

# PERSPECTIVE

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THE MONTHLY JOURNAL OF MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH

Starting the Christian Life

DON'T GO IT ALONE





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## STAFF > SERMON SCHEDULE

- July 4** **Will God Love Me?**  
*Joshua 23:12-24:33*
- July 11** **See God's Glory**  
*John 2:1-11*
- July 18** **Embrace Christ's Cross**  
*John 2:12-25*
- July 25** **Be Born Again**  
*John 3:1-21*

## > FIGHTER VERSE

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.  
Philippians 2:9

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# ■●■●■●■●■▶ Southern Baptist Convention ■●■●■●■●■▶ & the Great Commission Resurgence

by Brad Thayer

On June 13-15, six messengers from Mount Vernon attended the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Orlando, FL. For the average member of a Southern Baptist church, little consideration or interest is given to these annual meetings. That's completely understandable. So much of the business conducted has little to no impact on local congregations. But every now and again, the SBC's annual meeting makes waves that spread throughout the news and has an impact on local churches. This year's meeting was one of those meetings.

## How It Began

Let me set the backdrop for this meeting with an explanation of the purpose and history of the SBC. The SBC was founded in 1845 in Augusta, GA as a cooperation of local churches in the Southeastern portion of the United States for the purpose of domestic and foreign missions. That's primarily why the SBC exists.

Since 1845, the SBC has grown to be the "largest evangelical denomination in the country, with over 44,000 churches in all fifty states."<sup>1</sup> Though the SBC has grown to be the largest denomination, it "has been embroiled in controversy regarding theological issues and denominational polity" for nearly three decades.<sup>2</sup> The most notable debate was what has been called the Conservative Resurgence from the late '70s to late '80s where the battle for the authority and inerrancy of the Bible was fought and won. So in light of that resurgence when Jesus gives the Great Commission in Matthew 28, Southern Baptists sought to submit to his authority.

## Great Commission Resurgence

Fast forward to April 16, 2009. Dr. Danny Akin, president of The Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, delivered a message in chapel entitled "Axioms for a Great Commission Resurgence" from Acts 1:4-8 calling his audience and the larger Convention to "stay focused on the main thing. Make sure your priorities line up with the Father's. Be (Jesus') witnesses and advance the gospel until I return." This message was the tip of the spear in an effort to refocus and reprioritize the Great Commission in the SBC. The concern being that the SBC has majored on secondary issues and become less effective at "penetrating lostness" through some of the current structure and Cooperative Program agreements.

In June 2009, the messengers of the Convention meeting in Louisville, KY commissioned the president, Dr. Johnny Hunt, to appoint a Great Commission Resurgence Task Force comprised of pastors and SBC leaders. This task force was responsible to spend the next year examining the SBC from top to bottom to see where the SBC is ineffective. They were then to report back to the messengers in Orlando in 2010 with a list of recommended changes. That's exactly what they did.

For an hour, 12,000 messengers deliberated and passed the following seven recommendations presented by the task force. (These are a summary.)

<sup>1</sup> David Dockery, "Introduction", *Southern Baptist Identity: An Evangelical Denomination Faces the Future*, ed. David Dockery (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009), 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Great Commission Resurgence Task Force Recommendations

1. Adopt the following mission statement: "As a convention of churches, our missional vision is to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations."
2. Adopt the following Core Values (each had a written explanation): Christ-likeness; Truth; Unity; Relationships; Trust; Future; Local Church; Kingdom
3. Request the Executive Committee (EC) to emphasize the Cooperative Program (CP) as the center of funding for the SBC and recognize all designated gifts to SBC causes as "Great Commission Giving." This recommendation also called all SBC entities and state conventions to direct more funds to the work of missions.
4. Request the EC consider revising the ministry assignments of the North American Mission Board, specifically refocusing NAMB's efforts for greater effectiveness in planting churches and reaching unreached people groups in metropolitan areas. It also called NAMB to better fulfill leadership training in church planting.
5. Request the EC consider revising the ministry assignment of the International Mission Board that would remove geographical limitations on its mission to reach the unreached people groups.
6. Request the EC consider working with the leadership of state conventions in developing a comprehensive program of CP promotion and stewardship education in alignment with these recommendations. In other words, state conventions should work to have a CP that mirrors the emphasis and recommendations of the SBC.
7. Request the EC consider recommending a budget allocation of 51% of all CP dollars go to IMB and decrease CP dollars to the EC by 1%.

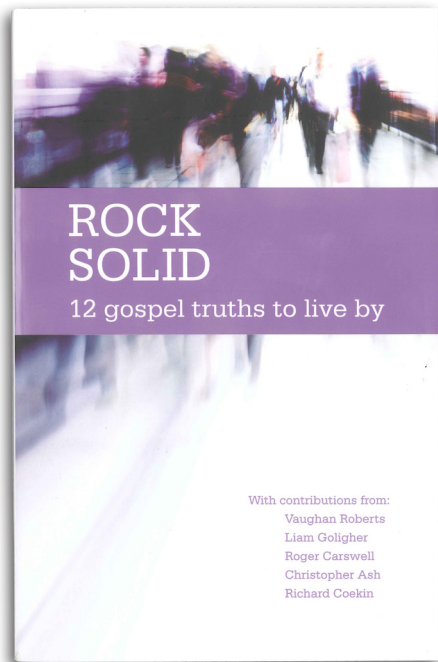
## What does this mean to MVBC?

Practically, it doesn't mean anything. The SBC has no authority to direct the affairs of its cooperating churches. But the adoption of these Task Force recommendations does come as an exhortation to all Southern Baptist associations, entities, churches, and pastors. It is a call to examine our commitments.

We understand that making disciples is Jesus' last commissioning words to his church. So why wouldn't we want to do everything we can to take the gospel to the nations in obedience to Jesus? Paul understood himself to be "obligated" to preach the gospel (Rom. 1:14). Are we some how not bound to that obligation? Of course not.

The Great Commission Resurgence calls "every generation" to make an "unconditional commitment to reach the nations for Christ." May Mount Vernon be known as a church before God that has radical commitment of sending our resources *and* people to those who have never heard the Gospel. A Great Commission Resurgence doesn't begin with a denominational annual meeting. It begins in the lives of the pastors and members of local churches. ■





## Rock Solid

12 Gospel Truths to Live by

Edited by Trevor Archer and Tim Thornborough

*Reviewed by Aaron Menikoff*

\*Article reprinted from TGC Reviews: <http://tgcreviews.com>

TREVOR ARCHER, A PASTOR at Chessington Evangelical Church in London, and Tim Thornborough of the Good Book Company have put together a contemporary, doctrinal introduction to the Christian faith. Each chapter is a question, from: “Is Jesus the ‘one and only’?” to “How good is ‘good enough’?” These provocative questions are doors into historic, Christian truth.

The editors succinctly state the goal of their book: “to help us get to grips with twelve great truths that together form the core of what it means to be an evangelical Christian” (5). These twelve great or “gospel” truths form the fabric of Christian orthodoxy. Each truth flows into the other. This is beautifully explained in the introduction.

The first gospel truth they address is “the unique supremacy of Christ.” Evangelicals must not compromise the necessity of turning to Christ alone. We need Christ because of the second gospel truth, “the seriousness of sin.” As a result of this sin we deserve the wrath of God. Our only hope in the face of God’s wrath is the third gospel truth, “the penal substitution of Christ’s death.” Christ died in the place of sinners.

Because of Christ’s death, God can declare sinners righteous. This leads to the fourth gospel truth, “the justification of believers by grace alone.” We can never be good enough to save ourselves—we need God’s grace. Furthermore, we can be confident that God’s grace can reach the most corrupt sinner because of the fifth gospel truth, “the sovereignty of God the Father.” We can trust God an almighty God is able to save sinners!

But how does this salvation become our salvation? Through the sixth gospel truth, “the regeneration of God the Holy Spirit.” We must be born again. We must be born again, and that urgency is due to the seventh gospel truth, “the reality of God’s coming judgment.” If we believe that Jesus is really

coming to judge the living and the dead, then we will embrace the eighth gospel truth, “the priority of evangelism.” We can evangelize boldly because of the ninth gospel truth, “the authority of Scripture.” When we are confident Scripture is true and trustworthy we will share the Bible’s Message.

Since we believe the Bible is God’s Word, we advocate the tenth gospel truth, “the centrality of Bible-teaching.” Good Bible teaching leads to the discovery of the eleventh gospel truth: “the importance of the local church.” The local church displays the character of God, which is why the final gospel truth is crucial, “the necessity of holiness.” To be a Christian is to pursue holiness.

The writers target young believers still trying to wrap their minds around the importance of Christian doctrine. Each chapter has several features. First, a clear and concise explanation of the doctrine being described. Second, a bible study and questions for further reflection. Third, a historical example. In the first chapter on the supremacy of Christ there is a brief summary of Athanasius’s interaction with Arius. Finally, a “real life” example. In the chapter on the authority of Scripture, the author includes an account of how a man named Royston went from believing the Bible is boring and irrelevant to believing it is the living Word of God.

Rock Solid is a compelling introduction to Christian faith and practice. I was recently racking my brain trying to think of one resource to give a new Christian who is starting from scratch. There are so many great books that address the sovereignty of God, the necessity of holiness, the practice of spiritual disciplines, and the importance of the local church. This book has it all. I wanted a quick introduction to the basics of Christian thinking and living. I found it in *Rock Solid*. ■

# Constitution

## conversations

The Deacons have approved a proposed Constitution that will be formally introduced at the next Church in Conference on July 25. As of now, there are five meetings scheduled for the Summer to discuss the Constitution. Here are the dates, times, and locations:

- **Sunday, July 11 at 4:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall**
- **Sunday, July 25 at 4:30 pm in the Sanctuary**
- **Thursday, July 29 at 7:00 pm in room 211**
- **Sunday, August 8 at 4:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall**
- **Thursday, August 19 at 7:00 pm in room 211**

If you are a member, please make a point to attend at least one of these meetings.





I SPENT THE FIRST SEVERAL YEARS of my Christian life thinking that I could be a lone-ranger Christian. I was converted during my first year of college. Though I often went to church, it was an in and out event. I never dug into the congregation. As a college student, I often took advantage of Friday night fellowships, but I did it solely for myself, I didn't think much about how I could be an encouragement to others. I never gave it much thought. I still remember the day the college pastor came and asked me about joining the church—actually becoming a member. I thought about it for a few seconds and then replied, “George, since I’m only going to be here four years I don’t think I want to join the church.” Joining the church was something older, settled people did. It wasn’t something an eighteen-year-old should consider. How

wrong I was! Every Christian needs to understand that God did not design us to live the Christian life alone. We were designed by Him to live in the context of a local church. This is for our good *and* for the good of others.

The Bible assumes that those people who are truly converted will invest themselves in a local church. They will not try to live the Christian life alone or even among a group of Christian friends who happen to share similar interests. Instead, they will give of themselves to a congregation of saints who have one thing, and perhaps only one thing in common: salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

We are living in an age where the church is considered an

unnecessary serving in the buffet of the Christian life. There are so many other tasty choices: small group Bible study, missions trips, private prayer time, iPod sermons, to name a few. Jonathan Stephen summarized contemporary antipathy to the local church:

*Boring...irrelevant...outdated...stuck in the past...vindictive...hypocritical...out of touch...narrow minded...arrogant...dull...incomprehensible...*

Ask any group of people in the street for their opinion of the church, and that’s the kind of answer you are likely to get. But when we turn to the Bible, we get a very different picture indeed.

It is said of Christ that God ‘*put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all*’ (Ephesians 1 v 22-23).

Nothing, it seems, in all creation is more important than the church—because the church is intimately and indissolubly joined to Jesus Christ, and everything that happens in the universe is ultimately for her benefit.<sup>1</sup>

I know exactly what Stephen is talking about. I’ve been in pastoral ministry for over a decade, and I’ve stopped counting the number of conversations I’ve had with people who say they love Christ but they can’t stand the church.

In his book on church membership, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God’s Love*, Jonathan Leeman tries to answer why there is so much hostility to what some call “institutional religion.” It is rooted, Jonathan argues, in modern man’s attempt to separate love from authority. Authority (which is institutional) and love (which is organic) are like oil and vinegar. People are arguing that love and church just don’t mix.

*Love* and *church* don’t go together, particularly a church with sharp boundaries and authoritative pronouncements . . . Say the word love and most people’s thoughts immediately jump into some other category: maybe the relationship between two lovers, or the relationship between parents and their children, or even the relationship between an individual and God. But how many people today associate love with the relationships that subsist inside the local church? Often, just the opposite is the case. Local churches are better known for bickering, backbiting, and bigotry.<sup>2</sup>

Jonathan’s analysis is spot on. We may love Jesus, but we no longer think that our love for Jesus has that much to do with His body, the church, beyond an occasional visit and an occasional check. But nothing could be further from the truth. The local church is ground zero for Christian love.

**We can’t read the Bible without seeing the church**

The storyline is about God creating a people for Himself, a people who live and breathe and serve for His glory. In Isaiah 61:3, the prophet describes the captives who have been set free: “They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.” It is not enough to think of ourselves individually, “like a tree planted by streams of water” (Psalm 1:3) we are part of a grove of trees, and this grove exists to display the splendor of the Lord our God. Until every believer is gathered, together, on the new earth, that grove is best pictured as the local church.

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Stephen, “The Importance of the Local Church,” in *Rock Solid*, eds. Trevor Archer and Tim Thornborough (The Good Book Company, 2010), 129.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God’s Love* (Crossway, 2010), 25.

Consider how passage after passage of Scripture identifies us as partnering with other Christians for the glory of God:

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another (John 13:34).

Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness (Hebrews 3:13).

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us (1 John 4:12).

Someone may still read these verses and think, “But why do I have to be part of a local church to obey these commands? Can’t I encourage my brothers and sisters in Christ wherever they are? Why do I have to be *in* a church?”

**The local church is  
GROUND ZERO  
for Christian love.**

Because in the New Testament, *ekklesia* which is translated “church” is the name given to those Christians who gather together to hear the Gospel (preaching) and celebrate the Gospel (baptism and the Lord’s Supper). Pastor Mark Dever underscores that a church is not a place, it is a group of people:

According to the New Testament, the church is primarily a body of people who profess and give evidence that they have been saved by God’s grace alone, for His glory alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. This is what a New Testament church is; it is not a building. The early Christians didn’t have buildings for almost 300 years after the church began. The collection of people committed to Christ in a local area constitute a church.<sup>3</sup>

So when Paul described the local church in Corinth in material terms, he had a spiritual meaning in mind. Believers in the Corinthian church, Paul insisted, are “God’s fellow workers... God’s field...God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9). God plants the church (field) He places the stones in its walls (building). And we, as Peter argued are “living stones...being built into a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5).

<sup>3</sup> Mark E. Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Crossway, 2004), 149.







# July 2010

1	2 Independence Holiday Office Closed Rockbridge Day Camp	3
8	9	10
15	16	17
22	23	24
29	30	31
7		
14		
21		
28		
5		
12		
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26		
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11	9:15 am Knowing MVBC: Session 1 12:00 pm Knowing MVBC: Session 2-4 4:00 pm Constitution Conversations 6:00 pm Lord's Supper	
18	12:00 pm Church in Conference 7:00 pm Ice Cream Social	
25	4:30 pm Church in Conference	

## Churchwide ▾

July 11 4:00 pm Constitution Conversation  
(see ad on pg. 3)

July 11 6:00 pm Lord's Supper  
We encourage members to examine their hearts and relationships with one another in preparation for this celebration of Christ's death and resurrection.

July 18 12:00 pm Church in Conference  
After the morning service, we will be holding a specially called church in conference to vote on the new slate of deacons.

July 25 4:30 pm Church in Conference  
Our quarterly church in conference will consider matters related to membership, the budget, the proposed Constitution, and more.

July 29 7:00 pm Constiution Conversation  
(see ad on pg. 3)

## New Members ▾

July 13 9:15 am Knowing MVBC: Session 1  
12:00 pm Knowing MVBC: Session 2-4  
(See ad to the right.)

## Elementary ▾

July 18 7:00 pm Family Night: Ice Cream Social  
July 19-23 Centri-Kid Camp  
Centri-Kid is a five day, four night camp for 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders.

## Students ▾

July 19-23 Mission Lab

## Recreation ▾

July 5-9, 12-16 Rockbridge Day Camp  
Rockbridge is a summer program designed for boys and girls ages 7-12.

July 26-30 Youth Basketball Camp  
(See ad to the bottom-right.)

## BIRTHDAYS ▾

1 Bubba Holmes	Yvonne Holtzclaw
2 Marie Tingle	17 Cam Cherbonnier
3 Cindie Briley	18 Amy Bodor
4 Gay Cooper	19 Montine Alexander
5 Ralph Haines	Hazel Kath
6 Ruth Edwards	Todd Mattera
7 Linda Hickerson	20 Vic Moore
8 Danny Brundage	Kevin Smith
9 Wink Laney	21 David Carnes
6 Elsie Howard	Connie Moore
Rob Meadows	Paige Pattillo
Gloria Sartogo	22 Mark Henderson
7 Lisa Kubes	Courtney Nash
Ann McCallum	Rhonwyn Ryan
Michael Mosby	23 Tom Howard
8 Joel Roberts	24 Andres Rivera
9 Tricia Carnes	25 Jonathan Thurman
Aaron Henderson	Kevin Vaughter
10 Bob Flint	26 Brandy Meadows
12 Vernon Hendrix	27 Rita Caldwell
13 Sharon Donohue	Dee Linker
Joe Drexler	28 Anthony Blalock
Kay Reagan	Lena Hocker
Mel Wakefield	John McCoy
16 Cory Blackburn	29 Joyce Williams
Jim Fleming	31 Margot Dawkins

## EVENTS ▾



**Knowing MVBC: The Membership Class** is a four session course that introduces you to life at Mount Vernon, covering the following topics:

Knowing Our Commitments: Church Covenant

Knowing Our Beliefs: Statement of Faith

Knowing Our Disciplines: Personal Discipleship

Knowing Our Structure: Nuts & Bolts

Anyone interested in membership or knowing more about life at Mount Vernon is invited to *Knowing MVBC: The Membership Class*. All 4 sessions will be offered on Sunday, July 11. Session 1 will be at 9:15 am in the Mount Vernon room. Sessions 2-4 will begin at 12:00 pm. Lunch is provided. You may sign up on the edge of the bulletin or by contacting the church office at 404-255-3133.



**JULY 26-30**  
**MONDAY - FRIDAY, 9 AM - 12 PM**

**BOYS AND GIRLS AGES 9 - 14**

**COST: \$35 PER CAMPER**

**REGISTRATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE OUTSIDE  
THE FRONT OFFICE AND BESIDE THE GYM.**



850 Mount Vernon Highway NW  
Sandy Springs, GA 30327