastors don't interpret the Scriptures based upon Hermeneutical methodology, because if they did, they would have to let the Word speak what it actually says, instead of giving it a biased interpretation based upon their attempt at trying to contextualize the passage to try and remove any offensiveness or sting in a particular passage of Scripture. And God forbid that any pastor would preach exegetically verse-by-verse exposition of Scripture to his people. Of course, this is what we are being taught and told by confused Emergent Preachers like Andy Stanley in Atlanta, Georgia. And you talk about arrogance, there is no one

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, pages 7-9.

worse on earth than "his majesty," the right Reverend Andy Stanley. If you don't agree with me, please read the following excerpt from an article in the News Division, published back in May of 2015. Pay close attention to these foolish statements.

"The questions posed to Andy Stanley was this.....'What do you think about preaching verse-by-verse messages through books of the Bible?' Stanley's answer.....'Guys that preach verse-by-verse through books of the Bible—that is just cheating. It's cheating because that would be easy, first of all. That isn't how you grow people. No one in the Scripture modeled that. There's not one example of that.'

It's 'cheating.' Do you hear that, you exegetes? (Notice the condescending arrogance) you small church pastors, sweating away in your study on Friday and Saturday night to finish up before Sunday.....you expositors check the Greek and Hebrew and grasping the etymology of key words and phrases, putting it within Scriptural context, cross-referencing all the important verses, studying the commentaries of all the great scholars to unwrap the oracles of God verse by verse at a time. **People don't grow that way.**"¹⁸⁰ (Such a lie)

May I say to all of you readers, that this statement by Andy Stanley must bring a broken heart to his father, Charles Stanley, the great Bible expositor for so many years! Andy Stanley is truly a dangerous man. If Dr. J.D. Greear continues down the same pathway as Stanley, he too will rob a lot of people of the truth. I say this emphatically because when I listened to Greear on You Tube for about an hour, I was made sick on my stomach when I heard him tell a huge crowd of people at the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission National Conference back in 2014 that we need to really love the LGBTQ people, because sometimes when they are repentant, they may not change for the rest of their lives. Greear says this happens because they are "born with a proclivity or propensity" to homosexuality, and God doesn't completely change them or remove their sexual tendencies just because they get saved. In fact, Dr. Greear said "that sometimes God doesn't take the sin away so that through the person's struggles with abnormal desires, he can draw more intimate with Christ because of the struggles". My friends, these are damnable words from a confused and twisted President of the Southern Baptist Convention. Surely, surely, if God can save a soul and keep them out of hell, He can change the lifestyle of a homosexual or lesbian, and make a new creature of him or her. I will submit that we do irreparable harm to any person struggling with homosexual tendencies by telling them that they might not be able to change until they get their new glorified bodies. This is in fact what Dr. Greear said in this sermon, and so, I believe, he has become an enabler for homosexuals and lesbians to stay this way.

It literally seems to me that Dr. Greear is more prone to tolerate the sin of people than he is to tolerate those who might disagree with their sin. And for the life of me, I can't understand why he or anyone could have such an attitude toward homosexuality, unless of course, his main motive is to draw the crowds.

Why, during Dr. Greear's sermon, he made the statement that he has a young man on his staff at the Summit Church who is a homosexual, and one that struggles with it every day of his life! He even said that this young man, Brannon, may not be

¹⁸⁰ The News Division, By: Ed Stetzer, Lifeway Christian Resources, May, 2015, page 1.

able to get the victory over it until he gets a new body on the other side. Folks, is this the kind of preacher that we should be embracing and standing behind as the President of the Southern Baptist Convention? Forgive me, but I don't think so!

Based upon what Dr. Greear stated in his sermon at the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission National Conference, Dr. Greear believes and teaches that a homosexual or lesbian might be able to repent of their sin and get saved, but there may just be a chance that these people may not get delivered by the power of a righteous God, and therefore, they will have to struggle with their immoral behavior until they ultimately get a new glorified body. If what this man is teaching is the truth, then there is no hope for my niece, Beverly.

You see folks, my niece, Beverly, is a long standing lesbian who "makes no bones about it"! She just simply tells you that God made her a lesbian, and that she doesn't plan to change. Yet, when my wife and I spent over two hours with her at our house several years ago, she emphatically told us that she is saved, on her way to heaven, and yes, she doesn't have to change. In fact, she goes to a homosexual/lesbian church where the pastor is Gay. So, aren't we proud to say that we have a sweet, kind, loving Southern Baptist Convention President that believes it is right to tell the Gay people that they are wrong in what they do, but for God's sake, don't cause them to have any fear! But instead, let's make them feel loved, accepted, and close to us, even if they are living in outright rebellion against the plan of God for their lives. Of course, I wonder what Dr. Greear believes about **Romans Chapter One**, where it tells us that if these people don't repent and stop their sinning, God will turn them over to a reprobate mind, and they will never be genuinely saved. I have written a booklet entitled, "There Is Nothing Gay About Homosexuality". In this exegesis of **Romans Chapter One**, we find that there is hope for the homosexual or lesbian if he or she will repent and change their lives. If they don't, God will turn them over and let them destroy themselves within their sin. Yes, God loves the homosexual, and so should we. But, God doesn't love their sin, and neither should we.

Before moving on, I would like to mention that Dr. Greear also warned all of us about stigmatizing sexual sin as being worse than other kinds of sins. Therefore, we should not be too strong when we tell the homosexuals and lesbians that what they are doing is wrong. But, isn't it amazing that the Bible always shows the extremely different consequences of sexual sin because they are much more severe than others, with the exception of maybe murder?

I have been counseling people who have committed sexual sins for over 53 years, and I can truly tell you that there is something different about sexual sins when it comes to consequences. Sin may be sin, but consequences are truly different. Because of these different consequences, we must warn people and tell them the truth in our counseling sessions, in our Sunday School classes, in our worship services, and in our training seminars. If you don't think sexual sins are different, one day ask King David when you get to heaven, if you make it. David's sexual sin produced a baby that died, a broken home for Bathsheba and Uriah, and Uriah's being killed. Then, if these consequences weren't enough, David ended up losing his Kingdom because this sexual sin started it on a downward spiral. You can surely read this story in **First Samuel**.

Conclusion To This Chapter

Well now, there you have it! We have been told by the new Southern Baptist Convention President that his desire for all of us is unity. It really doesn't matter what we believe, if we will just stay unified. But yet, in order to get along with these progressives or "liberals" (There is that old word again.), then we, the old traditional Southern Baptists who believe the Word of God is His inerrant Word, must be the ones who change to accommodate the grunges, the cool people, and the hip-hop new generation. And, let's not forget to make sure that we adjust well and align ourselves with these super-spiritual New Calvinists and power-filled charismatics who are joining hands with the Catholics to form a cross-theological-boundaries ecumenical counterfeit church. Why, I would never have dreamed in a million years that when I reached three-score and ten years, I would have to repent and turn back to my young days in the 60s and 70s when the Jesus Movement was so prominent. The only difference back then was that we didn't have pastors in the pulpits trying to be cool and promote their coolness just to draw a crowd. Yes, there truly were some weird people at the Rock festivals and Rock concerts. Now, instead of people's speaking and trying to bully others into committing any sin they choose to, we have hip-hop Calvinists dressed like street people standing in our churches telling their attendees how to present the Gospel to others softly so that they don't offend anyone. We now must take the sting out of the Gospel, or maybe even stop preaching and just dialogue with fearful phonies who know very little about truth any way. But, Paul said it very well **I Corinthians 1:18**, when he said, ***"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."*** It is not the dialoguing about the cross that saves, but it is the preaching of the cross. By the way, the preaching of the cross has always been foolishness to them that are not saved. So, what does this teach us today about all of these people that want to do away with preaching?

Chapter Eleven

The Cold Hard Facts

Well folks, the truth is that our great Southern Baptist Convention is no longer very great, and the truth is that the entire convention is in a mess. We have already discussed many problems that are contributing to the deterioration of the S.B.C., but maybe we should just take a careful look at some of the cold hard facts about where the convention is today. And, at the risk of seeming very negative, I am convinced that the days of the convention being a strong evangelistic and missionary denomination like it used to be are truly over. In the next chapter of this book, I am going to share with you some very strong recommendations that will be hated by some of you. But, the truth is that if the patient is very close to death, then we should disconnect the life-support machine and let God do with it the remaining hours what He chooses to do. I plead with all of you, our readers, not to stop until you read this entire volume, and please, “don't throw the baby out with the dirty bath water” when you hear my candid suggestions for the future of Baptists here in America. I would just ask you to look carefully at the facts which I am going to give you in this chapter. Then open your hearts and minds to the recommendations I will make in the last chapter of this book. Remember, if “the Titanic is lost and going down”, we may not be able to keep it from sinking, but we surely “to goodness” can do our best to rescue as many people on the sinking ship as we possibly can. Now, let me give you some cold hard facts about the “sinking ship” of the Southern Baptist Convention. Some of these facts go back just a few years, but it truly gives a picture of the decline of the S.B.C., even with the Conservative Resurgence.

What Happened To The Southern Baptist Convention?

By: Chris Forbes, June 23, 2014

"There have been a lot of tweets, posts, articles, blog posts and discussions online and at the annual meeting asking this question: What has happened to the Southern Baptist Convention? The fact is the S.B.C. is not growing at the same pace it used to grow. Our baptisms are down from years before, the convention is on a decline. There must be a reason, there must be someone to blame! Everyone wonders what happened and asks what can we do about it, but are we asking the right questions?

How did we really get so big as a convention? We are big mostly because we reached the Baby Boomer generation. The Southern Baptist Convention came of age in a time of unprecedented population growth in the USA. The 76,000,000 Baby Boomers born between 1946-1964 drove up the numbers of the S.B.C. membership. This generation single-handedly increased the size of the denomination's share of the USA total church attendance. Baby Boomers are by far the largest segment of the S.B.C. (approximately 60% of S.B.C. pastors are Boomers)."¹⁸¹

"The history of the S.B.C. parallels the life stages of the Boomer generation. As

¹⁸¹ Wordslingersok.com, What Happened To The S.B.C.? By: Chris Forbes, pages 1-2.

children they began to be enrolled in S.B.C. church cradle rolls during the 'Million More in 54' campaign. The sheer size of the Boomer generation forced the S.B.C. to adapt to their church ministries with innovations like age-graded Sunday School, church busing, Vacation Bible School, and full-time children's ministries.

As Boomers became youth, the S.B.C. experienced explosive growth in church-based youth ministry, youth camps, youth musicals, etc. S.B.C. ministries like Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) summer missions, IMB Journeymen programs were at their height of popularity at the same time S.B.C. Boomers were in college.

Many of the current S.B.C. leaders became believers during the Jesus Movement in the 1970's and revivals of the 1980's. When Boomers became parents they flocked together in our mega churches, and even changed the music used in worship services to suit their tastes.

Boomers are older now, and the S.B.C. market has shifted. S.B.C. has grown over the years because we reached mostly white Baby Boomer young families. That group has aged, and the children of Boomers are going to other churches. They are not leaving church; they were not raised to be brand loyal to the S.B.C..

How can we involve the next generations more effectively in S.B.C. leadership? A much smaller Generation X (born 1965-1979) and a larger, more ethnically-diverse Millennial generation (born 1980-1996) are taking the lead in the church at large. There happens to be fewer of them involved in the S.B.C. leadership. How can we change that? How can we connect cooperatively with existing churches that reach other generations?

There used to be only a few options for church membership: Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc. Now there is a proliferation of new churches and increased competition for members from other conservative start-up churches. Visit any of these newer churches, and you will find many people there who grew up in the S.B.C.. Most of these churches are theologically compatible with the S.B.C.. How can we meaningfully affiliate with these churches? In my opinion, the S.B.C. needs to talk about these questions as much as they need to search their hearts about the other questions that are being asked in the convention."¹⁸²

Now, I have included this article by Chris Forbes of Oklahoma, back in 2014, for the purpose of showing some very relevant truth concerning the modern day Southern Baptist Convention. However, it seems that Chris' article raises more questions than providing answers. For instance, why did all of the younger people start fleeing from the S.B.C. churches? What was it that allured them to these non-denominational, non-affiliated, and non-accountable churches? The truth is that they were led astray by many of the things that we have already discussed in this book. There is the appeal of the non-confronting preaching, the contextualizing of the Gospel message, more social work, and less evangelism, and of course, there is the strong influence of the "Restless, and Reformed Calvinism" that is negating the importance of soul winning and missions all over the world.

Also, there is the appeal of worldly music, entertainment and performance. There is the downplaying of the importance of mass evangelism and giving public invitations. The idea is, "Let's go to church as an alternative, but let's not expect too

¹⁸² Ibid, page 2.

much because we are a younger generation and right now we need comfort, convenience, and very little demand on us from our Christianity."

Yet folks, while we play these silly games and observe these hard cold facts of negligence, worldliness, a lack of concern, a downturn in giving, and just plain laziness, the lost world dies without Christ to the tune of 30 million people per year. Now, let's go back to an even older article revealing the decline and deterioration of the Southern Baptist Convention, and hopefully, this will show us that something has to be done if we are going to get the vision of the pastors and churches back on the lost world and the need for missions.

S.B.C. Evangelistic Stats Grim, But Could Be Worse

James A. Smith Sr. Baptist Press 2005, 6 May

"Southern Baptist evangelism statistics are grim, but they could be far worse. That's the finding of a major new study by a leading church growth expert who argues empirical evidence demonstrates the Southern Baptist Convention is in an 'evangelistic crisis' despite the conservative resurgence, whose leaders cited greater soul-winning results as a key priority in their desired reform of the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination. While other studies previously demonstrated the S.B.C. has suffered with sluggish evangelism results for the last half century, the analysis by Thom S. Rainer of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for the first time sought to answer the question: What would have happened if conservatives had failed to win their battle for control of the S.B.C.? Rainer's study found the S.B.C. would have fared 'much worse' had the reformation failed. If the partner churches' baptism statistics of the alternative, denomination-like Cooperative Baptist Fellowship were representative of all S.B.C. churches, total baptisms would have plummeted and baptism ratios would have soared, he theorizes.

'An honest evaluation of the data leads us to but one conclusion. The conservative resurgence has not resulted in a more evangelistic denomination. Indeed, the Southern Baptist Convention is less evangelistic today than it was in the years preceding the conservative resurgence, Rainer writes in 'A Resurgence Not Yet Realized: Evangelistic Effectiveness in the Southern Baptist Convention since 1979,' which was published in the Spring 2005 issue of Southern Seminary's publication. 'Without the resurgence, the evangelistic effectiveness of the denomination would be much worse. To use a medical metaphor, the resurgence slowed the bleeding of lost effectiveness, but the patient is still not well,' declares Rainer, former dean of the seminary's Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth in Louisville, Ky. An advance copy of the article from the forthcoming journal was made available to the Florida Baptist Witness. Journal subscribers already received the edition, which focuses on the S.B.C.'s conservative resurgence, in May."¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Crosswalk.com, Baptist Press, By: James Smith, Sr., May 6, 2005, page 1.

Re-Energizing Evangelism

"Rainer's study may be of particular interest to Southern Baptists in light of former S.B.C. President Bobby Welch's campaign to re-energize evangelism in the denomination. Welch, former pastor of Daytona Beach's First Baptist Church, will lead the S.B.C. in its June annual meeting in Nashville to launch an "Everyone Can Kingdom Challenge" that sought to encourage Southern Baptists to evangelize and baptize one million persons in one year. Following Welch's lead, Florida Baptist State Convention president Hayes Wicker urged Baptists in the Sunshine State to seek to baptize 100,000 that year, which would nearly triple the 34,534 baptized in 2004.

While Welch was traveling and unable to comment on the study, Wicker offered his reactions in an interview with the Florida Baptist Witness. Wicker, pastor of First Baptist Church of Naples, praised Rainer for 'raising some good questions,' but suggested the problem of evangelistic effectiveness is more complex and disagreed that the current state of affairs can be considered a failure of the conservative resurgence. 'The conservative resurgence is not over.... It hasn't permeated many of our state institutions and state conventions, Wicker told the Witness, adding, 'I believe the conservative resurgence has been aimed primarily at dealing with the institutions, not the local churches, but that filters down and affects the local churches.' Noting that evangelistic effectiveness varies from region-to-region, Wicker said, 'We're living in what I would call a third soil century, as in the parable of the soils, where we're consumed with the love of things and the cares of the world.' [Good point.] **Wicker cited a 'de-emphasis on offering public invitations and confrontational soul-winning as key problems today in the S.B.C.** [So very true.] 'We've gone through a sea-change in terms of perception of direct evangelism,' Wicker said. 'Many of the people in our churches listen to or read teachers who disparage traditional evangelism. Wicker strongly affirmed Rainer's call for repentance among S.B.C. conservatives in order to see a return to evangelistic effectiveness. 'Surveys may remind us of the need, and biblical doctrine gives us the foundation, but there still has to be the personal choice to turn from our idols to the true and living God,' Wicker told the Witness."¹⁸⁴

S.B.C. Baptisms Plateau While Ratios Increase

"Better evangelistic results is the only major objective of the conservative resurgence that has not been attained, according to Rainer, who also cited the other priorities of the movement as 'doctrinal reformation' at the S.B.C.'s six seminaries, 'engagement with the culture' on ethical and public policy matters, and a 'conservative and conversionary direction' in the denomination's international missions efforts. Rainer writes that conservative leaders rallied grassroots Southern Baptists about the need for change in the denomination by pointing to liberal, mainline denominations that were dying. **'And one of the primary benefits of the resurgence, we were told, would be an unprecedented evangelistic harvest in the denomination,' he notes.** According to Rainer— who has published numerous books on church growth and is widely recognized as one of evangelicalism's chief experts on the subject—

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, page 2.

there has been no improvement in S.B.C. evangelism statistics since 1979 when conservatives began to take control of the denomination. While acknowledging statistics can tell only part of the story and 'matters of the heart between a person and God are not always best expressed by numerical measurement,' Rainer argues nevertheless that annual total baptisms and baptism ratios—the number of church members per baptism—are reasonable benchmarks in evaluating denominational evangelistic effectiveness.

'With the limitations of the data noted, we must conclude that the evangelistic growth of the denomination is stagnant, and that the onset of the conservative resurgence has done nothing to improve this trend,' he writes. Between 1950 and 2003 annual total baptisms remained basically the same, a 'classic plateau.' In 1950 Southern Baptists baptized 376,085, while 377,357 were baptized in 2003. Throughout the period, the highest level of baptisms was 445,725 in 1972 and the lowest was 336,050 in 1978, the year before the beginning of the conservative resurgence. [The conservatives quit fishing as the main thing, as they were planning the takeover.] The study was completed before statistics for 2004 were available, showing a small increase in baptisms with a total of 387,947. More troubling, Rainer asserts, is the spike in congregational baptism ratios—'How many members does it take to reach one person for Christ in a year?—which he regards as the preferred 'measurement of evangelistic health since it takes into consideration church size.' In 1950, one person was baptized for every 19 members of S.B.C. churches. In 1978, the baptismal ratio increased to 36 to 1, and by 2003 the number had climbed to 43 to 1. (Now, it is 59 to 1) A lower ratio is desired. 'The trend in total baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention thus depicted a clear pattern of plateau. But the more revealing measurement of baptism ratios reveals consistent evangelistic deterioration,' Rainer argues. 'The baptismal ratio since the onset of the conservative resurgence has worsened. The trend is negative and disturbing. Though numbers are not ultimate measures of spiritual realities, the data we do have indicate a denomination in evangelistic crisis,' he adds."¹⁸⁵

I would just like to interject something at this point. If Tom Rainer felt so strongly about the decline in evangelism back in 2005, why on earth would he have gotten so involved in this Calvinism takeover of the convention which without a doubt, is contributing enormously to the decline in soul winning and missions? Yet, we know that Tom Rainer is another one of those "good ole boy" buddies of Al Mohler at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He should not have to wonder now why people are not being saved, and the baptisms are not going up: Calvinism!!!!

What If C.B.F. Stats Were Representative?

"But, Rainer asks, is it possible to determine 'where the Southern Baptist Convention would be today if the change toward more conservative leadership had not taken place? We believe such an exercise is possible and revealing.' To estimate the likely evangelism statistics for the S.B.C. in the absence of the conservative resurgence, Rainer compiled baptism data from congregations that are publicly

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, pages 2-3.

affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, noting it is generally recognized that the conservative resurgence represented change, while the direction of the CBF was a continuation of pre-1979 values.'

The CBF was formed in 1991 by former S.B.C. leaders who opposed the conservative resurgence. Rainer's researchers identified 638 churches allied with the CBF, representing about one-third of the group's approximately 1,800 partner congregations, finding that the churches had 4,994 baptisms in 2003 with a baptismal ratio of 92 to 1—compared to the S.B.C.'s baptismal ratio of 43 to 1. Extrapolating the CBF partner churches' 2003 statistics to all S.B.C. congregations, Rainer found that instead of baptizing 377,357, the denomination's churches would have baptized only 176,953. Rather than stagnant baptism figures, baptisms would have plunged by more than half; instead of a more than doubling of the baptismal ratio since 1950 (43-1 versus 19-1), the ratio would have more than quadrupled (92-1 versus 19-1). Rainer asserts, 'If the CBF churches are representative of where the Southern Baptist Convention would be today, the conservative resurgence has been critical to the evangelistic health of the denomination.... On the one hand, the conservative resurgence has not resulted in improvements in the evangelistic health of the Southern Baptist Convention since 1979. On the other hand, the evangelistic health of the denomination would be much worse without the resurgence if the CBF is a barometer of 'what might have been.'"

According to background data provided to the Florida Baptist Witness, of the 638 CBF partner churches, the top three states were Virginia (311), North Carolina (164), and Georgia (49). In response to a Witness request for comments from CBF coordinator Daniel Vestal, spokesman Ben McDade offered the following statement: 'Because many churches that choose to affiliate with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship are dually-aligned with the Fellowship and the Southern Baptist Convention or American Baptist Churches USA, or even multi-aligned with several organizations, it is not statistically possible to determine which portion of a church's baptisms can be credited to a particular Baptist body. 'The Fellowship affirms those who commit to a relationship with Jesus Christ without regard to affiliation or church membership. Evangelism as described by the Fellowship's vision of being the presence of Christ in the world is at the heart of who Fellowship Baptists are and what they seek to achieve for the Kingdom.

'The Fellowship has no interest in commenting on comparative statistical analyses or other academic exercises related to evangelism efforts of other, autonomous religious groups. The Fellowship remains committed to its mission of serving Christians and churches as they discover and fulfill their God-given mission.' But citing his experience of serving as pastor of 'moderate or liberal' churches that were not evangelistic, Florida Baptist leader Wicker told the Witness he agreed 'totally' with Rainer's analysis of the CBF. 'I feel like we do have serious issues as churches, but without the platform of correct doctrine, it's impossible to turn that around,' he said. Rainer concludes, 'If we as a denomination had not pursued a path of biblical fidelity, we would have no hope for an evangelistic reformation. In the history of the Church, God has not blessed those groups who have strayed from biblical truth.'

Although the conservative resurgence has so far failed on its soul-winning objective, it may yet achieve the desired results, Rainer argues. 'When we are passionately obedient about Christ's commission to share the Gospel in all that we do, then the resurgence will have taken its full course.'¹⁸⁶ (c) 2005, Baptist Press.

Well friends, we can see, from these two previous articles, that going back over 13 years, the conservative leaders knew that the convention was in trouble by the declining numbers, but they obviously weren't being very productive, even with the great push by Dr. Bobby Welch to baptize one million people in one year. During the most recent reports from 2016, church membership is down over one million people from 16,000,000 to 15,005,638, and baptisms were 27,000 less in 2017, than in 2016.

Also, overseas baptisms for 2015 dropped to 54,762 from the 190,957 reported for 2014 (71%). Overseas baptisms for 2016 were 45,256, compared to the 54,762 people baptized in 2015. The point is, here in America, and yes, on the foreign fields of the world, people are not getting saved like they used to. The main reason for this is that instead of "going fishing where the fish are biting", like I mentioned earlier in this book, we are going to the Unreached People Groups where two or three people get saved each year. I would like to mention again that I wrote a book which includes some tremendous information about "fishing where the fish are biting". The book is entitled "God's Biblical Blueprint For Missions", and you can get a copy by contacting Gateway International Missions, Inc. at gatewayinternationalmissions.com.

I would also like to mention that when David Platt became the International Mission Board's president, following Dr. Jerry Rankin's resignation in 2010, we had over 5,000 foreign missionaries on the different foreign fields of the world. However, after Dr. Platt asked over 1,200 of these foreign missionaries to take early retirement and come home in order to save money and try to bring the operation of the IMB back into the black, this past year (2017), we only had 3,357 missionaries on the foreign field.

Giving Is Up, But Fruitfulness Is Way Down!

For many years, giving in the Southern Baptist Convention has been declining, probably attributable to many of the churches' closing their doors. Of course, new churches are being planted, but most of the new church plants are Calvinistic which stifles evangelism and growth. We are told that right now, seventeen Southern Baptist Churches are closing their doors every month here in America. This is so terrible, but yet, it is happening.

Just a few years ago, annual undesignated giving was over eleven billion dollars in Southern Baptist Churches. This past church year, 2016-2017, the total undesignated funds given were \$9,518,257,051.00. Thus, giving has dropped over two billion dollars. Also, I would mention that in recent years, giving to missions has been down as well. However, there has been a tremendous push to get giving up to the Cooperative Program and to the annual special mission offerings like the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions and the Annie Armstrong Home missions offering for work here in America. During this past church year, 2016-2017,

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, pages 3-5.

\$462,662,332.00 was given to the Cooperative Program, while the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering was \$152,982,560.95. The Annie Armstrong Offering was \$59,648,377.00 for home missions, and there was a special Global Hunger Relief contribution of \$3,077,696.00. Combining these together, the Southern Baptist Convention took in \$678,370,965.95 for the most recent church year. When you divide this huge number by the 254,122 baptisms this past year, that means that for every soul that comes to Christ in and through the Southern Baptist Convention, \$2,669.47 is spent. Of course, this is not a huge amount compared to what is spent by the entire Evangelical Church world which is \$330,000 for each and every newly baptized person, but it is still a large amount of money when you consider that our Gateway International Missions Ministry sees one person come to Christ for every \$3.00 we spend. Why is this true? Because we use predominantly national workers on the fields. So, I would say that there has to be a tremendous amount of overhead somewhere in the Southern Baptist program. If I were asked to tell you, I could surely show you where a lot of this overhead is.

By the way, even with giving to missions being up somewhat in spite of the closing of many churches, the average Christian in the world only gives one penny per day to world missions. According to "About Missions", the annual income of all Christians in the world is over 16 trillion dollars. Less than 2% is given to all Christian causes. These Christians who receive over 16 trillion dollars spend over 98% of their income on themselves. So folks, all children of God should take a realistic look at the wasted funds they are spending on themselves, and then, the Southern Baptist Convention should take a vivid look at the waste in so many areas of their huge operation.

Now, let me give you a more generic eye-opening article on missions and mission giving. I pray that this next article might really open our eyes to not only the crisis in the Southern Baptist Convention, but also around the world in the quest to try and win the lost to Christ. Let's read carefully so as to miss nothing. But just a warning! This next article was written by a Presbyterian man which includes some mention of a few Calvinism doctrines, but the article is so good that I just wanted you to read the content. Just remember, we are Baptists, and not Presbyterians.

The Western Church And Global Missions Giving: A Case For Discernment

"God is a missionary. A missionary is someone sent by God with the goal of redeeming the lost. The Father sent both the Son and Spirit to that major purpose. The Father modeled this when He sought out Adam and Eve after they sinned (Gen. 3:9). God chose Israel not to enjoy unique blessings, but to be a light to the Gentiles (Is. 42:6; 49:6). Jesus went first to the lost of Israel (Matt. 15:24), in deference to the chosen, but trained and commanded His disciples to go into all the world with the gospel upon His death (Matt. 28:18-20). "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." (Luke 19:10, NIV). As the Father sent Jesus on that mission, Jesus now sends us to the remotest places—jungles, villages, slums, apartments and trailer parks, cities, and to gated-communities (John 20:21).

So important is reconciling the lost that Christ was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). God laid plans to redeem us before our creation. So important is reconciliation that the return of Christ hangs upon all people having the opportunity to turn away from sin and toward God (Matt. 24:14). None should be denied hearing the message of salvation through faith in Christ and His payment for sin on the cross, because God wants none to perish (2 Pet. 3:9). God is a missionary. Churches are to be missionary communities. The first missionaries were sent by interruption of the Holy Spirit at a prayer meeting in Antioch (Acts 13:2). Discipleship is important—learning to be like Christ. But we will become like Christ when we go to heaven. Fellowship is precious, but we will fellowship in heaven. Helping to feed and clothe the poor, finding jobs for the unemployed and working for a more just world are all the work of the church. But in the new heavens and new earth, such issues will vanish. Worship and praise are due to God, but Christians will have endless opportunity to perfect praise. What is uniquely ours to do while time remains is to be agents of reconciliation to God. Missions encompass more than evangelism, but evangelism is the heart of missions."¹⁸⁷

"Programs, buildings, new organs and more staff aren't misplaced if there are higher priorities with proportionate budgets. But program, plant and ritual can hijack an otherwise missionary church. Churches can become like tired corporations—having lost their sense of purpose and accompanying zeal, they focus upon form, risk-avoidance and status-quo bureaucracy.

The Spirit came upon Christ at the beginning of His Ministry (Luke 4:1; Mark 1:12). The Spirit was breathed upon the Twelve at the start of their commission to go beyond the Jews (John 20:22). The Eleven were commanded to wait until they were filled with the Spirit, so that they could begin turning the world upside down (Acts 1:8; 17:6). A church that is not sending and supporting missionaries is seriously quenching the Spirit of God, who is the Lord of the harvest. It is a costly and finely appointed vehicle without an engine. Various church communities have their distinctives—liturgy, evangelism, community, worship, emotional freedom, social action, missions, 'miracles' etc. A local church of whatever personality, without significant outreach, should question whether or not she should continue to exist.

If missions is a priority for God, how is it reflected in local churches? A George Barna survey of senior Protestant pastor taken in December 2004 found that only 15% had missions as any one of their top three priorities for the coming year. One tenth of one percent (ten cents per hundred dollars) of all Christian income went to global foreign missions, estimates David Barrett in his annual 'Status of Global Mission' report for 2005. Seven-tenths of 1% went to churches and another 1.2% went to parachurch organizations globally. Fundamentally the issue is stinginess among Christians (at least nominal ones)—churches being composed Christians—and even more fundamentally, the issue is failing to avail ourselves of the grace of God.

In twenty-nine American denominations, benevolence giving as a part of total church income declined from 21% in 1968 to 15% in 2002. Giving to 'benevolences' is defined as funds given to the local church for local, national and international

¹⁸⁷ Reconciliation Ministries Network, rmni.org, The Western Church and Global Missions Giving, Jim Sutherland, pages 1-2.

missions, as well as for denominational support. Benevolence giving declined from .66% of personal disposable income to .38% of disposable income in that same time span, remembering again that probably not more than half of this tiny income did not go to global missions. In real numbers, this means an average of \$101.00 per member was designated in those denominations for all church benevolences in 2002. This does not include giving directly to missions, apart from giving through the church, but overall, giving to missions was minimal. Denominations vary considerably in the amount given per member for missions. Giving by Christian Evangelicals is considerably higher [14% of them tithe, compared to 5% of the general population], but they represent only 7% of the U.S. population.

Eighty-five percent of giving in the 29 denominations went to maintain the local church program. The situation is similar when it comes to human resources. Ninety-five percent of graduates of evangelical seminaries, Bible Colleges and similar institutions stay in the U.S., which has 5% of the world's population. Where does local church income go and does it reflect an ethnocentric and insular mindset, or a global and missionary mindset? Some churches give 50% and more income to missions. Giving is not an end in itself, but a means to glorify God. The Spirit can turn blasphemers, materialists, hedonists, sardonic post-moderns, the indifferent, the vile and the merely religious into joyfully worshippers of God."¹⁸⁸

"David Barrett estimated that 34.3 million die without Christ annually, and of those, 13.2 million were never evangelized. In all, sixty-five percent of those dying annually aren't Christians. This should motivate us to spread the Gospel as quickly as possible. 'Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter' (Prov. 24:11, NIV). Do we believe that apart from Christ a person will go to hell, and if so, do we really care, as reflected by our giving?

The Lausanne Covenant, a product of global evangelistic reflection in 1974, and ratified by 2,300 people from 150 nations says in paragraph 9: The goal should be, by all available means and at the earliest possible time, that every person will have the opportunity to hear, understand, and to receive the good news. We cannot hope to attain this goal without sacrifice. All of us are shocked by the poverty of millions and disturbed by the in-justices which cause it. Those of us who live in affluent circumstances accept our duty to develop a simple life-style in order to contribute more generously to both relief and evangelism.

We need revival. South American missiologist, Samuel Escobar, writes: 'Missionary vision and drive have always been connected in history to movements of spiritual revival. Missionary attitudes mark young churches where the memory of their origin is still fresh, but also old churches when they are shaken and revitalized. The spiritual vitality of people, churches and denominations in times of revival has nourished the vision and the willingness to obey Christ, and so has made possible Great advances in mission. Revival has been the cradle of missionary vocations and the kind environment in which new structures for mission have been imagined.

In light of the neglect of the church's core mission, as judged by percentage of giving to missions, it is time to call Christian stewardship to new standards. Western Christians are the wealthy of this world. A person earning \$10,000 annually is among

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, page 2.

the upper 9% on earth by income. Rich Christians are commanded 'to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.' (1 Tim. 6:18-19)."¹⁸⁹

"Generosity, however, must be coupled with discernment, otherwise it can be wasted. If we trust that each Christian will naturally give where it is best to give, does current giving to missions support that assumption? Simply giving more isn't enough. Consider giving to the local church. Christians are to support those who serve them as pastor/teachers (1 Cor. 9:7-14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6). They are to support the truly needy among them (James 2:15-17; Gal. 6:10). They are to maintain the church property (Haggai 1:7-9). Equipping believers for ministry and Christian education will require program funds. Beyond this, we should ask what percentage of church income goes to spread the message of salvation locally and globally. Should the US church, probably the wealthiest on the planet in aggregate income, give just a tithe to the world? Is that being "rich in good deeds?" The apostle Paul admonished an entire church to "excel in the grace of giving" (2 Cor. 8:7). A tithe is minimal, not excelling. Money isn't sufficient—Jesus told us to pray for workers (Luke 10:2). But without funding, missionaries can't go, or take years longer to reach the field. Good stewardship criteria should also be applied to mission giving, as well as to churches.

Some missionaries and agencies are simply bad investments. We need to give to humble, loving and Spirit-filled persons of excellent character who are contributing to the work of the Kingdom as God has gifted them, and at the place on the line of battle the Lord has directed. Some mission agencies fix support levels extremely high (\$100,000+/year in Africa) or take an inordinate amount for administrative overhead (15%+). We are to send missionaries out 'in a manner worthy of God' (3 John 1:6), but not at princely support levels, which tend to separate missionaries from the nationals. At the other extreme, some African-American missionaries in Africa live on less than \$20,000 per year.

If local church leaders lack the faith and commitment to fund local and global missions, prayerfully ask the leaders to reconsider their priorities. If they still lack vision, rebalance your personal giving to include giving to reach those who really are perishing. You (or indeed a church) may have to decide not to go into debt, to be able to continue to support missions at current levels. We may sacrifice an expensive vacation and the lifestyle we owe to ourselves, for the lifestyle we owe to Christ. He gave us richly all things to enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17), and it's right to enjoy those gifts. But He also commanded that we be "rich in good deeds." "You will be made rich in every way *so that* you can be generous on every occasion" (2 Cor 9:11). God, by the Spirit, can teach us the balance point between enjoying and conveying of the blessings of God, and how to make discerning generosity a lifestyle."¹⁹⁰

While I don't have time in this book to deal with any more long discussions of what has gone wrong, I would like to add that just today, while I have been trying to wrap up this study, I learned that one of the former Presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention, Frank Page, President during the years of 2006-2008, resigned back in

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, pages 2-4.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, page 4.

the spring as the CEO and President of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee due to improper moral behavior. My point in bringing this up is, if the S.B.C. has people in leadership who have immoral lifestyles at the same time there is so much confusion and twisted theological behavior, then it is certainly no wonder that the screws which have held the convention together for many years are now coming out. I will let you read another article about this sad story.

S.B.C.'S FRANK PAGE RESIGNS OVER 'PERSONAL FAILING'

March 27, 2018, By Aaron Earls

"Frank Page, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, has resigned effective immediately over a 'morally inappropriate relationship,' according to a Baptist Press report.

Stephen Rummage, pastor of Bell Shoals Baptist Church in Brandon, Florida, and chairman of the Executive Committee, released a statement on behalf of the committee that noted Page informed him of his resignation due to the inappropriate relationship.

'This news will, we understand, bring great sorrow,' the statement read. 'I have shared with the Executive Committee officers what Dr. Page shared with me, including Dr. Page's repentance and deep regret that his actions have caused pain for others.'

Rummage asked Southern Baptists to 'pray for everyone involved in a situation like this.'

He also noted 'the stewardship we owe Southern Baptists and the watching world to communicate with truth and candor and to honor the Lord in our actions and decisions.'

Within the S.B.C., the Executive Committee runs the day-to-day tasks of the denomination and oversees the distribution of the nearly \$200 million in yearly funds it receives from local churches to national entities including two mission boards and six seminaries.

According to S.B.C..net, 'the work of the Executive Committee is basically fiscal and advisory.' It acts on behalf of the convention in between annual sessions.

Rummage said the EC, in keeping with bylaws, would be working on a plan to provide 'interim transition' and also 'conduct a search for the next president and CEO of the S.B.C. Executive Committee.'

In a statement also released today, Page said, 'As a result of a personal failing, I have embarrassed my family, my Lord, myself, and the Kingdom.'

He continued, 'It is my most earnest desire in the days to come to rebuild the fabric of trust with my wife and daughters, those who know me best and love me most.'

Page was elected as the president and CEO of the Executive Committee in 2010. Previously, he served as a local church pastor and as president of the S.B.C. from 2006-2008."¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ The Baptist Press, Facts and Trends, Online Editor, Aaron Earls, March 27, 2018, pages 1-2.

The Hard Facts Of Moral Failures

Based upon the article I have just presented to you, I would like to say that all of the theological problems on earth are not comparable to the moral failures of so many preachers and church leaders that have fallen in the Southern Baptist Convention. All of us have recently heard about the 300 Catholic priests in Pennsylvania who have molested over 1,000 children and youth over the past 10 plus years. This is a terrible immoral behavior, but I am not shocked. Why, because recently I read a book about modern Catholicism. A Catholic writer, Leo Lyon Zagami, stated in his book "Pope Francis: The Last Pope?" "that every day in the world, over 500,000 Catholic children, youth and young women are molested in the Church of Rome by priests and nuns."¹⁹² This is truly a horrific thought, but it is happening all over the globe.

"A couple years back I also read another book, entitled, 'Fifty Years In The Church Of Rome,' written by Charles Chinquy, a former Catholic priest who spent 50 years in the Roman Church until he finally genuinely got saved. This man was a dear friend of Abraham Lincoln, who had defended his case against some slandering priests up in the Mid-west after he came to America from Canada. And truthfully, this former Catholic Priest was one of the men that tried to warn President Abraham Lincoln that the Catholics were trying to assassinate him; which of course, they eventually did. Father Chinquy revealed in this great book just how immoral the priests were when people came into the confession booths to confess their sins. This entire book talks about the horrible behavior of these celebrate priests."¹⁹³

Now, I told you about these two books because I wanted you to get a picture of the immorality in the Catholic Church, and then tell you again how tragic it has been in recent years for the immorality in the Southern Baptist Convention. Why, in addition to Dr. Frank Page's falling, there have been other moral failures that have been prominent. One of these is Dr. Christian George from Mid-western Baptist Seminary and the alleged accusation of Dr. David Sills, one of Al Mohler's professors at the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. I just mention these two, supposedly conservative leaders who have fallen morally while writing books and trying to be leaders within the convention. Let me just give you one more article about these moral failures, and then we will move on.

S.B.C. DIGEST: Seminary Professors Christian George & David Sills Resign By: Biblical Recorder & BP Staff, Wednesday, June 06, 2018

NASHVILLE (BP) – "Two Southern Baptist seminary faculty members have resigned their positions, vacating ministries that previously had placed them in the

¹⁹² Pope Francis: The Last Pope? By: Leo Lyon Zagami, Consortium of Collective Consciousness Publishing, page lost!

¹⁹³ Fifty Years In The Church Of Rome, By: Charles Chinquy, Published by Create Space, throughout the entire book.

news.

The resignations of Christian George at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and David Sills at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary were reported by the Biblical Recorder, news journal of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, on June 4.

George, curator of Midwestern Seminary's Spurgeon Library and its digitized Spurgeon Archive, had edited two volumes of previously unpublished sermons by Charles Spurgeon in a planned 12-volume series, 'The Lost Sermons of C.H. Spurgeon,' published by the B&H Academic division of Life Way Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Sills, professor of missions and cultural anthropology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, had been a member of the International Mission Board presidential search committee seeking a successor to David Platt, who is transitioning to a pastor-teacher role at McLean Bible Church in Northern Virginia.

George resigned on May 3 while Sills resigned on May 23, the Biblical Recorder reported. George's resignation was 'due to a personal moral failing,' Midwestern told the Recorder on June 1. For Sills, no reason for his resignation was stated by Southern.

George, as curator of the Spurgeon Library and digitized archive, worked with the personal library of the famed 19th-century London preacher. The collection, which Midwestern purchased in 2006, consists of more than 6,000 books and hundreds of artifacts, letters and assorted materials. The Spurgeon Library facility on the Kansas City, Mo., campus was dedicated in 2015 after 10 months of construction.

George also was on Midwestern's faculty as assistant professor of historical theology and is a former faculty member at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland; an M.Div. from Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.; and an undergraduate degree from Samford.

George's departure, Midwestern said in its statement to the Biblical Recorder, 'has not affected the employment of anyone else at Midwestern or Spurgeon College. As sad as we are to lose Dr. George, we are optimistic about the future of the Spurgeon Center and look forward to introducing hundreds of new students to Spurgeon this fall.

Sills, in addition to resigning his faculty position at Southern, has resigned as president of Reaching & Teaching International Ministries, an organization with 13 staff members seeking, according to its website, to help meet the great need for deep discipleship, pastoral preparation, leadership training, and theological education around the world.'

Sills joined Southern's faculty after serving as an International Mission Board missionary in Ecuador as a church planter and general evangelist among the Highland Quichua people in the Andes and as a seminary professor at the Ecuadorian Baptist Theological Seminary.

He is the author of numerous books on missions and missiology, including 'The Missionary Call: Finding Your Place in God's World' (Moody) and 'Changing World, Unchanging Mission: Responding to Global Challenges' (IVP).

Southern Seminary, in a statement to the Biblical Recorder, said SBTS President R. Albert Mohler Jr. 'received the resignation of Dr. David Sills from the

Southern Seminary faculty on May 23, 2018. Southern Seminary is committed to the highest standards of both principle and policy. Our policies and procedures are clear and are consistently applied. Because this is a personnel matter, we cannot comment further.”¹⁹⁴

So folks, when we have had people leading the convention, or even any church, that are living in sin while trying to teach others how to live right and do service for Jesus, then we have major problems. I mentioned earlier in this book how Dr. Paige Patterson was castigated, criticized, and eventually fired from his job for something he said and did over twenty years ago. But now we have these other leaders who have just been pretending, while at the same time, they are training pastors and church workers on how to do ministry. I thank God for their being willing to step down, but just imagine the decisions they made while being cold toward God and living in sin. It is truly no wonder that the Southern Baptist Convention has continued to deteriorate. Can't you see it? We have been having former leaders committing egregious sins while at the same time trying to oversee and lead others, and then, we have a new S.B.C. President, Dr. J.D. Greear, who wants to coddle the homosexuals and lesbians while pretending to be doing a great job for Jesus.

Well, it just seems that I am having a hard time finishing this chapter, but the more I think about the coming demise of the S.B.C. and the terrible immoral things that have been happening, I just am so burdened. It seems that we have been more interested in promoting our pet doctrines like Calvinism and other projects, while at the same time permitting some spiritual and moral problems to not be dealt with. So, I want to give you one more article I found about the need for fallen leaders to repent and clean up their acts. Therefore, I will give you this article, yes, written by another Presbyterian writer, but one that every child and servant of God needs to read carefully.

Before I present this article to you, let me say that I don't hate or despise leaders who have fallen into sin, repented, and tried to turn their lives around. But, as I remember Dr. Chuck Swindoll's saying on a radio broadcast many years ago, "Once a Christian leader falls, things are never the same ever again, even after God has forgiven the people, just simply because things will never be as they were." And, Dr. Swindoll used the example of King David, who committed adultery with Bathsheba, planned the death of Uriah, her husband, married her to cover up his sin, and then had to watch as his baby died. David's sin started a downward spiral that eventually led to the demise of his kingdom. And, so it is with any person who commits immoral sin! We know that we surely can be forgiven, but in exception to what Dr. J.D. Greear said about not stigmatizing sexual sin, as I stated before, the consequences are much greater, and usually, many more people get hurt than with other sins that people commit, unless of course, it might be murder. Now, let's look at the article from "The Aquila Report".

¹⁹⁴ The Southern Baptist Digest, From: The Biblical Recorder and Baptist Press, June 06, 2018, pages 1-2.

The S.B.C., Fallen Leaders, And Repentance
How Should Churches Minister To The Large Numbers Of
Pastors Leaving The Ministry Due To Moral Failure?
Written by Ray Carroll | Sunday, June 10, 2018

“At some point, we will have to publicly admit that we are hemorrhaging pastors to burnout, moral failure, and pornography. We will have to admit that there is a problem with deacons, nursery workers, and church workers over the years who have abused children. We will have to admit that there is an unchecked problem with morality within the walls of our churches where people should feel safe...We have to overhaul our leadership, our churches, and our hearts. We have to reprogram the way we do things and the way we think about other people and ourselves.

A couple of years ago, **I wrote a blog during the Southern Baptist Convention** about the need for Southern Baptists to get serious about the crisis of its fallen leaders. Not surprisingly, nothing has been done about the large numbers of pastors leaving the ministry due to moral failure. I made several suggestions in that post to prevent moral failure.

Sadly, **it seems the chickens have come home to roost** for the largest Protestant denomination in America. It's no surprise. We have been mishandling moral failure in pastoral leadership in the pulpit for decades and have been doing little to prevent it from happening.

This ministry has been dedicated to helping fallen ministers and those affected by their fall for close to a decade. I have helped around 600 people personally in that time period. The stories of the pastors and those around them are all the same. Their sin came as a surprise to those in the church, but for the most part, could have been prevented. And after a fall, the church was ill equipped to handle the fallout.

In a recent article, **Albert Mohler called the recent events and controversy** in the S.B.C. the wrath of God poured out. (This is what Mohler said about Dr. Paige Patterson's Firing) Others have used similar language. I couldn't disagree more. For decades, we have simply grossly mishandled moral failure and turned a blind eye to sin within the church on the local, association, and denominational level. When a pastor falls, churches typically haven't been trained to respond with grace, but by shooting the wounded. **This isn't the wrath of God, it's the consequence of a graceless and unprepared response.**

So how did we get here? Let me offer three reasons that I've noticed in my years as a fallen pastor who has a front row seat to the moral failure in the church. This ministry exists because I have a heart for it, but also because frankly, the church and most denominations do little to reach out to the fallen in their midst. Our initial response to sin in leadership is to remove the fallen leader as far away from our sight as possible.

This response is not just awful, it's unbiblical. **Go read Galatians 6:1.** When anyone sins, the church's response is to restore the one who repents. I'm not talking about putting a fallen pastor back into the pulpit. Anyone who has read either of my books or this blog knows I don't argue for that. I'm talking about restoring a sinner back to a right relationship with Christ, his family, and the church. When a member of

the church sins, the pastor and leaders most often chase after them and do what they can to restore them. However, when a church leader falls, the most immediate instinct is to fire them, kick them to the curb, and remove them from the fellowship as fast as possible. Sadly, this reaction is so ingrained into our Southern Baptist DNA that it is hard to think of any other response when we are hurt by a leader's actions. That is why we need to retrain our response.

We have marginalized the women in our churches and the stories of their suffering. Half of the contacts I get in this ministry are from women who have been in a relationship with a church leader or pastor. The vast majority of them have been in a consensual relationship with a leader. However, most of the time, the woman is the one who first feels guilt over the sin in the relationship and **wants to come clean long before the minister**. More often than not, when she approaches the pastor or the church leadership with the sin, she is ignored, ostracized, or not believed. The pastor will often lie to cover his tracks and will do what he can to protect his job and ministry. Instead of listening to the stories of the women who have truth that needs to be heard, we have instead protected liars in positions of power. Worse, there are women I have spoken with who have been flirted with, chased by, and spoken to inappropriately by a pastor without consent or their desire (hence, the need for a blog post about "is my pastor flirting with me?"). Many times, church leadership turns a blind eye to the actions of the pastor and is complicit in his sin. On top of these, add the hundreds of women whose voices who have been silenced and who have been physically and sexually abused. All of them in the name of religion, by leaders, those claiming to be good Southern Baptists, or within the walls of our churches.

We have not publicly recognized the moral crisis within our midst and have done nothing to address it. I only know of one denomination that has a counseling center for fallen pastors or pastors who are in crisis mode. It's not the Southern Baptists. There are churches in our denomination who have set up ministries dedicated to helping out the burned out or fallen, but waiting lists are long and the demand greatly outweighs the supply. That's one of the reasons this ministry began. There was nothing out there for fallen pastors when I started blogging. There are still scant resources. Thankfully, there is a grassroots movement to address the moral crisis and failure in our country. It might be better that the S.B.C. doesn't institutionalize pastor restoration so that it becomes a process overwhelmed with bureaucracy.

At some point, we will have to publicly admit that we are hemorrhaging pastors to burnout, moral failure, and pornography. We will have to admit that there is a problem with deacons, nursery workers, and church workers over the years who have abused children. We will have to admit that there is an unchecked problem with morality within the walls of our churches where people should feel safe. A resolution isn't enough. Apologizing for it at the annual convention isn't enough. We have to overhaul our leadership, our churches, and our hearts. We have to reprogram the way we do things and the way we think about other people and ourselves. We cannot continue this pattern because it is not working and it has produced failure.

I made several suggestions in my post two years ago that I think are helpful, but I think at this point they would just be part of a larger overhaul. We have so many problems to fix, but I'm confident that they are fixable. Until then, this ministry is

dedicated to people from all denominations, all walks of life, from all over the world, just like it has been since day one. If you need help, please reach out, read through this blog, or check out either of my books. Know that you're not alone.

Ray Carroll is the author of **"Fallen Pastor Crisis Manual: Help for All Those Affected by a Minister's Fall"** and **"Fallen Pastor: Finding Restoration in a Broken World,"** which answers many of the questions I get asked on a weekly basis. This article is used with permission."

Do you remember the story of Joseph in the Book of Genesis? I am sure you do. If you remember correctly, you know that Potiphar's wicked wife tried very hard to get Joseph into bed with her. But, Joseph was such a classy man, and one that respected his boss, Potiphar, so much, that he refused to submit to the wife's seduction. His refusal of her and his stand for righteousness cost him dearly. This evil woman lied about the incident. This caused Joseph's being put into prison for a very long time. Yet, because of his commitment to righteousness, God supernaturally preserved Joseph in the prison. Eventually, God rewarded him with the second highest position in Egypt. We should know that there is nothing that can destroy a ministry or church any quicker than immorality. And as Ray Carroll said, "Whatever the Southern Baptist Convention might have in the future, if any, then there needs to be the proper stand against immorality."

Let me give you one more story before I conclude this chapter. Many years ago while I was pastoring a growing, thriving Southern Baptist Church, we had many evangelistic meetings in order to try and get people saved. This included some huge outdoor crusades. Sometimes we would turn out over 3,000 people in the tent revivals. Our primary preacher for these great meetings was a middle-aged, well-known evangelist. He was preaching all over the Southern Baptist Convention, and he could draw the net probably better than any other evangelist I knew. God was using him tremendously.

But then, on two occasions, one in a local restaurant and another on a Christian cruise in the Carribean, my wife and I heard him tell some off-the-wall vulgar stories. He thought these little jokes were cute, but when my wife and I separated from him, and on the cruise, from him and his wife, my dear, very wise wife said to me twice, "I just don't feel comfortable around this evangelist anymore." My wife has always been very discerning. Well, it wasn't very long until this dynamic evangelist who was seeing hundreds saved, had an affair with a young pastor's daughter in another state. His ministry was ruined. Because he talked to another previously fallen pastor in another state, he was convinced that all he needed to do was to repent before God and work on getting his marriage back together. Then, he made plans to change the presentation in his ministry from preaching the Word to doing Christian comedy. So, he was only away from the ministry a short while, but now, he expected every person to completely forgive him, and truthfully, to act as if nothing had even happened. Well, it doesn't work that way, and this tremendously faithful servant of God who used to be so fruitful, is now not doing very well. Yes, I am very thrilled that he got forgiveness from Jesus, but I am appalled that he expected all of his friends to act like nothing ever happened. There is nothing on earth that can destroy a life, a ministry, a church, and even the Southern Baptist Convention like immoral sin. But, we have decided that you

can commit sin and then act like nothing ever happened. I assure you that it doesn't work that way. It never has, and it never will.

Conclusion To This Chapter

It goes without saying, that by the time you have covered this book up to this point, you understand that I believe the Southern Baptist Convention is in a terrible condition. Well, you are exactly right, and truthfully, I don't believe the S.B.C. can be rescued, repaired, saved, or whatever word you might choose to correct the problems. It has gone so far that most of those wonderful conservatives who took the seminaries back in 1979, under the leadership of some great men and women of God, have now passed on. As we have already discussed, this new generation of young leaders are so confused about Calvinism, worldliness in the church, entertainment, performance, contextualizing the Gospel, the orality movement, and an entire host of other things, that it has just gone too far. If there would be any hope at all, it would have to be an organized coup attempt again with some strong conservative preachers who know they are Baptists, would be willing to defend Biblical truth, and throw all of these hyper-Calvinists, Emergent Church people, and neo-charismatic tongue speakers out the door. We know that this is probably not going to happen. The reason I say it would take a Christian coup attempt is because all of the seminaries, mission boards, agencies, like Lifeway, and other committees or boards are now controlled by people with theology that is completely foreign to the traditional Southern Baptist churches. So, it probably won't happen!

However, this once beautiful and effective body of baptized believers may have to just die a horrendous death like so many denominations of the past have done. We will not know all of the contributing factors until "the autopsy" is done, but the things we have discussed in this book, plus a lot of things I have not had time to mention, are surely contributing factors to the increasing rapidity of the death of the S.B.C.

Chapter Twelve

What Is The Solution To The Demise Of The Southern Baptist Convention?

Introduction To This Final Chapter

Well, we have finally come to the last chapter of this book. By now, some of you have hopefully had your eyes opened to a real mess, while others of you, because you disagree with my appraisal of the situation in the S.B.C. or because you differ with me about these modern new doctrines of Calvinism, are probably quite angry or upset with me. If you have looked objectively at what I have tried to present as the thesis of this book, I believe you should now see, and hopefully understand, the dire straits of the Southern Baptist Convention. On the other hand, if you are extremely angry with me because you differ or disagree with me, then please know that I still love you in the Lord anyway. I am really not trying to please or appease you, but my heart is sincerely broken over the direction in which the Southern Baptist Convention has moved since 1979, although I was right there with all of the conservatives trying to take back the convention from the moderates or liberals. You conservatives were very successful in your attempt to rescue the convention, but then, because of the many “dumb” (pardon the expression) mistakes of those in leadership down through these almost forty years, the convention seems to be on the road to its demise. If not a demise or death, it is surely on the road to more wasted money and ineffectiveness. So, in these last pages, I am probably going to make those angry with me even angrier. And those who were not angry before, probably will be by the time you finish reading this. Why? Because I am going to make some horrendous suggestions about letting the Southern Baptist Convention go the way of so many dying denominations. And truthfully, I am not too sure but that God has allowed this disaster to come about after 173 years of existence for the S.B.C., just simply because the emphasis has been taken away from the local church assembly and has been placed upon this parachurch denomination.

So now, let's look at some strong recommendations from this 71 year old preacher who loves Jesus and the souls of men. Sometimes we have to retreat and regroup before we can win the battles. This is what I believe we have to do at this time in Christian history. Yes, Jesus is coming soon, but until He gets here, we need to be busy about the Great Commission and not just about the structure, budgets, organization, and personnel of a huge dying effort to save face before the world. You might say that what we need to do is to simplify the process and magnify what Jesus magnifies, and that is the souls of men, women, boys, and girls who need to be saved. Now, I ask you to become as objective as you possibly can as you take a look at these recommendations. I present them for only two reasons; first, to glorify Christ in the greatest way, and secondly, to encourage us to get on our hearts what Jesus has on His—the souls of men, women, boys, and girls! Remember again that in **Luke 19:10**, **Jesus said, “I came to seek and to save those who were lost.”**

So, we will never be more like Jesus than when we follow His plan to go seek the lost.

Please Notice What We Must Not Do!

1. The first thing we must not do is quit!

When things are as bad as they really are in the Southern Baptist Convention, the natural and easy thing would be just to say, "What's the use?" But, how can we even be inclined to give up when Jesus went all the way to Calvary and certainly didn't quit until it was finished.

I have wanted to quit many times during my 53 plus years of ministry, but after open heart surgery, living for years with an incurable lung disease, constantly battling diabetes, and even with a horrible wreck in Africa 25 years ago wherein one of my best friend and I were thrown from the vehicle and he was killed, I just can't quit now when there is so much at stake. Truthfully, even while I have sat for weeks and weeks writing this book, I have been tempted to say, "What's the use when so many professional "good ole boys" have let their desire to climb the religious ladder get in the way of reaching scores of people with the Gospel?"

Also, when I constantly battle health issues right now as I write, I want to say, I am too old and much too sick to try to recommend some bold recommendations to those coming after me. But then I stop and try to envision where those young dedicated expository Bible preachers are that will come in, take a stand, and help start anew, but honestly, I just don't know but a few. But believe it or not, this very morning when my dear wife, Jo Anne, and I were reading the Book of Revelation in our daily family devotions, I reread the following passage from chapter three. Just read carefully what Jesus said to the struggling church of Philadelphia. ***"And to the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee a open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that over cometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."*** (Rev. 3:7-13)

Well, I won't try to write a complete commentary on what Jesus said to the church of Philadelphia, but I will just give a note of explanation for some encouragement. Jesus tells the suffering church at Philadelphia that He is going to stand with them, and if He opens the doors for them, no one will close them, not even Satan himself. He also tells the church that if God closes the doors, no one will be able to open them. The primary truth is that it is God who opens and closes the doors for ministry and no one else. Therefore, I sincerely believe that God is behind the scenes

of the deteriorating Southern Baptist Convention closing some doors that have been open for many years. He is doing this because people have gotten sidetracked from the real purpose of world evangelism and missions due to arguments over false doctrines and many other selfish and egocentric subjects.

This text also says to the church that they must not quit because Jesus has made them overcomers, and He is going to make them pillars in the true temple of God. In other words, if others hate and persecute them, Jesus will protect them. And, one of the most astonishing things in these few verses is found in verse nine where Jesus says this, ***“Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.”*** Do you understand what our Lord is saying? He is telling these suffering saints that one day those who have put them through so much hell will be made to bow at their feet and witness Jesus’ declared ownership of these faithful saints. Wow! What a tremendous text and thought!

Just think about it, through all of the years of suffering and persecution brought on by those who make fun of us, castigate us, and sometimes even hate us, these people will be exposed for being liars, and they shall be humbled before the Lordship of God. So, my dear friends, we cannot quit, and we must not quit. Even with our strength almost gone, pay attention to **Galatians 6:9**, ***“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”*** That my friends, is a tremendous encouragement to tired, weary, and almost exhausted servants of God. Therefore, we cannot, and we must not quit!!

2. The second thing we must not do is to capitulate to Satan.

Folks, it is truly obvious that the long and sometimes rapid decline of the Southern Baptist Convention has been caused by the evil working of Satan himself. It only stands to reason that when a huge parachurch organization, that was one time closely connected to the local churches and was winning multitudes to Jesus, starts to die, then, it has to be Satan’s orchestrating the takedown of this huge ministry. We must learn to apply what the Word of God has instructed us to do when we are in battle with Satan. In the **Book of James**, we find these words, ***“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*** (James 4:7) So my friends, it is our responsibility to submit to the authority of our risen Savior and Lord, and then, He will give us the power to resist the temptations and attacks of Satan.

You see folks, Satan is truly the horrible creature behind the destruction of the S.B.C., and if we are going to be victorious over him, then we must fight him the way the Word of God tells us to fight. Pay attention to the next several verses from the **Book of Ephesians**. ***“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the***

wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Ephesians 6:10-17)

Now, if you don't believe Satan is truly the enemy that we are fighting, just notice some of the following statistics found on the Pastoral Care, Inc. Website. These statistics are not just from the Southern Baptist Convention, but from all evangelical churches in America. Yet, these very things have contributed to the demise of the S.B.C. Please read carefully and get a burden like God has given to me.

“Every year in America, over 4,000 new churches are started, but, over 7,000 churches close their doors during that year. Also, each month over 1,500 pastors leave the ministry voluntarily for various reasons, such as immorality, depression, bitterness, and other causes. In addition, over 3,500 people left the church every day last year. Also, 95% of pastors report that they are not praying daily or regularly with their spouse. Going further, 52% of pastors feel overworked and cannot meet their church's unreal expectations. Seventy-one percent of churches have no plans for their pastor to have a periodical sabbatical.”¹⁹⁵

Some Heartbreaking Bad News

Well folks, today while I am working on this chapter, my heart has been broken because of some new information I have just learned. One of the best friends I have had in the ministry for many years, Dr. Johnny Hunt, is on the verge of leaving his huge church, the First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Georgia, to become a new official with the North American Mission Board in Atlanta. God used this wonderful servant for almost 30 years to build a dynamic soul winning church from 200 people to over 7,000 in attendance, and now he is leaving this wonderful soul winning congregation to adjoin himself with Dr. Kevin Ezell, the strong hard Calvinist who now runs the North American Mission Board. When I got the news just about three hours ago, I almost wept. And, the news has made me sick on my stomach because how can a non-Calvinist soul winning man, go and attach himself to a hardened Calvinist who doesn't even believe that the Gospel is for all people—just for the elect? This just reveals one more time how much the deterioration of the S.B.C. is progressing. From a church where thousands have been won to Christ, to now, a Calvinistic church planting operation which is reproducing dying Calvinistic churches. Satan must be sitting back and laughing about this foolishness while millions of lost people may die and go to hell as the result of this tragic decision.

You might be wondering, “Why does this keep on happening with great Southern Baptist Convention conservative men of God?” I will tell you what I have already told you earlier in this book. There is a “good ole boy” buddy system, which continues corrupting great servants of God and leading them away from the Great Commission lifestyle to a life of less responsibility and sometimes even laziness due to their corrupted new-Calvinistic theology proliferated by Al Mohler and his good ole buddies. The raging rapids pouring downhill just keep getting more vicious and faster as the days come and go. Yes, it seems that Satan is making one mad dash for the finish line before Jesus returns and brings this wicked mess to an end. My heart is

¹⁹⁵ Pastoral Care, Inc. Website, pages 1-3.

truly grieved, but I refuse to capitulate my doctrinal stand to these colleagues of Satan. But, I do believe there is a celebration in hell today over this unbelievable decision by one of God's formerly great servants to join the enemies of the Great Commission for whatever reason. And believe it or not, I used to hear this servant of God say over and over, "We must keep the main thing the main thing." That of course is the Great Commission. Now, this same man has aligned himself with those who believe the Great Commission is not even necessary because God has already determined who will be saved, and who won't!"

3. The third thing we must not do is to go on pretending everything is still good, when we know it isn't.

One time many years ago, a dear pastor friend paid me one of the greatest compliments that anyone could ever have paid me when he said, "Stan Frye is the real deal." Truly, no one could have complimented me with any words greater than these. Why do I say this? Because for the past 53 years, whether in the pulpit preaching God's Word or outside dealing with church people and other pastors, I have just tried so hard to be genuine and real. I have not tried to cover up who I really am, but I have just tried to be myself. Therefore, at the risk of making some of my dear former brethren and friends angry at me, I must say one more time, I am not going to pretend that nothing catastrophic is happening in the S.B.C., when I know that it really is. The Southern Baptist Convention is on a collision course with disaster, and multitudes of great leaders have just hidden their heads in the sand and made silly statements that we should just co-exist with all of these people in the convention who have left or gone back on the Traditional Southern Baptist beliefs, just so that we can get along with each other and not be divided.

May I tell you folks that we are far beyond this silly compromising point in our existence if we are going to be true to the Word of God and keep on trying to carry out the Great Commission like our Lord commissioned us? Never in my entire life, would I have ever imagined that before I pass on to heaven, I would have to decide whether to co-exist with false doctrine or take a big step and leave these deteriorating churches and compromising pretenders in order to be true to the Word of God and to my conscience.

But, I suppose when I consider what the Scriptures say about religious pretenders teaching false doctrine, then I must now say, it is time to leave this dying monster called the Southern Baptist Convention behind. Please notice the following Scriptures concerning the spot that we are now in. **II Corinthians 6:17-18**, *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."* Also, take a look at the profound passage found in **Romans 16:17-18**, *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."* Wow folks, these two passages from the pen of Paul the Apostle demand some strong action to get away from these charlatans who are causing so

much division in the flock of God. In the Corinthian passage, Paul tells the Christians to separate themselves from these “unclean” religious pretenders if they expect to be called children of the most Holy Father. There is no room here for compromise or acquiescence to those who teach false doctrine and want to cause trouble in the body of Christ.

Then, in the second passage of Scripture found in **Romans**, Paul tells the people if there are people who are causing divisions within the flock of God, then they were to avoid those people at all cost. Literally this means, that if there are false teachers and troublemakers in the flock, then we are to literally walk on the other side of the street from them because their motives are selfish and sinful, and their deception will continue to do more and more damage to the cause of Christ. These were not little childish immature words of compromise and co-existence, but they are words of command and demand for the true servants of God. Therefore, brothers and sisters in the Southern Baptist Convention, it is time for all true believers who believe the biblical principles of the past which brought about the true Conservative Resurgence in the S.B.C. to change direction and come out and start anew with the work of God in an attempt to really carry out the Great Commission. It is not time to succumb to the false doctrine that all people can't be saved and that the only people we should be going after are the unreached people groups where we have to go with unbiblical covert mission activity.

4. The fourth thing we must not do is to ignore the bad situation in the S.B.C. and just hope it will go away.

My friends, the mess in the Southern Baptist Convention is not going away. Even if God miraculously sent a genuine revival, unless these power crazy compromising people who just love to be in charge and bring their buddies alongside of them would get on their knees and boldly admit their wrong and repent of their sins, things will not get better for many years to come. Truly, the arrogance of so many of these corrupt conservative Calvinistic leaders is beyond anything I ever witnessed back during the days of the moderates and liberals when they controlled the convention. We cannot ignore them or just pretend that things will get better, when in fact, they never do until people admit they are wrong and beg for forgiveness from those they have so terribly wronged. But, I can tell you that if these people are so brilliant, like Al Mohler and his Calvinistic mafia, they will never admit the damage they are doing unless God breaks them through severe chastisement. As long as they have the power and control the money, they surely will not admit they are wrong unless God does break them. I am going to go so far to say that many of these “young, restless, reformed” seminary students and punk pastors are doing more damage to eternal things than the MS-13 gangs do with their brutality. Now, you may say this is a terrible statement, but no, it isn't when you consider that the MS-13 gangsters control, rape, and kill hundreds of people, but these “young, restless, reformed,” gangsters are destroying the faith of millions of people, and they are helping to send multitudes to hell because of their damnable doctrines of predestination and election.

Therefore, I want to say once more, “I hear the death rattles of the Southern Baptist Convention.” We must take away the support structure which is keeping it

alive. The time has come to expose the Diotrophes and Demases, and let them have the preeminence and the love of the world which they seek so diligently.

In the old west, when a cowboy's horse broke its leg, the cowboy had to shoot the crippled horse and put it out of its misery. Maybe it's time to turn the S.B.C. over to these "good ole boy" buddies and just let them decide how to put the convention out of its misery. It is now time to take some big steps and go our separate ways in order to get back on our minds what Jesus has on His mind—the souls of men, women, boys, and girls. And just maybe we need to do with these Calvinists and false teachers in the S.B.C. what Dr. Adrian Rogers said many years ago when I heard him preaching about what to do about the push for homosexuality. He just stated, "Let's just put all of them on a deserted island somewhere out in the ocean, and in a few years there would be none left." He got in trouble for this statement, but it made a lot of sense.

Because most Calvinists and the Emerging Church don't want to do evangelism, conduct crusades, give invitations, pass out the written Word of God, and preach sermons any more, maybe we should just tell them to go do their "thing", and in a few years, their churches will die. They will cease to exist with the exception of a few, and we can devote our time to going after lost souls. But, if this happens, we have to make some drastic changes.

Now, Please Notice What We Must Do!

Now that we have taken a look at what we must not do, let me make a number of suggestions for what we must do in order to get back to the historical and traditional Baptist and biblical doctrines that the Southern Baptist Convention was founded upon. These suggestions might seem tough to some of you, but there is no other choice at this point if we are going to make the Great Commission the main thing in the way that Jesus meant for it to be carried out.

1. The first thing we must do is to stop supporting the Cooperative Program.

Earlier in this book I shared with you how I started attending the Southern Baptist Associational and State Convention meetings wherein support for the Cooperative Program became the main subject of most meetings, even to the point where it became the ticket of participation. If we are going to slow down the advance of the false doctrine that is now being propagated by so many Calvinists, Emergent Church people, and yes, even a lot of new-charismatics, within the convention, the only way to slow these things down and eventually stop a lot of this before they can corrupt more and more people, is to stop the flow of funds through the Cooperative Program. Of course, for you pastors to do this, you will have to clearly educate your church people about all that has been happening in the S.B.C., and then, convince them that there is a better way.

But, I will tell you this! The only way to make some of these corrupt cronies stop their contamination of the convention is to cut off the flow of funds that pay their salaries. Now I know that a lot of good has been done down through the years through the Cooperative Program when the right people were directing its expenditures and use. But now, since there is so much false doctrine and jockeying for positions, the

only way to stop this is to stop giving to this Cooperative Program. When we stop giving to the CP, then corrupt missionaries may have to come home from the fields, unnecessary personnel may have to leave their positions, and the support of false teaching seminaries will have to be curtailed or stopped.

This needs to be the very first step taken by all of you genuine Traditional Southern Baptist pastors and church members. Don't let the phony brainwashed leaders in the convention and in your churches continue the lie about how great the CP is. Just stop the flow of funds that have been wasted by the millions of dollars down through the years, and you will see some very extensive changes coming very soon.

However, you do need to understand that some of the S.B.C. leaders in the local associations, state conventions, and even the Southern Baptist Convention itself, may ask you to pull your churches out of the S.B.C. and become independent churches. But please, don't let this deter or intimidate you in the least. Things have already gone too far to save or rescue the convention at this point. So, you will have to leave the convention and then begin anew.

2. The second thing we must do is to come together and form a new national association of Baptist Churches.

Now, I am not talking about forming a new denomination at this point, but just simply to form a loose association of churches who prayed much and decided to start over with a new organization. I would suggest that all of the like-minded churches and pastors in various regions of the country do this and just discover how many churches and pastors there are that want to return to the way we used to be with solid biblical and Baptist beliefs.

I would suggest that these churches come together and get better organized to the point of selecting some very qualified, Jesus loving people, who will be willing to sign a doctrinal statement like the one that was adopted with some very traditional Southern Baptist doctrines, especially moving away from Calvinism. This statement was written by several great traditional leaders back in May of 2012, in Nashville, Tennessee. The document was titled, "**A Statement of the Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation.**" Let me give you a copy of an article that was written by Baptist Press back there in 2012. This article also includes this special document, but it was rejected by some of the more Calvinistic leaders of the convention who were firmly against this new document by standing on the Baptist Faith and Message 2,000. The only problem was, and is, that the Baptist Faith and Message 2,000 was written or revived so as to include a Calvinistic slant to the way of salvation. This is why so many of the leaders of the convention in 2012 rebuffed the new document. They still wanted to allow a spot for the Calvinists. Let me give you a copy of the Baptist Press article so that you can see how some opposed the new document, but also, so you can read the names of many of those great servants of God who help draw up this new document. I would ask you to read this article very carefully.

Statement On Calvinism Draws Approval And Criticism By Michael Foust, posted Thursday, May 31, 2012

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – “A group of current and former Southern Baptist leaders has signed a statement affirming what they call the ‘traditional Southern Baptist’ understanding of the doctrine of salvation, with the goal of drawing a distinction with the beliefs of ‘New Calvinism.’

The statement was posted May 31 at S.B.C.Today.com and includes a preamble and 10 articles, along with signatures from two entity presidents (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's Paige Patterson and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's Chuck Kelley), five state executive directors (Georgia's Bob White, Florida's John Sullivan, Mississippi's Jim Futral, Louisiana's David Hankins, Alaska's Mike Procter), and in addition to Patterson, five other former S.B.C. presidents (Bailey Smith, Jimmy Draper, Jerry Vines, Morris Chapman and Bobby Welch).

The document was titled, "A Statement of the Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation." (Read the entire document at the bottom of this story.)

‘For the most part, Southern Baptists have been glad to relegate disagreements over Calvinism to secondary status along with other important but ‘non-essential’ theological matters,’ the document reads in the preamble. “The Southern Baptist majority has fellowshiped happily with its Calvinist brethren while kindly resisting Calvinism itself. And, to their credit, most Southern Baptist Calvinists have not demanded the adoption of their view as the standard. We would be fine if this consensus continued, but some New Calvinists seem to be pushing for a radical alteration of this long-standing arrangement.’

The document further asserts that the ‘vast majority of Southern Baptists are not Calvinists and that they do not want Calvinism to become the standard view in Southern Baptist life.’

‘We believe it is time to move beyond Calvinism as a reference point for Baptist soteriology,’ the statement reads. Soteriology is the study of the doctrine of salvation.

Each of the 10 articles includes a statement of what the signers affirm and what they deny. For instance, on the article about the Grace of God, the document says:

‘We affirm that grace is God's generous decision to provide salvation for any person by taking all of the initiative in providing atonement, in freely offering the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in uniting the believer to Christ through the Holy Spirit by faith.’¹⁹⁶

“The statement then adds:

‘We deny that grace negates the necessity of a free response of faith or that it cannot be resisted. We deny that the response of faith is in any way a meritorious work that earns salvation.’

Eric Hankins, pastor of First Baptist Church in Oxford, Miss., wrote an introduction to the statement at S.B.C.Today.com. He is a signer of the statement.

¹⁹⁶ Baptist Press, Website, May 31, 2012, By: Michael Foust, Page 1.

'The concern of the developers of this statement was that the viewpoint of this majority was not well represented by the term 'non-Calvinist' and that an instrument was needed by which that majority might articulate positively what they believe vis-à-vis Calvinism,' Hankins wrote. '... Its purpose is to engender a much needed Convention-wide discussion about the place of Calvinism in Southern Baptist life.'

Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, said he chose not to sign the statement.

'Southern Baptists have always found a way to work together, within the framework of historical Christian faith and Baptist doctrine, to support and promote our cooperative enterprises of global missions, theological education and benevolent ministries,' Page said. 'While I fully affirm any group of Southern Baptists to express their deeply held convictions about doctrinal matters, especially a matter as important as the doctrine of salvation, I would prefer that any collective document to which I affix my signature be a consensus statement, developed jointly with those of various soteriological persuasions, that expresses our core commitments to those matters we hold in common. The Baptist Faith and Message is such a document.'

At the same time, Page also said he believes the convention needs a 'consensus accord,' and said he will announce at the S.B.C. annual meeting in June plans for putting one together.

'Given the depth of the fracture lines around the issue of soteriology across the Convention,' Page said, 'I sense a need to assemble a representative group of Southern Baptists who can hammer out such a consensus 'accord' that will enable the majority of Southern Baptists to work together for the Kingdom purposes which initially bound us together, an initiative I plan to announce at this year's annual meeting.'

The 'Traditional Southern Baptist' document was widely discussed on Baptist-centric blogs in the hours after it was released. A post at S.B.C.Voices.com quickly collected more than 100 comments. The comments section at S.B.C.Today.com surged past 200.

Brent Hobbs, pastor of Severn Baptist Church in Severn, N.C., wrote at S.B.C.Voices.com, 'As a Calvinist, I barely recognize the theology they claim is Calvinism.'

David Rogers, son of the late Adrian Rogers and senior editor at the Adrian Rogers Pastor Training Institute, wrote at S.B.C.Voice.com that he doesn't know which group he'd fit in and that Southern Baptists are 'likely never going to come to full agreement' on these issues.

'For the good of the work, the glory of the Lord, and the edification of the Body of Christ, though, I believe we need to agree to disagree over some issues, while constantly affirming that our agreement on the essentials trumps whatever disagreement we may have on more secondary (or tertiary) issues,' Rogers wrote.

Others, though, applauded the statement.

'Eric, thank you for your leadership, thoughtfulness and wisdom,' Brad Whitt, co-pastor of Abilene Baptist Church in Augusta, Ga., wrote at S.B.C.Today.com. Whitt signed it. 'This statement clearly expresses what I, and many other Southern Baptists, believe about the doctrine of salvation.'

David Worley, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Greenfield, Tenn., also signed

the statement.

'I love my Calvinists, Reformed Brothers and Sisters in Christ,' he wrote at S.B.C.Today.com. 'I can work alongside of them, and worship with them, in the S.B.C. I do not want them to be kicked out, or left out of S.B.C. life. But, I do agree with this document, and I think it's a step in the right direction for S.B.C. life.'"¹⁹⁷

"Jon Akin, pastor of Fairview Church in Lebanon, Tenn., wrote at BaptistTwentyOne.com that he does not consider himself part of the 'New Calvinism' and that he agrees with much in the statement. But Akin said the document is fighting 'straw men,' such as implying that 'New Calvinists' believe that a person can be saved apart from personal repentance and faith.' He did not sign it.

'I don't know a single Calvinist in the S.B.C. alive who would argue that a person can be saved apart from repentance and faith,' wrote Akin, who added he believes the statement is divisive.

The statement, he wrote, 'inaccurately and unfairly describes the theology of the 'New Calvinists.' It implies that double predestination is the standard Calvinist position when it is 'in reality' a minority position, Akin wrote.

'The S.B.C. is big enough to include Calvinists and non-Calvinists,' Akin wrote. 'We agree on far more than we disagree on, so let's unite and fight a common enemy.'

Tom Elliff, president of the International Mission Board, and Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, released a joint statement about the document. It read:

'As the heads of the two S.B.C. mission boards (IMB and NAMB), we and all our personnel have already affirmed the BF&M 2000 as prerequisites for employment. We do understand the sentiment behind the proposed statement, but we believe the BF&M 2000 effectively conveys the doctrinal positions traditionally held by Southern Baptists. While alternate doctrinal statements may occasionally arise, it is both our role and our intention to consistently lead in a manner that reflects those doctrines approved by the convention we serve.'"¹⁹⁸

Michael Foust is associate editor of Baptist Press.

Following is the full text of the statement, as posted at www.S.B.C.Today.com:

A Statement Of The Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding Of God's Plan of Salvation Preamble

"Every generation of Southern Baptists has the duty to articulate the truths of its faith with particular attention to the issues that are impacting contemporary mission and ministry. The precipitating issue for this statement is the rise of a movement called 'New Calvinism' among Southern Baptists. This movement is committed to advancing in the churches an exclusively Calvinistic understanding of salvation, characterized by an aggressive insistence on the 'Doctrines of Grace'

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, pages 1-3.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, page 3.

('TULIP'), and to the goal of making Calvinism the central Southern Baptist position on God's plan of salvation.

While Calvinists have been present in Southern Baptist life from its earliest days and have made very important contributions to our history and theology, the majority of Southern Baptists do not embrace Calvinism. Even the minority of Southern Baptists who have identified themselves as Calvinists generally modify its teachings in order to mitigate certain unacceptable conclusions (e.g., anti-missionism, hyper-Calvinism, double predestination, limited atonement, etc.). The very fact that there is a plurality of views on Calvinism designed to deal with these weaknesses (variously described as '3-point,' '4-point,' 'moderate,' etc.) would seem to call for circumspection and humility with respect to the system and to those who disagree with it. For the most part, Southern Baptists have been glad to relegate disagreements over Calvinism to secondary status along with other important but 'non-essential' theological matters. The Southern Baptist majority has fellowshiped happily with its Calvinist brethren while kindly resisting Calvinism itself. And, to their credit, most Southern Baptist Calvinists have not demanded the adoption of their view as the standard. We would be fine if this consensus continued, but some New Calvinists seem to be pushing for a radical alteration of this long-standing arrangement.

We propose that what most Southern Baptists believe about salvation can rightly be called 'Traditional' Southern Baptist soteriology, which should be understood in distinction to 'Calvinist' soteriology. Traditional Southern Baptist soteriology is articulated in a general way in the Baptist Faith and Message, 'Article IV.' While some earlier Baptist confessions were shaped by Calvinism, the clear trajectory of the BF&M since 1925 is away from Calvinism. For almost a century, Southern Baptists have found that a sound, biblical soteriology can be taught, maintained, and defended without subscribing to Calvinism. Traditional Southern Baptist soteriology is grounded in the conviction that every person can and must be saved by a personal and free decision to respond to the Gospel by trusting in Christ Jesus alone as Savior and Lord. Without ascribing to Calvinism, Southern Baptists have reached around the world with the Gospel message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. Baptists have been well-served by a straightforward soteriology rooted in the fact that Christ is willing and able to save any and every sinner."¹⁹⁹

"New Calvinism presents us with a duty and an opportunity to more carefully express what is generally believed by Southern Baptists about salvation. It is no longer helpful to identify ourselves by how many points of convergence we have with Calvinism. While we are not insisting that every Southern Baptist affirm the soteriological statement below in order to have a place in the Southern Baptist family, we are asserting that the vast majority of Southern Baptists are not Calvinists and that they do not want Calvinism to become the standard view in Southern Baptist life. We believe it is time to move beyond Calvinism as a reference point for Baptist soteriology.

Below is what we believe to be the essence of a 'Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation.' We believe that most Southern Baptists,

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, page 4.

regardless of how they have described their personal understanding of the doctrine of salvation, will find the following statement consistent with what the Bible teaches and what Southern Baptists have generally believed about the nature of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ."²⁰⁰

Articles of Affirmation and Denial

“Article One: The Gospel

We affirm that the Gospel is the good news that God has made a way of salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for any person. This is in keeping with God's desire for every person to be saved.

We deny that only a select few are capable of responding to the Gospel while the rest are predestined to an eternity in hell.

Genesis 3:15; Psalm 2:1-12; Ezekiel 18:23, 32; Luke 19.10; Luke 24:45-49; John 1:1-18, 3:16; Romans 1:1-6, 5:8; 8:34; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Galatians 4:4-7; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-16; 2 Peter 3:9

Article Two: The Sinfulness of Man

We affirm that, because of the fall of Adam, every person inherits a nature and environment inclined toward sin and that every person who is capable of moral action will sin. Each person's sin alone brings the wrath of a holy God, broken fellowship with Him, ever-worsening selfishness and destructiveness, death, and condemnation to an eternity in hell.

We deny that Adam's sin resulted in the incapacitation of any person's free will or rendered any person guilty before he has personally sinned. While no sinner is remotely capable of achieving salvation through his own effort, we deny that any sinner is saved apart from a free response to the Holy Spirit's drawing through the Gospel.

Genesis 3:15-24; 6:5; Deuteronomy 1:39; Isaiah 6:5, 7:15-16;53:6; Jeremiah 17:5,9, 31:29-30; Ezekiel 18:19-20; Romans 1:18-32; 3:9-18, 5:12, 6:23; 7:9; Matthew 7:21-23; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 6:9-10;15:22; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27-28; Revelation 20:11-15

Article Three: The Atonement of Christ

We affirm that the penal substitution of Christ is the only available and effective sacrifice for the sins of every person.

We deny that this atonement results in salvation without a person's free response of repentance and faith. We deny that God imposes or withholds this atonement without

²⁰⁰ Ibid, pages 4-5.

respect to an act of the person's free will. We deny that Christ died only for the sins of those who will be saved.

Psalm 22:1-31; Isaiah 53:1-12; John 12:32, 14:6; Acts 10:39-43; Acts 16:30-32; Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:10-14; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-20; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 9:12-15, 24-28; 10:1-18; I John 1:7; 2:2

Article Four: The Grace of God

We affirm that grace is God's generous decision to provide salvation for any person by taking all of the initiative in providing atonement, in freely offering the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in uniting the believer to Christ through the Holy Spirit by faith.

We deny that grace negates the necessity of a free response of faith or that it cannot be resisted. We deny that the response of faith is in any way a meritorious work that earns salvation.

Ezra 9:8; Proverbs 3:34; Zechariah 12:10; Matthew 19:16-30, 23:37; Luke 10:1-12; Acts 15:11; 20:24; Romans 3:24, 27-28; 5:6, 8, 15-21; Galatians 1:6; 2:21; 5; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 3:2-9; Colossians 2:13-17; Hebrews 4:16; 9:28; 1 John 4:19

Article Five: The Regeneration of the Sinner

We affirm that any person who responds to the Gospel with repentance and faith is born again through the power of the Holy Spirit. He is a new creation in Christ and enters, at the moment he believes, into eternal life.

We deny that any person is regenerated prior to or apart from hearing and responding to the Gospel.

Luke 15:24; John 3:3; 7:37-39; 10:10; 16:7-14; Acts 2:37-39; Romans 6:4-11; 10:14; 1 Corinthians 15:22; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; 6:15; Colossians 2:13; 1 Peter 3:18

Article Six: The Election to Salvation

We affirm that, in reference to salvation, election speaks of God's eternal, gracious, and certain plan in Christ to have a people who are His by repentance and faith.

We deny that election means that, from eternity, God predestined certain people for salvation and others for condemnation.

Genesis 1:26-28; 12:1-3; Exodus 19:6; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Matthew 24:31; 25:34; John 6:70; 15:16; Romans 8:29-30, 33; 9:6-8; 11:7; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; Ephesians 1:4-6; 2:11-22; 3:1-11; 4:4-13; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 1 Peter 1:1-2; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 7:9-10

Article Seven: The Sovereignty of God

We affirm God's eternal knowledge of and sovereignty over every person's salvation or condemnation.

We deny that God's sovereignty and knowledge require Him to cause a person's acceptance or rejection of faith in Christ.

Genesis 1:1; 6:5-8; 18:16-33; 22; 2 Samuel 24:13-14; 1 Chronicles 29:10-20; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Joel 2:32; Psalm 23; 51:4; 139:1-6; Proverbs 15:3; John 6:44; Romans 11:3; Titus 3:3-7; James 1:13-15; Hebrews 11:6, 12:28; 1 Peter 1:17

Article Eight: The Free Will of Man

We affirm that God, as an expression of His sovereignty, endows each person with actual free will (the ability to choose between two options), which must be exercised in accepting or rejecting God's gracious call to salvation by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel.

We deny that the decision of faith is an act of God rather than a response of the person. We deny that there is an "effectual call" for certain people that is different from a "general call" to any person who hears and understands the Gospel.

Genesis 1:26-28; Numbers 21:8-9; Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 8:1-22; 2 Samuel 24:13-14; Esther 3:12-14; Matthew 7:13-14; 11:20-24; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 9:23-24; 13:34; 15:17-20; Romans 10:9-10; Titus 2:12; Revelation 22:17

Article Nine: The Security of the Believer

We affirm that when a person responds in faith to the Gospel, God promises to complete the process of salvation in the believer into eternity. This process begins with justification, whereby the sinner is immediately acquitted of all sin and granted peace with God; continues in sanctification, whereby the saved are progressively conformed to the image of Christ by the indwelling Holy Spirit; and concludes in glorification, whereby the saint enjoys life with Christ in heaven forever.

We deny that this Holy Spirit-sealed relationship can ever be broken. We deny even the possibility of apostasy.

John 10:28-29; 14:1-4; 16:12-14; Philippians 1:6; Romans 3:21-26; 8:29,30; 35-39; 12:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Ephesians 1:13-14; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 1:21-22; 1 John 2:19; 3:2; 5:13-15; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 13:5; James 1:12; Jude 24-25

Article Ten: The Great Commission

We affirm that the Lord Jesus Christ commissioned His church to preach the good news of salvation to all people to the ends of the earth. We affirm that the

proclamation of the Gospel is God's means of bringing any person to salvation.

We deny that salvation is possible outside of a faith response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 51:13; Proverbs 11:30; Isaiah 52:7; Matthew 28:19-20; John 14:6; Acts 1:8; 4:12; 10:42-43; Romans 1:16, 10:13-15; 1 Corinthians 1:17-21; Ephesians 3:7-9; 6:19-20; Philippians 1:12-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Timothy 2:5; 2 Timothy 4:1-5”

3. The third thing we must do is to agree to sign a Historical Document Of Loyalty.

I say this because as it has been happening for many years, wolves in sheep clothing have been infiltrating the convention pretending to be Baptists, when in fact they are Presbyterian Calvinists. So, if the Baptist Faith and Message is not written explicitly enough to keep the wolves out, then there has to be a solid written agreement for the conservative Traditional and Historical Baptist to adhere to and build this new association of real Baptist churches.

Also, with the infiltration of the Emerging Church and the Ecumenical movement, there has to be a solid agreement among the real Baptists to prevent these worldly pastors and their people from trying to contextualize the Gospel, to take the sting out of it, and to do away with pulpit preaching and replace it with the orality Gospel and the spiritual dialogue which tells stories rather than preach the truth as God has commanded His preachers to do. In other words, this Statement of Faith must include the truth that the Word of God is truly God's inerrant infallible Word, and it is absolute truth.

Another thing this new Statement of Faith must include is that the word evangelism cannot be replaced with the word evangelicalism because this new evangelicalism associated with the ecumenical movement now preaches social welfare or the social gospel instead of true evangelism. They say God is more interested in redeeming the communities on the planet than He is redeeming the souls of men for eternity. Of course, most of these new evangelicals don't believe in the place called heaven. They also believe that it is more important to concentrate on redeeming the planet than getting people saved. If this new group of genuine Baptists is to make it and to keep carrying out the Great Commission as the main thing, then evangelism must be the priority, and not social welfare and humanitarian assistance. All of this social welfare and humanitarian aid must be just the means to open and keep open the doors of the world in order to take the Gospel message to the lost.

4. The fourth thing that we must do is to organize a volunteer Board of Trustees and Volunteers.

There probably will be a time in the future when this new association of churches will need some staff and personnel, but that should be down the road after this new organization of churches becomes stronger and very stable doctrinally, volunteer wise, and of course, financially. In other words, there may need to be

minimal staff in the future, but this ministry should never become the huge primary operation that takes precedence over the local churches. I have watched the bureaucracy get bigger and bigger in the present S.B.C. for years, to the point that “the tail is now wagging the dog”. What I mean by this is that the parachurch S.B.C. has now taken precedence over the local churches, and this monster of an organization or denomination is demanding the churches keep the convention going, rather than the S.B.C. being an outreach arm of the churches. This is why the percentage of support for the Cooperative Program became the ticket to participation for local churches and pastors, rather than the churches holding the Southern Baptist Convention leaders accountable for the way they spent the money. I will tell you that years ago, I had a staff member of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention tell a group of pastors in a meeting, that I was in, that if they would just send their Cooperative Program money into the convention and not ask questions, then their churches wouldn’t be asking questions either. The idea was, “Just trust us, and we will handle the funds properly, but there will be no accountability.”

5. The fifth thing we must do is to form a new Foreign Mission Program.

Of course, if this were to happen, then the entire methodology of enlisting and training these nationals would take precedence over the training and recruiting of American missionaries. Certainly, there will need to be many well-trained mission leaders and missionaries, but their primary function should be to recruit God-called nationals, train them properly, and then, just simply coach them, help support them, and yes, hold them accountable while they are trying to plant churches, and get them strong enough to become self-supporting churches.

Now in order to enlist these nationals and train them properly, there needs to be a renewed effort to start some strategic Bible institutes and seminaries in the different regions of the mission fields, so that the national workers can both learn academically and practically Biblical truth and theology, and also, how to plant and supervise new churches. These seminaries should be the places where sound theological doctrine should be maintained, and these institutions should be bastions of zeal and excitement to get the nationals ready to win people to Jesus. These schools should not be places where legalistic Calvinists brainwash the students and destroy their enthusiasm to have a passion for souls.

All of these training schools should be used to fully equip the students with Biblical knowledge and practical ministry skills, and they should be used to teach strong accountability standards. Truthfully, these schools should not be an afterthought of the new Baptist association, but they should be primary, and funds should be raised to keep the schools going strong on a regular basis. All teachers in these institutions should have to sign the “Statement of Principles” which we have already mentioned. I say this assuredly because of the damage that has been done by men, such as Al Mohler, who demanded that their teachers at the Southern Baptist Seminary sign the documents to promote Calvinism. These new training schools, whether here in the USA or on the mission fields of the world, need to be Traditional

Historical Baptist schools in theology, church polity, and practical ministry application

I would like to add that if at all possible, these nationals who become missionaries in their own countries should be trained in their countries and not brought to America for training. I say that because I have worked in Africa for 33 years, and I have seen too many African preachers get obsessed with coming to America. Once they start coming, they become westernized, and then when they return home, they are not nearly as effective because they have become too distant from their original culture.

6. The sixth thing we must do is to start a new Home Mission Program.

Presently, the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is on a whirlwind tour trying to plant churches in the North American hemisphere. It is the intent of Dr. Kevin Ezell and his colleagues to plant hundreds of churches throughout North America, but the sad thing is that the plan for most of these new church plants has to do with starting new-Calvinism churches throughout North America. Even the new literature being produced by Lifeway for the purpose of using it in the new church plants is Calvinistic.

I am a little encouraged by the fact that Dr. Johnny Hunt is coming now to work with Kevin Ezell because Pastor Johnny has always had an evangelist's heart for souls. But, my question is, "How can a dynamic soul winning pastor work together with a rabid new-Calvinist who believes that only the elect can be saved, while the non-elect have to go to hell to accommodate God's holy anger?" This just makes no sense to me at all.

Returning to the recommendation to start a new Home Mission program, I would suggest that the emphasis of this new Home Mission program be on planting new, non-Calvinist churches in areas where there are no churches. On the other hand, I would recommend that new churches not be started in areas where there are already a lot of churches. But you might say, "The churches that are there are already dead." Well, if this is the case, then the object of this new Home Mission program should be to work with the dying churches and help them to revitalize these stagnant or dying ministries. There are already some good ministries which are working with restoring churches, but the new Home Mission program should spend much time in trying to revitalize complacent churches. If new churches are planted in these areas where there are a lot of dying churches, then before starting the new church plant, there should be some attempt to resurrect or resuscitate the dead churches and try to get them moving forward again.

I would like to say here, once more, that the primary purpose of the new Home Mission program should be to win people to Christ—not to just do disaster relief and carry out humanitarian aid. For if any organization changes its emphasis from evangelism and winning souls to disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, then "mission drift" has occurred. Before you know it, most of all of the organization's ministry will be physical and social instead of winning people to Jesus. This "mission drift" has occurred in many formerly good evangelistic ministries, until presently

there is very little evangelism effort at all. I will tell you that this “mission drift” usually occurs because of the desire for more money. Donors seem to give more for humanitarian aid than they do to help win people to Christ.

I also think this would be a good time for me to tell you that I don’t ever recommend combining any other ministry with either the Foreign Mission program or the Home Mission program. This is what happened down through the years of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the “great Cooperative Program” became a combined mixture of every kind of program from helping with humanitarian assistance to hiring phony professors in the Bible Colleges and seminaries, instead of just doing the missions the promoters pushed. There is no place in mission programs or mission money for all of the day to day programs like the Women’s Missionary Union, Baptist Men, and a thousand other cronyism programs. The purpose of Foreign and Home missions should be to attempt to win the lost. Again I say, the only purpose of humanitarian activity should be to keep the doors open so that the Gospel can be preached.

7. The seventh thing we must do is to build and develop a new Traditional Baptist College and Seminary.

The founders of this college and seminary should be extremely rigid in their requirements for the qualifications of these administrators and professors. No Calvinist, Emerging Church person, or neo-charismatic should be allowed anywhere near this new college and seminary. All of the personnel of this school should be staunch Traditional Historical Baptists, and they should believe that the Gospel message is for the entire world, not just a predestined elect group. Every staff member should believe in the complete truthfulness of **John 3:16**, ***“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*** Every administrator and professor should believe in giving a Gospel invitation. Furthermore, these leaders of this new school should believe in mass crusades like Peter preached in the Book of Acts, and each professor should teach every student on how to share their Christian testimony with others. They should also be able to give a simple presentation of the Gospel. These professors should be passionate soul winners, and they should be practicing soul winning on a regular basis. If these college and seminary teachers want to be very deep theologians and academically inclined, so be it. But, no doctrine or theology study should take precedence over preaching and sharing the truth of God’s Word in order to win the lost to Christ.

From the classrooms of this newly formed Baptist school, there should be scores of young servants of God who come out of the classrooms “on fire” for Jesus. They should have on their hearts what Jesus has on His—the souls of men. Worldliness should be absolutely forbidden in this school of the prophets and servants of God, and never, never should worldly hip-hop music or any other derogatory and disrespectful worship styles be allowed to infiltrate this new college and seminary. Ecumenicalism should be anathema at this school, and tolerance of evil within the student body or administration should never be allowed. This new school should be “the city on a hill”, and it should be one from which the entire world can

receive the light of Jesus Christ and the hope of the Gospel in and through both the professors and the graduates.

I would say emphatically that it would be much better to build one dynamic Baptist College and school here in America than to try to put other schools in different regions. If we can build a dynamically strong school here at home, then it would allow us to concentrate on building more regional schools on the mission fields of the world. This school here in America needs to be under the local churches, and it needs to be the mother institution for the other schools on the mission fields of the world.

8. The eighth thing we must do is to stop the foolishness of taking the Gospel to the Unreached People Groups and return to Jesus' plan of world missions strategy.

In the last several books that I have written, I have talked a lot about the present foolishness of moving missionaries from all the fields where God sent them, and then sending them to these unreached people groups in the 10/40 window where two or three Muslims get saved every year, instead of thousands coming to Christ where people are sharing the Gospel in open places where God has opened the way. I talked about this earlier in this book when I talked about how Dr. Jerry Rankin, the former president of the International Mission Board, literally destroyed productive and fruitful evangelism and missions by changing the strategy of the mission board. Only eternity and the Judgment Seat of Christ will reveal just how much damage has been done by this satanic inspired philosophy brought about by Dr. Ralph Winter at the first Lausanne, Switzerland Evangelism Conference sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Organization. Because of this terrible change in strategy or methodology, millions of lost souls have undoubtedly died without Jesus Christ as their Savior.

So, if the new association of true Baptists wants to be productive and fruitful in winning multitudes to Christ, then we must return to the methods that have worked fruitfully down through the years. We need to forget about going just to the unreached people groups and return to "the waters where the fish are biting" by the thousands. According to "God's Biblical Blueprint For Missions," described in **Matthew Chapter Ten**, we are to follow the example of the early disciples and take the Gospel to the towns and cities where God has opened the doors. If He has opened the doors, then there will be receptivity to the Gospel message, and even the messengers will be welcomed and received by the citizens of these towns and cities. Also, we need to stop all of this foolishness of going into countries underground lying about why we have come there, and then trying to slip upon the blind side of the people and win a few people to Jesus. It amazes me that today when so many Calvinists are screaming about the Sovereignty of God, they don't seem to believe that our Sovereign God can open the doors where He wants His message to be preached. Instead, it seems that God wants His people to tell lies about why they have come to certain cities and towns in order to just casually share the Gospel undercover through oral stories instead of the preached Gospel.

Folks, it is high time that this newly formed Traditional Historical Baptist Association gets back to coming together to conduct large crusades and yes, much to

the dismay of these hyper-Calvinists, gets back to giving strong invitations in order for the Holy Spirit to draw people to Himself. Don't you think that it is really silly that we are seeing so many Southern Baptists taking the cloaked Gospel to the unreached people groups and basically forcing open the doors, while multitudes, like in our African countries, are dying without the Gospel because the missionaries have gone to the places that are closed? My sincere question is, "Could it possibly be right to just let thousands of people die and go to hell that would definitely get saved if they heard the Gospel, just in order to win one or two people to Jesus underground?" Yes, every soul is so valuable, but we should never disregard the multitudes in order to prove a point about how smart we are trying to force open closed doors. However, if you are a Calvinist, it really doesn't matter anyway, because those people that God has predestined to be saved will get saved, whether we take them the Gospel or not. And of course, there is just nothing we can do to rescue those who have been elected to burn in hell just to prove a point about God's justice. **FOLKS, THIS IS A DAMNABLE DOCTRINE! YOU CALVINISTS NEED TO REPENT IN SACKCLOTH AND ASHES!**

Conclusion To The Book

Well, it is hard for me to believe, but I have come to the end of this writing project. It seems that I just started, but God has truly helped me through this project, and I give Him praise for the help He has given to me.

The purpose or thesis of this book was to reveal the decline and disintegration of the Southern Baptist Convention by exposing so many of the problems since the origin of the S.B.C., way back in 1845, when it was first organized at the First Baptist Church of Augusta, Georgia. After trying to provide some in-depth history of the convention, I have tried to show what tragic things have happened to the convention, especially since the Conservative Resurgence way there in 1979.

I must tell you that if I hadn't live through these many years, watching and observing the rapid decline, especially since 1979, I would never have believed this could possibly have happened. But now, as we come to the end of this project, I sincerely hope and pray that every one of you readers will have grasped how the convention has fallen apart, and truthfully, why it is now in its dying stages. Some of you might be mad at me for the exposure of so many "good ole boys", but I could not have shown you the connected conspiracy to make the convention a New Calvinist denomination if I had not mentioned a lot of names.

I do want to say again that I don't hate these people who have done so much damage to the S.B.C., but I truly do fear for them, because they will one day stand before our Lord Jesus at the Judgment Seat of Christ to answer for their dastardly deeds which have resulted in collectively destroying one of the greatest soul winning and evangelistic ministries that has ever been on earth. I think it is so ironic, that these conservatives who convinced themselves that something had to be done to save the convention from the moderates or liberals, are the very ones that have brought destruction through Calvinism, the Emerging Church, the neo-charismatic movement, and of course, the new ecumenical movement. Please think about what I just said. The ones who wanted to save the convention are the ones who have brought about its demise. Why? Because of their self-centered, ego-centric, more-spiritual-than-you-are-attitude, and because of their non-teachable spirits which left no room for others who determined to remain Traditional and Historical Baptists. I will call it again what this process has been. It has been a coup de-tat' because preeminently of the power and influence of Dr. Al Mohler and his Calvinistic colleagues who have been hell-bent on taking charge of this formerly great institution.

I do pray that not too many of you are angry with me because I have told the unvarnished truth in this book, but I do hope that there are plenty of you that are so upset with the destroyed convention that you will come out from among them and start anew to build another Association of Conservative Baptists which will one day be winning millions to Christ. I would love to be a vital part of this effort, but due to my age and enormous health problems, I doubt very seriously that I will live long enough to really make a difference. But, to those of you who are tired of the bureaucracy, the ego trips, and the condescending attitude of so many present convention leaders, I promise you that if you will "run with the ball" and start anew, I will prayerfully support your effort. I would love to live long enough to see a true spiritual revival break out in the Traditional and Historical Baptist Churches which

come together and build a new association of genuinely Baptist brothers and sisters. We don't need any more super-spiritual leaders to tell us that only the elect can be saved. What we do need is a new and fresh awakening among God's people to initiate a new quest to carry out the Great Commission. I would make an appeal to everyone of you serious Baptists to come quickly and help us get moving with a new and productive Baptist entity that will win millions to Christ before He comes again! It has been proven in the past, that so much more can be done if God's people who truly believe the truth of His Word will come together and work in unity, based upon true Biblical doctrine and not by false cultic religiosity. Please join me in prayer about this huge effort I have recommended. If you want to discuss this with me, just give me a phone call at the GIMI office phone number on the front of this book. Lord Jesus, please use this book to take the cover off a huge amount of religious hypocrisy and get your people going in the path you have determined in order to win the world for you!

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