

SBC Affirms Great Commission Resurgence; Authorizes Task Force

By Mike Day

The Annual Meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Louisville, Kentucky is now a part of Southern Baptist history. It will most likely be remembered for its intense heat and humidity (outside the meeting hall—not inside); its refreshing and visible youthfulness (I no longer represent the youth movement of the SBC); and, its affirmation of the need for a renewed commitment to the fulfillment of the Great Commission at all levels of SBC life (a Task Force was appointed to study how Southern Baptists can “work more faithfully and effectively together in serving Christ through the Great Commission.”)

The *Great Commission Resurgence Task Force* will make its report and recommendations to the SBC Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida next year. Between now and then, there will be much talk about what the Task Force is doing and what they will recommend. Reporters will report, bloggers will blog, postulators will postulate, and speculators will speculate as to the purpose, priorities, plans, agendas, and motivations of the Task Force. My hope is that in the midst of the reporters, bloggers, postulators, and speculators that pray-ers will pray that God, by His power, will graciously “awaken” our churches and “adjust” our denomination so that we might indeed see a resurgence of ministry and evangelism focused upon fulfillment of the Great Commission. May I encourage you to read the basic tenets of the “Great Commission Resurgence Declaration” (printed below) and join us in praying for an outpouring of God’s blessing upon His church and our denomination as we seek to get more serious than ever about completing the task and mission He has given us.

“Great Commission Resurgence Declaration”

Then Jesus came near 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, HCSB).

Preamble

Southern Baptists have always been a Great Commission people. Christ’s command to go, disciple, baptize, and teach is woven into the very DNA of our church. It is our conviction that a Great Commission Resurgence must embrace the following ten commitments:

I. A Commitment to Christ’s Lordship. *We call upon all Southern Baptists to submit to the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ in all things at the personal, local church, and denominational levels. (Col. 1:18; 3:16-17, 23-24)*

II. A Commitment to Gospel-Centeredness. *We call upon all Southern Baptists to make the gospel of Jesus Christ central in our lives, our churches, and our convention ministries. (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:17-21)*

III. A Commitment to the Great Commandments. *We call upon all Southern Baptists to recommit to the priority of the Great Commandments in every aspect of our lives and every priority we embrace as a network of local Baptist churches. (Matt. 22:37-40)*

IV. A Commitment to Biblical Inerrancy and Sufficiency. *We call upon all Southern Baptists to unite around a firm conviction in the full truthfulness and complete sufficiency of Christian Scripture in all matters of faith and practice. (Matt 5:17-18; John 10:35; 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)*

V. A Commitment to a Healthy Confessional Center. *We call upon all Southern Baptists to look to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 as a sufficient guide for building a theological consensus for partnership in the gospel, refusing to be sidetracked by theological agendas that distract us from our Lord's Commission. (1 Tim. 6:3-4)*

VI. A Commitment to Biblically Healthy Churches. *We call upon all Southern Baptists to focus on building local churches that are thoroughly orthodox, distinctively Baptist, and passionately committed to the Great Commission. (Matt. 16:13-20, 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-47; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 5)*

VII. A Commitment to Sound Biblical Preaching. *We call upon all Southern Baptists to affirm and expect a pastoral ministry that is characterized by faithful biblical*

VIII. A Commitment to a Methodological Diversity that is Biblically Informed. *We call upon all Southern Baptists to consider themselves and their churches to be missionaries in non-Christian cultures, each of which requires unique strategies and emphases if the gospel is to penetrate and saturate every community in North America. (Phil. 2:1-5; 4:2-9)*

IX. A Commitment to a More Effective Convention Structure. *We call upon all Southern Baptists, through our valued partnerships of SBC agencies, state conventions/institutions, and Baptist associations to evaluate our Convention structures and priorities so that we can maximize our energy and resources for the health of our local churches and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. This commitment recognizes the great strength of our partnership, which has been enabled by the Cooperative Program and enhanced by a belief that we can do more together than we can separately.*

X. A Commitment to Distinctively Christian Families. *We call upon all Southern Baptists to build gospel-saturated homes that see children as a gift from God and as our first and primary mission field. (Deut. 6:1-9; Psalm 127, 128; Eph. 6:4)*