

## SermonIndex Announcements :: Where are we going?

**Where are we going? - posted by Branded4him (), on: 2007/1/13 21:11**

Baptist leaders claiming to represent 20 million Baptists in North America are hailing a new push spurred by former presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton to create a new Baptist voice.

Former President Jimmy Carter, left, listens as former President Clinton speaks during a news conference at the Carter Center in Atlanta, Ga., Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2007. They met with leaders of more than 30 moderate Baptist groups planning a January 2008 national celebration of Baptist with former President Carter as keynote speaker.

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On the sidelines, however, are the conservative Baptists who weren't formally invited to "celebrate" the new covenant earlier this week but were still welcomed to join.

But not many Southern Baptists want to hop on board.

"They have no confessional statement," said Russell Moore, senior vice president for Academic Administration at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., according to Family News in Focus. "They're really united around what they don't believe and what they don't believe is essentially everything the Southern Baptist Convention does believe."

The Southern Baptist Convention withdrew its membership from the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) in an overwhelming vote in 2004. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Paige Patterson had noted a "continual leftward drift in the BWA" at the time of the vote.

Baptists joining the Carter and Clinton initiative – "The Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant" – include representatives of groups connected to the North American Baptist Fellowship, a regional affiliate of the BWA. They were critical of the conservative Baptist voice dominating the media and are now set to counter the "negative" Baptist image and to demonstrate Baptist unity at a convocation in 2008.

"This is a historic event for Baptists in this country and perhaps for Christianity," said Carter at a conference announcing the 2008 gathering.

Some 20,000 Baptists are expected to attend.

While Carter's endorsement does not surprise Southern Baptists, Moore drew attention to the newly added Clinton voice.

"I cannot believe that a group of self-professing Baptists would welcome as a participant in a convocation a man who vetoed legislation protecting unborn children from partial-birth abortion," he said. "Do they really wish to pick up Clinton's language of a 'new covenant with the American people...?' " according to The Henry Institute.

A Southern Baptist pastor in Charlotte, N.C., echoed similar concerns. "Tell me how President Clinton is going to give Baptists a better image? ... He is pro-choice and pro-homosexual agenda," said Kevin Bussey of Durham Memorial Baptist Church in his blog.

"If he is re-shaping Baptists, then I don't want to have any part of it," he added.

Although Bussey doesn't agree with everything the SBC does, he labeled himself as conservative when it comes to the Bible and faith and does not think it's necessary to join the new Baptist initiative "unless the Carter and Clinton group will agree to live by the principles of the inerrant Holy Bible."

The overall endeavor, according to the Associated Baptist Press, is spearheaded by Carter and Bill Underwood, of Mercer University in Atlanta and Macon, Ga. And Clinton was enlisted to lend his "star power" to the pan-Baptist effort.

The former presidents and supporting Baptist leaders acknowledged the divide and theological dissension among Baptists, but agreed that Jesus' compassion mandate provides a platform for working together, according to the Associated Baptist Press.

"President Carter's call has provided an even broader and richer forum to accelerate common gospel efforts," commented the Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley, general secretary of American Baptist Churches, USA.

One of the major prongs to creating a new Baptist voice is following the compassion mandate through social work in the capacity of poverty, HIV/AIDS and sex trafficking and also addressing religious diversity and evangelism among other issues.

"One of the challenges this places before us as Baptists and as believers is to live up to our faith," said William Shaw, president of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., according to ABP.

Baptists aim to redirect the public focus from the "negative image" to the humanitarian work they're involved in.

Morris H. Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, argued the notion about a negative perception of Baptists, according to the Baptist Press. Southern Baptists have provided over 5 million meals in the U.S. alone, he said. And he further cited a recent Zogby International survey that showed adults view Southern Baptists favorably, especially in areas where they have a strong presence.

The convocation is scheduled tentatively for Jan. 30 - Feb. 1, 2008, in Atlanta and Carter called on "all Baptists" who share their goals to join with them.

Richard Land, head of the Southern Baptists' public policy arm, said the organizers of the 2008 gathering have to work hard to ensure the event is not viewed as "overly political" as it is held during a presidential election year.

Will Hall, vice president of news services for the SBC, also suspects the timing of the event, saying it has "more of a political ring to it than an actually evangelical ring to it," according to Family News in Focus.

"To me it's not a new voice," he said. "It's just rehashing a tired, old saw."

**Re: Where are we going? - posted by tjservant (), on: 2007/1/13 21:43**

Two words: End Times

In His Service

TJ

**Re: Where are we going? - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/1/13 22:24**

Is it wrong to have pride... in being a Southern Baptist; especially when I consider the alternatives.