

INSIDE:

- The Good Ship SBC is Sinking!
- McRaney: SCOTUS Lawsuit Details Horrific NAMB Abuse
- GCR Leads to Greatest Decline in Southern Baptist History
- SBC to Make it Harder to Get Financial Information on Entities

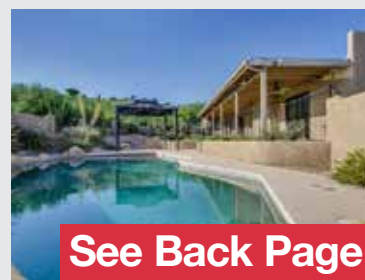


Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting - Nashville - June 15-16, 2021



SBC NEWS

Lavish Homes of NAMB Church Planters for Sale!



See Back Page

Shocking 10-year Report Card



Buzzards Over Nashville, But Not Dead Yet

By Randy Adams

Last week a friend sent me an **obituary for Randy Adams**. For real. But that Randy Adams was a 54-year-old X-ray technician from Arkansas, not a 59-year-old preacher from Washington. To paraphrase Mark Twain, “News of my death has been greatly exaggerated.”

Some have suggested we write an **obituary for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)**. While that would be an exaggeration, buzzards have been flying over Nashville, and they’re not circling the Grand Ole Opry. If the SBC doesn’t straighten things out, the buzzards may yet have a feast.

The SBC is sick. **5,258 fewer churches supported Cooperative Program (CP) missions** in 2019 than in 2007, resulting in a decrease of \$85.1 million to CP, not including inflation. That is alarming, and tragic (source is CFO of SBC Executive Committee in a report to EC on Feb. 22, 2021).

Even more tragic is a **massive decline in baptisms of more than 100,000 souls a year**. And church starts have plummeted to less than half the number before 2010, while NAMB’s church planting budget has exploded, growing from \$23 million to \$75 million annually.

Before I outline some of the problems, let me say right

up front that we need transparency, accountability and greater participation to save the SBC:

1. **Transparency builds trust.**
2. **Accountability stops corruption.**
3. **Participation empowers every church.**

SBC Took Some Seriously Wrong Turns

Wrong Turn #1 – SBC finances are cloaked in secrecy, lacking transparency and preventing accountability.

Some assert the sickness in the SBC can be cured by closing our eyes and singing Kumbaya in unison. While unity and love are biblical commands, so are integrity, honesty, and righteousness. Unity requires truth and trust. It has also been said that we need to “market” the SBC better. That is a doomed strategy without transparency, accountability and participation. We need transformation. We need transparent and accountable leadership. We need to prove we’re spending money correctly before we’re accused of doing wrong.

Fact: The YMCA, Salvation Army, Prison Fellowship, Habitat for Humanity, Father Flanigan’s Boys Home, and many other charitable organizations are more transparent than the SBC. But not only are they more transparent, the **Clinton Foundation and Planned Parenthood are more transparent in finances and effectiveness than the North American Mission Board** (see www.give.org). Your church deserves more transparency from the SBC than donors to a horrible organization like Planned Parenthood receive. Southern Baptists deserve better. And if the SBC fails to provide transparency, accountability, and increase the participation of our churches, CP may drop far more than \$85 million over the next decade. That would be a real tragedy.

Wrong Turn #2 – Weakened local mission partners and strengthened national SBC.

In 2010 the SBC took a path toward top-down control of much of Southern Baptist mission work in North America. The Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) report was adopted by the SBC at the annual meeting in 2010. This resulted in more CP funds sent to the SBC and cutting investment through State Conventions. That, together with ending the cooperative agreements between NAMB

Ezell Report Card

- (F) Baptisms
- (F) Church Plants
- (F) Cooperation
- (F) Transparency
- (F) Accountability
- (A+) Marketing

“You can take your shots at me, I may not fit your credentials or critique and I may not have the resume that some prefer, but I will take ownership of the next decade.”

– Kevin Ezell, NAMB President
October 8, 2010

and state conventions, resulted in about \$60-\$70 million more dollars shifted to the SBC from the State Conventions and local Associations. Most of this \$60-\$70 million is being directed by NAMB, with a much smaller net gain by the IMB. If this surprises you, you should know that the GCR benefited NAMB more than all other SBC entities combined. Cooperative partners closest to the churches, associations and state conventions, were weakened by the GCR, while the SBC was strengthened.

See **SHOCKING** page 2



Mary Habila with husband, Haggai.

WMU President to Nominate Randy Adams

Northwest Baptist Convention (NWBC) President, Mary Habila, will nominate Randy Adams to serve as President of the Southern Baptist Convention.

“Mary Habila is a leader in Northwest missions,” said Adams. “She leads our Women on Mission. She served on our NWBC Executive Board, and on the Executive Committee of our board. Many Northwest Baptists know Mary for her leadership in public prayers. She prays like a person who spends

time with Jesus and knows Him well,” he said.

Habila is making history as the first woman to nominate a person to serve as SBC President. When he learned that Mary Habila would nominate Randy Adams, NWBC mission leader Gary Floyd said he couldn’t think of a more perfect choice.

“Mary Habila and her husband, Haggai, are deeply loved and greatly respected by Northwest Baptists. They are

See **NOMINATE** page 5

‘Can the SBC be Born Again?’ asks Chuck Kelley

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (LBM) – In 1837, Hans Christian Anderson of fairy tale fame, wrote a tale about two weavers commissioned by the King to make new clothes for him. The weavers said they created the most spectacular clothes ever made, but those clothes would be invisible to all who were unworthy



Kelley

See **KELLEY** page 5

\$1 Million Giveaway from LifeWay Revealed in Lawsuit



Double and Triple Dipping on Income while Serving Southern Baptists

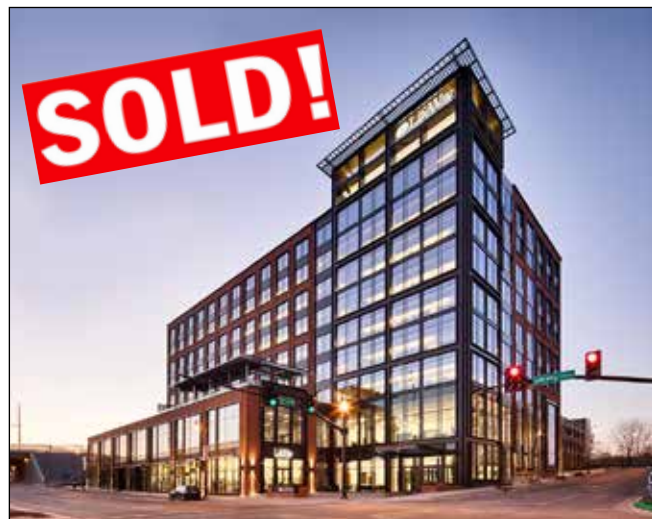
By Staff

How many Southern Baptist Convention leaders and megachurch pastors are double and triple-dipping their income? There are likely far too many to mention, but three accounts are listed in this article.

Former LifeWay Christian Resources President Thom Rainer reported receiving gross weekly income of \$225,000 to ChurchAnswers.com while serving at LifeWay. In Feb. 2016 Rainer tweeted his weekly gross income to Church Answers and that image was captured online. Church Answers was a separate competing ministry to LifeWay, which in 2017 reported an operating loss of \$35.5 million. In 2019, LifeWay closed all 170 retail stores which put hundreds of employees out of work. Church Answers was not only a competing ministry with LifeWay, Thom

Rainer’s ministries were being supported in various ways by LifeWay staff (including current Baptist Press leader Jonathan Howe) and on LifeWay paid time and using LifeWay paid equipment.

Rainer also received a \$1 million bonus (of sorts) as he left LifeWay to work his high-paying side gigs. This “bonus” was approved by a single LifeWay trustee, Rainer’s good friend Pastor Jimmy Scroggins of Family Church in West Palm Beach. Scroggins was a trustee despite receiving benefits by having secured three-book deals from LifeWay with Rainer/LifeWay, which would disqualify Scroggins from being a LifeWay trustee. These facts came to light when current LifeWay President Ben Mandrell and the LifeWay trustees filed a



lawsuit against Rainer for violating the terms of his separation agreement which had a “non-compete” clause. Rainer had a publicized contract with

Former LifeWay President Thom Rainer received a \$1 million “bonus” when he left the agency. The payment was approved by a single trustee, his buddy Jimmy Scroggins.

Tyndale Publishers in violation of his agreement with LifeWay and receiving the \$1 million gift.

Triple dipping: A month after announcing his coming transition out of being LifeWay president, Rainer signed a contract with his former pastor and friend, Kevin Ezell of the North American Mission Board (NAMB). In September 2018 a partnership was announced between NAMB and Rainer’s newest venture, Revitalize Network. At this time, Rainer was drawing a check from LifeWay, under contract with NAMB, and had his Church Answers ministry, in addition to whatever

See **\$1 MILLION** page 6

The Good Ship SBC is Sinking!

Since 2007 the SBC has lost more than 5,000 churches supporting the Cooperative Program, totaling over \$85.1 million dollars before inflation. Baptisms have plummeted by more than 100,000 souls each year to a level not seen in more than 80 years! New church starts plunged to less than half the number just 12 years ago. 2,000 fewer IMB missionaries are serving on the foreign field! We are losing the SBC! I would like to invite you to read the articles in this newspaper and the information presented about the state of our beloved Southern Baptist Convention.

I would also ask that you prayerfully consider supporting my candidacy for President of the Southern Baptist Convention.

— Randy Adams
Candidate for SBC President



This Doesn't Have to be the Future of the Southern Baptist Convention

There is
A BETTER WAY
through...

- TRANSPARENCY
BUILDS TRUST
- ACCOUNTABILITY
STOPS CORRUPTION
- PARTICIPATION
EMPOWERS CHURCHES

How Bad is the Crisis of Decline in the SBC? See Page 5 for disturbing details

McRaney: SCOTUS Lawsuit Details NAMB Abuse

By Will McRaney
After I won two decisions in the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, what a few national Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders said would never happen, has happened. Actions by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) have taken the future of the SBC inside the halls of the U.S. Supreme Court, and the court's decision could change the SBC forever. Practically speaking, NAMB is requesting Supreme Court protections from defamation and tortious interference against ministers who serve



McRaney

autonomous organizations that choose to voluntarily relate to the SBC in various ways. NAMB, along with President Kevin Ezell and trustees made claims to the U.S. District Court of status and rights over voluntary autonomous Baptist bodies that are forbidden in SBC governing documents. Before the Supreme Court on May 28, 2021 NAMB trustees via their attorney submitted the following false statement: "Reverend McRaney attempts to avoid certiorari by emphasizing that, though he was employed by one Southern Baptist entity, he was never employed by the particular

Southern Baptist entity that he sued, namely the SBC Mission Board." There are three deceptions in this one sentence. First, in my NAMB case involving the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware (BCMD), I have not claimed that I was an employee of an SBC entity. Second, my employer (the BCMD) was and is not an SBC entity. Third, NAMB is not the "SBC Mission Board." It commonly refers to itself as the acronym NAMB, not the SBC Mission Board. These damaging false statements scream for answers, 1) Why the deception and what will it cost the SBC? and 2) Will the SBC tolerate Ezell and NAMB trustees deceiving the Supreme Court?

Former Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) President Russell Moore added to the deception when he filed an amicus brief, which contained false statements with the courts. He claimed the SBC was a hierarchy, and that the national entities are umbrellas over state conventions, associations, and SBC churches. This is the most impactful court case in SBC history, and the decision will now be made inside the hallowed walls of the Supreme Court. NAMB trustees and the SBC Executive Committee and other leaders have remained silent. NAMB Trustees have not required Ezell as a NAMB employee to meet with me and



Actions by the North American Mission Board actions have taken the Southern Baptist Convention to the U.S. Supreme Court, where its future will be decided.

answer my accusations and related questions. To summarize, this all began when Ezell made false and damaging written statements against me that then escalated to worse behaviors. When Ezell's lies against me did not give him his desired result, he ratcheted up the pressure on the

BCMD where I was serving as the executive director. In a period of a few months, Ezell threatened to pull matching funding (\$1 million annually) for joint ministry and a few joint staff from the BCMD based on a false narrative. Ezell

See **SCOTUS** page 6

Shocking

Continued from page 1

Wrong Turn #3 – NAMB church planting budget exploded from \$23 million to \$75 million. Top-down control included an explosion in the NAMB church planting budget. Tragically, even with the increased funding, **new church plants plummeted to less than half the number planted a decade earlier**, with 552 by 2019 compared to 1,256 reported in the 2010 Annual Report. Even under the current leadership, hundreds more churches were started each year in 2011-2015, than in 2016-2020. The last five years are the lowest five years in at least 40 years, in terms of new churches started (for charts depicting SBC decline see the related article on page 5, <https://www.sbctransform.org/post/the-crisis-of-decline-in-the-sbc-why>). **Fact: churches did not establish the SBC so that it could direct how missions and evangelism are to be done throughout North America.** Nor was the SBC established to work independently from cooperative partners the churches established in their counties and states. But that is what is happening. NAMB is setting up its own network of staff in state conventions that work independently from state conventions and local associations, especially in the non-south. NAMB

has dictated the terms to each state convention. **Wrong Turn #4 – the last decade is the worst in 175 years, but still SBC refuses to turn from failure.** No decade has seen a decline like 2011-2020, but leaders at the national level, who led in the GCR recommendations in 2010, have failed to admit the horrible mistake that was made in adopting the GCR. More importantly, the SBC has failed to correct course and return to missiology that is led locally and not from national headquarters. **No corporation would continue pursuing a strategy that has failed for a decade, but that is what the SBC has done.** This, despite 5,258 fewer churches supporting SBC CP missions, and a drop of more than \$85 million in total CP mission giving. This decline is tragic. If the SBC does not make significant changes, the buzzards will gather. **Wrong Turn #5 – NAMB and ERLC have taken Southern Baptists to the Supreme Court of the United States.** After losing two decisions in the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, despite admittedly deceiving the court with false information about the SBC being a hierarchy over all Southern Baptist churches, associations and conventions, NAMB and the ERLC are now dragging the SBC to the SCOTUS. (See related article above, "McRaney: SCOTUS Lawsuit Details NAMB Abuse.") **SBC Must Return to the New Testament**

Model of Advancing God's Mission New Testament missions is based on the call of God on the missionary, the empowerment and direction of the Holy Spirit, and the sending and support of the church (see Acts 13:1-4 and Paul's Epistles). In the New Testament, the "elites" did not control how missions was done. Financial resources were not amassed in Jerusalem, or Antioch, or by the Twelve Apostles, and then disbursed from headquarters in ways the "remote elites" determined best. Peter didn't control the expansion of the church. Peter didn't know what was needed in Ephesus or Corinth or Philippi. He probably never even heard of Berea, just like SBC leaders have never heard of Pomeroy, Wash. or Sun Prairie, Wis. or even Randolph, Ala. The Jerusalem Church didn't control the movement of the missionaries and direct their work as they moved from city to city. The Holy Spirit was in control, working through Spirit-filled, God-called men. And the cooperation that mattered most was that which was most local. For Paul, this was the Antioch Church, but in time it included other churches and even networks of churches. **The SBC was birthed by churches that believed they must advance the mission of God.** Until the last decade, SBC leaders respected that leaders in local churches of every size were in the

best position to know what to do in their towns. And that local associations were best positioned to help their churches, from a Southern Baptist cooperation standpoint. And that state conventions were the next best positioned. This changed with the GCR as tens of millions of dollars were shifted to the national level. **Top-down control of missions in North America must end.** Just as the federal government can't run your local city with the same accountability as your mayor and city council, SBC and NAMB leaders can't direct the work in 50 states as well as those who live in those states. **My Commitment as an SBC Presidential Candidate** As a candidate for president of the SBC, if elected I will bring transparency to the finances and performance of the entities of the SBC. The bankbooks will be opened. Effectiveness will be revealed. Accountability will be required. Participation in the annual meeting of the SBC will be expanded to remote locations. I will work to restore true partnership in the SBC, one in which the SBC serves the churches and does not attempt to usurp the proper role of the local association and state conventions (for a fuller description of my plan for reforming the SBC, go to www.randyadams.org). **The SBC president can make a difference.** Some question what the president can

truly accomplish. I assert that SBC trustees will take notice when the president demands financial transparency, reveals conflicts of interest, and tells them that they serve the churches first, not the SBC. When the SBC president calls out corruption, SBC leaders and the media will take notice. When the SBC president shines the spotlight on the performance of our entities, all Southern Baptists will take notice. The SBC needs more than a "cheerleader" president. We need a reformer who does not fear "rocking the boat" to rebuild trust and get the SBC back on mission. That is what I will do. We can renew cooperation and partnership. Under the Lord's leader-

ship and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the next chapter in the history of Southern Baptists can be glorious. Remember:

1. Transparency builds trust.
2. Accountability stops corruption.
3. Participation empowers every church.

For SBC data year-by-year, go to <https://sbhla.org/digital-resources/sbc-annuals/> and look at the Executive Committee reports and the entity reports. Randy Adams is executive director of the Northwest Baptist Convention.

Tweet of the Week

The Baptist Blogger
@BaptistBlogger

Randy Adams is running for SBC President on a platform of transparency and accountability. This doesn't bode well for the least transparent chairman in modern @SBCExecComm history.

We dare you. Try to use the words "Mike Stone" and "transparent" in a sentence. You can't do it.



GCR Leads to the Greatest Decline in History of the SBC

Eleven years ago this week in Orlando, the most far-ranging restructuring of an agency in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention was approved by a hand vote of 11,000 messengers. That vote erased 60 years of cooperation between the agency and state conventions, and allowed the North American Mission Board (NAMB) to place missionaries in any state without consulting those former partners.

Controversial from the outset, it has resulted in a decade of increasingly strained relationships which are questioning the heart of how Southern Baptists fund missions and reach North America with the gospel.

Nearly a third of state conventions are now discussing ways of withholding Cooperative Program funds. That conversation focuses on the actions of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force which allowed the North American Mission Board to redirect funds previously allocated to state conventions for its own church planting efforts.

The heart of the rebellion is \$51 million in annual giving which NAMB no longer has to share with the state conventions. That will amount to a half-billion more church planting dollars over the agency's budget for the next decade.

While the funds have been in a phased-in draw-down over the last several years, the pain has been felt hardest in the smaller non-South conventions where Southern Baptists remain relatively unknown. The funds, earmarked as "Cooperative Agreements,"

help subsidize local missions and originally fueled the denomination's growth beyond its Southern roots west and north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Eventually, as soon as this coming fall, many of the smaller state conventions will be largely defunded through the Task Force recommendations. To survive, they are promoting their state missions giving above those of NAMB's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and considering withholding a portion of

Nearly a third of state conventions are now discussing ways of withholding Cooperative Program funds.

their Cooperative Program giving that is being withheld by NAMB.

Current SBC Executive Committee President Ronnie Floyd chaired the Great Commission Task Force Committee and, along with Southern Seminary President Al Mohler, were among the Task Force's strongest proponents. What is at issue, many state executives claim, is the lack of transparency of how the \$51 million in new money for NAMB is being spent. They maintain that the men and women in the pew, as shareholders in the denomination through their tithes and offerings, are due such pinpoint accountability.

Baptist News Global, an independent Baptist news agency, published a lengthy report on Feb. 18 on the potential unraveling of the Cooperative Program as states threaten to withhold funds to keep more resources in their states. The article detailed inter-

views with non-South state executives who charged NAMB President Kevin Ezell with broken promises and a strong-arm approach of placing missionaries with minimal, if any, feedback with local convention staff.

The use of gift cards for NAMB planters ranging up to \$1,000 – which was not denied by NAMB in the story – further weakened trust between the states and the national entity.

The Great Commission Resurgence Task Force Committee, which was created in 2009 by then-SBC President Johnny Hunt, was largely charged with breathing new life into Southern Baptist. The state executives claim the Committee, chaired by then Arkansas pastor Ronnie Floyd, has done more damage than good to the spirit of cooperation that created the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

Rather than reversing the denomination's decline through the Task Force objectives, Southern Baptists last year reported the largest drop in baptisms in a century. According to statistics released by LifeWay Christian Resources just days prior to the 2020 virtual annual meeting, the loss of 288,000 church members in 2019 also brought the total SBC membership to 14.5 million, down from its peak of 16.3 million in 2006.

The Task Force recommendations, according to the state executives, have done little to reverse the denomination's decline and may be hastening it through poor leadership decisions.

Floyd now serves as the highest-ranking officer in the denomination and

is charged with defending NAMB's right to withhold the funds from the states while trying to avoid a weakening of the denomination's funding mechanism. The Task Force, which he chaired, ultimately placed cooperation within the crosshairs of its report.

As it disbanded, the Task Force Committee voted to seal details of their deliberations for 15 years, when they will be opened before the SBC Annual Meeting in 2025.

The most serious confrontation between the state conventions and the Task Force Report, as personified by NAMB's new authority, occurred last August.

That's when, in August 2020, state executives from six state conventions – California, Hawaii, Ohio, New Mexico, Alaska and the Northwest (composed of Washington, Oregon and North Idaho) – figu-

rally nailed their 95 theses to the doors of NAMB in Alpharetta, Ga., and the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville, Tenn. which Floyd now leads.

The group then joined by another nine who, if they close ranks, would total slightly more than a third of the denomination's conventions. It's a loose confederacy that could unravel the Cooperative Program –

also known as the "rope of sand" – by which Baptists have funded their global missions and evangelism outreach since 1925.

One of the main concerns of the non-South state executives is Ezell's unwillingness, after an entire decade,

Some critical of NAMB's approach have taken their concerns to another level, focusing on a provision in the denomination's Business and Financial Plan, "Article XIV Safeguarding of Funds," which states: "Members of cooperating Southern Baptist churches shall have access to information from the records of Southern Baptist Convention entities

regarding income, expenditures, debts, reserves, operating balances, and salary structures."

In a wide-ranging interview with Georgia Baptist state paper Editor Gerald Harris in October 2010, just a month after his hiring, Ezell pledged transparency in his answers to a variety of questions.

Regarding church planting, he said: "If someone

walked into my office and said, 'Kevin, you are president of the North American Mission Board. Over the next 10 years I want to give you a billion dollars and I want you to tell me what you are going to do with it – a billion.' How would I answer that question? The people of the SBC ask it every ten years.

"I'll be 58 years old in 10 years (2020) and I will have a lot of explaining to do. If we look to the past there has been a billion dollars given to this agency in the last ten years. Are we pleased with what has been done with that money? Do you really want more of the same?"

"You can take your shots at me, I may not fit your credentials or critique and I may not have the resume that some prefer, but I will take ownership of the next decade."

That decade has now arrived, state executives maintain.

In its article, Baptist News Global provided Ezell with 10 questions as part of an interview to which he agreed. However, Ezell canceled the interview 48 hours later on the morning when it was scheduled to occur.

This story was curated from a lengthy discussion of the NAMB conflict with state conventions as published on Feb. 18, 2021. It does not serve as an endorsement of any candidate. It is printed here, in a condensed format, to share the concerns of Southern Baptist state executives. For the complete story with documentation and interviews with several non-South state convention leaders, visit baptistnews.com and search for keywords "NAMB state conventions"

Randy Adams: SBC Needs New Leadership

By Joni B. Hannigan
VANCOUVER, Wash. – With a degree in petroleum engineering, it came as no surprise to some that Idaho-born and Montana-raised Randy Adams would one day land in Texas where he earned a master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

After 28 years of pastoring and starting churches throughout Texas and Oklahoma, Adams – who also led Oklahoma Baptists in missions and evangelism for eight years – finally left the oil-rich lands, heading north to become executive director-treasurer of the Northwest Baptist Convention in 2013.

The young man who committed his life to ministry through the influence of the Baptist Student Union at Montana Tech, along the way has served in denominational leadership roles at every level of Southern Baptist life. Adams also has been involved in mission work in Pakistan (where his parents served through the International Mission Board); Malawi, Africa; East Asia; and Mexico.

In Washington State, he felt like he had come home. Adams is a "new work"-made man leading a "new work" state, which means that he got his start in a place where there were only a handful of Southern

Baptist churches – and then after nearly three decades of ministry – returned to a similar situation.

One of four candidates for Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president, Adams is married to Paula, and they have two grown sons and a daughter-in-law. He blogs about issues important to Southern Baptists at randyadams.org and SBCtransform.org.

In a recent telephone interview, Adams responded to questions about Southern Baptist practices and expectations, and current issues that affect Southern Baptists.

In a recent interview, a presidential candidate alleged that no SBC president should say anything negative, publicly, about any part of the SBC when it's involved in a legal case. For instance, he said comments could later be used in court cases. What is your view?

When a legal case threatens the very nature of the SBC and our work, it's incumbent upon a leader to speak about it. When a Southern Baptist entity makes arguments in a legal case that is antithetical to Baptist polity, someone needs to point it out. If a legal case could threaten the work of Southern Baptists, some-

one needs to speak up and alert Southern Baptists to the threat.

Would you speak differently, or less publicly about SBC entities and leadership if you were elected SBC president?

I believe the president represents Southern Baptist churches to the SBC; and, therefore, the president needs to speak on behalf of the churches when he sees a lack of transparency or corruption in the SBC. So, the president should work with the entities to become more transparent, financially more transparent, and more transparent in terms of their ministry effectiveness. Southern Baptist churches have a right to know how their dollars are being spent and if our entities are effective.

For example, Southern Baptists are spending \$50 million more dollars per year than we did a decade ago, and we are planting less than half as many churches. I believe Southern Baptists have a right to know that. Southern Baptists made a huge shift in how we do evangelism at the national level a decade ago. And since that huge shift – which included defunding hundreds of evangelism positions across the nation – Baptisms have plummeted to levels not seen



Conservative leader Randy Adams will be nominated to lead reform as SBC President. Adams is calling for SBC transparency, accountability and participation.

since the great depression. I believe Baptists have a right to know that.

Who speaks for Southern Baptists?

No one person can speak for Southern Baptists. The president must use his influence not to speak for Southern Baptists but to help Southern Baptist churches have a voice in how the SBC ought to function. The president should represent the churches to the SBC and be a voice from the churches to the SBC, primarily, not a voice from the convention back to the churches.

Is it difficult for the SBC to oppose Critical Race Theory while at

the same time racial and ethnic equality?

When dealing with matters of race, or any other matter, it is vital that we stay tethered to Scripture. Our arguments, our beliefs, our behavior, need to flow from the Bible. Whenever we fashion our arguments upon theories – political theories, social theories – rather than the revelation of God through his Word, we get ourselves into trouble. The Bible tells us all we need to know about the nature of man, the sinfulness of man, and the remedy for sin. The Bible tells us all we need to know about how to love our neighbor and how to love our enemy. Ultimately the Bible reveals there are

only two types of people; those who know Jesus and those who don't. A person's relationship to Jesus is the single great determiner of their life, not their skin color, language, ethnicity, nation of origin, or any other matter that society uses to differentiate people.

Can you promote complementarianism without being a misogynist?

Yes. I am a complementarian, meaning I believe that the Bible reveals complementary roles for men and women. Again, it's vital that we adhere to Scripture when we formulate our views on any area

SBC NEWS VOICES

Prof. Russell Fuller: Randy Adams and the Need for Change at SBC Seminaries

By Russell Fuller

Randy Adams will make needed changes to the seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) if he is elected convention president. I worked for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for 22 years as a Professor of Old Testament. I can personally attest to the many problems at our seminaries.



Fuller

The seminaries lack transparency

During my time at Southern Seminary, transparency rarely happened. This was especially true of how the money was spent or how much money was spent. For example, Al Mohler, the president of Southern Seminary, wanted to expand the extension center located in Nashville. Some churches offered to house this extension in their church for free or virtually free. Mohler, however, decided on office space adjacent to Nissan's headquarters. Some estimated the cost at a little under \$100,000 a year. But we may never know for sure. Few students signed up. It was a disaster. The extension finally ended up in a church.

Later, a jubilant Mohler came to a faculty meeting to announce that Southern Seminary/Boyce College intended to acquire Northland College, a school located two hours north of Green Bay, Wis., more north than most of the population of Canada, and without a Southern Baptist within the time zone. Mohler's jubilation turned to panic and despair when he realized that only about a dozen students signed up for our Siberian extension. He bailed, but not before squandering an estimated \$500,000 to \$750,000. But we may never know

for sure. I know of other examples, but I also know that there are others that we will never know. And that is the problem. Randy Adams has stated that we know more about the financial dealings of Planned Parenthood than we know about the financial dealings of SBC agencies. We need to know how and where the money is being spent for sure. Let's have transparency.

The seminaries lack accountability

Some agency heads, including some seminary presidents, are virtually unaccountable. For example, few questions are asked about donors, such as why would a non-Southern Baptist pastor, C.J. Mahaney, give Southern Seminary more than \$100,000 in just a few years? And why would his church/organization, Sovereign Grace Ministries, also not a church/organization associated with the SBC, also give more than \$100,000 to Southern Seminary?

Of course, we may never know the full truth. But we do know that Mohler and Mahaney co-founded Together for the Gospel, one of the largest Evangelical conferences. And we do know that when Mahaney was embroiled in an alleged cover-up of a sex abuse scandal in his church, he was assisted by the president of Southern Seminary. When Brent Detwiler, a former pastor at Sovereign Grace Ministries, came forward and furnished email evidence to Christian radio host, Janet Mefferd, alleging that Mahaney had knowledge of the problem and was covering up his knowledge of the situation, Mohler did his part by call-

See FULLER page 6

LETTERS

Lives Destroyed by NAMB actions

I was a regional team leader for the North American Mission Board during the years of healthy partnership (before 2010) between NAMB and the Baptist Convention of New Mexico. It was a joy to serve New Mexico by working with the BCNM to facilitate funding, missionaries and church planters and jointly participate in the Great Commission. But, when Kevin Ezell became NAMB's president, he set in place an agenda to dismantle state conventions and withdraw funding from each cooperative budget.

Ezell's agenda was to remove all the funding from western state conventions. He stated that the state conventions "were ineffective and unnecessary." To that end, in 2011, he required regional team leaders to inform the state conventions that by 2020 cooperative agreements would be a thing of the past, and NAMB would be in control of church planting.

In March 2011, 120 missionaries serving in western states were told they were no longer needed. Since 2011, I have seen lives destroyed - caused by the toxic environment at NAMB. Physical

decline, mental illness and at least one death happened because servants of God could not reconcile God's call on their lives with the ungodly rejection by NAMB (i.e., Kevin Ezell).

The loss of the Great Commission, declining baptisms, weak sharing of the Gospel and a diminished cooperative spirit are the price Southern Baptists have paid over these last 10 years. The failure to be on God's mission to the world and the destruction of countless lives have been the cost of Ezell's direction and leadership of NAMB. It is impossible to understand how the NAMB Board of Trustees can affirm and celebrate Ezell and his failure to deliver on his promises.

Men who believe they know best what New Mexico and the western conventions need, but who are not part of those conventions, have sacrificed the future of the greatest missionary organization in America. They are unwilling to listen, learn and cooperate. And, unless they repent, Southern Baptists will continue to lose the battle in living out the Great Commission.

Frank W. Shope, Jr.
Former regional team member for NAMB



Shope



‘We’re All in the Same Boat Now’

By Randy Adams

On Dec. 7, 1941, Winston Churchill was at Chequers, his weekend retreat, with the U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain and many top military officers.

For almost two years Britain had held out against Nazi Germany's efforts to bomb them to oblivion and force surrender. At some point that evening they turned on the radio to listen to the latest news from the BBC. What they heard was both terrible and wonderful for Churchill. The Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. That terrible news caused Churchill to brighten. He was careful not to show elation to his American guest. But the reason for his heightened mood was confirmed when he reached President Roosevelt by phone. Roosevelt told Churchill, "Winston, we're in the same boat now." And with the United States in the boat, Churchill knew they would defeat both Japan and the Nazis. Thus, a dark day became for Churchill the day when he knew for certain that Great Britain would prevail in its desperate struggle for survival.

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is sometimes referred to as a great

ship. What we've learned, however, is that not everyone believes we're on the same boat. I believe that we are on the same boat, huddled up in our groups, and the boat is severely damaged and taking on water. If the ship is salvageable with respect to the task of advancing God's mission in the future, we need to work together to repair the damage and save the ship. How can we do this?



Adams

First, advancing God's mission is the purpose of the SBC, and the Cooperative Program fuels the mission.

Make no mistake, Southern Baptists built what we have inherited through a unified, voluntary, cooperative, and God-blessed this effort. Referring to the SBC as a "miracle" is not hyperbole when describing the missionary system that thousands of churches cooperated to build.

Second, multiple fractures in the hull of the SBC ship have sorely damaged support of the Cooperative Program (CP).

In 2007-2008 SBC churches contributed more than \$548 million through CP to fuel the mission work

of the Southern Baptists. That dropped to \$462 million in 2018-2019. Inflation adds another \$100-plus million to the impact of the decline. The CFO for the SBC Executive Committee reported in February 2021 that churches contributing through CP over that same period declined from 34,322 to 29,064, a drop of 5,258 churches contributing to missions through CP.

The fractures that have led to huge declines in cooperative mission's giving are numerous. I have written elsewhere that I believe the changes wrought by the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) strategy, and its implementation by the North American Mission Board (NAMB), have greatly harmed the mission of Southern Baptists. Adopted in 2010, the GCR created the biggest fracture in the ship because it turned SBC's mission strategy upside down, becoming top-down instead of bottom-up. It also destroyed mission partnerships between NAMB and state conventions and local associations.

So, how do we repair the fractures? We must operate righteously, rebuilding trust in the SBC mission's system, and we must learn to trust each other once again, even if it means "trust but verify," to paraphrase President Ronald Reagan. We will not work together to repair the cracks in the hull if we do not trust each other.

"(We) are on the same (SBC) boat, huddled up in our groups, and the boat is severely damaged and taking on water."
— Randy Adams, SBC Presidential Candidate

Many in the SBC are calling for unity, but it is premature to call for unity where there is no trust, especially when we can't agree on what is true. Calls for unity, without efforts to improve trust, are efforts to manipulate and silence dissent.

So, how do we rebuild trust? We do it like this:

1) Transparency must be mandated.

We must insist on transparency. Transparency reveals reality, financial reality and performance reality. Transparency turns the lights on so that all can see the truth of the situation. Leaders resist transparency when they have something to hide.

See BOAT page 6

Many Lies Lead to Glorieta Sale

The following transcript is from actual records filed in U.S. District Court and U.S. Appeals Court:

Former LifeWay President Thom Rainer never responded to letters from Glorieta Conference Center property owners challenging that under SBC Bylaws, any sale of Glorieta required pre-approval by two-consecutive annual meetings of SBC messengers vote prior to any disposal of the multi-million-dollar 2,500-acre SBC Glorieta facility. In support of this legal requirement court records attest SBC had followed its Bylaws requiring two-consecutive annual meetings vote prior to their purchase of Glorieta with cooperative program money and appointed LifeWay (Sunday School Board) to manage SBC's new "Western Conference Center".

Thom Rainer declared to LifeWay Trustees Glorieta had lost money for 25-years. LifeWay financial statements filed in court fail to support Rainer's claim. Rainer reported trustees' unanimous vote to find a buyer for the conference center. Then LifeWay trustee president Mark Anderson holds the truth; the trustee vote was

not unanimous and much argument was overruled by Rainer. At the 2014 SBC annual meeting, Rainer reported the [one-dollar] "sale of Glorieta was necessary to keep Glorieta from becoming a casino". Rainer lied, the Bureau of Indian Affairs would not approve Glorieta as a casino, it is not located on Indian Land.

Under Thom Rainer's direction, Glorieta private citizens' property was systematically confiscated at less than fair market value as stated in individual property agreements allegedly resulting in a \$10 million profit to LifeWay. U.S. Appeals Court record contains a judge's two questions to LifeWay attorney, "...SBC paid Tompkins zero dollars for their property?" "...Did SBC not feel any moral responsibility?" Indeed, LifeWay had filed litigation against Mike Adney who was the caretaker living in Tompkins Glorieta residence, evicting him and awarding ownership of Tompkins Glorieta residence to LifeWay.

Subsequently, LifeWay sold Tompkins property that according to a government approved appraiser was valued at \$195,000 to Glorieta 2.0 for approximately \$67,000. Later,

Terry Looper, a director/investor of Glorieta 2.0, visited personally with Tompkins offering \$200,000 if Tompkins would withdraw from further litigation. Mr. Looper stated that Thom Rainer was in no way any part of the offer.

The Tompkins v. LifeWay litigation continued six years. The original case dismissed on grounds that Tompkins, as a non-lawyer, did not have authority to represent Glorieta property owners. A second litigation dismissed on grounds it was "precluded" by the original case.

SBC Messengers, read the Bylaws, know what is written, demand your elected SBC and its entity executive employees abide by the law. The Christian and non-Christian world is watching the ongoing SBC abuse of power and failure of financial disclosure of compensation paid to SBC executives. Baptist choosing to continue electing alleged self-serving lawless executives deserve all that will continue under the thieves who steal your cooperative program contributions and use it for high six-figure salaries and for legions of lawyers to keep us from learn-

ing the truth about their alleged mismanagement.

Yes, 500 letters to SBC executives and entity trustees remain unanswered. These letters asked for help for former Glorieta property owners who include retired missionaries, pastors, and widows, some losing their life savings and only home. While recent media articles and court records expose LifeWay trustee Jimmy Scroggins, without authorization, awarded Thom Rainer \$1 million in an additional retirement benefit, elderly Glorieta property owners continue to suffer financial losses in excess of \$10 million. Wake up Messengers to SBC 2021 annual meeting and know the facts, expose the annual compensation paid current leadership before you vote.

The whole world is laughing at what once was a powerful beautiful Southern Baptist Convention. The SBC "mission" remains worthy and it is blessed with Christ centered individuals, but with some allegedly corrupt top executive leadership.

The unbelieving world looks for any excuse to dismiss Christianity and our Lord. Alleged SBC corruption gives unbelievers the excuse they seek.

Kirk Tompkins
Glorieta homeowner



Tompkins

The Crisis of Decline in the SBC – Why?

By Randy Adams

New issues and crises seem to arise weekly in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). While Southern Baptist leaders must respond to current issues and crises, it's future-focused thinking that will shape the mission strategy of the SBC. What we do today will determine who we will be in 2040. If trends continue the SBC of 2040 will be a fraction of what it is today.

The charts that accompany this article show that the SBC is in crisis. The Cooperative Program has declined almost \$85 million from its peak, despite strong growth in the U.S. economy (see Figure 1). Baptisms have declined to levels not seen since 1938 (see Figure 2). Perhaps most surprising is what has happened in church planting. Though the North American Mission Board (NAMB) has increased its church planting budget from \$23 million to \$75 million, total church plants have declined to less than half the number of a decade ago, and NAMB's cost per church plant has exploded (see Figures 3).

The critical question is not, "Is the SBC declining?" The decline of the SBC is irrefutable. The critical question is "Why?" The answer to this question seems clear when you consider the strategic change made at the SBC Annual Meeting in 2010. Concerned about a more modest decline in baptisms, Southern Baptists formed the Great Commission Task Force, whose recommendations were adopted at the annual meeting in 2010. Those recommendations were largely implemented by one agency of the SBC – NAMB.



Ezell

Under the leadership of Kevin Ezell, who was elected NAMB president in September 2010, the entity began a process of withdrawing from partnerships with state conventions and adopted a more unilateral, top-down, national approach to missions, especially in church planting.

NAMB slashed evangelism funding by about 65 percent, shed nearly all evangelism personnel, and eliminated funding for evangelism personnel in associations, state conventions, college campuses, and other places. At the same time, NAMB more than tripled the church planting budget, an increase of more than \$50 million annually, while nearly eliminating partnership with state conventions in the starting of churches. This severe reduction of partnership has been devastating as new church starts have plummeted to less than half the number of a decade ago. NAMB's approach changed from partnering with state conventions – and funding through state conventions who then partner with local associations and churches – to set up its own, autonomous church planting system in non-south state conventions, and greatly reducing work in the south.

When the current NAMB president began, he requested that he not be evaluated as to NAMB's effectiveness for 10 years. He believed there would be a resurgence in church planting and evangelistic effectiveness. Alas, the opposite has happened. Initially, the NAMB president said NAMB would lead in starting 1,500 churches each year. Then he decreased the goal to 1,200 church plants each year. In February 2020 he announced that the goal was further reduced to 750 church plants each year. In 2019 we recorded the lowest number of new church starts in our lifetimes – 552. The lowest years of the last half-century in new church starts are the last four years, and this despite spending three times the money.

One might think that individual church planters are receiving three times as much money, but that is not the case. The church planting budget is funding the purchase of houses for use by a select few church planters (and others). There are also many pastors receiving funding as NAMB ambassadors, mobilizers, coaches, spousal support, etc. An independent forensic financial audit could help identify NAMB property holdings, paid consultants and contractors, and recipients of special grants, among other things. NAMB has reduced spending through state conventions by \$50 million each year, maybe more than that (this is a rough estimate). How is this money being spent? The way dollars are allocated for missions in North America has undergone an enormous change in the last decade. With the accompanying decline in mission effectiveness, this bears scrutiny.

These charts reflect the fruit of diminished partnership and little trust between NAMB leadership and many state conventions. I believe this is the primary reason we have experienced a steep decline. Southern Baptists were built on cooperation and partnership to advance the Great Commission. Concerning our work in North America, little partnership remains. One retired state convention executive director from a south state said, "Partnership is dead in the SBC," referring to what NAMB has done.

The SBC took the wrong road in 2010 with the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) and the new NAMB. It's been said that you can't turn back the clock, but that

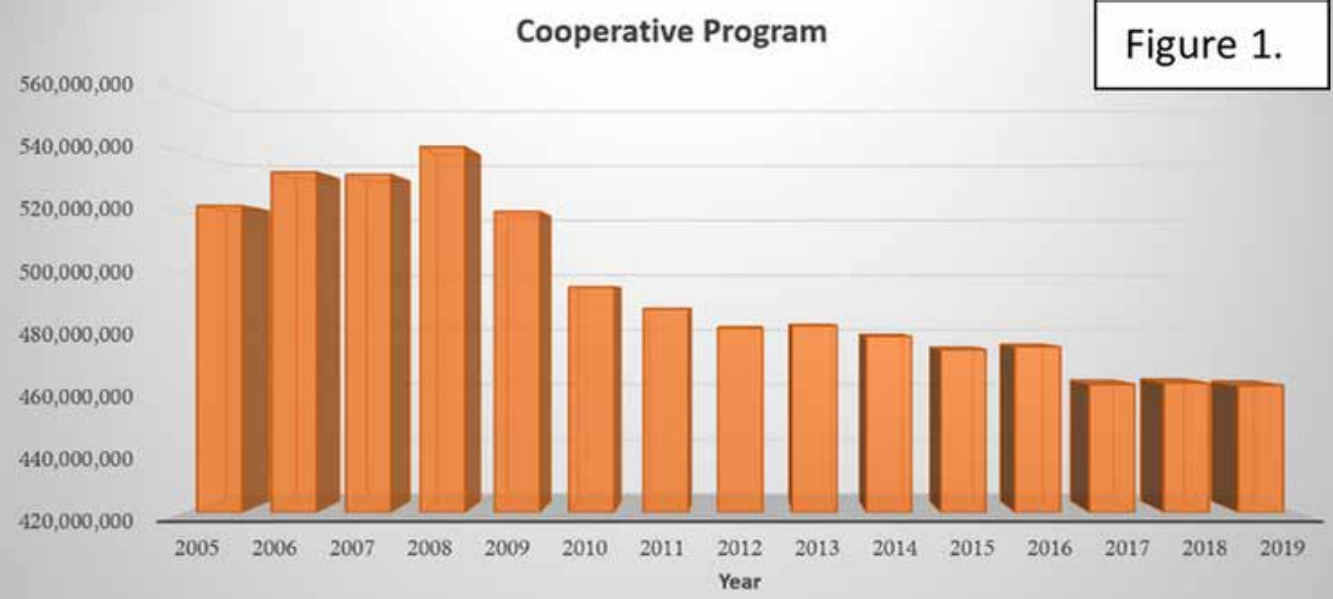


Figure 1.

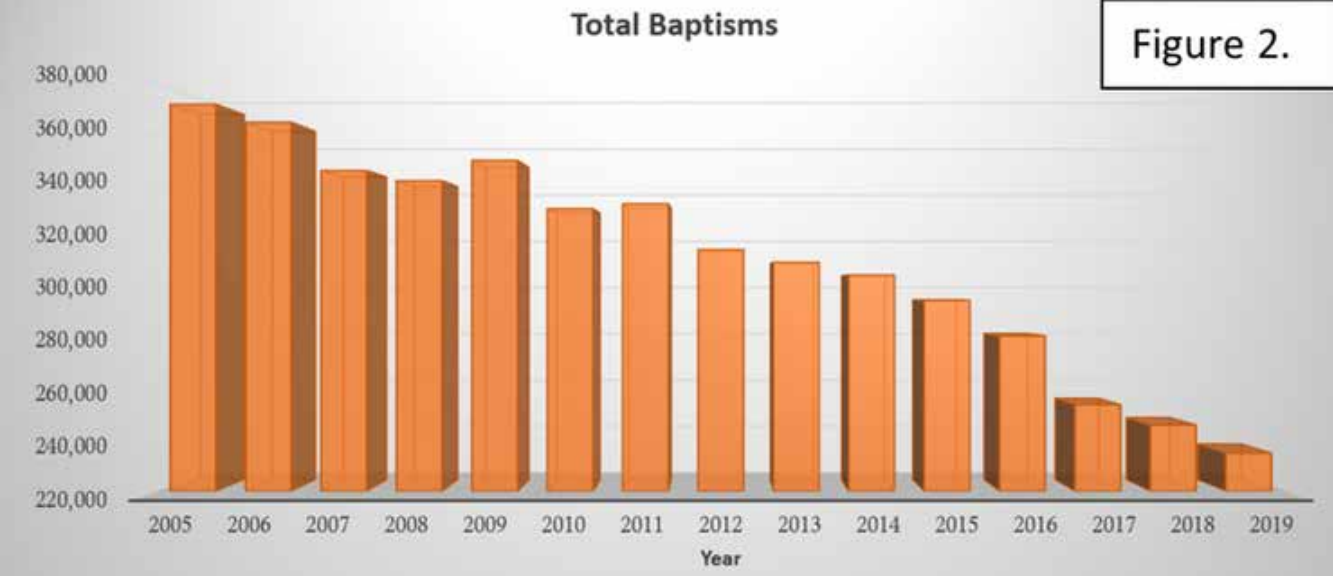


Figure 2.

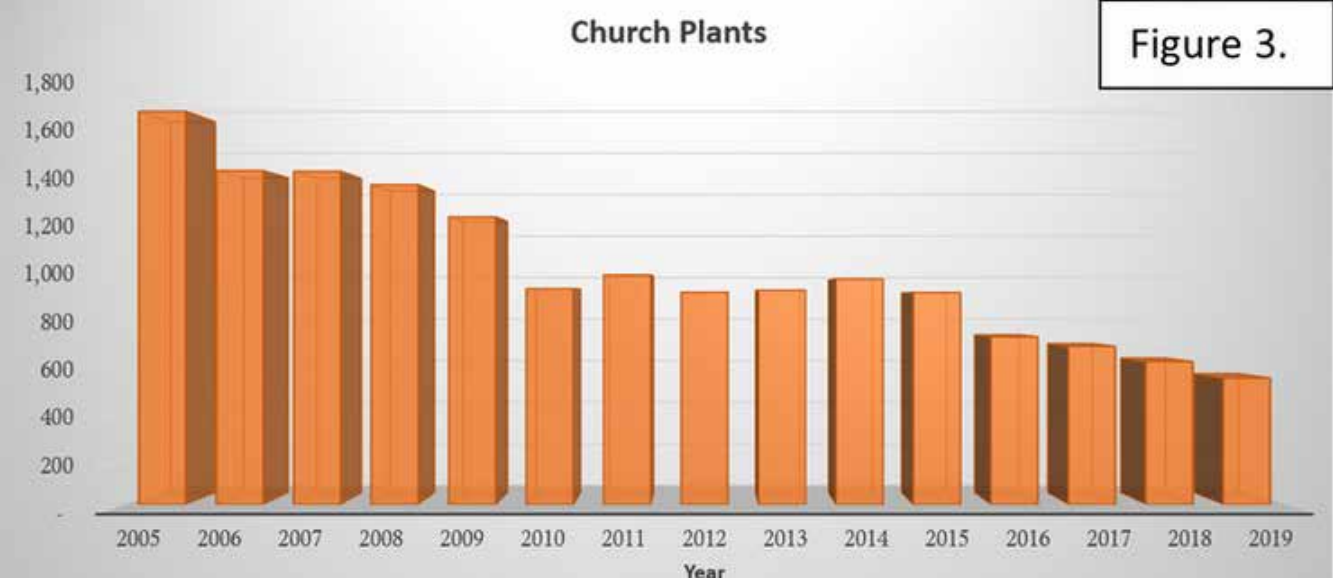


Figure 3.

10-year Ezell / GCR Record

	Pre-GCR 2000-2009	Post-GCR 2011-2020	Increase or Decrease
Baptisms	3,745,336	2,700,004	Decrease of 1,045,332
Church Plants	15,769	7,964	Decrease of 7,805
NAMB Church Plant Spending	\$207,940,677	\$615,363,651	Increase of \$407,422,974
Gain in Churches	3,422	1,808	Decrease of 1,614

is the wrong metaphor for the SBC. We have taken the wrong road, so we must turn back and take the right road. The right road is the local autonomy of cooperative missions. The right road is bottom-up missiology, not a top-down mission strategy imposed by a handful of elite national leaders. Attempts to control cooperative work in

North America, and dictate from NAMB headquarters, have failed. We must return to the cooperative mission strategy that made Southern Baptists a great missionary people.

Randy Adams is a candidate for SBC president. Read more columns by Adams at sbctransform.org.

Kelley

Continued from page 1

of a royal position or "unpardonably stupid." The emperor put on these supposedly magnificent clothes and paraded before his subjects with great pride. All were too worried about being considered stupid or unworthy of their position to say anything, until a child finally cried out, "The emperor is not wearing any clothes!"

Finally, everyone could acknowledge the truth of what their eyes had seen: The supposedly magnificent clothes did not really exist. Neither does significant Great Commission progress in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) for the last decade and more.

Fellow Southern Baptists, the reality underneath our glowing reports and SBC pride is that our convention is in serious trouble. We may use Great Commission language, but we are not achieving Great Commission results. There are and ever will be some strong, healthy churches out there, but that cannot be said today of the SBC as a family of churches.

This decline cannot be attributed solely to the difficult circumstances faced by today's churches. The Great Depression-era was an extremely difficult time in the U.S., but Southern Baptists had an average membership gain of 101,468 people per year during the Depression. However, in the decade since the "Great Commission Resurgence" launched, we lost nearly 2 million members and are baptizing fewer people than we did in 1938. In 1939, SBC churches averaged one baptism per 17.9 members. Last year the churches averaged only one baptism per 62 members.

Without changes, things can and will get worse

Decline never simply disappears. Decline gathers momentum and broadens, working its way into more and more areas. What began as a significant drop in baptisms has now spread to nearly every statistical category. When negative momentum grows, downward trends become harder and more complex to reverse. SBC decline has reached the point of requiring a massive, intentional strategic change sustained

over many years to reverse the trends.

Where do we start?

Declare the rebirth of evangelism! Publicly. SBC leaders need to acknowledge that our convention is in the grip of a historic decline affecting nearly everything in SBC life. The convention must recover its identity as a family of congregations who continually seeks the lost in their communities and connects those of all ages who are born again into an ongoing process of congregational discipleship. For most of our history, that has been our distinctive identity.

Restructure NAMB

NAMB leadership must return to a passionate embrace of the historic SBC assignment to assist churches with evangelism. The SBC needs a strategic plan that identifies reasonable evangelistic goals and includes additional personnel, national infrastructure, and a dedicated budget, to help churches reach those goals. NAMB cannot help SBC churches recover a vibrant evangelistic culture unless it recreates its own evangelistic culture.

Focus on the essentials.

1) Win the children of the

church and community to Christ, baptizing them and guiding them into life as disciples of Christ. 2) Teach students the basic skills and practices of discipleship, including how to walk with God, discern truth, and live on mission to reach others. 3) Engage adults in Bible study and some aspects of ministry in the church. 4) Use every means to share Christ and invite people to salvation. A variety of methods is crucial.

Most importantly, REPENT! All of us and each of us must repent. In the words of a timeless hymn, "All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down." God must move in us first if He is ever to move in our churches. God will not bless those displeasing to Him. We must become blessable or we will become expendable. The hindrance to revival is us. All of us.

Chuck Kelley is the Distinguished Research Professor of Evangelism at New Orleans Seminary. Adapted from his original article published June 18, 2020, and reprinted in part, to inform Southern Baptists, and not to endorse any SBC presidential candidate.

Nominate

Continued from page 1

missionaries. They start churches. They reach people for Jesus."

Habila and her pastor husband immigrated from Nigeria where they were blessed by Southern Baptist IMB missions.

"I was involved in Girl's Auxiliary (GAs) as a young lady, and my husband was a Royal Ambassador in our early years."

After starting several churches in Nigeria, Habila served alongside her husband who started the Baptist Prison Ministry with an International Mission Board (IMB) missionary in 1989. The prison ministry grew and later received national recognition and became connected to Prison Fellowship International.

The couple moved to the United States so that Haggai could attend The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The Habilas moved to



Mary Habila was a member of Girls In Action (GAs) in her native Nigeria.

the Northwest to start churches 10 years ago and they have since started three.

"I am so honored that Mary Habila will present my nomination. She represents what's best about Southern Baptists. She was reached for Christ by IMB missionaries, and now she serves as a missionary and mission leader in the Northwest."

Proposed Plan Would Hide Entity Finances; Bypass CP for Fundraising



By Alan Atchison

If you thought Russell Moore’s progressive politics was all that was wrong in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) – think again. The SBC’s Executive Committee is proposing greater secrecy under the guise of more transparency. It is a political move worthy of fat cats in Congress rather than the Church.

The proposed change would make the release of salary information subject to each entity policy rather than the general SBC Business Plan:

“Cooperating Southern Baptist churches have access through the Convention Annual to information from Convention entities regarding income, expenditures, debts, reserves, and operating balances. Additional inquiries may be made by official action of a cooperating Southern Baptist church. Such inquiries, including requests for salary structure information, may be submitted to the entity board and will be handled based on the entity board’s approved guidelines.”

Good luck with that! The Capstone Report has documented how churches and individual SBC members requested salary information from entities and never received it. So, the plan by SBC elites is to take away the current policy mandating disclosure.

The current policy says the following:

“Members of cooperating Southern Baptist churches shall have access to information from the records of Southern Baptist Convention entities regarding income, expenditures, debts, reserves, operating balances, and salary structures.”

The old policy allows any member to get this information – information that

secular non-profit organizations must make available to all taxpayers!

The new policy will allow the already run amok SBC entities to decide if it will reveal how much their entity heads are paid.

One is forced to ask why so much secrecy? Are the SBC entity heads ashamed of how much they earn? Just how deep into the six-figure range are we talking?

The new plan allows entities to bypass Cooperative Program for fundraising

The old Business and Financial Plan prohibited direct appeals by the entities outside of the two regular offerings. Here is the old plan on fundraising:

“VI. Fund Raising Activities: A. Approval of Financial Activities – No entity of the Southern Baptist Convention shall conduct any type of fundraising activity without the advance approval of the Convention, or its

American Missions.”

The new financial plan allows the entities to find donors outside the Cooperative Program.

“Financial Appeals to Churches: Because of the strength and importance of cooperation and the generous giving of Southern Baptist churches through the Cooperative Program, no entity of the Convention or their employees should initiate an approach to any church for inclusion in its church budget for financial contributions. This provision does not address the practice of an entity receiving gifts initiated by a church or soliciting individual contributions in support of the entity’s mission.”

Thus, the entities can go around the local church to solicit monies from church members. The new wording bans solicitations for inclusion in annual church budgets; however, the far more important thing to note is that the SBC enti-

“One day, my fellow Southern Baptists, we will give an account to the Lord Jesus for what we have done with vast resources he has given us. Let us covenant together today that we will stand before Him, confident we have been good stewards of His kingdom. “May God help us.”



Chapman

– Morris Chapman, former CEO of the SBC Executive Committee

Executive Committee. No advance approval shall be required for the two Convention approved special offerings: Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North

ties can use their brands to solicit funds directly from the people in the pew.

So, next time you need to repair the church roof – you’ll get to compete with the big SBC brands with their digital and online marketing campaigns.



The SBC Executive Committee to set to propose a change in SBC Business and Financial Plan to allow direct fundraising from church members over Cooperative Program giving.

Have fun with that! **SBC Executive Committee and Entities mock Morris Chapman**

The entire rewrite makes a mockery of Morris Chapman’s motion. Chapman, a former CEO of the SBC’s Executive Committee, was a messenger to the 2019 Annual Meeting in Birmingham. Chapman made a motion asking for greater financial transparency in the SBC.

Here is what Dr. Chapman said in making his motion in Birmingham:

Dr. Chapman said, “My motion is very simple. It asks the Executive Committee to examine our current policies to see where Southern Baptists may improve our financial accountability and transparency. I was thrilled a moment ago while I watched the emphasis upon foreign missions. We’ve got a great mission force around the world and how strongly we are able to support them with our gifts and love and prayers. But we also expect them to

be honest in their reporting back home. And it is our desire that we who are administrators and executives working throughout the entities of the Southern Baptist Convention be just as trustworthy and as honest as those who are serving in the field giving a report to us.

“My motion is built upon two biblical commitments. First, Southern Baptists believe the Lord’s work is done best when it is done by the Word of the Lord. And second, we believe the Lord’s work is done best when it is done in the light of day.

“This year, the light has shined on our cooperative work in ways that have revealed our need for reform.

“By the power of God, we must use this opportunity of self-examination to make sure that everything we are doing for the Lord is with integrity, accountability and transparency.

“One day, my fellow Southern Baptists, we will give an account to the Lord Jesus for what we have done with vast resources he has given us. Let us covenant together today that we will stand before Him, confident we have been good stewards of His kingdom.

“May God help us.” Yes. May God help us.

“The proposed Business and Financial Plan drives the convention deeper into the dark. It’s the opposite of transparency and accountability. I will oppose it.” –Randy Adams

The Executive Committee will not do its job. And instead pretends this new business plan is reform when it is in fact enabling the entities to evade accountability.

As a messenger, you should remember this in Nashville.

Resolution 9 Not a Good Course for the SBC

DURING the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual Meeting held June 11-12 in Birmingham, Ala., messengers approved a resolution “On Critical Race Theory And Intersectionality.” What are these concepts? Where do they come from? And what does it mean that the SBC corporately affirmed them?

Resolution 9 states that some evangelicals have expressed concern over “frameworks such as critical race theory and intersectionality,” categorizing the former as “a set of analytical tools that explain how race has and continues to function in society” and the latter as, “the study of how different characteristics overlap and inform one’s experience.”

“It is our aspiration in this resolution simply to say that critical race theory and intersectionality are simply analytical tools. They are meant to be used as tools, not as a worldview,” Curtis Woods, chairman of the SBC Resolutions Committee, told messen-

gers during the debate on the resolution.

Following the annual meeting, Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, commented about the resolution on his podcast, “The Briefing.” Mohler called into question the committee’s view, arguing that critical race theory (CRT) and intersectionality cannot be accurately defined as “merely” analytical tools.

“It is not fundamentally wrong to say that intersectionality and critical race theory are analytical tools. What does that mean? It means that they are tools of analysis. Of course, they are. They emerged as analytical tools, but they were never merely analytical tools ... both critical race theory and intersectionality are far more than analytical tools,” said Mohler.

Marxist Influence?

Mohler said in the pod-

cast that CRT and intersectionality are theories derived in large part from Marxist philosophy and that they each contain inherent political components. One doesn’t have to agree with every single aspect of a theory or school of thought to learn from it, but “the problem is, as Christians understand, that analytical tools very rarely remain merely analytical tools. Ideas, as we know, do have consequences,” he added.

The chief consequence of critical race theory and intersectionality, according to Mohler, is identity politics – defined as “politics in which groups of people having a particular racial, religious, ethnic, social, or cultural identity tend to promote their specific interests or concerns without regard to the interests or concerns of any larger political group,” according to merriam-webster.com – and he argues that such behavior is funda-



Woods



Mohler

mentally “antithetical to the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

What is CRT?

To understand CRT and intersectionality, it is important to understand their philosophical origins.

Critical Theory (CT) originated in the Frankfurt School; a school of Marxist sociological and philosophical thought associated with the Institute for Social Research in what is today Frankfurt, Germany, in the early 20th century.

The significance of CT’s Marxist origins – i.e. its association with the philosophy of Karl Marx, one of the chief architects of modern communism – are its foundationally naturalistic worldview and viewing of all human interactions through the lens of systemic power struggles.

In academia, CT’s distinct approach is unique in that it takes in multiple subjects including “ethics, political philosophy, and

the philosophy of history,” according to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP).

From its inception, CT and its proponents aimed to deconstruct previous academic approaches to philosophy and science, combining and recreating traditional approaches into a newfangled interdisciplinary and ideologically charged perspective.

Critical Theorists have long sought to distinguish their aims, methods, theories, and forms of explanation from standard understandings in both the natural and the social sciences. Instead, they have claimed that social inquiry ought to combine rather than separate the poles of philosophy and the social sciences: explanation and understanding, structure and agency, regularity and normativity,” the SEP states. “Such an approach, Critical Theorists argue, permits their enterprise to be prac-

tical in a distinctively moral (rather than instrumental) sense. They do not merely seek to provide the means to achieve some independent goal, but rather ... seek ‘human emancipation’ in circumstances of domination and oppression.”

CRT is a branch of critical theory with a specific focus on race – which was first designated in 1989. CRT is defined as “the view that race, instead of being biologically grounded and natural, is socially constructed and that race, as a socially constructed concept, functions as a means to maintain the interests of the white population that constructed it,” according to the britannica.com.

This definition of CRT supports the aforementioned criticisms of Resolution 9. Critical race theory cannot be understood as an analytical tool that is subservient to Scripture because in the basic nature of CRT exists an unbiblical dichotomy of social categories in which

See **CRT** page 8

ADAMS

Continued from page 3

of life, including our views regarding the roles of men and women in the family and (roles) in the church. The New Testament teaches, for example, that pastors are to be God-called, qualified men. The New Testament teaches this not only through instruction but also through example. The apostles and the pastors mentioned in the New Testament were males. That said, some of the greatest witnesses in the New Testament were female: the woman at the well; the women at the

tomb; for example.

In the home, the command for husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the church should eliminate any abuse from the husband towards his wife. No acts of abuse, no acts of misogyny can be supported through Scripture or by Scripture. There is no biblical argument for someone who adheres to complementarianism to use that as a club with which to harm, abuse, or subjugate a woman.

Do you believe there is a problem with abuse of power, spiritual abuse, or abuse of women and/or children in SBC churches and that is being downplayed or covered up? If so, is there a better

way of making sure predators are not recommended to churches for staff positions?

Certainly, abuse of all kinds exists in the church, from sexual abuse to abuse of power, abuse of authority. Whenever it is identified, whenever it surfaces, abuse must be dealt with firmly, and abusers should have no access to any position that would give them any kind of authority in the church. If a person knows about sexual abuse, they must report it to the authorities who are trained to do such investigations. I support an interdenominational reporting system for those who have been found guilty of sexual offenses.

In addition, the “good ol’ boy” system, in which you

don’t speak ill of a brother pastor, must be abolished when it concerns other matters of abuse as well. Matters of spiritual abuse, abusing and bullying people are the types of questions that we need to be honest to each other about when we give recommendations.

Recently, one of our entities filed a legal brief characterizing the SBC as an umbrella organization over SBC ministries. Do you agree with that brief?

I strongly disagree that the SBC is an umbrella organization over all state conventions, associations and churches. If that is true then Southern Baptists would have a polity similar to Roman Catholics or

United Methodists. We do not have that polity. Each of our churches are autonomous. They own their property, for example. They call their own pastors. The SBC does not appoint pastors to churches; they do not own the property of churches. The same is true of state conventions. State conventions are autonomous from the national convention. We own our property; we pay our own staff. That’s also true at the associational level.

To say that the SBC is an umbrella organization over all other bodies is to create a hierarchy in Southern Baptist life, similar to the hierarchy that Roman Catholics and some other groups have. That would also create a

problem of ascending and descending liability. For example, if an abused person sues the church and the SBC was the umbrella over that church, the lawsuit would not only damage or threaten the church, it threatens the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole. So, for many reasons, it is both wrong and dangerous to say the SBC is an umbrella organization.

For more information on Randy Adams, please visit sbctransform.org.

Joni B. Hannigan is the former managing editor of Florida Baptist Witness and a contributor to Baptist Press. She has written for Home Life, Student Life, Discipleship, and Deacon magazines.

NAMB Spends Millions on Houses

Since 2011, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) has purchased millions of dollars in real estate as a part of its church planting strategy, according to extensive research done by the organization Reform NAMB Now (reformnambnow.org).

Research conducted looked into houses purchased by NAMB and where these houses are located across the United States – and what was found is disturbing.

Public records indicate that real estate bought by NAMB isn't always used by church planters and sometimes is used for church planters of non-Southern Baptist churches.

The agency's Send City strategy is used to justify defunding some state conventions with the intent of redirecting those funds to focus on U.S. population centers, it appears that something very different is happening.

Using the search tool at sbc.net, Reform NAMB Now found that only two of eight church planting properties were located in

a Send City location, and others had a resident that was not working for an SBC church.

The location of those churches included Miami and Chicago, which are Send City locations, while church planting properties in West Palm Beach, Fla.;

Send Cities, which is a key NAMB strategy.

"Until NAMB opens their books and becomes financially transparent we don't know if your money going to a missionary or going to pay what could potentially be almost \$850,000 in property taxes EVERY YEAR for residential properties," states an article at reformnambnow.org.

A second article states, "Even though NAMB has spent on average \$100,000 per church plant, the reality is that very few are receiving hundreds of thousands in support from NAMB in the form of properties, while others receive very little."

What's more, it appears NAMB is rewarding friends and giving out favors to SBC leaders or mega-church pastors through the buying and selling of houses.

Photos and the accounts on this page are just a few of the many houses identified by Reform NAMB Now. For more details on NAMB properties purchased for church planting visit reformnambnow.org/the-properties.html.



NAMB purchased two homes for Ben Mandrell in metro Denver. One was for Mandrell to use and the other for Mandrell's future church planter. Mandrell and Kevin Ezell served in Louisville together and Ezell, Jimmy Scroggins and Mandrell served as officers for the SBC Pastors' Conference in 2010. Mandrell is the current president of LifeWay. Storyline Fellowship (the church plant) had numerous sponsors, including First Baptist Church, Orlando, home of NAMB Trustee Chairman Danny deArmas.



The North American Mission Board (NAMB) purchased this luxury home with swimming pool for a church planter connected to Vance Pitman of Hope Church in Las Vegas, who is a protege of Johnny Hunt. NAMB paid \$200,000 more than median price of average houses in the area. The planter was in the home much longer than the 12-24 months approved by NAMB trustees for the use of these homes. The house was not near Send City as the stated objective of the \$62 million housing project by NAMB.

Clip Your Very Own
Jimmy Scroggins \$1 Million Bill!
(Redeem for \$1 Million at LifeWay Christian Resources)



NAMB Builds House for CP in Pittsburgh

NAMB purchased property and built a new house for Send Pittsburgh church planter Rob Wilton who was a part of three church planting networks.

The \$500,000, five bedroom, four and a half bathroom, 4,079-square-foot house was built on land purchased in 2018 for \$85,000.

Additionally, NAMB purchased a \$500,000 church building, closed an SBC church plant and made it into a Send Relief Pittsburgh center at 213 Bailey Ave.

NAMB purchased 12 homes in Pittsburgh, in addition to the church building and Wilton's home.

Scroggins Gets Condo in West Palm Beach

A \$352,000 condo was purchased by NAMB for use by Ezell's friend and former staff member Jimmy Scroggins for who ever Jimmy decided to put in the condo. Scroggins was LifeWay chairman of trustees who made the

decision to make a \$1 million gift to his friend, Thom Rainer, who was retiring as president of LifeWay.

Exclusive Townhouse Bought Near NAMB

NAMB purchased a new 2,376-square-foot, four bedroom townhome in a gated Woodland Trails community in Alpharetta, Ga., for \$419,900 – just two miles from NAMB headquarters. No planter has been identified as living there, and the use of the townhouse is still unknown.

Chicago Houses Bought for Harvest Church

Four homes were purchased by NAMB in Chicago, but the Illinois Baptist Association was not allowed to place church planters there. The houses were designated for use by disgraced pastor James MacDonald of Harvest Bible Chapel and the Vertical Network.

Greear Uses NC Houses

While serving as president of the Southern Baptist Convention and a NAMB trustee, J.D. Greear, pastor of Summit Church, had access to two homes in Morrisville, N.C. to use under his administration. One home was occupied for a time by a staff member of Summit Church.

\$20 Million Gift Made to Dilbeck's Church

Three properties purchased by NAMB are close to Quail Springs Baptist Church, where then Pastor Hance Dilbeck served. Homes purchased by Ezell after Dilbeck's church received a one-time single gift of over \$20 million. Dilbeck was serving as the chairman of trustees of the International Mission Board (IMB). He later become executive director of the Oklahoma Baptist Convention and now is the president-elect of Guidestone.

\$1M House for Church With its Own Brewery

Ezell and NAMB purchased two homes for Andy Wood, pastor of Echo Church. Two homes were valued at a combined \$1.75 million. Echo Church was named in the recent beer brewery/Octoberfest and had female pastors while an Echo executive pastor served NAMB Send Network to assist and train church planters.



CRT

Continued from page 7
certain groups are always oppressors and others are always victims.

Not only does CRT not allow for the biblical truth of the existence of only two meaningful categories of people – believer and unbeliever – it claims that a generally-defined group of people deemed those with social, cultural, and political power, often "white" people, are inherently evil, or at a minimum unethical, by nature of their congenital ethnic and ancestral makeup. While others, any person not considered "white," by often-arbitrary standards, is a victim by nature of similar broad stroking.

Intersectionality is a concept coined by feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in a 1989 essay of the same name. It is a term used to define the compounded oppression of certain peoples based on the original concepts and paradigms outlined in the study of CRT.

In her essay, Crenshaw argued that "because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take inter-

sectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated," according to merriam-webster.com.

Critical race theory places all people in one of two camps: oppressor or

oppressed, largely based on their ethnicity – something that no person has any control over.

Intersectionality takes this concept a few steps further by accepting CRT's general duality of oppressor and oppressed but claim-

ing that certain oppressed people are more oppressed than others based on their various identities. For example, a black woman is likely more oppressed than a white woman. But a black woman who also identifies as a lesbian might be more

oppressed than a heterosexual black woman.

Critical race theory and intersectionality cannot be rightly defined as simply analytical tools by the very nature of their intellectual claims, as Mohler and Ascol correctly point out. They

are indeed analytical tools but they are not analytical tools that can be incorporated into any meaningful Christian worldview, as their theories are incompatible with two millennia of orthodox Christian theology and practice.

Reform NAMB Now
reformNAMBnow@gmail.com

NAMB's Reserves: **↑415%**

Evangelism Funding: **↓65%**

Church Plants: **↓50%**

Baptisms: **↓30%**

The concerns and questions raised by this website are meant to bring to light issues that many Southern Baptists have not been made aware of. Our institutions and organizations should set the standard for integrity, honesty and biblical leadership.

We call for NAMB's Trustees and the SBC to investigate and address the concerns and questions raised by our site.

Repair the Partnerships.
Restore Transparency.
Reform NAMB

We can no longer be apathetic about our leadership. We must call for them to account for the failed strategy, the stockpiles of assets and reserves, the luxury homes outside of Send Cities, the slashed funding for existing churches, and the threats and interference in State Conventions.

Join the Call for Reform