

Towers

A News Publication of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary



12
July
2010

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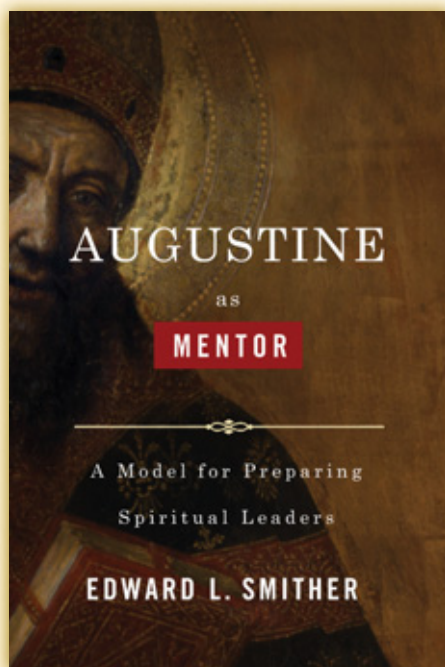
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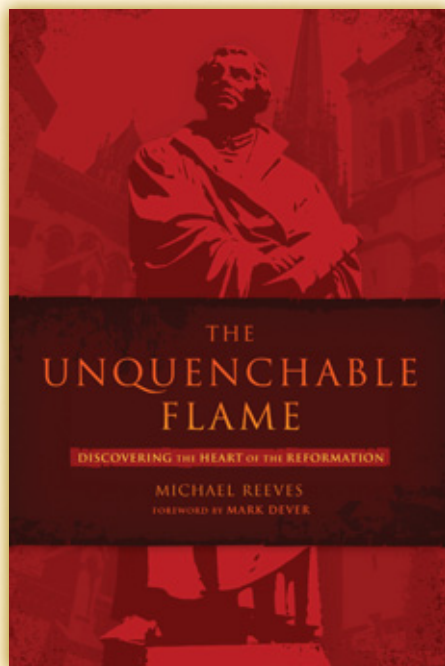
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GCRTF report passes easily; Southern Seminary grad Wright nominated SBC president

By GARRETT E. WISHALL

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention approved a slightly-amended Great Commission Resurgence Task Force (GCRTF) report by a 3-1 margin and nominated Atlanta-area pastor and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary graduate Bryant Wright as convention president at the SBC annual meeting June 15-16 in Orlando, Fla.

At the historic convention that saw more than 11,000 messengers take part — and that some called the most important annual meeting since the Conservative Resurgence — a spirited, but kind, hour and a half debate preceded the passage of the GCRTF report. Once messengers had their say and after two changes to one of the seven GCRTF recommendations, the report passed easily.

After the vote, task force chairman Ronnie Floyd said even those who did not vote for the report should be viewed as friends.

“We ... would say to the watching world that the differences between those who support the Great Commission Resurgence report and recommendations and those who do not should not be exaggerated,”* said Floyd, senior pastor of the First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark. and The Church at Pinnacle Hills in Rogers, Ark.

“We are still brothers and sisters in Christ. We differ on no article of faith. We are guided by our shared commitment to the Gospel itself and to the articles of faith identified in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. The Southern Baptist Convention is a convention of churches



Southern Baptist Convention President Johnny M. Hunt looks out over more than 10,000 messengers to the 2010 SBC annual meeting. Via uplifted ballot, messengers overwhelmingly voted to adopt the recommendations of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force. Photo by Devin Maddox

that is committed to a missional vision of presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations. We are a Great Commission people.”

Bryant Wright nominated SBC president

The nominating speeches and first election for SBC president took place just before the GCR discussion, with the runoff between Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, and Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Bap-

tist Church in Pensacola, Fla. Both candidates were in favor of the adoption of the GCRTF report.

In the runoff, Wright defeated Traylor, receiving 4,225 votes (55.11 percent) to Traylor's 3,371 votes (43.9 percent). Wright received the most votes in the first election — around 30 percent — closely followed by Traylor and Jimmy Jackson, pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala. Leo Endel, executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, also ran in the first election.

In his nominating speech for Wright, David Uth, pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando, said the Atlanta-area pastor's commitment to the Great Commission is evident.

“While we've been talking about Great Commission stuff, Bryant's been quietly leading his church to do it,” Uth said, according to a Baptist Press article by Norm Miller. “He wasn't waiting on a resurgence; he wasn't waiting on a vote of a convention. He heard his Lord speak, and he did it.”

Wright, who earned his master of divinity from Southern Seminary, began as Johnson Ferry's first full-time pastor in 1981, a year after the church began as a plant. The church has since given more than any other church in the SBC to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and more than 1,500 members of the church participated in 70 mission trips to 27 countries last year, Uth reported.

At Southern's alumni luncheon, Southern
(Continued on page 6)



Bryant Wright, senior pastor of the 7,600 member Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., won the run-off election for president of the Southern Baptist Convention with 55 percent of the vote. More than 7,660 messengers voted during the June 15 election in Orlando, Fla. BP photo

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Staff

Executive Editor:

Dan DeWitt

Managing Editor:

Garrett E. Wishall

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Director of

Communication Projects:

Jared Hallal

Lead Designer:

Tyler Deeb

Design/Layout:

John Rogers

Copy Editors:

Emily Griffin

Lindsay M. Poenie

Gabi Henry

Photographer:

Devin Maddox

Contact Information

Phone: (502) 897-4310

Fax: (502) 897-4880

E-mail: towers@sbts.edu

Web: news.sbts.edu

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ISSUE INSIGHT

Becoming a Great Commission Church

This article is an excerpt of a booklet that may be accessed at www.sbts.edu/resources.

Even with the phenomenal opportunities we have to spread the Gospel today, much of the world still waits for a Gospel witness. The numbers around the world reveal the need.

Of 11,000+ people groups, more than 6,600 remain unreached. More than 2,000 of these groups have a population of more than 100,000 people. Of these 2,000 groups, slightly more than 500 are still unengaged.¹

The numbers in North America are no less ominous. Of the 340 million people in North America, at least 75 percent are assumed to be non-believers.² What churches will choose to make a dent in this global darkness?

Getting started: pray

The famous English pastor Charles Spurgeon once wrote words that still demand our attention today: “Do not restrain prayer. . . . For only through prayer can the prosperity of a church be increased or even maintained.”³

Church leaders — primarily the pastor — must set the example in leading a church to pray to become a Great Commission church. Most church leaders want a ready-made program for prayer, but almost every prayer study indicates that a praying church begins with a praying pastor. If you are a church leader, take a moment to answer this question honestly: “If all of our church members prayed as much and as fervently as I do, should I expect our church to be a Great Commission church?” If your answer is “no,” you know where to begin.

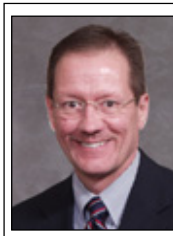
Here are a few steps toward becoming a praying church leader:

1. Hold yourself accountable to someone. Find someone who knows you well, and who cares enough about you to confront you with this question: “Have you prayed today?” The age of email makes it possible for someone to ask us this question every day, and most of us need *daily* accountability for our praying.

2. Pray with your spouse and family every day. Even a few minutes a day is a starting point, especially if you have small children. You will

more emphasize prayer and more forcefully challenge your church to pray if you know that prayer in your own home is consistent.

3. Do Bible studies on great prayer warriors. It is difficult to read the stories of prayer in the early church without longing to pray as



Chuck Lawless,
Dean of the Billy
Graham School
of Missions and
Evangelism,
Southern Seminary

they did. More specifically, it is hard *not* to pray more when we read how much Jesus prayed (consider the book of Luke). Learn about prayer warriors, and you will likely pray more.

Setting goals: personally evangelize

I teach evangelism, but evangelism does not always come easy to me. That is surprising to me now, as sharing my faith was quite easy when I was a young believer. In fact, evangelism was never difficult until I became a pastor — when the multiple tasks of ministry seemed to get in the way of evangelism. The more involved I was in leading my church, the less involved I seemed to be in evangelism.

I have since realized that I must intentionally plan evangelism into my life. I have also learned that I am not the only pastor who has to work to keep evangelism at the forefront of his ministry. For me, doing so includes setting personal goals in evangelism.

1. Set a goal for developing relationships with non-believers. In most cases, we get so isolated in our Christian bubble that we seldom have strong friendships with non-believers. Countering this tendency is not easy unless we intentionally strive to develop relationships with people outside of the church. Consider setting a goal to be in a growing relationship with at least three non-believers at any time — while always watching for opportunities to share the Gospel.

2. Set a goal for praying for non-believers. Pray for the three relation-

ships mentioned above, and then pray for at least two more non-believers. Determine to pray at least weekly that God will open their blinded minds (2 Cor 4:3-4) and transfer them from the dominion of darkness to the kingdom of His Son (Col 1:13). Pray as well that you will share the Gospel boldly and clearly when an open door is apparent (Eph 6:18-20; Col 4:3-4).

3. Set a goal for sharing the Gospel. As you develop relationships, pray for others and begin to speak about God, trust Him to empower you to speak the Gospel to someone. If you are not evangelizing now, consider a goal to share Christ at least twice a month. If you are already doing evangelism, ask God to move you toward sharing Christ at least weekly, if not daily.

Touching the world: promote and do missions

For some amazing reason, God has graciously chosen to use His church to reach the world. Through the preaching of the Word and the witness of His people, God is drawing to Himself a people from around the world (Rev 5:8-10). The fact that we are permitted to share in this great work is astounding.

Too often, though, we leave missions to the “professional” missionaries who are serving “somewhere over there.” How regrettable (and disobedient) this is, especially when communication and transportation are so advanced today. Consider these simple ways to increase your church’s commitment to global outreach:

1. Ask God to give you a heart for the world. I have seen entire churches grow burdened about the Great Commission after God moved first in the life of only one church member. Ask God to move in your heart in that way. Read about the world; learn about needs; weep over lostness.

2. Teach the next generation about missions. I fear that many of our churches have so neglected missions training for our next generations that our children no longer have missionary heroes. If Lottie Moon is only a name and the needs of the world are known only through cable news, few of our children will ever grieve for 1.7 billion people who have little access

to the Gospel. Decide now to start or strengthen your church’s missions training for children and youth.

3. Promote, promote, and promote again any missions offering that your church supports. Out of the wealth God has given us, we are privileged to help sustain global outreach. I am convinced that, even in a time of economic crunch, God’s people will give if they believe in the cause — and if their leaders challenge them. Teach your members about the needs of the world, and introduce them to the sacrificial work of missionaries around the world. *Show them that their giving matters,* and challenge them to give until the sacrifice is real.

4. Challenge your church members to be missionaries, including in their own neighborhoods. No longer is the mission field only overseas. The world has come to North America, and our neighbors sometimes speak a different language and worship a different “god.” Evangelism in North America now requires crossing cultural barriers in order to gain a hearing and speak the Gospel. Challenge your members to be missionaries much like the early church, who “went everywhere gossiping the Gospel; they did it naturally, enthusiastically, and with the conviction of those who are not paid to say that sort of thing.”⁴

Conclusion

Our task is to preach the Word to all the nations, beginning where we live and trusting His power to do the work (Luke 24:46-49). May God work through you to lead your congregation to be a Great Commission church.

For more thoughts on missions, evangelism, and biblical church growth, visit www.chucklawless.com

End notes:

¹See <http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/>

²See http://www.namb.net/atf/cf/{cda250e8-8866-4236-9a0c-c646de153446}/EVANGELISM_AND_CHURCH_PLANTING_IN_NA.PDF

³Charles Spurgeon, *The Power of Prayer in a Believer’s Life* (Lynnwood, WA: Emerald Books, 1993), 105.

⁴Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 243.

Mohler steps away from live radio show for other ministry opportunities

By GARRETT E. WISHALL

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, announced at the end of his radio show June 21 that he needed to prioritize other ministry responsibilities and “a different media platform.” The final live broadcast of The Albert Mohler Program was held July 2.



Russell D. Moore (left) interviews R. Albert Mohler Jr. on the air July 1, the day before the final live broadcast of the Albert Mohler Program. Photo by Devin Maddox

In an official letter explaining his plans, Mohler expressed gratitude to his listeners, Salem Communications and others who have had a hand in the radio program. Ed Atsinger and Stu Epperson, the founders of the Salem Radio Network and Salem Communications, were among those Mohler thanked for “believing in this program and for building a great Christian radio network that is not afraid to take on the issues and offer conviction.”

“I have had the privilege of talking to people all over the world each weekday through the medium of radio,” wrote Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. “I believe we have indeed developed a model that lived up to our promise of ‘intelligent Christian conversation about the issues that matter.’ I have been energized every single day by the experience of sitting behind that microphone and talking to people across the nation and around the world.”

Mohler cited the continually shifting medium of radio, ministry responsibilities at Southern Seminary and other media opportunities as reasons for the ending of the live radio show. While the radio program is broadcast

on more than 100 stations in the United States, Mohler noted that taking the program to the next level would likely involve an expansion to a three-hour daily broadcast.

“This is just not a practical possibility,” Mohler explained, “given my other responsibilities.”

In coming days, Mohler said more announcements will be made about the new

shape of his media plans. One component will be a recorded interview and discussion based program without callers. Mohler will also continue to do national broadcast commentary for Salem Communications.

Mohler expressed a measure of regret over the decision to end the live program that he knows had to be made.

“There is a sense of sadness in leaving this stage of ministry and media for another,” he wrote. “I need to be most available — at my best — for those who mean the most to me, to Southern Seminary, and to the advance of Christ’s Kingdom.”

Mohler, who also serves as Joseph Emerson Brown Professor of Theology at Southern, noted that removing the constraints of a radio schedule will allow him to be more present in areas of life and ministry.

“I need to be more present on the mission fields of the world, more present with our students and faculty and more present with friends of the Seminary.”

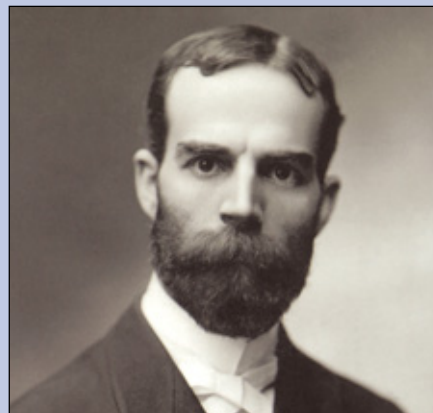
Digital files of *The Albert Mohler Program* will continue to be available at www.albert-mohler.com.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHT:

E. Y. Mullins elected as president of SBTS

By STEVE JONES

On June 29, 1899, 36 members of the Southern Seminary board of trustees gathered in Atlanta, Ga., for the purpose of electing a new seminary president. William H. Whitsitt had resigned as president earlier that year amid controversy surrounding his published views regarding the history of baptism by immersion. The



E. Y. Mullins, president of Southern Seminary, 1899 – 1928. Photo from SBTS archives

effects of that controversy and the decision by J. P. Greene of William Jewell College to decline the seminary presidency left the seminary in urgent need of a new president. That leader was chosen in Atlanta as the trustees unanimously voted to elect E. Y. Mullins to the presidency.

Mullins was serving as pastor of Newton Centre Church in Massachusetts as the seminary trustees gathered in Atlanta. According to his wife, Isla May Mullins, the first telegram that was received regarding his election as president provided for more confusion that clarity. That telegram from the editor of the *Baptist Argus* simply read “Congratulations. Send your photograph.”¹ Mullins was unaware that he was even being considered for the presidency and initially dismissed the thought. Telegrams continued to arrive into the evening, however, and they all confirmed that he had indeed been elected as the fourth president of his alma mater. His wife recorded the following recollection of the evening of June 29,

“The messages continued to come at intervals through the evening; and then, knowing that the telegraph office closed early, Mr. Mullins went down and asked, as he had on another occasion, to take charge of the wire until his messages ceased coming. The agent knew him well, smiled and gave him the wire. As E.Y. tuned in, as he had done in the old days

when he was an operator, it was a bit awkward to catch signals correctly and get into the swing of things. Telegraphers are sensitive as their fingertips strike unexpected things. So, one lusty operator called back to the interloper, “Who in h— are you, anyway?” and the interloper chuckled as he replied, “Never you mind, just go ahead with your thunder.” He soon got the hang of things, as he told his wife, and took message after message for himself, the very last being the official message from the Board of Trustees of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary calling him to its presidency.”²

Mullins officially accepted the presidency on July 8, 1899, and took office on Oct. 2 of that year. He would go on to serve in that position for 28 years until his death in 1928. During that time, Mullins left his mark on the direction of the seminary and Southern Baptist life as a whole. He led the seminary in an extensive fundraising effort that facilitated the relocation of the seminary to its current location in 1926.

“On June 29, 1899, 36 members of the Southern Seminary board of trustees gathered in Atlanta, Ga., for the purpose of electing a new seminary president. ... That leader was chosen in Atlanta as the trustees unanimously voted to elect E. Y. Mullins to the presidency.”

As a seminary president and writer, Mullins also greatly influenced the theological direction of the seminary and many Southern Baptists towards progressive theology. In addition to his service as seminary president, Mullins also served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1921-1924 and as chairman of the Baptist Faith and Message Committee in 1925.

To learn more about E. Y. Mullins or to examine the papers of the presidents of the seminary, visit the archives on the second floor of the library or our website at archives.sbts.edu.
ENDNOTES

¹Isla May Mullins, *Edgar Young Mullins: An Intimate Biography*. (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention), 104.

²*Ibid.*, 105.

GCRTF report passes easily

(Continued from page 3)

President R. Albert Mohler Jr. recognized Wright and led attendees in prayer for him. Wright expressed a desire to see every Southern Baptist pastor lead his church on a mission trip over the next year and of his SBC presidency, he said, “I am absolutely passionate about people renewing their relationship with Jesus Christ, that individual relationship with God through Christ. I’m absolutely passionate about global missions and seeing what can happen in the local church when people begin to not only give, and not only pray, but to go and develop partnerships around the world.”

For more on Wright’s thoughts on the SBC presidency, see page 7.

Amendments and debate of the GCRTF report

The two amendments came to recommendation three, which affirmed the Cooperative Program and called for the addition of the term “Great Commission Giving” to describe the combination of CP giving and designated giving to Southern Baptist entities. The amendments read: “continue to honor and affirm the Cooperative Program as the most effective means of mobilizing our churches and extending our outreach” and “We affirm that designated giving to special causes is to be given as a supplement to the Cooperative Program and not as a substitute for Cooperative Program giving.”

Albert Mohler Jr., a member of the task force, said he thought the amendments strengthened the recommendation and caused it to better reflect the priorities of Southern Baptists.

“The bottom line is that in an inelegant way we have a superior recommendation,” he said, according to a Baptist Press article by David Roach. “I think it’s, in one sense, Southern Baptists at their very best — sometimes a bit clumsy but determined to get to the same place together. And I appreciated the spirit of the messengers.

“I especially appreciated the intent and tenacity of Dr. John Waters [who proposed the amendments] to come and actually get to our attention what further he wanted to say. In one sense, if we had received that word prior to the formulation of the final report, I can basically assure you it would have been in there because we resonated with that language.”

Waters initially moved that the proposal to create the category “Great Commission Giving” to refer to CP giving and designated giving to SBC entities be removed from recommendation three and replaced by “to continue to honor and affirm the Cooperative Program as the most effective means of mobilizing our churches and extending our outreach.”

The vote on Waters’ proposed amendment was too close to call and to avoid a lengthy ballot vote process, the GCRTF suggested that Waters sentence be an addition to the recommendation, but not a replacement for the language of Great Commission Giving. This amendment passed easily, but minutes later messenger Jan Bryant, a messenger from Morrow Baptist Church, Morrow, Ohio, asked that Waters initial motion be brought back to the floor for a ballot vote.

At that time, Waters — pastor of First Baptist Church of Statesboro, Ga. — came to the platform and, after discussion with the GCRTF, presented a motion that retained the language of Great Commission Giving and added the following sentence: “We affirm that designated giving to special causes is to be given as a supplement to the Cooperative Program and not as a substitute for Cooperative Program giving.” This amendment passed overwhelmingly and Bryant said she was satisfied and withdrew her request for a

ballot vote on Waters initial motion.

Just before Bryant’s motion, David Tolliver, a messenger from Concord Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Mo., and executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention, moved that the GCRTF report be referred to the Executive Committee for further review.

“Jesus in Luke chapter 14:28 admonished all Christians to count the cost prior to entering into any kind of major undertaking ... the fact is we don’t know the ramifications or the implications of the report,” Tolliver said. “We don’t know the financial ramifications. We don’t know the organizational ramifications. How will the work of North American Mission Board be affected through decentralization? ... Why don’t we take some time and study that?”

Floyd called on Mohler to address Tolliver’s motion and Southern’s president noted that the task force’s report did precisely what Tolliver was requesting.

“As you look at the actual recommenda-

tions, you’ll note they are written as advised by legal counsel and those with special responsibility and polity in this convention in order to do exactly what you are asking to do,” Mohler said. “We’ve sought to write these motions with due deference and appreciation for our polity to say exactly what it appears that this amendment would seek to have us to say which is we are going to trust the trustee system, our Baptist polity, to move from this point onward? The real question is, are we going to move from this point onward?”

Tolliver’s motion was rejected by a significant majority.

*Quotations from the GCRTF recommendations and debate come from a transcription by Melissa Deming, with assistance from Tammi Ledbetter, both of the Southern Baptist TEXAN.

Story based on personal coverage and stories by Mark Kelly, David Roach and Norm Miller, reporting for Baptist Press at the SBC, and Southern Seminary’s Emily Griffin.

SBTS archives adds first edition of monumental missionary book by Fuller

BY JEFF ROBINSON

Andrew Fuller could not escape the question: Does every man have a duty to repent and believe in the Gospel?

Fuller, a young British pastor at the time, wrestled with this critical conundrum for more than a decade from the mid 1770s well into the 1780s and his study, which landed on the answer “Yes, all men have a duty to repent and believe,” became a famous work “The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation” that provided a theological framework that sparked the modern missions movement that sent William Carey to India and Adoniram Judson to Burma.

Recently, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary acquired Fuller’s first draft of “Gospel Worthy,” a work that is on display in the school’s archives and special collections.

Michael Haykin, professor of church history and biblical spirituality and head of the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies at Southern, bought the rare manuscript for \$900 from the Philadelphia Rare Book and Manuscript Company.

To find an early manuscript of such a famous work is incredibly rare, Haykin said, especially to find it in good condition and to be able to buy it at such a low price.

The first draft entails 60-plus pages. Fuller

published an expanded final version of “Gospel Worthy” in 1785.

“It is very unusual for two reasons: number one, this is America and to have the document in America rather than in the United Kingdom is very unusual because Andrew Fuller was a Baptist minister in the United Kingdom and never came to America,” Haykin said. “The document actually came here through (Fuller’s) son who made a trip to New York around 1860.

“Secondly, it is very rare to have this sort of thing because normally it would be destroyed by the author upon the writing of the second draft if there was a second draft. Generally, these drafts don’t exist for the 18th century because these drafts would be taken to the printer and unless the author requested that the draft be returned to him, the printer would end up keeping them and usually most printer records would be thrown out and destroyed after a number of years. So, to have this is a tremendous find in terms of the rarity of this sort of thing, but also in terms of who it is and what the book is.”

The document will be available in PDF format for researchers in Southern Seminary’s archives and special collections library and the manuscript itself will be rebound and made available for perusal, Haykin said. Fuller printed the first edition on linen paper, which

has allowed it to hold up well over the years. Linen paper had a sturdiness that 19th century paper did not, Haykin said.

Publication of “The Gospel Worthy” embroiled Fuller in heated controversy throughout much of the remainder of his minister over the so-called “modern question” of “duty faith.” Fuller’s work countered the hyper-Calvinism which deadened many churches in England in the mid-late 18th century by denying duty faith and thus refusing to proclaim the Gospel to the lost.

Fuller’s work recovered a theology of evangelism and missions and drove Carey, Fuller and others to take the Gospel to the nations.

“Fuller tackled some of the great theological giants of the day in his world — men like John Gill, John Brine, who had written fairly extensively against indiscriminate preaching of the Gospel, and Fuller was proposing that there would be an open and free offer of the Gospel to all,” Haykin said.

“What we have is the first draft of that. It is tremendous to have this document because compared to the later draft that was published it gives us some idea of how his mind developed. You can actually see the genesis of his thinking here and comparing that to the later version that was published you can see how he matured. This is a great find.”

Wright envisions Baptists returning to first love, making radical shift in Cooperative Program priorities

By TAMMI REED LEDBETTER

Newly elected Southern Baptist Convention President Bryant Wright wants to see Southern Baptists return to their first love, radically reprioritize their lives, funding and ministries to fulfill the Great Commission and directly participate in overseas mission work.

Speaking to reporters less than an hour after his election on the first day of the SBC annual meeting, Wright shared his dream of seeing every Southern Baptist pastor and church take at least one mission trip.

"The pastor needs to experience what it's like to be out there in another culture sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ," Wright said.

Wright commended the Atlanta-area congregation he pastors, Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, for having sent more than 1,500 people on 70 mission trips to 27 nations last year.

In the midst of Kingdom-focused work like developing partnerships with Southern Baptist missionaries, Wright said Johnson Ferry's leaders began to question why so much of their Cooperative Program contributions remained in the United States. That led to a decision to

reduce CP giving in order to designate more to the International Mission Board.

"We realized it does cause the church to appear not to be as supportive of the main approach to missions in the Cooperative Program, and yet, at the same time, we continue to give very heavily to the Cooperative Program," Wright said, noting that Johnson Ferry contributed the second-highest Cooperative Program amount in the Georgia Baptist Convention last year.

"We would very much prefer that all those funds go straight through CP," Wright said, "but there needs to be a radical reprioritization of that money."

He said state conventions as the place where change must occur and regards Cooperative Program allocations at the national level as generally healthy.

Asked about a column he wrote urging state conventions to retain only 25 percent to 30 percent of undesignated CP gifts from churches, Wright said, "I'd love to see states move in that direction, knowing it will be a long, long process." Even a goal of splitting receipts 50/50 between state and SBC causes would allow funding for many more missionaries, he said.

Wright said state convention leaders "can be

the real heroes in carrying out the Great Commission" since they control budgets and decide how much goes out of state for distribution to Southern Baptist causes. If more Cooperative Program dollars were sent to the international mission field, Wright said he believes Southern Baptists would see an increased passion for CP giving, especially among younger pastors, the group from whom he has received the greatest support for his stand.

Asked to reflect on the passage of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force recommendations during the annual meeting immediately prior to his election, Wright said: "We have been a people that have been united on missions and evangelism and reaching our world with the Good News of Jesus Christ and yet we are not moving ahead in that area as we have done a lot of our years."

He praised SBC President Johnny Hunt's courage in raising the issue and to messengers for engaging in a healthy discussion.

"The task force leadership has led the convention in taking a very courageous step, but it is really just a beginning," Wright said. "If we're going to be radically serious about reaching this world for Christ, we as individuals and we as

churches are going to have to really be prayerfully committed to fulfilling what God has called us to do with the Great Commission."

In America, local church members need to repent of materialism, hedonism and other idols that distract them from their first love and inhibit their love of lost people, Wright added.

"The beginning point for all of us is to renew our hearts. Jesus Christ could not be clearer, as politically incorrect as it is in our contemporary culture, that He is the only way to God," he said.

Asked where he stood in his convictions regarding Calvinism, Wright described himself as "a follower of Jesus Christ that believes the Bible." He added: "I really don't believe that human beings are ever going to completely reconcile the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. To have a neat theological system is great for human beings, but it sure makes for a small God. We can have a greater awe about the majesty and wonder of God when we believe in both." (BP)

Tammi Reed Ledbetter is news editor of the Southern Baptist TEXAN (www.texanonline.net), newsjournal of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

Frank Page elected Executive Committee president

By ERIN ROACH

Frank Page was elected as the next president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee June 14 in Orlando, Fla. A former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Page will succeed Morris H. Chapman, who is retiring after 18 years in the position.

Page, 57, most recently served as vice president of evangelization for the North American Mission Board and was pastor of First Baptist Church in Taylors, S.C., for nine years and SBC president from 2006-08.

Executive Committee members deliberated for nearly two hours in a closed session the afternoon of June 14 before announcing a decision to call Page as president, and he accepted the role with "a great sense of destiny and awareness that God has a great future for Southern Baptists."

Page told the Executive Committee his goal is that the group will be unified in its passion to see the world won to Jesus Christ. In comments to Baptist Press after the vote, Page said he is following the call of God and is excited about the future.

"I'm somewhat nervous because the task

before me is one that's bigger than any one person, and I am very cognizant of that. So there's a level of nervousness, and I'm not a nervous



Frank Page, newly elected president of the SBC Executive Committee, answers questions during a press conference June 15. BP photo

person, but I realize the task ahead is great," Page said. "There's great division amongst the brethren and to pull us together is going to be a God-ordained task that I shall deal with as best I can.

"One of my goals is to be a unifier. We've got to, based on John 17:21," he said. "It is imperative for our evangelistic efforts that we be unified, and that is extremely important to me."

Page, who will work alongside Chapman as president-elect until Oct. 1, hinted at an emphasis he'll unveil in the fall to support international missions, North American missions, the seminaries and the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

"The EC is not a missions-sending agency, but I want to be the greatest supporter our agencies have ever seen," Page said.

After Page emerged from the closed-door session with the Executive Committee members and while they were praying and taking the vote, he told reporters he answered some members' questions regarding the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force report.

As a member of the task force, Page said he voiced deep concerns about some of the recommendations both to the task force and to the Executive Committee.

"But I do want to join our president in a call for a Great Commission Resurgence," Page said. "I believe that. I love Dr. [Johnny] Hunt and love his heart and want to see us do more

to reach the nations for Christ.

"Everyone knows I'm a strong Cooperative Program supporter. I've said many times, not just in there but everywhere, 'Just look at the record,'" Page told reporters. "While a lot of people talk about the Cooperative Program, I've been raising millions through it because I do believe in it. I believe in what it does in the states. I believe in what it does in supporting missions."

Page said the Cooperative Program plays a unique role that must never be overlooked.

"It alone pulls us together. It alone provides for the work of our state conventions that helps support so many hurting churches. I love that," he said.

A native of Robbins, N.C., Page holds a Ph.D. in Christian ethics focusing on moral, social and ethical issues from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, along with a master of divinity degree from Southwestern. He earned a bachelor of science degree with honors from Gardner-Webb University in North Carolina, majoring in psychology with minors in sociology and Greek.

Page was named to President Obama's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships in February 2009. (BP)



with **David Wells**



A cross section of the student body of Southern Seminary

What is your hometown?

Paragould, Ark.

What is your degree track?

M.Div.; great commission ministries

What were you doing before you came to Southern?

"I worked in the telecommunications industry managing an engineering services group, data conversion group and a small I.T. department."

How has your idea of ministry changed been shaped at Southern?

"Ministry is going to be harder and messier than I thought, but the reward comes from seeing the Holy Spirit transform people, conforming them to the image of Jesus and God being worshipped and glorified."

"Ministry is going to be harder and messier than I thought, but the reward comes from seeing the Holy Spirit transform people."

— David Wells

What local church are you a member of and how do you minister there?

"I am a member of New Heights Baptist Church where I teach Sunday school, serve as a deacon, and participate in outreach ministries."

What are your future ministry plans:

"Lord willing, my wife and I hope to serve in Ecuador as missionaries with a new and exciting ministry group."

How do you see your ministry at Southern preparing you for future ministry?

"I have learned so much at Southern, but the one constant I have heard at some point in every class is simply this: 'know Christ, know His Word and minister in the power and strength of His Holy Spirit.'"

Advice for other students:

"As good as other books can be nothing supplants the Word of God. Never allow anything to get in the way of learning your Bible and knowing it intimately. Also, if you have a spouse and children then ministry begins in the home."



Tweetable features "tweets" from Southern Seminary faculty and other leaders in Southern Baptist life.

@albertmohler

All the radio out here is playing @DrMoore music. People are divorcing, losing in love, breaking each other's hearts, and having a blast.

<http://twitter.com/albertmohler>

@DonWhitney

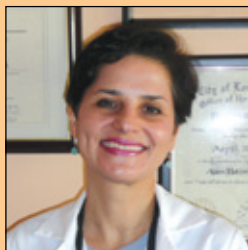
The nearer a man lives to God the more intensely he [will find that he] has to mourn over his own evil heart — C.H. Spurgeon

<http://twitter.com/DonWhitney>

@jd_payne

Students in Mexican schools have survival training in case of shootouts. Pray 4 gospel transformation in Mexico.

http://twitter.com/jd_payne



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Timothy K. Beougher

Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth and associate dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism

You have been at Southern Seminary's Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism for 15 years. How did the Lord lead you here?

"I got a phone call from Thom Rainer, founding dean of the Billy Graham School, asking me if I'd be interested in leaving Wheaton College to come to the Billy Graham School. While on the phone I told him 'thank you, but no.'"

Rainer convinced Beougher to visit the school before making a hasty decision. Beougher visited Southern Seminary soon after, coming more for fellowship and not thinking that he would be interested in a teaching position. After listening to Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr.'s vision for the institution and Rainer's vision for the Billy Graham School, Beougher was convinced that he needed to be a part of the Billy Graham School.

"It was the kind of thing that the Lord's hand was all over. Given the vision for the Billy Graham School, it was clear that this is where I needed to be."

What is your favorite element of teaching?

"The best part is when the light bulb comes on for the students, in particular in terms of evangelism. We have a lot of students who come here with great experience and great passion, and I am just basically

trying to encourage them and say 'keep doing that.' But we have other students that come here that still need encouragement. I once had a student in my personal evangelism class that said 'I have to admit I was sure I was going to hate this. The whole concept of evangelism was terrifying to me but it's not anymore.'

"People think that evangelism is not for them, and then they start to understand it and that is a transformation that happens from the inside out. That transformation is something that the Lord does, not me."

You share that your conviction for practicing and teaching evangelism comes from Matthew 12:34, where Jesus says our mouth speaks out of that which fills our heart. Can you elaborate on that?

"When we are passionate about something, we talk about it. That is why grandparents don't have to have a training seminar about how to talk about their grandkids – they just do it naturally. If we're in love with the Lord, if He is real in our lives, then our witness will just be an overflow of our walk with Him. A lot of evangelism training focuses on methods — and there certainly is a place for that — but I think it ought to center in our relationship with Christ."

How do students at Southern challenge you?

"It's best to phrase it through a conversation that I had with one of my daughters. We were talking about different generational things and I asked her what her generation thinks about my generation. She said, 'We think that you all are just playing church.' She quickly followed that with, 'I don't think that about you and mom! I think you two really mean it. But your generation is just going through the motions playing church and my generation doesn't want to just go through the motions. We really want to do it and have our hearts there.'

"I sense that among our students. I sense that our students aren't just going through the

motions; they really want to impact the world with the love of Christ. That passion and commitment continues to challenge me."

"One of the things that my wife Sharon and I have done for almost 28 years is every year we read a book together. We each get a copy so we can mark it up and ask questions, then we'll take a mini-retreat away and sit down and go through the book together and talk about what elements of the book spoke to each of us. That has been one of the most helpful things for our marriage."

— Tim Beougher

What are you currently reading?

"I love biographies. Spurgeon once said that every pastor should divide his library up in two sections – biography and everything else. He understood that biographies inspire. I have read and reread the biographies of Dawson Trotman and Jim Elliot because they challenge me and inspire me.

"Currently the book on my nightstand is Paul David Tripp's new book on marriage 'What Did You Expect?: Redeeming the Realities of Marriage.' I find that everything he writes really speaks to me; he really stomps all over my toes. I wouldn't say I enjoy reading him as much as I need to be reading him.

"One of the things that my wife Sharon and I have done for almost 28 years is every year we read a book together. We each get a copy so we can mark it up and ask questions, then we'll take a mini-retreat away and sit down and go through the book together and talk about what elements of the book spoke to each of us. That

has been one of the most helpful things for our marriage. Sometime it will raise issues that we hadn't been thinking about and it really helps us communicate."

How do you personally feed your soul?

"Spending time with God's Word is foundational. Even though I am not tremendously technological I have learned how to use an iPod and that has been invaluable to me. I have said for years that every minister needs a minister, every pastor needs a pastor, and since I'm preaching almost every weekend somewhere I like to listen to other preachers as often as I can. I like to listen to David Platt and the London church St. Helen's Bishopsgate. I am always challenged and encouraged by Platt. I like to listen to St. Helen's Bishopsgate because they are very good expositors and also it helps me remember that North America is not the world (there is more to the world than just North America)."

Books:

Author of:

- "Overcoming Walls to Witnessing"
- "Richard Baxter and Conversion"

Co-author of:

- "Evangelism for a Changing World"
- Editor of: "Accounts of a Campus Revival: Wheaton College 1995"

One of several editors of:

- "Training Leaders to Make Disciples"

Moore chairs SBC resolutions committee

By ROBERT E. SAGERS

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Russell D. Moore led the Southern Baptist Convention to pass resolutions on issues ranging from environmental protection to the SBC's own culpability in tolerating divorce at the annual meeting June 15-16 in Orlando, Fla.

Moore, Southern Seminary's senior vice-president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology, served as chairman of the SBC's committee on resolutions. The committee presented seven resolutions to SBC messengers, all of which passed with overwhelming majorities (for more on the resolutions, see the story below).

After the convention, Moore reflected on the resolutions process.

A resolution, Moore said, is "a statement of opinion or conviction by the messengers at a meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention." A resolution is "both an internal and an external conversation," Moore said, because each resolution "addresses other Southern Baptists and also 'speaks to the outside world about what Southern Baptists are thinking and feeling and believing at a particular time.'"

The committee exists, Moore said, to receive resolutions from Southern Baptists and to craft resolutions of their own for consideration by the convention. SBC president Johnny Hunt appointed the entire committee, including Moore.

Moore said that his responsibilities as chair of the committee were to "set the agenda and lead the discussion of our committee in deciding what issues we would address and what issues we would not address." Moore has served on the resolutions committee twice previously, in 2002 and 2003.



Russell D. Moore, chairman of the 2010 Resolutions Committee for the SBC, gives a committee report June 16. Photo by Devin Maddox

Of the seven resolutions passed by this year's messengers, Moore said he was most personally invested in two of them: "On the Scandal of Southern Baptist Divorce" and "On the Gulf of Mexico Catastrophe."

"The divorce resolution encouraged me because Southern Baptists have not passed a

resolution specifically on divorce since 1904," Moore said. "Given the destruction divorce is reeking on the churches right now — and has been for a generation — that is, in itself, a scandal.

"Also, the divorce resolution is speaking to ourselves, calling ourselves to repentance, rather than simply an expression of outrage directed toward the outside culture and our lost friends and neighbors," he continued.

The resolution on the recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico hit particularly close to home for Moore, as he hails from the coastal town of Biloxi, Miss. He said that the way in which Southern Baptists spoke to the issue of the care of creation through the resolution is "healthy for the future."

Moore said the committee wasn't all business and planning.

"It was a really warm-hearted fellowship," Moore said of his time with the members of the resolutions committee itself. "A good bit of our time was spent praying — praying for wisdom, praying for one another."

The full content of the seven resolutions passed by this year's meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention — "On the Centrality of the Gospel," "On Family Worship," "On Homosexuality and the United States Military," "On the Employment Non-Discrimination Act," and "On Appreciation," in addition to the two previously noted — may be accessed online at www.sbc.net.

Resolutions address Gospel's implications

By TOM STRODE

Messengers adopted a resolution calling for reaffirmation of the centrality of the Gospel of Jesus and endorsed other resolutions addressing the implications of the Good News June 15-16.

Russell D. Moore, chairman of the Resolutions Committee, told reporters after the messengers' votes the committee members "wanted to make a very clear statement at the very beginning that we believe the Gospel is central not only in our evangelism, although that is certainly true, but in every aspect of the Christian life."

The committee was "very intentional on trying to speak in a Gospel-focused way not only in the first resolution" but in each of the others, said Moore, senior vice president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The resolution on the Gospel was one of seven approved by messengers either unanimously or with almost no opposition during the

morning session June 16. The other measures:

- Encouraged prayer for the end of the massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and for those affected by the crisis, and action by the government and corporations to prevent future catastrophes.
 - Opposed the effort to change federal law to permit homosexuals to serve openly in the military.
 - Expressed disapproval of the Employment Non-discrimination Act, which would grant rights in the workplace based on homosexuality and other "sexual orientations."
 - Called for the "scandal of Southern Baptist divorce" to be addressed by the convention and its churches.
 - Urged Christians to participate in family worship in their homes, with fathers taking the lead, and churches to promote the practice.
 - Thanked God and those He used to produce the annual meeting of Southern Baptists.
- The resolution on the centrality of the Gospel urged churches not only to proclaim

the Gospel to unbelievers but to Christians as well "that through the renewing of our minds we might continually be transformed by the Gospel." It called for pastors "to keep the Gospel foremost in every sermon" and churches "to display the Gospel by transcending ethnic, racial, economic and social barriers due to our unity in Christ."

It also encouraged Southern Baptists "to speak to the outside world as those who are forgiven sinners, who have received mercy as a free gift, and not as those who are morally or ethically superior to anyone."

The resolution on the Gulf oil crisis asserted that mankind's "dominion over the creation is not unlimited, as though we were gods and not creatures," meaning there is a higher standard than economic profit.

"[W]e are acknowledging here there is no unlimited, Pharaoh-like dominion over the earth," Moore said at the news conference. "There is a Christ-like stewardship over the earth, and that would apply in every aspect of life." (BP)

Newsbriefs

Motion to make GCRTF deliberations public fails

A motion by Jay Adkins of First Baptist Church in Westwego, La., to make public immediately the minutes and recordings of all Great Commission Resurgence Task Force meetings was defeated on a show of ballots June 16. The task force had voted previously to seal its records for 15 years.

Adkins admitted during debate on his motion that "there are times when there needs to be privacy in delicate issues," but he argued that the GCRTF proceedings should not be treated as a confidential matter.

"I just wonder, what better way could we as a body not come together but to then see the process by which you, as a diverse group of people, came together and made your consideration?" Adkins said.

Speaking against the motion, task force member R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said unsealing the record now would cause the committee to break its promise of confidentiality to participants in the deliberation process.

"We invited persons to come meet with us, and we promised them confidentiality," Mohler said. "In the course of those deliberations, of necessity we had to deal with some questions about personnel that are indeed legally privileged and are confidentiality covered and are matters of tremendous sensitivity. This motion would require your task force to break its word to those we invited to come meet with us."

James A. Smith, executive editor of the Florida Baptist Witness, spoke for the motion, arguing that "there is interest, I believe, in Southern Baptist life to now know today and in future weeks rather than in 15 years the deliberations this task force engaged in."

But Greg Wills, professor of church history at Southern Seminary, pointed out that records of sensitive matters are customarily sealed for a period of time. He cited the SBC Peace Committee, the diary of Southern Seminary president William Whitsitt and transcripts of a 1958 Southern Seminary trustee committee as examples of temporarily sealed records.

Wills said opening the GCRTF records now would force future SBC committees to eschew audio recordings in order to preserve confidentiality and that such an action would impoverish the historical record. (BP)

Books old and new



“Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy” by Eric Metaxas (Thomas Nelson 2010, \$29.99)

BY JEFF ROBINSON

As a church historian, biographies are among my favorite kind of books and thus, I am constantly reading one. I said that to provide context for this statement: Metaxas’s work on Bonhoeffer is one of the finest and most inspiring biographies I have ever read.

Metaxas paints a bold picture of Dietrich

Bonhoeffer and his profoundly courageous leadership of the confessing church in Nazi Germany, a faithful church that led resistance to the demonic Third Reich and its unholy leader Adolf Hitler.

Metaxas’s book provides as much insight into the wickedness of the Third Reich as it does into the indefatigable efforts of Bonhoeffer who was executed at a concentration camp in Flossenburg mere days before Germany surrendered to the Allies.

“Bonhoeffer” provides a well-researched and deeply intimate look at the Lutheran pastor and the theology of the cross that drove him to participate in an attempted assassination of Hitler. The work is lengthy and detailed at 540

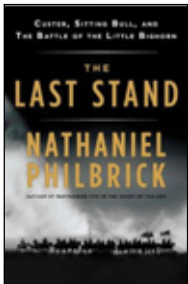
pages, but you will not be able to put it down for long.

The book provides thrilling details about Bonhoeffer’s involvement in a plot to assassinate Hitler. A man of deep piety and conviction who wrote a work on ethics while imprisoned, Bonhoeffer nonetheless believed it was God’s will and served the greater good to kill Adolph Hitler. Arrested in the aftermath of the failed attempt, Bonhoeffer’s intimate involvement in the plot came to light only after another failed attempt on the Fuhrer’s life, the now-famous Valkyrie operation.

Readers also learn of Bonhoeffer’s commitment to conservative theology during a time when few orthodox theologians were to

be found in Germany and the book also sheds light on his involvement in smuggling Jews into neutral Switzerland. For Bonhoeffer, the true church was composed of Jews and Greeks, slaves and free, and any church that articulated a gospel of ethnic supremacy had become a false church in league with Satan. And any Christian who would do nothing to oppose the machinations of such wickedness had not rightful claim on the name of Christ.

The work is well-written and impeccably researched. At more than 500 words, it is densely packed with quotations and source material, but readers will be quickly drawn into the enthralling story that is part biography, part living theology and part spy story.



“The Last Stand: Custer, Sitting Bull, and the Battle of the Little Bighorn” by Nathaniel Philbrick (Viking 2010, \$30)

BY JEFF ROBINSON

The author of the best-selling book “Mayflower” is back with a new and compelling examination of the famous Battle of Little Big Horn. From Booklist’s Gilbert Taylor: “Shifting between the movements of Custer’s cavalry regiment and the Cheyenne and Lakota village it was approaching, Philbrick both quickens the pace and flashes back to the lives of the principal characters in the drama: Custer; his subordinate officers Frederick Benteen and Marcus Reno; and on the Indian side, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. Although in the aftermath of Custer’s annihilation, contemporary American blame fell on the dead man, Philbrick arraigns Reno (for being intoxicated) and Benteen (for being slow to link up with Custer). However, Philbrick keeps hold of a hint that Custer let Reno attack unsupported so as to garner the glory for himself. Evoking such tantalizing details, as well as the fight’s tragic context of being the Plains Indians’ own last stand, Philbrick delivers a compellingly readable rendition of the famous battle.”

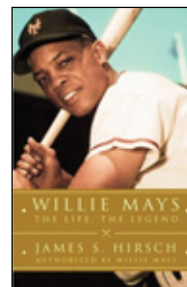


“The Masculine Mandate: God’s Calling to Men” by Richard D. Phillips (Reformation Trust 2010, \$15)

BY JEFF ROBINSON

Phillips brings us a fresh treatment of the crucial topic of biblical manhood. Written from a robust complementarian viewpoint, Phillips applies his clear writing style to teasing out the myriad implications of the two-fold calling of every man from Genesis 2:15, a calling that originated with the first man in the garden: to work and to keep.

In God’s mandate to Adam in Eden, the author perceives a template for manhood, one that, when carried out with diligence, provides dignity to men, service to mankind and glory to God. He then goes on to show that men are called to lead, to love their wives, to discipline their children and to serve the church of Jesus Christ. Here is biblical exposition of the most practical sort teaching that reveals not only what men are to think but what they are to be. Don’t miss this excellent, concise work.



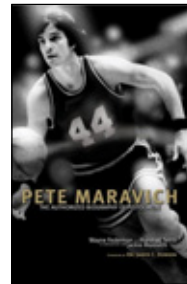
“Willie Mays: The Life, the Legend” by James S. Hirsch (Scribner 2010, \$30)

BY JEFF ROBINSON

Mention the name Willie Mays to a real baseball fan and one thought will usually spring to his mind: five tools. Many consider Mays the greatest baseball player of all time because he was omniscient in five areas

that are present in the best players: he hit for a high average, hit for power, had blazing speed on the base paths, was an excellent defensive player and possessed a howitzer arm.

Hirsch tells of Mays’ life and career, which began in the old Negro Leagues, and shows how he became one of the most beloved players in history in the face of the ungodly racism of the 1950s and 60s in the big leagues. This book tells of baseball during its golden age when many Hall of Famers roamed the classic old ballparks, salaries were a bit more sane and steroids were injected only in farm animals.



“Pete Maravich: The Authorized Biography of Pistol Pete” by Wayne Federman and Marshall Terrill in collaboration with Jackie Maravich (Tyndale 2008, \$14.99)

BY GARRETT E. WISHALL

God has given His creation many good gifts, but none can substitute for a personal relationship with the Giver. That, in a nutshell, is the story of Pete Maravich, a life that is well captured in “Pete Maravich: The Authorized Biography of Pistol Pete.”

Having previously enjoyed the movie “Pistol: The Birth of a Legend” (1991) and another Maravich biography, I was intrigued to read the newest Maravich biography written by Wayne Federman and Marshall Terrill in collaboration with Jackie Maravich, widow of the basketball great.

The forward by James Dobson started off the book, as the Focus on the Family founder recounted Maravich dying of a heart attack in his arms after a pick-up basketball game with Focus staff. It was the first time that the two had met.

Maravich’s life is a not uncommon tale of someone living his life apart from submission to God and a personal relationship with Him before one day realizing that such a life is meaningless and without hope. The original element of Maravich’s story – other than every person’s story and life being unique and valuable to God – is his giftedness as a basketball player and intensity as a human being. Only a handful could control and make a basketball sing like Maravich and he did everything full throttle.

Federman and Terrill weave a compelling account of Maravich’s growing up years, record-setting time as the star of Louisiana and the college basketball world at Louisiana State University and injury-plagued NBA career, before turning to his conversion to Christianity following his retirement.

The authors present an honest account of Maravich’s pre-conversion life, noting that some loved him and considered him the life of the party, while others thought him selfish and sullen, including teammates. The stark account of Maravich nearly being shot one night outside a tavern, and his obsessive devotion to sports, success, UFO’s and nutrition set the stage well for his dramatic conversion.

The intensity of Maravich’s devotion to Christianity led to a strong witness for Christ that found expression in dozens of speaking engagements across the United States. Maravich’s heart attack in Dobson’s arms at age 40 ended his life, as the Lord chose to bring him home after just a few years as a Christian.

Though some of the game accounts drag on a bit, this book provides an interesting inside look at Maravich’s life through personal accounts from Maravich and those close to him. Maravich’s life is a testimony to the greatness of God’s grace and the futility of life apart from Him.

Adoption spotlighted at SBC Pastors' Conference

Moore challenges Southern Baptists to picture the Gospel by caring for the fatherless

By GARRETT E. WISHALL

Under the banner of "Greater Things," speakers during the June 14 afternoon and evening sessions of the 2010 Pastors' Conference focused on the Great Commission and the launch of a national campaign to help pastors adopt children.

Russell D. Moore called attendees of the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference to view adoption and orphan care not as a charitable effort, but as an extension of the Gospel that characterizes churches that are serious about the mission of God.

Moore, preaching from Romans 8:12-23, said God adopting people who were once spiritual orphans should be a life-shaping reality. Instead, he said it is something we often quickly forget.

"God has said to us that every single one of us was isolated and alone and spiritually fatherless and we have a Father who rescued us from that and a Father who has given us a Gospel that is enough to say 'whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved,'" said Moore, senior vice president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"If we believe that and if we have received that then we should picture and show that, including to the fatherless children of the world."

The Pastors' Conference program featured the launch of a national campaign to help pastors adopt children (www.sbcadoption.com). Kevin Ezell, president of the Pastors' Conference and senior pastor of Highview Baptist

Church, is praying for Buff and Cissy McNickle, a Florida couple who adopted twin boys, appeared on stage. Buff is a minister at Idlewild Baptist Church in Lutz, Fla.

"Adoption is not God's Plan B ever. Adoption

is always God's Plan A, if that's what He's called the family to," Cissy McNickle said during a short video that told their adoption story.

Ezell, whose three adopted children are from China, Ethiopia and the Philippines, also presented the McNickles with an unexpected \$10,000 check to go toward the adoption of their twins

from the ministry partners who sponsored this year's conference.

Moore — who has adopted two boys from Russia — recounted walking into a Russian orphanage that was totally silent because infants had needs go unmet for so long that

they stopped crying out for help.

"(Before we adopted our boys) we walked into their room one last time and told our boys that ... we would not leave them orphans and we would come to them," said Moore in his Pastors' Conference message.

"When we walked out of the room, we heard that little one-year-old boy fall down on his face in that crib and scream. My wife's knees buckled as she started to cry and I held back tears myself as I said, 'that is the most beautiful sound I ever heard in my life because he has parents who will hear him when he calls.'"

Paul wrote of men who were known as children of God, Moore said, not because they were part of ethnic Israel, but because the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwelled within them. Such people regularly cry to God 'abba!' a term that entails relationship and familiarity, but also much more.

"Paul is telling us that the cry 'Abba!' is literally a scream through the Spirit of adoption," Moore said. "Those who are the children of God are crying out, with arms lifted up, 'father! Father! Father!'"

"Adoption and orphan care is not charity; adoption and orphan care is not another denominational program. Adoption and orphan care is spiritual warfare, because adoption and orphan care is about Gospel and about mission."

The section on the launch of a national adoption campaign was compiled by Shannon Baker from various reports for Baptist Press.



Kevin Ezell, senior pastor of Highview Baptist Church, prays for Buff and Cissy McNickle, who recently adopted twin boys. The couple received a donation at the SBC Pastors' Conference that paid their adoption debt of \$10,000. Ezell announced that the Pastors' Conference will provide \$2,000 adoption grants from an offering surplus to Southern Baptist ministers and missionaries. *Photo by Devin Maddox*

Church, who initiated the fund, hopes to raise a \$1.5 million endowment in order to match the first \$2,000 a pastor raises to adopt a child. Pastors' Conference attendees gave a \$26,000 offering toward the fund.

The first adoption grant was awarded dur-

Mohler focuses on necessity of conversion at SBC Pastors' Conference

By GARRETT E. WISHALL

No matter how orthodox one's theology or how favorable his opinion of Jesus, unless one is converted from a self-centered life of sin to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ he will not receive salvation, R. Albert Mohler Jr. said June 14 at the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference.

Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, worked through the story of Nicodemus in John 3 to demonstrate the centrality of conversion in Scripture.

"We come to understand that conversion is so central to our theology that it must be in every sermon," Mohler said. "It must be in every church. It must be always the confession of the church, that we are not the ones born merely, but twice born by the promise and power of God and by the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

While Nicodemus came to Jesus for conversation, Jesus quickly turned the discussion to conversion for Nicodemus was not a believer. First, Mohler noted the imperative of conversion.

"Jesus makes very clear that conversion is not an option," he said. "It is not a way one becomes a believer. It is not one understanding among other possible understandings. Jesus says the definitive, essential experience is that one must be born again."

Second, Mohler highlighted the mystery of conversion. He said such mystery emphasizes both the essential ministry of the Holy Spirit to awaken the dead and the means God uses in conversion: the proclamation of the Gospel.

"Here we have a testimony to the fact that the wind blows and we cannot orchestrate it or manipulate it: we can't even predict it and that is how it is with salvation," Mohler said. "We

preach the Gospel, we bear witness to the Gospel and we see the affect of the Spirit as there is a response to the Gospel by faith."

Third, Mohler fleshed out a theology of conversion, focusing on the necessity of a substitutionary sacrifice.

"In the Old Testament, Moses was instructed to craft a bronze serpent so that everyone who was bitten by a venomous snake might look to the snake and live," he said. "It is a pointer to a substitutionary atonement. There was nothing that the Israelite could do to save himself. His salvation had to come from completely outside of himself: his salvation had to come from God."

"Here in this gospel, John three times makes the statement of Jesus being lifted up and all three times it refers to Jesus being lifted up on a cross: the sinless Son of God paying the full penalty for our sin. But it all three times in the Gospel of John also points to His exaltation,

to His ascension, where He is lifted up now as Savior and as Lord."

Finally, Mohler highlighted the Gospel in conversion. Scripture teaches about the purpose and plan of God in salvation, man's necessary response and the imperative to proclaim the Gospel to all men.

"God's love underlines the divine initiative in the Gospel," Mohler said. "God's purpose before the *cosmos* was created was to redeem a people through the blood of His own Son. To clothe His people in the righteousness of His Son. To declare His people as sinners who are drawn to faith in Christ as the Gospel is proclaimed."

"And there is a whoever here: that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. And thus we find our confidence to declare the Gospel: that if any sinner believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he or she will be saved."

Backstage wisdom from the 2010 SBC Pastors' Conference

By Emily Griffin

Southern Seminary alums Kevin Ezell, Jimmy Scroggins and Ben Mandrell served as president, vice president and treasurer, respectively, of the 2010 SBC Pastors' Conference. The three developed the conference to challenge pastors and church leaders to consider



Johnny Hunt, outgoing SBC president, answers a question from Jimmy Scroggins after his sermon at the 2010 SBC Pastors' Conference. Photo by Devin Maddox

the “greater things” they can achieve in their personal walk with Christ, for their family, for their churches and for the mission field.

As each speaker finished delivering their message, Scroggins and Mandrell briefly interviewed them and asked them to share wise words to young pastors. Here are some of the backstage interview highlights.

Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga.

Scroggins: What would you say to pastors who need some encouragement?

Hunt: When I think about the pastors of small churches I am mindful that we have all been there. My first church had 35 [people], second 37, third 90. But I wanted to do the best I could there. You don't have to have a big church to do big things. If you experience a Great Commission resurgence in your own heart, then in your local church and then take the people that God has committed to you and embolden them and empower them through the proclamation of the Word to win their community ... I know of nothing more encouraging to a young pastor than literally embracing and doing the Great Commission.

C.J. Mahaney, leader of Sovereign Grace Ministries

Mandrell: How do you stay fresh in preaching?

Mahaney: Surely, you could have found somebody else more experienced, more effective than myself in answering this question! Here is my attempt to encourage any pastor who under-

stands the labor intensive nature of preparation of preaching and then the proclamation event as well. I want to encourage you to watch your life and doctrine. I find it easier to watch my doctrine than I do to watch my life. I must pay attention to my life, I must pay attention to my soul and watch over my heart with all diligence as we are commanded in Proverbs 4.

David Dockery, President of Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

Mandrell: What would you say to a young pastor who is trying to figure out where he fits into the SBC?

Dockery: I would call for us to focus on our commonalities and pray that God would bring about unity, consensus and renewal. To recognize that one of the four core values being proposed by the GCR is to focus on the Kingdom and that as Southern Baptists we need to be Southern Baptists but not Southern Baptists exclusively — we need to relate to other Gospel partners across the Kingdom and work together for the good of the Gospel, holding hands as friends and creating new networks. I think there is opportunity for young pastors to lead this over the next decade.

Matt Chandler, lead pastor of The Village Church in Dallas, Texas

Scroggins: You talked a lot about how our preaching and our programming in local churches tends to basically encourage people to chase works-righteousness as opposed to the Gospel of Jesus. What can pastors do to begin to retrain their churches to think differently about the Gospel?

Chandler: I think that the pastor's weapon is vision casting and the pulpit every weekend. Almost every program that I know of, whether that's a Southern Baptist church or an Acts 29 church, almost any program that started with its roots in “How do we clearly communicate the Gospel in this area?,” and then it drifts. So what I think you have to do is go back. I don't necessarily think you have to shred all your programs, stop everything that you're doing and start some new work; you need to simply go back to what those works started for and what they were about.

J.D. Greear, lead pastor of Summit Church of Raleigh-Durham, N.C.

Mandrell: What words of encouragement would give to young pastors?

Greear: In the world we live in it becomes very easy to think “I can just fly solo, I don't need all the mess that comes with the SBC.” In any group of people that you join up with you are going to find that there is always dysfunction and mess. The SBC is not unique in that and that is true of any network.

I would encourage young pastors that there are things in the SBC that God has given them and that we can do much more effectively together. One of those is international church planting; one of those is theological education. I am a personal beneficiary of both of those: I spent two years in the mission field and didn't have to raise any money because of the Cooperative Program and I graduated from seminary debt free — which is almost unheard of — because of the Cooperative Program.

Ravi Zacharias, founder of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries

Scroggins: As pastors listen to preachers like you, what is your hope for them? If we are going to turn things around what needs to happen in the lives of pastors?

Zacharias: We need to rescue the opportunity of the moment. It will go away otherwise. The most important thing is reaching our youth. We are in deadly trouble because the youth are being swept aside in our universities by hostile ideas, atheistic worldviews and other ideas that actually are incoherent to their core but made so appealing to their sensibilities. The church has to come to terms with the questions of our time and, without compromising the substance of the Gospel, reach this generation.

Scroggins: With popular culture so strong and jamming demonic ideas down the throats of our children and families, what can we do?

Zacharias: One of the things that you can know for sure is that as awful as those ideas are they leave them empty. It's like Jack Higgins the writer said, I wish I'd known that when I got to the top there would be nothing there, the loneliest moment is when you've just experienced that. So the hollowness is there, what they are



Matt Chandler, pastor of The Village Church in Texas, delivers a sermon at the 2010 SBC Pastors' Conference. After the sermon, Pastors' Conference President Kevin Ezell prayed for Chandler who is battling terminal cancer. Photo by Devin Maddox

looking for is the coherence of what it is we are trying to present. We need to communicate why it is that this bridges the head to the heart.

Scroggins: And the Gospel of Jesus does that?

Zacharias: It is the only message that does that, there is no other message.

Video of each backstage interview is available at www.sbpc.net.

Students hone discipleship skills at D3 Conference

By EMILY GRIFFIN

“This week is about what it means to follow Jesus as a disciple,” Denny Burk, dean of Boyce College, told the nearly 100 students that attended the inaugural D3 Youth Conference on the campus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dan Dumas, senior vice president for institutional administration at Southern, designed D3 for high school students wanting to enrich their discipleship and develop their understanding of Christian leadership, worldview and missions.

“Our prayer is that this week will be one of those watershed moments in your life where God sets down some markers in your life about what it means to be a disciple and what it means to follow Him,” Burk said.

he appeared when Jesus was hungry. Jesus faced the temptations that we face but He set His eyes on the Father and overcame them, Moore said.

Moore implored D3 students to understand that no one is invulnerable to temptation and Satan will appeal to the deepest urges and wants one has in their life.

“If you are going for follow Christ, you are going to have to understand what it means to be a person made with an appetite and you need to understand that your appetite is going to be extremely strong,” he said.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, spoke on developing a Christian worldview from Romans 12:1-2.

“I want to encourage you to develop a Christian worldview because you do not want to miss God’s perfect will in your life,” Mohler

a living sacrifice is the one, who by definition on the authority of Scripture, is not conformed to the world because he or she has a mind that is renewed.”

Dumas preached a message that challenged D3 students to consider how they handle fear. Fear of things other than God is an unhealthy and unhelpful dimension of faith, Dumas said, but a fear of the Lord will serve you all the days of your life. Teaching from Psalm 139, Dumas said the text reminds believers of the awesomeness of God.

“This text is the single greatest aid to my personal sanctification,” Dumas said.

Building a high view of God does have complications, Dumas said. First, God has full disclosure and is all-knowing, meaning that His followers cannot have privacy. Second, God is always present; therefore His followers cannot run away from Him.

Dumas challenged students to think carefully about this point. If you see His all-present nature as a threat rather than a comfort, then you need to deepen your walk with the Lord, he said.

Third, God is all powerful, and we need to realize that we cannot fully imagine the details of His being. Dumas’ final point was that God is all knowing and we cannot have secrets from Him.

“Search me, know me, try me - this should be your prayer,” Dumas said.

Leadership, worldview, missions

D3 students structured their own conference experience by selecting one of three focus tracks: leadership, worldview and missions. Dumas led the leadership track and focused on five topics: character as king, leaders don’t panic, leaders must live for others, leaders must



Dan Dumas leads a session at the inaugural D3 Youth Conference at Southern Seminary. Dumas headed up the leadership track at the conference. Photo by Devin Maddox

Discipleship in the Word

Russell Moore, dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern, spoke three times during the four-day event.

Moore’s first message came from Matthew 3:16-4:4 and addressed temptation. Moore told students that Scripture affirms that Satan is leading each of us into temptation like sheep to slaughter. The Bible says that no one is being tempted by God, Moore said, but all of us are being tested by God. Testing occurs when God allows us to go through a time or situation in which we see what is really true about ourselves whereas temptation is something leading us towards harm and destruction.

Moore said Jesus was tempted by Satan and tested by the Spirit. Satan did not approach Jesus during His time in the wilderness; rather

said. “You do not want to miss God’s plan for your life. You are only going to find yourself faithful in God’s plan for your life if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is faithful, and if you are fully operational, which means thinking like a Christian.”

Mohler said it is going to take everything Christians to be faithful to Jesus Christ in this fallen world. He drew attention to the apostle Paul, who said that faithful Christians are not conforming to the world but are transformed by the living God.

“The Christian worldview is not a mind game, it is not an intellectual exercise, it is not a course you can take or a seminar — it is a way of life that equals faithfulness to Jesus Christ,” Mohler said. “Without developing a Christian worldview you can never demonstrate what it means to be a living sacrifice to Christ because

Hurley challenges students to understand the wrath of God

By COURTNEY REISSIG

The subject of God’s wrath is not something we like to think about, Shannon Hurley told the high school students gathered for the final session of the D3 conference. In fact, he said it is a subject that Satan will do everything in his power to turn people away from.

“Satan doesn’t want us to think about God’s wrath, which is why he will try to fill our day with everything else,” Hurley said. “We are bombarded with this life, everything that will get us not to think about eternity.”

Hurley serves as the director of Sufficiency of Scripture Ministries (SOS) in Uganda. SOS exists to disciple people through God’s Word and biblical training, and is an evangelical voice in Uganda, Hurley said.

Hurley challenged students to think about eternity and told them that an understanding of the wrath of God should awaken them to ministering to lost people. It should also awaken them to see the justice of God and their own sinfulness, Hurley said.

“We think we are so good, but in reality we are bad,” he said. “God is the judge of the living and the dead. Because He is a righteous judge He cannot let anything go unpunished, therefore He must punish. Therefore the wrath of God is who He has revealed Himself to be.”

Using a variety of biblical texts, Hurley showed that God’s wrath is revealed in six ways.

“God has revealed his wrath through natural disasters, heavenly powers, various wars, abandonment, the last days and eternal judgment in hell,” he said.

But, most notably, God revealed His wrath through the death of His Son, Hurley said.

“God poured His wrath on His Son so that people don’t have to suffer wrath,” Hurley said. “God cannot let any sin go unpunished, so He had to pour His wrath on something. So He said ‘let me take my own innocent Son and let me put him on that tree and I will put my wrath on him.’”

When we tell people about the coming wrath of God, we must tell them about the hope of the Gospel, Hurley further explained.

“God sent His Son so that those who realize they are wretched sinners can run to the cross, cling to the cross and hold on to the cross. Through this cross their sins are put on God — and they are forgiven.”

“The Gospel,” Hurley told the gathered students, “is that God bore the wrath that they deserved to show that He is a righteous judge who will judge the world for sin.”

“God has revealed his wrath. The question is this: will you believe it and run to Him, the only one who can save you, Jesus Christ?”



Denny Burk, dean of Boyce College, addresses students as worship artist Josh Wilson looks on. Burk led the worldview track and Wilson led worship at the event. *Photo by Devin Maddox*

be Gospel-driven and acting like men. Heather Payne, former member of the Point of Grace music group, led the female D3 students in an acting like women session.

For the character as king discussion Dumas pointed students to 1 Timothy 4 and told students that leadership is not a sprint, but is instead a long distance race. Throughout this race students should have a “healthy dissatisfaction” with their own leadership of others, meaning a desire to mature, grow and strengthen their abilities.

Burk led the worldview track and told students that their worldview needs to answer many questions, including what it means to be a human being. Burk told students that gender confusion exists in the secular *and* evangelical world.

“From pop culture idols to Bible professors you (youths) are seeing a ton of confusion about gender and what it means to be male and female,” Burk said. “Students, you are being confronted, even when you’re not aware of it, with alternate worldviews on what it means to be created in the image of God.”

Eric Bancroft, senior pastor of Castlevue Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Ind., lead the missions track. Bancroft told students that Christian mission is going to places where worship is not happening.

“One of the strongest misconceptions about missions is thinking that missions is something that happens only in remote parts of the world. Missions is the proclamation to Christ to people who don’t know Christ,” Bancroft said.

“The ownership of missions is at the feet of every person that claims the name of Jesus Christ.”

Bancroft walked the students through 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10 and presented the “K.I.P.” acronym as a way to remain active in missions: Know the Gospel, Illustrate the Gospel and Proclaim the Gospel.



Russell D. Moore exhorts students at the D3 Youth Conference to look to Christ for strength to resist temptation. *Photo by Devin Maddox*



Christian artist FLAME performed at the conference. The Boyce College graduate will begin as a student at SBTS in the fall. *Photo by Devin Maddox*

Announcements

Free sewing class

The free sewing class led by Mrs. Barbara Gentry meets from 6-7:30 p.m. on Mondays in Fuller Room 16. This class will be continuing throughout the summer. Sewing machines are provided at no cost. No experience is required, but women with experience may also participate. Knitting and crocheting lessons will also be offered. Mrs. Barbara Gentry leads the class, assisted by Mrs. Kathy Vogel. For questions, you can call Mrs. Gentry at 380-6448 or Mrs. Vogel at 742-1497.

Vigilance conference: rebuilding perspective on safety and security

The Vigilance Conference July 20-22 at Southern Seminary will equip pastors, leaders and administrators, as well as safety and security staff, to think biblically about their role as shepherds, providing for the physical security of their flock. Speakers will include top names in safety and security to address crucial topics such as executive protection, risk management and security systems. Visit www.sbts.edu/ events to register or learn more.

Connecting Church & Home Conference

The Connecting Church & Home Conference is designed to equip pastors, church leaders and parents with practical ministry strategies for shepherding families within the church. The conference will be held at Southern Seminary **Aug. 20-21**. Featuring nationally known leaders and ministry speakers, this conference is sure to impact your approach to building stronger families in your church. Visit www.sbts.edu/events to register or learn more.

Martha Peace featured speaker at women’s biblical counseling conference

On Aug. 23, the Center for Biblical Counseling at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is hosting author and biblical counselor Martha Peace for a biblical counseling conference. Peace will address the topics of anxiety, depression and discipleship. The conference is open to all women. Peace is the co-author with SBTS professor Stuart Scott of the recently-released “The Faithful Parent: A Biblical Guide to Raising a Family.” She is also the co-author of “Tying the Knot Tighter” and the author of “Damsels in Distress” and “The Excellent Wife.” For more information, visit www.sbts.edu/blog/2010/06/21/martha-peace-featured-speaker-at-womens-biblical-counseling-conference and click on the view the brochure link. You may also email CBC@sbts.edu or call 502-897-4608.

Ministry Resources

Ministry position postings

Full-time and part-time ministry positions may be found on e-campus through the help desk’s link to Ministry Resources.

Résumé service

Start or update your résumé file with Ministry Resources by submitting our on-line candidate form. Visit the Church Resources quick link on www.sbts.edu for the simple instructions. The office is also eager to counsel you over your resume and ministry preferences. Visit Norton Room 150 or call ext. 4208.

Health and Rec

The Health and Recreation Center (HRC) will be open the following hours during the summer: M-F — 6 a.m.-10 p.m. Sat. — 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Aerobics schedule

- Fitness Boot Camp M, W & F 8-8:45 a.m.
- Mommy and Me Power Walking W & F 10-11 a.m.
- Practical Pilates M, T, & R 4:45-5:45 p.m.
- Aqua Alive T & R 5-5:45 p.m.
- Body Sculpt T & R 9-9:45 p.m.

Intramural volleyball

Co-ed Volleyball takes place at 6:30 p.m. every Monday in the Main Gym of the HRC.

Soccer Camp

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., July 12-16
\$50 per participant
Register at the HRC Front Desk. This camp is for second through fifth graders.

Louisville Bats outing

6:05 p.m., Friday, July 31.
\$6 per ticket: tickets may be purchased at the HRC Front Desk.

Basketball camp

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Aug. 2-6
\$50 per participant
Basketball camp for rising sixth through eighth graders. This will be a mid-level camp. Register at the HRC Front Desk.

- Call the HRC at 897-4720 with questions about scheduling and events.
- Visit the weekly calendar on the Health and Recreation Center page of the SBTS website to see what is happening at the HRC.
- Become a fan of the HRC on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (SBTSHealth_Rec).



3 Questions WITH

Greg Gilbert
Senior Pastor of Third Avenue
Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.

Greg Gilbert earned his M.Div. from Southern Seminary and recently accepted the position of senior pastor at Third Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville. Gilbert is the author of the recently-released “What is the Gospel?”

1 *Why did you write “What is the Gospel?”*
I WROTE THE book to drive a stake in the ground concerning the essential core of the Gospel. There are a lot of conversations going on right now about things that are very close to the heart of the Gospel, but I think it’s important to nail down what’s really *not* at issue, what we as evangelicals understand to be of first importance. That’s what I’m trying to do with the book.

My hope is that it will be useful in at least a couple of ways: First, I hope it will help Christians to shore up their own understanding of the Gospel, to let them know where some of the contemporary challenges of the Gospel are coming from and to help them defend against those challenges. I hope it will be the kind of short, simple and accessible resource that pastors would be glad to encourage their church members to read. Second, I wrote the book so that Christians will be able to hand it to non-Christian friends in order to introduce them to Jesus Christ. Hopefully it will be a good way to start conversations with people about the Gospel.

2 *Why do you think people like to redefine the Gospel without Christ being central?*

GOOD QUESTION. It’s not so much that people are pushing *Christ* out of the center of the Gospel, though. Most everyone is quite content to keep Jesus at the center. The trouble is that the Jesus they so often want to put at the center is Jesus the Rabbi, Jesus the Teacher, Jesus the Social Activist or Jesus the (mere) King. What too often gets shoved out of its place — de-centered, redefined, implied or just flat ignored — is the *cross*. Time and

time again, that’s what people simply don’t want to talk about, and I can’t help but think that the reason is precisely what Paul told us in 1 Corinthians: The world around us just doesn’t like the idea of the cross; they don’t like the thought of God being wrathful, they don’t like the thought of themselves being guilty and they don’t like the thought of being saved by a crucified man.

But that’s what Paul says is of *first importance*, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that on the third day He rose again. So yes, Jesus belongs right at the center of the Gospel, but He’s not just Jesus the Rabbi; He’s Jesus the Savior. Not just Jesus the Teacher, but Jesus the Crucified. Not just Jesus the King, but Jesus the *suffering* King. If you leave that out, you’ve really got no Gospel at all.

3 *What made you include a chapter on the Kingdom?*

THE KINGDOM OF God is a really important part of the Good News that Jesus and the apostles proclaimed. The Bible tells us that Jesus came preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” So that’s the main reason I included a chapter on the Kingdom: When we are saved, God transfers us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved Son. The blessings of the kingdom are the great reward we are promised because of what Christ has done for us.

It’s also important to recognize that there are lots and lots of people out there talking about the kingdom these days, and more than a little of it is flatly unbiblical — classic liberalism warmed over. So one of the things I hope to do in that chapter is simply inoculate people against some of the falsehood out there by giving them some basic, biblical truth about what the kingdom is and how one becomes a part of it. That chapter certainly doesn’t say all one could say about the Kingdom, but I hope it’ll give people a good start.

Towers

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