

SIMPLE TRUTH: *M*issional optimism

By Shawn Parker



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We began on Tuesday with a celebration of over 80 missionaries being sent by Southern Baptists through the IMB to points around the world. As always, this was a highlight of the meeting, and it served as a sterling reminder that this is the work we cooperate to accomplish. Thankfully, Mississippi Baptists were represented among those missionaries, and I want to encourage you to be praying for them as they go.

Another highlight of the meeting was the gathering of Mississippians and friends for our Mississippi Reception on Monday evening. We had around 300 people join us for the fellowship, and the spirit of joy was palpable in the room. There's nothing like being in a relatively strange place and seeing family, and that's exactly what the evening entailed.

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Dr. Parker (right) visits with Mississippi Baptists during the Mississippi Baptist Fellowship at the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis on June 10. (Photo credit: Tanner Cade)

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In addition, we passed a healthy measure of resolutions addressing a variety of topics. The one resolution that has

garnered the most attention is focused on In Vitro Fertilization. Once again, some have misunderstood this resolution to be a condemnation of IVF, but a close reading of the statement clearly indicates that it is simply a caution about the use of the practice to insure consistency with our belief in the sanctity of human life. It's difficult to reconcile the destruction of fertilized embryos with our belief that life begins at conception. I suspect this issue will be further discussed in the days ahead, but this resolution is a starting point for Southern Baptists and hopefully the larger culture.

Several have asked whether this convention was good or not. I've said it was a good meeting, and I'll offer my reason for this conclusion. I think most people left satisfied with a good bit of what happened, but I doubt that anybody left completely satisfied. When 10,000 people are involved in making decisions, this is a very understandable and acceptable result. When the stakes are high (and they are for those of us trying to reach the world), emotions will be strong. We may not agree on every detail, but we can all find a healthy measure of satisfaction that provides a platform for cooperation.

All this to say, I'm still thankful for the cooperative work we do, and I'm optimistic that the days ahead are bright for the mission we pursue!

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