

2007 Resolutions Committee Report Southern Baptists of Texas Convention

#1 Reaffirming Regenerate Church Membership

WHEREAS, the *Baptist Faith & Message* asserts that the Scriptures are "the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried" (Article I); and

WHEREAS, a New Testament church is composed only of those who have been born again by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Word, becoming disciples of Jesus Christ, the local church's only Lord, by grace through faith (Matthew 18:18-20; John 3:5); and

WHEREAS, a New Testament church is formed through covenant by a group of Christians intentionally gathering in the name of Jesus Christ and under his lordship (Matthew 18:19-20; Colossians 2:10, 19); and

WHEREAS, baptism of only believers by immersion in the Triune name is the only proper means of entering a local New Testament church and is thus the indispensable beginning of regenerate church membership (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41); and

WHEREAS, regenerate church membership is preserved by the practice of redemptive church discipline according to our Lord's command (Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Corinthians 5, Titus 3:10-11); and

WHEREAS, the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated in a worthy manner as a memorial of our Lord's atoning death, providing continuing evidence of regenerate church membership (1 Corinthians 11:23-29); and

WHEREAS, regenerate church membership is necessary for the responsible practice of congregational church government (Matthew 18:17, Acts 6:3-4, 15:22); and

WHEREAS, the local church has been commissioned to make disciples of all nations through proclaiming the Word, by going, baptizing and teaching all things that Christ commanded, thus propagating regenerate church membership through evangelism (Matthew 28:16-20); and

WHEREAS, the New Testament ideal of regenerate church membership has long been a cherished Baptist principle as described by the *Baptist Faith & Message* (Article VI); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Arlington, Texas, November 12-13, 2007, humbly urge our beloved churches to renew their commitment to regenerate church membership by acknowledging the necessity of spiritual regeneration and Christ's lordship for all members of local churches; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we humbly urge our churches to renew their commitment to the congregation as a covenantal assembly entered only by immersion of those who evidence a credible profession of faith in Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we humbly urge our churches to renew the practice of redemptive church discipline, reviewing their membership rolls and kindling fraternal kinship and accountability among all members of the congregation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we humbly urge our churches to celebrate the Lord's Supper as a meaningful memorial celebration according to the New Testament, and develop congregants capable of responsible self-governance; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we humbly encourage all of our beloved Southern Baptist churches to seek to fulfill the New Testament ideal of regenerate church membership for the glory of God, the edification of His people, and the more effective evangelization of the lost.

#2 The Importance of Sound Doctrine for True Unity

WHEREAS, the Bible instructs pastors and churches to be "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict," (Titus 1:9); and

WHEREAS, the Bible informs churches that mature saints will not be "tossed here and there by waves of doctrine," (Ephesians 4:12, 14); and

WHEREAS, the Bible records Paul urging Timothy to, "instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines," (1 Timothy 1:3); and

WHEREAS, the Baptist identity arises from certain doctrinal principles and convictions; and

WHEREAS, churches, denominations, and conventions have compromised their doctrinal distinctives in modern days in an ecumenical attempt to include people by excluding sound doctrinal principles-which has neither been unifying nor healthy; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Arlington, Texas, November 12-13, 2007 recognize that true biblical unity is based upon certain unalterable doctrinal confessions as revealed in God's inerrant Scripture; further be it

RESOLVED, that we encourage all pastors, church members, and churches to pursue sound doctrinal understanding through teaching, seminars, and sermons for the purpose of a continuing education for edifying and equipping Southern Baptists to engage the world in conversation about God; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in order to establish a New Testament church and a unified convention, sound doctrine cannot be compromised; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention affirms and encourages ongoing doctrinal conversation within Baptist life for the purpose of further defining ourselves, evangelizing this world, and growing in relationship and obedience to God.

#3 The Role of *The Baptist Faith & Message*

WHEREAS, the various entities of the Southern Baptist Convention operated for the first eighty years of the convention's existence according to their own internal theological parameters, including the *Abstract of Principles* at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and

WHEREAS, the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, May 14-15, 1925, shaped the modern Southern Baptist Convention by adopting *The Baptist Faith & Message* as "those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us"; and

WHEREAS, *The Baptist Faith & Message* did not become the statement of faith of any of the various entities of the Southern Baptist Convention until it was adopted as such by the boards of trustees that govern the entities; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, upon its adoption of *The Baptist Faith & Message*, nevertheless retained the *Abstract of Principles* as a body of additional binding theological parameters for the operation of the seminary, setting the precedent and demonstrating the propriety of individual Southern Baptist entities adopting and following additional binding theological parameters beyond *The Baptist Faith & Message*; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Arlington, Texas, November 12-13, 2007, regard *The Baptist Faith & Message* as the "instrument of doctrinal accountability," considering it appropriate for all Southern Baptist entities to employ it as the minimum theological standard by which they operate; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we acknowledge the appropriateness of entities adopting and enforcing additional theological standards such as the *Abstract of Principles* as a part of the unique responsibility of the board of trustees of each entity, operating in conscientious accountability to the convention to govern the entity in its charge in all matters theological and otherwise; and be it further

RESOLVED, that, although we believe the contents of *The Baptist Faith & Message* to be grounded in biblical truth, we affirm the unabridged liberty of any individual who has not voluntarily entered a fiduciary or employee relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention or any of its entities to accept or reject, in part or in total, the tenets expressed in *The Baptist Faith & Message*.

#4 Christian Civility

WHEREAS, Hebrews 12:14 states we are to “strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord,” and Ephesians 4:1-3 urges us to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page and other SBC leaders have pleaded for Christian civility and an end to internecine conflict which leads to character assassination and personal attack; and

WHEREAS, civility is not a call for relativism, a repudiation of inerrancy, a lack of biblical conviction, or the absence of an evangelistic strategy; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention has been known for its doctrinal integrity, its missional activity, and for its agreeing together in the Lord; and

WHEREAS, application of Christian decorum and decency often lags behind the development of new forms of technology and communication; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Arlington, Texas, November 12-13, 2007, commit to follow biblical mandates and Christian convictions while treating others with Christian civility and kindness; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we will heed the biblical admonition to walk in the Spirit, demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in the use of any form of personal communication that we will allow “no corrupting talk to come out of our mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear” (Ephesians 4:29) and that we will allow our speech to “always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” (Colossians 4:6); and be it finally

RESOLVED, that as we state our biblical convictions without reservation and our personal convictions without hesitation, we will allow all communication and conversation to be a personal reflection of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

#5 Support for Covenant Marriage

WHEREAS, the *Baptist Faith & Message*, the adopted statement of faith of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, states in Article XVIII (The Family): “Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal

the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race"; and

WHEREAS, negative cultural shifts in attitudes toward marriage are evident across America in public policy and in the media; and

WHEREAS, the divorce rates in Texas have risen dramatically because no-fault divorce laws and government policies provide virtually no protection for the institution of marriage; and

WHEREAS, numerous elected officials, social scientists, community leaders, and policymakers across the ideological spectrum agree with church leaders that children in married families are healthier, perform better in school, live in poverty less frequently, and are involved in crime or other destructive behaviors less often; and

WHEREAS, after four decades of treating society's ills with more government spending and welfare dependency, juvenile crime, child abuse, school underachievement, drug abuse, suicide among children, and many other social ills have increased; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of government is to protect and foster the common good, which encompasses reducing the number of broken families and also supporting families who stay together; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of churches, associations, denominations, para-church organizations, legislators, social scientists, and educational groups are championing efforts to strengthen the legal status of the marriage covenant; and

WHEREAS, several items of legislation favorable to stronger marriages were introduced but not adopted by the 2007 session of the Texas legislature; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Arlington, Texas, November 12-13, 2007, affirm the biblical principles of marriage as a covenant; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage the introduction and passage of laws that will encourage marriage and discourage divorce.

#6 Evangelistic Outreach and Pioneer Missions

WHEREAS, the Word of God gives a clear mandate to Christ-followers to reach all people, in all places (Matthew 28:19-20) by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ charges us to be His witnesses locally, nationally, and globally (Acts 1:8); and

WHEREAS, followers of Christ are called to make an impact on our culture by being salt and light (Matthew 5:13), by being the sweet aroma of Christ in every place (2 Corinthians 2:14-15), and by being His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20); and

WHEREAS, Scripture commands us to be doers of the Word and not hearers only (James 1:22-25); and

WHEREAS, God's Word confirms the critical importance of obedience (2 John 5:3) and the need to put into practice what we know (Philippians 4:9) revealing our ultimate accountability to God for doing so (2 Corinthians 5:9-10); and

WHEREAS, entire significant cities and states in our own nation remain under engaged by our mission efforts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Arlington, Texas, November 12-13, 2007, affirm and embrace Scripture's clarion call to take the gospel to all people, in all places, beginning in our local communities and nation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we acknowledge the necessity for all Southern Baptists to be in the world but not of the world and therefore distinct from the culture without abrogating our God-given responsibility to reach the culture; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage all Southern Baptists to practice what they know and put their faith in action in tangible ways by building relationships with those outside the faith that they might be living examples of the love and character of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we acknowledge the need to partner strategically and aggressively with existing Southern Baptist churches in the United States and plant new works where none are established; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we recognize the need to apply greater mission efforts and resources in reaching the unreached areas of the United States for the glory and renown of Jesus Christ.

#7 Biblical Literacy

WHEREAS, the God-breathed, wholly inspired, inerrant, infallible, and divinely revealed Word of God should be the basis of all Christian understanding and learning (2 Timothy 3:16); and

WHEREAS, a mature person in the faith should be trained by the solid food of the Word of God to discern good and evil (Hebrew 5:14); and

WHEREAS, the learning of God's Word is a discipline that yields spiritual purity (Psalm 119:9-11); and

WHEREAS, God created our minds and commands us to use them (Matthew 22:37-38, Romans 12:2); and

WHEREAS, Scripture commends to us the virtue and blessing of the knowledge of God (Proverbs 4:23, Proverbs 19:2, Hosea 4:1, 6, Philippians 3:8); and

WHEREAS, Scripture speaks to the need for critical thinking skills and the ability to explain what we believe and why (2 Corinthians 10:5, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Colossians 2:8, Colossians 4:5-6, 1 Peter 3:15); and

WHEREAS, Scripture indicates the necessity of knowing the Word of God for patience and instruction (Romans 15:4); and

WHEREAS, the Scripture indicates the importance of having our minds guarded by the truth of God's Word (2 Peter 3:15-17); and

WHEREAS, a biblical worldview is predicated upon the knowledge and proper handling of the word of God; and

WHEREAS, a lack of biblical literacy is becoming so prevalent in our churches that many have come to tolerate it; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Arlington, Texas, November 12-13, 2007 give a higher priority to biblical knowledge and its importance to the development of a Christian worldview; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the full counsel of Scripture is a heritage that should be taught to future generations in fulfillment of Christ's command to make disciples; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, that we commend to our churches the Education Commission of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention working in cooperation with the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Criswell College, and Jacksonville College for the promotion of further instruction of biblical knowledge and practice.

#8 Appreciation for Steve Swofford

WHEREAS, Pastor Steve Swofford has served as president of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention for the years 2006 and 2007; and

WHEREAS, President Swofford led our convention in a winsome and pastoral manner, serving our convention unselfishly and in the spirit of Christian grace; and

WHEREAS, Steve Swofford's term as convention president ends with the conclusion of our 2007 annual meeting; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Arlington, Texas, November 12-13, 2007, express our appreciation to Pastor Steve Swofford for his service as convention president and to First Baptist Church of Rockwall for their sacrificial generosity in sharing their pastor with our convention to the glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.