

SIMPLE TRUTH: What I saw at the Convention

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Parker

Last week's Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual Meeting in Nashville was filled with good fellowship, powerful worship, and important business. I've heard a good bit of feedback from those who were there and from some who weren't, and the feedback has reflected the diversity within the SBC family itself.

Of course, some want to focus on the negative, and I suspect something was said or done that most of us would take issue with to one degree or another. After all, this was a meeting of Baptists!

I'd like to focus, however, on the positives of the meeting. First and foremost, we celebrated the appointment of 64 International Mission Board missionaries being sent to minister in virtually every region of the world.

My wife and I had the chance to have dinner with one of the young couples who will be going to serve in Spain, and we were wonderfully encouraged to learn about the depth of their commitment. Yes, indeed, Southern Baptists are sending great people to do the greatest of works!



Brand

Second, Dr. Lee Brand, one of our own in Mississippi, was elected as the First Vice President of the Convention. Dr. Brand currently lives in the Southaven area and is a member of Desoto Hills Church. He is on the faculty at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis and is a deeply devoted disciple of Christ.

I've had the chance to get acquainted with Lee over the last few years and am thankful that he will be one of our key leaders in Southern Baptist life.

Third, I was deeply encouraged by the makeup of the crowd in Nashville. The messengers reflected a good healthy racial diversity, and I saw ages ranging from strollers to rollers (code name for walkers).

I was thoroughly impressed by the number of young messengers who participated in the discussions. While some suggest that denominationalism is on its way out, I'm thankful that the next generation of Southern Baptists understand that we can do more together.

Fourth, we made a lot of significant and challenging decisions ranging from electing a president to dealing with sexual abuse. While all of these decisions garnered significant discussion, we demonstrated that fellowship is possible even when we may not fully agree.

While many had strong convictions, the tenor of the entire meeting was one of grace. Though some may not agree with all the decisions, the gracious nature of debate was evidence of

the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The simple truth is that we aren't so much pursuing the majority opinion as we are the Heavenly opinion. It is the will of God that we want and need, and we trust God's oversight to insure that occurs.

Finally, I think it's important for us to remember that the objective in meetings of this sort is obedience to God. We are often tempted as Baptists to think that we follow a congregational process and are, therefore, seeking to determine the majority opinion on a matter.

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