

2008 Resolutions Committee Report

Southern Baptists of Texas Convention

Resolution One: On the Lordship of Jesus Christ

WHEREAS, “Lord” is used 489 times in the New Testament to refer to Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, the Lordship of Jesus Christ is the biblical doctrine that Baptists have accepted as central to Christianity and therefore defines our distinctives; and

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ used “Lord” to indicate that He is God (Matthew 24:42; Mark 12:35-37), by whom and for whom all things are created (Colossians 1:16); and

WHEREAS, “Jesus is Lord” is the confession of salvation first made by Christians (Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 12:3) and will finally be proclaimed by all to the glory of the Father (Philippians 2:11); and

WHEREAS, the Lordship of Jesus Christ is over all things (Matthew 28:18), including the separate domains of the church, over which He alone has “preeminence” (Colossians 1:18); and the state, which will discover in the end that He is “Lord of Lords and King of Kings” (Revelation 17:14, 19:16); and the family, in which Christ established the husband’s loving leadership and the wife’s gracious submission (Ephesians 5:24-25); and

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ expects Christians to obey Him as Lord with integrity and without hypocrisy (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46-49); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Houston, Texas, November 10-11, 2008, affirm and exalt the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all things, submitting ourselves to Him as disciples; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we humbly urge all those churches that consider themselves to be Christian to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ without reservation in all of their doctrines and actions; and be it further

RESOLVED, specifically, that we humbly urge our churches to proclaim consistently that, in the words of the *Baptist Faith and Message*, “There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord”; and be it further

RESOLVED, specifically, that we humbly urge our churches to teach and practice consistently that, in the words of the *Baptist Faith and Message*, “Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes”; and be it further

RESOLVED, specifically, that, in the words of the *Baptist Faith and Message*, Christian baptism “is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus”; and be it further

RESOLVED, specifically that, in the words of the *Baptist Faith and Message*, “The Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming”; and be it further

RESOLVED, specifically that, in the words of the *Baptist Faith and Message*, “The first day of the week is the Lord’s Day”; and be it further

RESOLVED, specifically that, in the words of the *Baptist Faith and Message*, “It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations”; and be it further

RESOLVED, specifically that, in the words of the *Baptist Faith and Message*, “All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society”; and be it further

RESOLVED, specifically that, in the words of the *Baptist Faith and Message*, “God alone is the Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it”; and be it further

RESOLVED, specifically that, in the words of the *Baptist Faith and Message*, “God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society,” which family is to be defined, structured, and conducted in terms of scriptural revelation; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we as Southern Baptist Christians shall seek in all domains of life, including the church, the state and the family, to implement only and diligently the will of the Lord Jesus Christ with full integrity, by the Holy Spirit, and for the glory of God, according to the gracious principles and loving precepts He has revealed in His Word.

Resolution Two: On the Centrality of Scripture

WHEREAS, the *Baptist Faith and Message* asserts that “the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter”; and

WHEREAS, the Bible affirms that being “born again is not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God” (1 Peter 1:23); and

WHEREAS, the Bible explains that spiritual growth comes by the Word of God and it is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, and we are to be doers of the Word (Psalm 119:105; James 1:22; 1 Peter 1:2); and

WHEREAS, the Bible commands us to “preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2); and

WHEREAS, the Bible warns us that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4); and

WHEREAS, Scripture instructs us to disciple our children throughout each day by teaching them God’s Word, His mighty works, and His commands, imparting to them a biblical worldview (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Psalm 78:4-7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Houston, Texas, November 10-11, 2008, encourage all our members, in view of the lostness of souls, the value of time, the love of God, and the mandate of our commission, to live, teach, and preach the Word of God which is the only power of God unto salvation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we urge our churches to encourage daily personal Bible study and memorization, family Bible studies, and regular Bible studies with their churches; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we urge our churches to consider establishing church schools which keep Scripture central to their curriculum as an additional means of imparting a biblical worldview to our children.

Resolution Three: On the Primacy of the Local Church

WHEREAS, Scripture clearly teaches that the church of Jesus Christ is to carry out “The Great Commission” (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-47); and

WHEREAS, the same church is the divinely chosen instrument which Christ would use to carry forth His gospel of Good News upon this earth (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23); and

WHEREAS, the same church acts corporately (Ephesians 2:18-22) through thousands of local established congregations (1 Corinthians 1:2, 7:17); and

WHEREAS, the New Testament concept of the church is a local congregation as the *Baptist Faith and Message* affirms “A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth”; and

WHEREAS, local congregations, through the corporate organization in America known as the Southern Baptist Convention, endeavor faithfully to carry out their biblical duty by its privileged means as an autonomous local church; and

WHEREAS, many of these local churches have voluntarily bound themselves through mutual fellowship and support through an association publicly known as the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention; and

WHEREAS, although many para-church organizations do a good work, they are not able to fulfill the God ordained tasks of the local church; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Houston, Texas, November 10-11, 2008, encourage all Christians to participate actively as members of their local churches, acknowledging and rendering cooperative support to the local church as we move together in service for the Kingdom of God; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we exhort local churches to embrace the responsibilities entrusted to them by God not relegating those responsibilities to any other entity.

Resolution Four: On the Great Commission Resurgence

WHEREAS, over the course of the past three decades the Southern Baptist Convention has been blessed of God, to experience a dramatic course correction in the Conservative Resurgence; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention was founded ten years ago due to the clear need for a resurgence of theological conservatism in our state; and

WHEREAS, the natural next step from the Conservative Resurgence is a Great Commission Resurgence; and

WHEREAS, numerous resolutions, initiatives, and programs promoting and encouraging evangelism and revival in our convention have had limited impact; and

WHEREAS, our commitment to the New Testament precepts that have defined the identity of Baptists has waned in recent years; and

WHEREAS, the Bible records multiple occasions upon which Christ issued His Great Commission mandate to the church (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20; Acts 1); and

WHEREAS, Christ stated that His disciples were to be His “witnesses” to the fact that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all the nations” (Luke 24:47-48); and

WHEREAS, the Lord commanded His followers in the Great Commission to “make disciples” by “going,” “baptizing,” and “teaching all things” (Matthew 28:19-20); and

WHEREAS, Jesus declared in the Great Commission that “all authority” had been given to Him and then promised to be with us always as we complete His Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20); and

WHEREAS, the primary emphasis conveyed by “going” is that of consistent activity in both missions and personal evangelism, with the assurance that winning souls has eternal impact for the Kingdom; and

WHEREAS, Christ instructed the church to make disciples, “baptizing” new believers by immersion; and

WHEREAS, baptism is an ordinance of the church and serves as a witness and a testimony of both the individual’s and the local church’s belief in the finished work of Christ as the sole means of salvation; and

WHEREAS, believers are exhorted to make disciples, “teaching all things” commanded by Christ; and

WHEREAS, our confessional statement, the *Baptist Faith and Message*, clearly states that there are certain “doctrines we hold precious and as essential to the Baptist tradition of faith and practice”; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that on the tenth anniversary of our convention, that the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention in Houston, Texas, November 10-11, 2008, express our heartfelt appreciation to those who worked diligently to bring about a Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we express our sincere gratitude to those who were led of the Lord to birth the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ and submit to His authority in every aspect of our lives including His Great Commission; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we hereby commit ourselves and our churches to carrying out the Great Commission of our Lord by making disciples; and be it further

RESOLVED, that as we pursue a Great Commission Resurgence that we intentionally work to teach the members of our churches the precious doctrines from the Word of God that will distinctively preserve our Baptist identity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we devote ourselves to both promote and practice text-driven preaching and teaching of the entire Bible and how it relates to Christ and God’s redemptive plan; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we lead the members of our churches to participate in the Great Commission by being Christ’s witnesses both at home and abroad and proclaiming the gospel message that everyone must repent of sin and trust in the finished work of Christ alone for salvation; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we covenant together earnestly to preach and teach “all things” as Christ commanded in the Great Commission without minimizing or trivializing biblical doctrines such

as: the Lordship of Christ; the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture; the exclusivity of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone; believers' baptism by immersion; regenerate church membership; congregational church polity; the priesthood of the believers; church discipline; and religious liberty.

Resolution Five: On Religious Liberty

WHEREAS, the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith affirms that the conscience of a person should not be coerced or repressed by another man (Romans 10:9-10); and

WHEREAS, religious liberty, the freedom to act on the dictates of a free conscience, follows naturally from the soul freedom of all people (Deuteronomy 30:15-16); and

WHEREAS, the United States Constitution forbids government hindrance or assistance of a particular religion—including atheist and materialist religions; and

WHEREAS, the United States Constitution also protects freedom of speech, including religious speech, evangelism and any proclamation of biblical truth; and

WHEREAS, basic and inalienable rights of people have their source in God (Genesis 1:26-27; John 8:36) and have been recognized by our nation's laws from its founding (Declaration of Independence); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Houston, Texas, November 10-11, 2008, urge that our elected leaders protect all Americans from coercion for or against religious beliefs and their expressions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we require for ourselves and our neighbors freedom to express lawfully in public the religious convictions we hold; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we decry efforts to abridge the free expression of Christian beliefs – whether in the cause of tolerance, unity, science, or secular faith – including through “The Fairness Doctrine” and “Hate Speech” legislation; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we urge our elected leaders at all levels to use the influence of our denomination and our nation to maintain recognition of the God-given rights of all people everywhere.

Resolution Six: On the Sanctity of Human Life

WHEREAS, the Bible teaches that all things were created through Christ (John 1:3); and

WHEREAS, the Bible shows that since God formed life (Isaiah 49:5) and sustains life (Isaiah 46:3), all human life is God's prerogative (Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:13-16; Luke 1:15; Galatians 1:15); and

WHEREAS, the *Baptist Faith and Message* says, “we should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death”; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Baptist Convention has repeatedly affirmed the sanctity of human life; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention has historically and repeatedly affirmed the sanctity of human life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Houston, Texas, November 10-11, 2008, reaffirm and restate our position against the taking of human life at any stage; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Christians should exercise care through giving, voting and expressing their convictions that their contributions to governmental, charitable, and other entities never be used to fund abortions, embryonic stem-cell research, and other practices that destroy human life; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we urge President-Elect Barack Obama and all of our executive, legislative, and judicial leaders, at the state and federal levels of government, to do all within their power to preserve human life at every stage of life.

Resolution Seven: On the Traditional and Biblical View of Marriage

WHEREAS, the covenant of marriage was created and ordained of God (Genesis 2:21-25; Mark 10:6-9); and

WHEREAS, the covenant of marriage is to be only between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-9; 1 Corinthians 7:2); and

WHEREAS, God gave sexuality “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” (Genesis 1:28; Hebrews 13:4); and

WHEREAS, the covenant of marriage is to provide the biblical foundation for the training, nurturing and teaching of the children created and given by God through procreation (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:1-4); and

WHEREAS, there is a movement in our country to challenge and redefine the traditional and biblical view of marriage so as to include same-sex “marriages”; and

WHEREAS, some states have recognized and supported same-sex “marriages”; and

WHEREAS, this movement for support of same-sex “marriages” and redefining the traditional biblical view of marriage desires legislation to bring legal and equal recognition of same-sex “marriages” to all states; and

WHEREAS, the United States Senate has failed to express support of the traditional biblical view of marriage by failing to pass the Marriage Protection Amendment that defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention wholly and solely embraces the biblical definition of the covenant of marriage; and

WHEREAS, the *Baptist Faith and Message* states, "Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in the covenant commitment"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Houston, Texas, November 10-11, 2008, declare our full support for any and all state and federal legislation that will protect and continue the traditional biblical view and understanding of marriage as being between one man and one woman; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon President-elect Barack Obama, our State Legislature and our Representatives to the United States Congress to do all within their means to sponsor and support legislation or amendments that will offer protection and endorsement for the traditional biblical view of marriage; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we humbly urge that all churches unashamedly and without reservation or hesitation teach and counsel the biblical precepts and principles of the covenant institution of marriage which was created and ordained of God from the beginning of man.

Resolution Eight: On Thanksgiving for this Convention in its Tenth Anniversary

WHEREAS, the people of God are to cry out to the earth to “come and see the works of God” (Psalm 66:5); and

WHEREAS, the work of Texas Baptists from their appearance in the 1830s until now has historically started in “the day of small things” yet witnessed the mighty blessings of God (Gary Ledbetter, *The Day of Small Things*); and

WHEREAS, the number of churches affiliated with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention has grown from 120 at our founding in 1998 to 2,073 in October 2008; and

WHEREAS, the budget dedicated to efficient and effective use by the churches and the entities they support in missionary and evangelistic enterprises has grown from \$903,500 in 1999 to \$20,935,548 in 2008; and

WHEREAS, we believe that the many new churches and many new Christian disciples that have arisen in Texas, the United States, and around the world are a result of God’s blessings upon

these cooperative efforts of the churches of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Houston, Texas, November 10-11, 2008, encourage all people to join us in praising God for the mighty works that He has done in our midst; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we express our appreciation for those groups and individuals involved in the foundation of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention in November 1998, including the officers of the Southern Baptists of Texas in that year: Miles Seaborn, Dee Slocum, Ed Ethridge, and Gerald Smith; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we express our appreciation for those Southern Baptist churches and entities that have hosted the annual meetings of this convention, including Woodforest Baptist Church of Houston, Criswell College of Dallas, Castle Hills First Baptist Church of San Antonio, Prestonwood Baptist Church of Plano, The Church at Quail Creek of Amarillo, Great Hills Baptist Church of Austin, and Houston's First Baptist Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we express our appreciation for the presidents elected to lead the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, including Stan Coffey, Rudy Hernandez, George Harris, Chris Osborne, Steve Swofford, and Bob Pearle; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we express our appreciation for the exemplary and visionary leadership of Jim Richards as our convention's executive director, and for the faithful missionary work of the fine staff of leaders that he has assembled to serve the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we affirm this convention's foundational values as proclaimed by Jim Richards at our constituting convention: "theological agreement" based upon the inerrant and sufficient Word of God, "missiological activity" dedicated to advancing the missionary and evangelistic efforts of our churches, and a "methodological approach" of friendly cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention and its entities.

Resolution Nine: On Disaster Relief Efforts

WHEREAS, throughout the year, calls for relief came to our Southern Baptists of Texas Convention from various disaster areas, including Oklahoma (ice storms), Iowa (flooding), and South Texas (hurricanes); and

WHEREAS, many people were killed, others injured or left homeless, and many churches were damaged or destroyed; and

WHEREAS, the Bible instructs us to help those in need, our Savior graciously teaching us that as we do such deeds as feeding the hungry and giving water to the thirsty, we do it unto Him (Matthew 25:35-40); and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention disaster relief units responded promptly in Christian love and sacrificial service to those great needs; and

WHEREAS, these units not only provided physical help to multitudes, they furthermore shared the gospel by word and deed to the glory of God and the salvation of souls; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Houston, Texas, November 10-11, 2008, express our deepest sympathies to those who lost loved ones, were injured, or were otherwise affected by such disasters; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we give God glory for His ministry through the disaster relief units and we also thank our brothers and sisters who participate in this vital ministry; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we pledge to continue assisting churches affected by disasters with our prayers, labor, and finances, recommending the convention's "Adopt-A-Church" program as an outlet for this pledge.

Resolution Ten: On Appreciation for Houston's First Baptist Church

WHEREAS, the messengers to the 2008 session of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention have enjoyed a time of worship, encouragement, and fellowship; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge God's providence for all of these blessings; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the kind hospitality and generosity of the people of Houston's First Baptist Church to host this convention; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the extraordinary commitment, extensive labor, and excellent leadership of Houston's First Baptist Church Pastor Gregg Matte, his church staff, and volunteers; and

WHEREAS, we gratefully acknowledge that other area churches have also extended hospitality and provided volunteer assistance; and

WHEREAS, we also acknowledge the Lord's work in enabling all our officers, various committees, convention speakers, musicians, and other platform personnel to conduct the affairs of this convention with dignity and a Christ-like spirit; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Houston, Texas, November 10-11, 2008, hereby express our profound gratitude to the Lord and to all those He used to bring about a meeting characterized by evangelism, worship, and encouragement.