

PENETRATING THE LOSTNESS

EMBRACING A VISION FOR A GREAT COMMISSION RESURGENCE AMONG SOUTHERN BAPTISTS

**FINAL REPORT OF THE GREAT
COMMISSION TASK FORCE OF THE
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
APRIL 26, 2010**

Needed: A Great Commission Resurgence

In every generation, Southern Baptists have been called to reclaim our identity as a Great Commission movement of churches. Now is the time for this generation to answer the same call – to make an unconditional commitment to reach the nations for Christ, to plant and serve Gospel churches in North America and around the world, and to mobilize Southern Baptists as a Great Commission people. Now is the time for a Great Commission Resurgence among Southern Baptists. A world of lostness is waiting – what are we waiting for?

Assignment: A Great Commission Motion

In the 2009 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, messengers overwhelmingly adopted this motion:

That the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting June 23-24, 2009 in Louisville, Kentucky, authorize the President of the Southern Baptist Convention to appoint a Great Commission Task Force charged to bring a report and any recommendations to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Orlando, Florida, June 15-16, 2010, concerning how Southern Baptists can work more faithfully and effectively together in serving Christ through the Great Commission.

President Johnny Hunt appointed a Great Commission Resurgence Task Force of twenty-two members, led by Ronnie Floyd of Northwest Arkansas as chairman. Over the last months, this Task Force has met both extensively and intensively, listening to Southern Baptists, evaluating the most urgent needs before us, and looking to the future with the call of Christ to the nations as our inspiration and passion.

We have been joined by thousands of prayer partners drawn from all over the world. We asked Southern Baptists to tell us what you see and to share your concerns. Southern Baptists from every sector of this convention have talked to us, written to us, and prayed with us. We spent important hours listening to denominational leaders at every level, but we also spent much time listening to grassroots Southern Baptist church members, pastors, missionaries, church planters, and students.

Southern Baptists have spoken, and we have been listening.

Urgency: A World of Lostness

There are almost 7 billion human inhabitants of planet Earth. At the most generous estimate, somewhere around 1 billion are believing Christians. That means that over

6 billion people are lost, without Christ, and thus without hope. Of these 6 billion, over 3.5 billion have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Over 6,000 people groups are without any Christian witness. There is no way that Southern Baptists can make real progress toward reaching these unreached people groups unless we experience a genuine Great Commission Resurgence. We must see a tidal wave of evangelistic and missionary passion, or the numbers of unreached people groups will only grow, and lostness will spread.

In North America, evangelical Christians are falling behind the level of population growth. Put simply, we are failing to reach new immigrant populations, the teeming millions in urban areas, and a generation of youth and young adults who are living in a time of vast change and confused worldviews. Lostness is not only our concern when it is found across oceans – it must be our concern when it is across the street. North America represents a vast continent of lostness, where millions still have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and where many communities and ethnic groups are woefully underserved by Gospel churches.

In our own congregations, we see falling rates of baptism and other signs of concern. In 2008, Southern Baptist churches baptized more than 33,000 fewer people than in 1950 – and that was with more than 17,000 additional churches. Baptism rates among teenagers have fallen dramatically, and many young people become disengaged with the church soon after graduation from high school. In 2008 we baptized only 75,000 teenagers. In 1972, we baptized 140,000. Why?

Research conducted by LifeWay Research on the Millennial generation and research by Thom Rainer on previous generations indicate that every American generation from early in the twentieth century forward has been less evangelized than generations before. Tracing generational patterns from the World War II generation to the Millennials, the estimated number of Christians has fallen from 65 percent to 15 percent. Churches in America are losing ground with each successive generation.

We desperately need to reach our communities for Christ – and this starts with our own young people. Furthermore, we must see this generation of young Baptists take their places on the front lines of the Great Commission Resurgence. Humanly speaking, that is our only hope for a bold advance for the Gospel in the coming generation.

Reality: What is Holding us Back?

The Southern Baptist Convention came into being in 1845 in order to mobilize the energies of Southern Baptist churches for missions and evangelism. It is just that simple. Over the last 165 years, Southern Baptists have grown into a massive denomination, with over 40,000 churches and an international reach for the Gospel.

And yet, there are signs that Great Commission commitment is diminishing among us. While a passion for seeing the world reached for Christ cannot be reduced to a question of money, there is no way that we can reach the world without the resources that are necessary. Missionaries must be sent, churches must be planted, pastors must be trained, and a host of services must be made available.

But, the average Southern Baptist gives only 2.5% of annual income to the local church and beyond. Does this reflect a Great Commission passion? Clearly not. We will never be able to push back against lostness at this level of giving.

Local Southern Baptist churches are now giving an average of 6% of annual receipts to the Cooperative Program. In other words, when Cooperative Program giving is reported, local congregations are retaining an average of 94 cents of every offering plate dollar. These contributions are vital and much appreciated, but there is no way the world will be reached for Christ at that level of congregational investment in missions.

Our state Baptist conventions are doing important work in reaching their own states for Christ, planting churches, educating young Christians, and partnering with other Baptists across the nation and around the world. But approximately 63% of all monies given through the Cooperative Program remain in the states – and the greatest percentage of these monies remains in the states with the largest Southern Baptist populations.

So much good work is being done. Many of our churches are growing, baptizing, and sending. Over the past two decades, Southern Baptist churches have learned to participate in missions in a whole new way – with tens of thousands of our church members going on mission trips and seeing a world of lostness with their own eyes. College and university students have been going, infusing a generation with new passion. State conventions are developing new ways of reaching North America, and local associations are devising new ways of linking churches together for ministry. On our seminary campuses, we see a generation of young Christians dissatisfied with business as usual – ready to risk themselves for the sake of the Gospel. Our mission boards report that Southern Baptists continue to answer the call, with candidates for service with the International Mission Board waiting for an opportunity to be deployed and church planters with the North American Mission Board ready and energized to plant Gospel churches. Throughout the Southern Baptist Convention, there are bright signs of promise and ample signs of hope.

So, what will it take to see a Great Commission Resurgence launched?

Back to Basics: A Theology for Great Commission Faithfulness

A Great Commission Resurgence grows directly out of a Great Commission theology. Do we really believe that Jesus saves? Are we not united in the confidence that

anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved? Are we not certain that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only message of salvation and that salvation is found in Christ alone? Are we not confirmed in our knowledge that every single believer is called to be a part of taking the Gospel to the nations? Do we not yearn to see the nations rejoice in the name of Jesus Christ? Do we not know that today is the acceptable day of salvation? If so, we will be ready to do whatever it takes to see a Great Commission Resurgence change our priorities, reshape our plans, and fuel our lives for God's glory.

The foundation for a Great Commission Resurgence is the truth of the Gospel. We believe in order for us to work together more faithfully and effectively towards the fulfillment of the Great Commission, Southern Baptists need a renewed commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the message of missions and evangelism, the message that is found only in Jesus Christ and His atoning death for sinners. These are first and foremost.

This will mean that we recommit ourselves to sharing, proclaiming, and teaching this good news, as well as ministering and living in the power of the Gospel.

We call upon the Southern Baptists to acknowledge the centrality of the gospel message to everything we do and everything we are. We celebrate the great variety in Southern Baptist life, but we believe that our true unity can be found only in the good news of Jesus Christ. We call for a new focus on the primacy of the biblical gospel.

We believe that every single person is a sinner, alienated from God and without hope apart from Christ. We are confident that God saves sinners by His grace and for His glory, and that our salvation is secured through the atoning life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that salvation is given to all who come to a saving knowledge of Christ, trusting in Him and in Him alone for our salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of everlasting life. We declare to the whole world our belief that Jesus saves – this same Jesus who is the divine God-man, our substitutionary Savior, and reigning Lord, the Head of His church.

In Jesus Christ we place our trust and hope. In His Gospel we place our hope and ground our efforts for a Great Commission Resurgence in Southern Baptist life. While holding firmly to the promise that Christ will be with us to the end of the age, we seek faithfully to proclaim the Gospel to the nations.

We must also affirm the primacy and centrality of the local church in the life of the Southern Baptist Convention. The New Testament identifies the church as the central instrument of the kingdom of God. We must return the local church to the primacy and centrality in the life and work of our denomination at every level.

At the same time, our churches need a new missional vision. The missional vision of the church is to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations – nothing less.

Each individual congregation must accept the responsibility to reach their village, community, town, or city with the good news of Jesus Christ. Churches across the Southern Baptist Convention must envision afresh their calling to reach their region, their country, and the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every local church must operate as a missional strategy center, releasing and sending Christ followers to advance the gospel regionally, nationally, and globally to penetrate the lostness in our world.

All of our Baptist work beyond the local church must exist solely to serve the local church in this mission. This is true for every Baptist association, state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. None of these exists for itself – all exist for the churches. Every pastor must be a missionary strategist, and every church must be a missionary sending center. Every congregation exists to replicate itself and to plant other Gospel churches. Every entity of Baptist work must exist to serve our churches in this missional vision. Otherwise, a Great Commission Resurgence will never happen.

So, how can we make a Great Commission Resurgence happen? In truth, only God can bring this about. At the same time, our Lord has given this assignment to His church, and we are commanded to get to this work. The Great Commission is a command, not a suggestion.

COMPONENT ONE: Getting the Mission Right

In order for us to work together more faithfully and effectively toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission, we ask Southern Baptists to adopt a new mission statement in order to focus our attention and direct our work toward a clear and compelling missional vision.

We believe that Southern Baptists will rally to a mission statement that offers a clear, concise, and deeply biblical vision of who we are and what we are to be about:

As a convention of churches, our missional vision is to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations.

Is this not who we are? Can we even think of settling for anything less? Our mission statement should be drawn directly from the words of Jesus. This missional vision must drive everything that Southern Baptists do, and reset every priority of the local church and the denomination.

If this is who we are, and what we know we must do, then let the whole world know that this is our mission.

Thus, we will ask Southern Baptists to adopt this missional vision as a statement of what draws us together, establishes our purpose, and defines our passion before our churches and the watching world.

COMPONENT TWO: Making Our Values Transparent

We must also work toward the creation of a new and healthy culture within the Southern Baptist Convention. If we are to grow together and work together in faithfulness to the command of Christ, we must establish a culture of trust, transparency, and truth among all Southern Baptists.

Thus, we ask Southern Baptists to embrace and adopt these Core Values:

CHRIST-LIKENESS

We depend on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and prayer to make us more like Jesus Christ.

TRUTH

We stand together in the truth of God's inerrant Word, celebrating the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

UNITY

We work together in love for the sake of the Gospel.

RELATIONSHIPS

We consider others more important than ourselves.

TRUST

We tell one another the truth in love and do what we say we will do.

FUTURE

We value Southern Baptists of all generations and embrace our responsibility to pass this charge to a rising generation in every age, faithful until Jesus comes.

LOCAL CHURCH

We believe the local church is given the authority, power, and responsibility to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world.

KINGDOM

We join other Christ-followers for the Gospel, the Kingdom of Christ, and the glory of God.

Thus, we will call Southern Baptists to embrace and adopt these Core Values as a means of ensuring that we work together in a way that will please our Lord and reflect our identity as fellow believers in service to the Lord Jesus Christ.

COMPONENT THREE: Celebrating and Empowering Great Commission Giving

A Great Commission Resurgence will require a new level of sacrificial giving from Southern Baptist church members and congregations. At the center of our funding stands the Cooperative Program, which since 1925 has served to mobilize the stewardship of Southern Baptists for worldwide missions and ministry.

We call upon Southern Baptists to reclaim our core identity as churches on mission, working together to take the Gospel to the nations and to fulfill our mandate as a Great Commission fellowship of churches. Our work together must be undergirded by cooperative investment in these tasks. We call upon Southern Baptists to honor and affirm the Cooperative Program as the most effective means of mobilizing our churches and extending our reach. We also call upon Southern Baptists to celebrate all giving to our common work. We will recognize the total of all monies channeled through the causes of the Southern Baptist Convention, the state conventions, and associations as Great Commission Giving. The greatest stewardship of Great Commission investment and deployment is giving through the Cooperative Program. We call upon Southern Baptists to recommit to the Cooperative Program as the central and preferred conduit of Great Commission funding, without which we would be left with no unified and cooperative strategy and commitment to the Great Commission task. We are a Great Commission people, who are called to sacrificial and increasing giving that the peoples of the earth may know the salvation that comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Furthermore, we recognize that our national mission offerings are indispensable conduits for Great Commission funding. Therefore, we call upon Southern Baptists to adopt goals of giving no less than \$200-million annually through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and \$100-million annually through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions by 2015.

We reaffirm the definition of the Cooperative Program adopted by action of the 2007 Southern Baptist Convention. We honor and affirm the Cooperative Program as the most effective and efficient means of channeling the sacrificial support of our churches through undesignated giving which funds both the state conventions and the work of the Southern Baptist Convention.

We call upon the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention to increase the percentage of their Cooperative Program giving.

We call upon the state conventions to increase the percentage of Cooperative Program funds directed to the Southern Baptist Convention.

We call upon every entity of the Southern Baptist Convention to maximize all Cooperative Program funds for the task of taking the Gospel to the nations and serving Great Commission churches in their fulfillment of this mandate.

We call upon all Southern Baptists to celebrate every dollar given by faithful Southern Baptists as part of Great Commission Giving, including designated gifts given to any Baptist association, state convention, and to the causes of the Southern Baptist Convention.

We call upon Southern Baptists to evaluate every budget, from the budget of the individual Southern Baptist church member to the budgets of the Southern Baptist Convention and its entities in terms of a Great Commission focus and commitment.

We call upon Southern Baptists to exercise the stewardship of wealth for the Great Commission through estate planning and planned gifts that will undergird the work of the Great Commission long after we have departed this life.

Thus, we will call upon Southern Baptists to give as never before, to support the Cooperative Program as never before, and to celebrate every church's eager and sacrificial support of Great Commission Giving at every level.

COMPONENT FOUR: Reaching North America

As we listened to Southern Baptists, the mission of reaching North America with the Gospel was a clear concern and priority. This was a concern shared by leaders of the North American Mission Board as they met with us in the course of our work. The central concern of all was the priority of liberating NAMB to conduct and direct a

strategy of reaching the United States and Canada with the Gospel and planting Gospel churches.

Thus, we believe that the North American Mission Board must be refocused and unleashed for greater effectiveness. Therefore, we call upon Southern Baptists to affirm NAMB with a priority to plant churches in North America, reach our cities and underserved regions and people groups, and clarify its role to lead and accomplish efforts to reach North America with the Gospel.

The North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention exists to penetrate lostness throughout North America by assisting Southern Baptist churches in their task of reaching North America with the Gospel of Jesus Christ through ministries of evangelism, church planting, and to mobilize Southern Baptist churches as a missional movement. How will this be done?

This reinvention of the North American Mission Board that we envision will implement a missional strategy for planting churches in North America with a priority to reach metropolitan areas and underserved people groups. We desire for the North American Mission Board to encourage Southern Baptist churches to become church planting congregations. Regardless of the size or location of our churches, we call for each to have a vision for planting churches somewhere in North America. It is our desire that at least 50% of the ministry efforts of our North American Mission Board be given to assist churches in planting healthy, multiplying, and faithful Baptist congregations in the United States and Canada.

We also call for NAMB to reclaim its mission of assisting churches to make disciples, working with LifeWay Christian Resources and other partners. Our churches are in great need of leadership, strategies, and materials for making disciples. We believe that NAMB is best suited to fulfill this leadership mission for the Southern Baptist Convention.

Similarly, we call for NAMB to be prioritized with the task of leadership development through the development of current pastoral leadership, with particular attention to contextual evangelism and church planting. NAMB must become a central engine for building missional momentum among Southern Baptist pastors.

If we are going to reach the 258 million lost people in the United States and Canada, we must address the fact that the vast majority of our Cooperative Program mission funds devoted to North America are expended in the most evangelized regions of our work. Approximately two-thirds of our Cooperative Program dollars are spent on regions where only one-third of the population resides. In other words, the greatest percentage of mission funds remains where our own churches are concentrated.

We call upon NAMB to penetrate lostness in partnership with state conventions located in the most unreached and underserved populations of North America.

Our hope and vision is to see NAMB reprioritized, decentralized, and fully authorized to lead Southern Baptists in this great work. This will mean the phasing out of Cooperative Agreements, a structure in place since the 1950s, that return a tremendous percentage of CP monies back to the regions where Southern Baptists are most greatly concentrated and often leaves NAMB with insufficient mobility to appoint personnel directly and ensure missional focus.

We recognize that in order to accomplish its mission for Southern Baptists, NAMB must work in partnership with the state conventions, and we affirm the need for this partnership to be based in cooperation and basic agreement concerning strategies. Nevertheless, we are convinced that the Cooperative Agreements must be replaced with a more appropriate structure and pattern of cooperation. Thus, we call for the leadership of the North American Mission Board to budget for a national strategy that will mobilize Southern Baptists in a great effort to reach North America with the Gospel and plant thriving, reproducing churches. We encourage NAMB to set a goal of phasing out all Cooperative Agreements within seven years, and to establish a new pattern of strategic partnership with the state conventions that will penetrate lostness and ensure greater responsiveness to the Southern Baptist Convention and greater effectiveness for NAMB in the appointment of missionary personnel and church planters.

Thus, we will ask Southern Baptists to unleash the North American Mission Board for a new era of leadership and service to Southern Baptists, pushing back against the lostness of the United States and Canada.

COMPONENT FIVE: Reaching Unreached and Underserved People Groups Within North America

When the Southern Baptist Convention was founded, the world was rather easily divided into “home” and “foreign” missions. That world is gone. Now, with revolutions in transportation and the movement of peoples, the world has come to North America. Indeed, some of the largest concentrations of populations of unreached and underserved people groups are found within the world's so-called “international cities.” Beyond this, significant populations of these people groups are now found even in smaller communities, especially those with colleges and universities.

At present, the mission statement of the International Mission Board prevents active involvement in mission efforts within North America. We believe that restriction fits the past far better than the present, much less the future. The International Mission Board has the charge to develop strategies for reaching these unreached and underserved people groups around the world, and this most often means a deep

involvement in language and cultural studies. We need to allow the IMB to utilize those skills and that knowledge within North America as well. Put simply, it makes no sense to duplicate this effort and work with an artificial separation of the mission.

Mission strategists estimate that there may be as many as 586 unreached and underserved people groups with representation within the United States. Many of these people groups are already within the reach of the International Mission Board, with personnel developing strategies based in their language and culture. We must take advantage of the expertise of both of our mission boards where it is most needed – working in coordination in order to make the greatest impact for the Great Commission.

Thus, such efforts must be done in communication with the North American Mission Board. This proposal has been thoroughly considered with NAMB leadership, and we are fully confident that these two mission boards can and will serve Southern Baptists and maximize their combined reach by working together in reaching these unreached and underserved people groups where they are found in North America. The North American Mission Board retains the leadership mission of reaching North America with the Gospel. We are encouraged to know that a spirit of cooperation already exists between the boards on this very issue.

Thus, we will ask Southern Baptists to entrust to the International Mission Board the ministry of reaching unreached and underserved people groups without regard to any geographic limitation.

COMPONENT SIX: Promoting the Cooperative Program and Elevating Stewardship

There can be no question that Southern Baptists must prioritize the promotion of the Cooperative Program and the elevation of stewardship among our churches. The 1995 “Covenant for a New Century” reorganization of the Convention assigned Cooperative Program promotion to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. Later, stewardship education was added as a ministry assignment.

We believe that the state conventions must take the lead in both ministries. In essence, this is how the Cooperative Program began. As Albert McClellan, author of the official history of the Executive Committee noted, “It was understood from the beginning that state conventions should be responsible for promoting the Cooperative Program in the field and gathering the funds from the churches.”

The reason for this is straightforward and easy to see. The state conventions have the mechanisms in place to collect and promote the Cooperative Program. This has been their historic role and continuing passion.

Clearly, there must also be a role for the Southern Baptist Convention. The Cooperative Program is a partnership, and both the SBC and the state conventions have important work to do. This means an important and continuing leadership role for the SBC Executive Committee as well.

We strongly encourage the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention to work with the state conventions, charged with the responsibility of Cooperative Program and stewardship education, in developing a strategy for encouraging our churches to greater participation and investment in the Cooperative Program. This is an immediate need, made more urgent by the rise of a new generation of Southern Baptists, ready for leadership and deployment in service to the Great Commission. Our hope is that a unified strategy with clearly established goals will be in place by the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in 2013.

COMPONENT SEVEN: The Call of the Nations and the SBC Allocation Budget

For many years, Southern Baptists have been proud of the fact that 50 percent of all Cooperative Program funds received by the Southern Baptist Convention are distributed to the International Mission Board. Thus, we are able to say that half of all Cooperative Program receipts at the national level go to International Missions.

While this is a matter of genuine and understandable denominational pride, it has become too comfortable. It is time to increase that percentage above 50 percent.

We recognize that Southern Baptists are rightly committed to a full range of denominational programs, ministries, and mission efforts. The strength of the Cooperative Program is its reach and comprehensiveness, and for this we are thankful.

At the same time, we will never reach the world while staying in a position of denominational comfort. Therefore, it is our hope to see Southern Baptists break the “50 percent barrier” and make a bold statement of our present and future commitment to reach the nations with the Gospel.

We ask Southern Baptists to support this goal by affirming an intention to raise the Cooperative Program SBC Allocation Budget percentage received by the International Mission Board to 51 percent. Further, we ask that Southern Baptists affirm the intention to fund this increase through a reduction in the budget granted to Facilitating Ministries, thus making a statement about our commitment to reduce denominational infrastructure in order to set the pace for growth in commitment to reaching the nations.

CONCLUSION

The components of our report do not represent a revolution in Southern Baptist life and work. Our Task Force was given several months in which to look at the most urgent issues among us, and to find ways that will allow Southern Baptists to work more faithfully and effectively together in serving Christ through the Great Commission.

We have come to the conclusion that these specific components will make a real difference, even as we recognize that these are only a start. This report must represent the beginning of a new spirit of Great Commission commitment and prioritization, not the end.

Therefore, at the conclusion of this report we bring a series of challenges that will reach every Southern Baptist church and church member, along with every level of Southern Baptist work and every entity of the Convention. We recognize that the challenge of working toward a Great Commission Resurgence will require the commitment of a generation, not merely of the messengers to an annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Nevertheless, we are confident that these components are of vital importance to the future of our denomination and its work – and are key to making immediate progress toward a Great Commission Resurgence.

We must keep ever in mind the command that frames the very reason for our existence:

Then Jesus came and said to them, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” [Matthew 28:18-20, Holman Christian Standard Bible]

May God bring glory to His name and the redeeming power of the Gospel of Christ through granting to Southern Baptists in this generation what can only be described as a Great Commission Resurgence.

A world of lostness awaits. What are we waiting for?

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

1. That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Orlando, Florida, June 15-16, 2010, adopt the following as the mission statement of the Southern Baptist Convention:

As a convention of churches, our missional vision is to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations.

2. That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Orlando, Florida, June 15-16, 2010, adopt the following as Core Values for our work together:

CHRIST-LIKENESS

We depend on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God and prayer to make us more like Jesus Christ.

TRUTH

We stand together in the truth of God's inerrant Word, celebrating the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

UNITY

We work together in love for the sake of the Gospel.

RELATIONSHIPS

We consider others more important than ourselves.

TRUST

We tell one another the truth in love and do what we say we will do.

FUTURE

We value Southern Baptists of all generations and embrace our responsibility to pass this charge to a rising generation in every age, faithful until Jesus comes.

LOCAL CHURCH

We believe the local church is given the authority, power, and responsibility to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world.

KINGDOM

We join other Christ-followers for the Gospel, the Kingdom of Christ, and the glory of God.

3. That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Orlando, Florida, June 15-16, 2010, request the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention to consider recommending to the Southern Baptist Convention the adoption of the language and structure of Great Commission

Giving as described in this report in order to enhance and celebrate the Cooperative Program and the generous support of Southern Baptists channeled through their churches. We further request that the boards of trustees of the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board consider the adoption of the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong offering goals as outlined in this report.

4. That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting June 15-16, 2010, request the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention to consider any revision to the ministry assignment of the North American Mission Board that may be necessary in order to accomplish the redirection of NAMB as outlined in this report; and that the Board of Trustees of the North American Mission Board be asked to consider the encouragements found within this report in all matters under their purview.
5. That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting June 15-16, 2010, request that the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention consider a revised ministry assignment for the International Mission Board that would remove any geographical limitation on its mission to reach unreached and underserved people groups wherever they are found.
6. That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting June 15-16, 2010, request the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention to consider working with the leadership of the state conventions in developing a comprehensive program of Cooperative Program promotion and stewardship education in alignment with this report.
7. That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting June 15-16, 2010 in Orlando, Florida, request the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention to consider recommending an SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget that will increase the percentage allocated to the International Mission Board to 51 percent by decreasing the Executive Committee's percentage of the SBC Allocation Budget by 1 percent.

CHALLENGES

ADDRESSED TO ALL SOUTHERN BAPTISTS

We hold to an ecclesiology that honors and affirms both autonomy and cooperation. The Great Commission Resurgence Task Force is well aware of this, and we realize that we cannot direct individual Christians, local churches, associations or state conventions to take any particular or specific action. This is as it should be. However, our doctrine of the church does not prevent us from challenging and encouraging, admonishing and advising, one another at all levels of SBC life for greater passion and effectiveness in pursuing the Great Commission. We are a convention of churches with a missional vision to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations. With all of this in mind, we wish to put forth the following as challenges for the future of the SBC that we might bring greater glory to the Lord Jesus as we seek to disciple all nations in the fulfillment of Matthew 28:18-20.

Challenges for Individual Christians

- Return to God in deep repentance of and brokenness over sin, denying self, and coming to God with complete humility.
- Commit to the total and absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ in every area of your life, understanding that Christ's lordship is inseparable from all aspects of the believer's life, including family obligations, business and profession, and recreational or leisure pursuits. We especially call on men to respond to this challenge.
- Devote yourself to a radical pursuit of the Great Commission in the context of obeying the Great Commandments of loving God and loving others.
- Participate in a local church sponsored evangelism training class sometime during 2011 and make this a regular component of the discipleship process in your life.
- Develop strategies as an individual for praying for, serving, sharing the gospel and discipling neighbors, coworkers, and others with whom you come into regular contact.
- Bear witness to the Gospel through personal evangelism, seeing every individual as a sinner in need of the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ alone.

- Participate in a North American or international mission trip sponsored by your church or association at least once every four years.
- Grow in giving as a faithful financial stewardship with at least 10% of your income going to your local church. However, see 10% as a place to begin in grace giving but not the place to stop.
- Determine to exercise a greater level of stewardship through estate planning and planned giving, leaving a percentage of your estate to your local church, the Cooperative Program, and to a faithful Baptist entity such as NAMB, IMB, a Baptist college, or our seminaries.
- Devote yourself to a radical pursuit of the Great Commission in the context of obeying the Great Commandments of loving God and loving others.
- Give serious consideration to adoption and orphan care as a component of Great Commission living.
- Determine to develop a well-rounded Christian worldview that allows you to clearly articulate both what you believe and why you believe.
- Repent of any and all sin that has prevented you from being fully used by our Lord in fulfilling the Great Commission. This includes sins of idolatry, pride, selfish ambition, hatred, racism, bigotry and other sins of the flesh that dishonor the name of Jesus.

Challenges for Individual Families

- Emphasize biblical gender roles with believing fathers taking the lead in modeling Great Commission Christianity and taking the primary responsibility for the spiritual welfare of their families.
- Recognize that parents have the primary responsibility of educating their children and helping them to cultivate a Christian worldview way of thinking and living.
- Build gospel saturated homes that see children as a gift from God and our initial mission field. Consider, in this context, the vital ministries of adoption and orphan care.

- Make prayer for and the evangelism and discipleship of children a family priority that begins with parents and is assisted by local churches.
- Develop strategies as a family for praying for, serving, and sharing the gospel with neighbors, coworkers, and others with whom family members come into regular contact.
- Adopt a different unreached people group each month and pray as a family 1) for IMB missionaries working with the people group, 2) for the conversion, baptism and discipling of countless individuals within the people group, and 3) for the establishment of biblical churches among the people group.
- Adopt a different North American church plant each month and pray as a family 1) for the church's leadership team, 2) for the conversion, baptism and discipling of countless individuals in the church's region, and 3) for the birthing of future church plants from the church.
- Spend a family vacation participating in a local church or association sponsored mission trip.
- Consider setting up a mission's savings account for each of your children that would enable them to spend six months to a year in a North America or International Missions context soon after graduating from high school.

Challenges for Local Churches and Pastors

- Lead your church by calling a Solemn Assembly in January 2011 for the purpose of calling Christ's people to return to God, to repentance, and to humility in service to a renewed commitment to Christ and the Great Commission. We request that the newly elected President of the Southern Baptist Convention lead Southern Baptists in this effort.
- Become knowledgeable of the mission field of your specific region, identifying the various people groups and developing a strategy to penetrate the lostness in your region. Be intentional in working with your local association, state convention and NAMB in pursuing this task.
- Work to cultivate a Great Commission atmosphere that is contagious in your church and becomes the DNA of the pastor, staff, adults, students, youth and children of your local body of Christ.

- Working with the IMB and NAMB, set goals for Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong that will enable us to send \$200 million to the IMB and \$100 million to NAMB in annual gifts by 2015.
- Strengthen mission education for believers of all ages, working with the Women's Missionary Union and other missions education programs. Every believer must be made aware of the global missions challenge.
- Lead your church to grow and increase in sacrificial Cooperative Program giving.
- Make sure every sermon, devotion, or other type of teaching is gospel centered and driven by the inerrant and infallible text of Scripture with emphasis on how to apply the text to the lives of different kinds of people.
- Make sure every sermon, devotion, or other type of teaching clearly articulates and applies the gospel message and is centered in the grand narrative of Scripture.
- Call your people continually to a radical devotion and surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- Preach passionately for the conversion of the lost and extend consistently the gospel call for persons to be saved.
- Honor the role of the evangelist, affirming the calling and witness of those who give their lives to the call of the Gospel.
- Challenge people to identify with Christ and testify to Him through believer's baptism by immersion.
- Call people passionately and consistently to surrender their life to full-time ministry. Include in this call the challenge to a career as a missionary through the IMB or NAMB.
- Preach regularly and passionately on Christian stewardship helping your people see this as a vital component of discipleship and life lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Undergird this with lessons on biblical stewardship in your church's Bible Study ministries.
- Cultivate an atmosphere of evangelism, missions, discipleship and biblical theology that permeates every aspect of the church's ministry.

- Give particular attention to the evangelizing and discipling of children and youth.
- Get involved in a regular church-planting program at some level of your congregation's capability. This can include specific partnerships with another church, your association, state convention or NAMB.
- Adopt an unreached people group and an underserved megacity in North America and regularly inform the membership about them, pray for them, and when applicable, work toward short-term mission trips to serve them. Encourage families to consider moving to those cities to be part of the core group for that plant.
- Plan at least one evangelism training course annually for your church members; consider inviting members of other churches in your association to participate, especially smaller churches.
- Plan at least one North American or international mission trip a year and/or encourage members to participate in mission trips sponsored by a local association.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for sharing the gospel with every person in your community with no regard to racial, social or economic status. This may include elements such as home-to-home evangelism, neighborhood block parties, servant evangelism projects, one-on-one mentoring, after-school programs, university campus outreach, innovative outreach events, neighborhood Bible studies, evangelistic mercy ministries, etc.
- Enter, if possible, the world of private Christian schooling and Christian homeschooling to provide a Christian alternative for the education of children, especially in areas hostile to the Christian worldview. See this as a complement to the many faithful Christians serving in the public school systems who see their calling to be salt and light in a missional assignment.
- Encourage Christian schools to send each student in their high school years on a cross-cultural missions experience or to an international mission field for at least one week before they graduate, developing a strategy to pay for these trips as a school in order to build a genuine passion and commitment to reach the nations.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for Great Commission discipling of all church members. This may include elements such as Sunday School and/or small group ministries, mission education programs, one-on-

one mentoring, affinity ministries (e.g. women, singles, etc.), pastoral leadership training, diaconal leadership training, etc.

- Develop a comprehensive church-based strategy for reaching and discipling college students, including international students.
- Develop as a comprehensive church-based strategy for reaching and discipling individuals with physical and developmental disabilities.
- Send teenagers and young adults on mission trips with the hope of exposing every young believer to global missions.
- Partner with like-minded ethnic churches or missions in evangelizing immigrants and other underserved ethnic minorities, including migrants and other short-term workers.
- Reclaim the Baptist vision of regenerate church membership, recognizing that this vision is central to our Baptist identity and understanding of the church.
- Reclaim corrective church discipline as the biblical means of restoring believers to healthy discipleship and faithfulness.
- Emphasize meaningful church membership through such practices as decision counseling, believer's baptism, new convert mentoring, membership covenants, prospective member classes, and redemptive church discipline.

Challenges for Local Associations

- Enthusiastically embrace the missional vision and core values of the SBC allowing them to guide your work and set your priorities.
- Adopt the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 as your confessional basis of association and adopt some shared core values and priorities that characterize the cooperating churches of your association.
- Organize quarterly associational prayer meetings for the conversion of the lost and the planting of sound churches in the underserved and unreached areas of North America and around the globe.
- Work with state conventions and the SBC to set aside January of every year as a month of prayer for the conversion of unreached people groups around the globe.

- Plan at least one annual foreign mission trip and one annual North American mission trip and encourage all the churches in the association to participate, especially smaller churches.
- Develop associational collections of evangelism and discipleship resources and regularly inform the churches about the availability of such resources.
- Work with cooperating churches to plant at least one new church a year in an underserved area within or near to the association.
- Work with cooperating churches to plan at least one mercy ministry focused outreach event every year.

Challenges for State Conventions

- Embrace with enthusiasm the missional vision and core values of the SBC allowing them to guide your work and set your priorities.
- Adopt the Baptist Faith & Message [2000] as a confessional basis for cooperation and adopt shared core values and priorities that characterize cooperating churches.
- Make church planting a priority and develop church planting partnerships with North American urban centers and underserved regions outside of the Southeast and Southwest.
- Determine to return to the historic ideal of a 50/50 Cooperative Program distribution between the state convention and the SBC.
- Hold state convention colleges and universities accountable to Baptist convictions and an authentic Christian worldview education. Baptist colleges and universities must inculcate a Great Commission mindset in their students and deploy them worldwide in short-term missionary service.
- Eliminate programs that do not directly assist local churches in fulfilling their biblical mandate to make disciples of all people.
- Work with the SBC and local associations to set aside January of every year as a month of prayer for the conversion of unreached people groups around the globe.

- Work with local associations and local churches to plan regional evangelism and discipleship training events on at least a semiannual basis.
- Encourage state convention children's homes to consider deep investment in Great Commission adoption/foster ministries that connect children with Baptist families within the state.
- Recognize the powerful witness of Disaster Relief programs as Southern Baptists have touched millions of lives in the aftermath of disaster and in a moment of acute need.
- Develop and celebrate mercy ministries which can be used as avenues for churches to serve others and open doors for evangelism.

LifeWay

- Create materials that our churches can use to teach biblical stewardship through our Sunday Schools and other Bible Study Ministries.
- Create materials our churches can use to teach personal evangelism and the call to each Christian to be involved in fulfilling the Great Commission. Create a simple but biblically rooted disciple-making plan that helps pastors and leaders to multiply themselves.
- Develop materials that assist individuals in their understanding and involvement in the Great Commission, both in North America and the world.
- Strengthen ministries directed to the support of Christian schools and homeschooling families.

Challenges for the Seminaries

- Remember never to lose sight that your calling is to serve the churches of the SBC.
- Maintain fidelity to our Confession of Faith (The Baptist Faith & Message 2000).
- Train and send to our churches Great Commission ministers who will lead us in becoming Great Commission churches.

- Develop a strategy for cultivating more local church-based partnerships for M.Div.-level theological education, particularly in underserved regions in North America.
- Develop more opportunities for students to gain tangible experience and earn seminary credit by serving in local church internships or short-term mission assignments and provide financial assistance to students who avail themselves of these opportunities.
- Give primary attention to masters and doctoral level programs for the education and training of pastors, missionaries, and other church leaders.
- Train students in the skills of disciple-making, affirming this calling as central to the task of the minister.
- Develop programs of study (and host regular conferences and workshops) that are specifically geared toward equipping local church leadership (both students and non-students) in areas such as preaching, evangelism, discipleship, pastoral ministries, church planting, international missions, and biblical counseling, etc.
- Cooperate with local associations, state conventions, NAMB and the IMB in planning and hosting church planting training that puts international missions and church planting in the life-blood of all the students our churches entrust to your care.

Challenge for the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission

- Renew efforts to call upon God's people to live and demonstrate Christ-likeness and moral witness as an example and testimony for Jesus Christ and continue efforts to preserve religious freedom in our nation so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be proclaimed and the Great Commission fulfilled.

Challenge for GuideStone Christian Resources

- Mobilize those who are retired and receiving benefits to use their energy in praying for and becoming personally involved in the evangelization of North America and the World.

Challenges to All Southern Baptist Leaders

- Take advantage of every opportunity to support the Cooperative Program among Southern Baptists and Southern Baptist churches.
- Enhance confidence in all Southern Baptist work by honoring the Business and Financial Plan of the Southern Baptist Convention.
- Commit to a continuous process of denominational review in order to ensure maximum implementation of the Great Commission.

THE GREAT COMMISSION TASK FORCE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Johnny Hunt - SBC President, Ex-officio member of the GCR Task Force, Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, GA

Ronnie Floyd - GCR Task Force Chairman, Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church of Springdale & The Church at Pinnacle Hills, AR

Daniel Akin - President, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC

Tom Biles - Executive Director, Tampa Bay Baptist Association

John Cope - Senior Pastor of Keystone Community Fellowship, Chalfont, PA

David Dockery - President, Union University, Jackson, TN

John Drummond - Owner, DMG Development, Panama City, FL

Donna Gaines - Women's Communicator, Pastor's Wife, Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, TN

Al Gilbert - Senior Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC

Larry Grays - Senior Pastor, Midtown Bridge Church, Atlanta, GA

J.D. Greear - Lead Pastor, The Summit Church, Durham, NC

Ruben Hernandez - Associate Spanish Pastor, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, TX

Harry Lewis - Vice-President of Partnership, Missions, and Mobilization Group at NAMB

Kathy Ferguson Litton - Women's Communicator, Pastor's Wife, First Baptist North Mobile, AL

Albert Mohler, Jr. - President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

Mike J. Orr - Pastor, First Baptist Church, Chipley, FL

Frank Page - Vice-President of Evangelism at NAMB

Jim Richards - Executive Director of Southern Baptists of Texas Convention

Roger Spradlin - Senior Pastor, Valley Baptist Church, Bakersfield, CA

Ted H. Traylor - Pastor, Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola, FL

Simon Tsoi - Executive Director of Chinese Baptist Fellowship of the U. S. and Canada

Robert White - Executive Director of the Georgia Baptist Convention

Ken Whitten - Senior Pastor, Idlewild Baptist Church, Lutz, FL

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY BY STANDING VOTE, 4:44PM, April 26, 2010