

2024 State Evangelism Conference sets the stage for personal revival

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A crowd of more than 30 committing their lives to Christ, a series of Spirit-led sermons offering that which has been bought by the blood of Jesus, a gathering of godly men and women encouraged to go – all describe the 2024 State Evangelism Conference.

Sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Evangelism Department, the conference was held at Northcrest Church in Meridian, Jan. 28-29.

Speakers included:

- Shane Pruitt, North American Mission Board
- Ron Meeks, Blue Mountain Christian University
- Bob Pitman, Bob Pitman Ministries
- Jamie Dew, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
- Sammy Gilbreath, Gilbreath Ministries
- Tom Richter, First Church, Cullman, Alabama

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reSunday night, Pruitt preached on the theme, "Tell Me the
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"Your heart was created to be full of passion for the Lord," Pruitt said. "Your hands were created to serve the Lord. Your knees were created to bow before the King of kings and the Lord of all lords. Your feet were created to follow the Lord. You exist for the Lord, and you always feel something is missing in your life as long as someone is missing."

Monday morning, the Northcrest Church worship team and Worship Pastor Paul Davis led the congregation in grateful song. The morning session began with Ron Meeks, professor at Blue Mountain Christian University, as he preached on Revelation 3:14-22. "We pat ourselves on the back because we're at least lukewarm. But the consequence for a lukewarm Christian, a lukewarm pastor, a lukewarm church, is that Jesus will spit us, spew us, vomit us out of His mouth," Meeks affirmed.

"I'm looking at these final words where Jesus says, 'Behold I stand at the door and knock, and if anyone hears My voice and

opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him as he with Me.' We use these verses to refer to Jesus knocking on the heart's door of a lost person, and if they'll open the door, Jesus will come in. And that is true, but that's not the context of these verses. Jesus is speaking to a lukewarm church, and He's saying, 'I'm only outside and I'm knocking on the door. Will somebody come and let Me in?'

"I want to declare today that Jesus is not a homeless man passing by the church for a handout. Jesus is the head of the church, and He wants to come in, and He who is aflame with fire wants to heat up His lukewarm church with His fellowship and with His love."

Bob Pitman of Bob Pitman Ministries delivered a message on Romans 5:20-21. "The law of God did not eliminate sin," Pitman expounded. "The law of God increased sin. That's exactly what verse 20 says. It seems like it might have said, 'Where sin abounded, there judgment abounded much more,' because that's absolutely true. The more sin, the more judgment.

"It seems like it could have said that 'Where sin abounded, there death did much more abound,' because that's absolutely true. The more sin, the more death. It seems like it could have said, 'Where sin abounded, there did tragedy much more abound.' But instead, it says, 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.'"

After the congregation returned from fellowship and food, the Monday afternoon session kicked off with worship led by the William Carey University praise team, and Pruitt revisiting the pulpit. Out of Acts 5:27-42, his sermon answered the question, "How do we know a revival is taking place?" "When I'm talking about revival, I'm not talking about crying and weeping or emotions," said Pruitt. "I'm not talking about getting 'Holy Spirit goosebumps.' Revival is when God awakens His people to get serious about the calling of God in their lives. Because when God's people get serious about the calling

to know Him and to make Him known, guess what happens? Lives change. Churches change. Communities change. Campuses change, and missions change.



“We need to realize we have a King... and it isn't people. It's King Jesus.” (Photo Credit: Bart Lambright)

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Jamie Dew, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, taught an apologetical message on the resurrection, from 1 Corinthians 15:12-28. Having detailed the evidence for Christ’s resurrection, including eyewitness testimonies and disciples willing to die for the Gospel, Dew stated, “If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not risen, and if Christ has not risen, then our preaching and our faith is empty. But guess what? If He is raised from the dead, then your preaching and your faith is not empty. That means every sermon, every Gospel presentation, is the truth. It’s not your truth against somebody else’s truth. It is the truth. Truth back then, truth right now, truth forevermore. If He’s not risen, then you’re a liar. But if He is risen, then every time you preach and proclaim it, you are telling people the truth, which they so desperately need. If Christ is not risen, then you are still in your sins. But if Christ is risen, then I’m free and I’m forgiven!

“My dear friends, if Christ has risen, the message of the Gospel is true, and it means more than ever we need to go out there and make it known, because there is no politician coming over the hill, there is no government program that can fix this, and there is no medical advancement that’s going to cure humanity. We are deeply flawed and badly broken, and only Christ can fix it. So preach it and proclaim it, because that, my brothers and sisters, is what the world desperately needs to hear.”

Sammy Gilbreath of Gilbreath Ministries hammered the point with his sermon on Philippians 4:1, illustrating, “We need to redefine our purpose. The London Transit was being overwhelmed

by complaints. It appeared that the people were getting to the appropriate bus stop on time, but the bus had just gone right by. The quote in the paper from the London Transit read, 'We can no longer keep our buses on schedule if we have to keep stopping to pick people up.' Listen to me, the purpose is not to keep the bus on schedule. The purpose is to pick people up. We're in the people-business.

"If you fail to emphasize the Cooperative Program, Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, and Margaret Lackey, somebody's going to come after you, and rightfully so. You mess up that baby dedication, somebody's going to come after you, and rightfully so. You fail in that hospital ministry, someone's going to come after you. Listen to me, nobody is going to come after you if you leave off evangelism. Nobody's going to say a word. You have to decide it's a priority. Make evangelism real in your church. Give an invitation. Why would I set the table and not invite anybody to eat?"



Richter gave a message on "rest," from Matthew 11. (Photo Credit: Bart Lambright)

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Senior Pastor of Northcrest, Wade Phillips, commented on the conference, “We saw so many people who gave their lives to Christ. So for those people, my prayer is that they live for Jesus and tell other people about Him. I hope our church leaders go back encouraged to take the Gospel to their communities, to their state, and to the world. Leading up to this, it’s been an exciting time preparing for the conference. The Lord has just shown us along the way that He’s gone before us and has been helping us. I’m walking away from this more on fire to share the Gospel, more on fire to see God’s Kingdom expanded, and more on fire to see young people give their lives to Christ. I want to see more of that as we go forward.”