

**A Statement by the SCBC President Regarding ‘Problematic Positions
and Statements’ by NewSpring Church Pastor, Perry Noble**
by Tommy Kelly, January 16, 2015

During the last few weeks, many South Carolina Baptist Convention churches have been disturbed and puzzled by the Christmas Eve sermon by Perry Noble of NewSpring Church, a church affiliated with the SCBC. This also precipitated a review and apology from this pastor on his blog. However, his 2014 Christmas Eve message and his theological position in that message are evidence of continued problematic positions and statements that are inconsistent with the beliefs of South Carolina Baptists. These events lead to the following statements:

1) As your convention president, I call all SCBC ministers to treat their individual ministry settings as a sacred trust void of coarse, profane language as well as choosing music that is sacred in content. We are all called by a holy God and must constantly be aware of our testimony for Him as His called servants.

2) Most ministers live an isolated existence regardless of church size or location. Therefore, I personally encourage all ministers to find and actively engage in accountability groups to hold them to a higher standard morally, ethically and biblically. I am a member of two such groups that meet weekly and attend them with faithfulness.

3) As Christian brothers, I ask all SCBC pastors to be courageous, faithful servants of our Lord by renewing themselves to more sound exegetical study and expository preaching and teaching of God’s word. Ezekiel 33 calls us all to be watchmen over souls and lives our Lord and Savior died for on a blood-stained cross one Friday over 2,000 years ago. All church leaders must take seriously their responsibilities to present well-thought and biblically based sermons and teaching that come from God’s infallible, inerrant Word and lead the lost to Christ.

Therefore, we as South Carolina Baptists must publicly state and remove ourselves from these positions and problematic statements and call for NewSpring to correct these positions if it chooses to say that it affiliates with South Carolina Baptist churches.

I thank you all for the privilege of being your convention president. If I can ever be of any further assistance, please let me know.

In Christ,

Tommy Kelly

Hebrews 11:1,6a

Editor's note: Perry Noble's blog post concerning his Christmas Eve sermon can be read at <https://perrynoble.com/blog/a-letter-to-the-church-i-love>. Tommy Kelly is pastor of Varnville First Baptist Church and president of the [South Carolina Baptist Convention](#).

The official publication of the South Carolina Baptist Convention carried a public rebuke of Noble and NewSpring:

The South Carolina Baptist Convention has told Perry Noble and NewSpring, that they must correct serious errors in their church before they can once again associate with the Convention. In a bold and praiseworthy statement, the president of the SCBC, Tommy Kelly, turned what has been general public criticism of NewSpring into official church discipline, though the public rebuke went much further than just the Ten Commandments sermon (wherein he stated that they were not Commandments, but something else). Kelly condemned Noble's pulpit profanity, his sloppy exegesis and preaching, his lack of accountability and inability to receive correction. It also criticized NewSpring's regular use of anti-christian music in its services.

After Noble's persistent defense of his error and his obvious antipathy towards the Baptist Convention, it's hard to see this public rebuke making much difference inside the executive offices at NewSpring. Instead, this is really a warning for everyone else. Kelly instructed every Baptist church in South Carolina to publicly state the truth regarding Noble's teaching and remove themselves from being associated with NewSpring.

The statement appears to concede that the Convention has already separated itself from NewSpring, and it demands that NewSpring must correct its positions on worship, doctrine, accountability and biblical scholarship before the church is again permitted to associate itself with the Convention. That the statement was made publicly suggests that Kelly doesn't think it's going to happen.

It's highly unlikely that a denominational leader would publicly ambush one of his own churches with something so serious, so I think it's certain that Kelly has already talked to Noble privately about the denomination's concerns. For Kelly to have gone public suggests that Noble rejected his correction quickly and unequivocally, with Noble understanding that the consequences would be expulsion from the Convention. On Thursday afternoon Noble tweeted, "Pressure is nothing more than a call to humility!" The statement, which didn't seem to fit any particular flow of thought in his Twitter feed, was likely his response to Kelly's warnings. Noble and Kelly probably spoke for the last time on Thursday afternoon. Kelly's announcement was published in the Convention's official newspaper and website on Friday morning.

Over the last week, Noble's Tweets have indicated that he is not willing to be corrected, and he resents it that other Christians are still criticizing him. Here's a sequence from the last few days:

Sometimes "fighting the good fight" means knowing which fights to walk away from. (Jan 12)

Unless a person is willing to be misunderstood they will never make a difference. (Jan 13)

The world would be a good place if sinners repented of sin. The world would be an AMAZING place if religious people repented of religion! (Jan 14)

Get that? Religious people are more harmful to the world than sinners. If you didn't know that his man was a pastor, would you assume he wanted to be identified as a member of Christ's church?

I think Kelly knows in his heart that Noble is gone for good, so he's doing the right thing as a faithful leader in God's church to warn others not to associate with Noble or his church. Assuming the separation is a permanent one, how might this affect NewSpring?

NewSpringers

Many will be surprised that NewSpring is even associated with the Southern Baptists, so discovering that they've lost that affiliation won't matter much.

Though some have already left over the Commandments sermon, if they've stood with Noble through his obvious error, they'll probably stand with him through a denominational rebuke, too.

Noble

Noble will probably be relieved to be done with the Baptists as a denomination, with whom his connection springs primarily from their \$20,000 investment in NewSpring's founding. Noble has announced that he has paid that investment back (with 3 percent annualized interest added), so he probably assumes he has no further obligation to them.

It's possible this affects his future publishing efforts. In late December Noble announced that he submitted the manuscript for his third book, though it remains to be seen whether any publisher is willing to take a risk on him now that he has built a reputation for embracing obvious error to the point of being disavowed by his own denomination. Noble's publisher, Tyndale House, is under intense pressure at the moment for knowingly publishing factually false and biblically unsound books. Mark Driscoll's next book was put on indefinite hold by Tyndale when he was engulfed in scandal last year, so it's not a stretch to see that happening to Noble as well. As NewSpring's dependence on Result Source demonstrated, there's not a huge market (that's not on NewSpring's payroll) that's anxiously waiting for Noble's next book.

NewSpring Staff

The example of Mark Driscoll's departure from Mars Hill Church and its almost immediate implosion must have a few NewSpring staffers concerned. How long can Noble continue his duties as a pastor if he stubbornly clings to obvious heresy? How does NewSpring survive if he walks away? It would be reassuring to see a few staff leave as a matter of principle, though there might be a few who are seeing the writing on the wall and are quietly freshening their resumes.

Fuse

NewSpring's mid-week youth ministry attracts many youth from other churches, even though they return to their parents' church on Sundays. Once parents discover that NewSpring's own denomination is warning people to stay away, will they continue to allow their children to be a part of it, especially if they attend SCBC churches on Sunday?

NewSpring College

The college promises to prepare its students for church work, and most probably plan to stay with NewSpring. Smart students should be tracking Noble's recent doctrinal trajectory and thinking about where he'll be (both doctrinally and physically) in two years. If they do stick it out, will other Baptist churches place much stock in a diploma from a church that has just been expelled from their denomination?

Clayton King

Best I can tell, NewSpring's official teaching pastor, has been silent on the controversy. Does he agree with his NewSpring boss? Dare he say anything if he doesn't? King's main vocation is as an itinerant preacher to small and mid-sized Baptist churches, many of which also send their young children and teens to his summer camps. Will parents balk at trusting their children's spiritual growth to a leader who is so closely affiliated with Noble and NewSpring?

A denominational leader like Kelly, who is willing to defend biblical authority at the cost of losing the denomination's largest church, is an admirable example of integrity and leadership.

Someone should offer him a book deal. (end of article)

May I say, every now and then a seeker friendly, purpose driven heretic cannot help themselves from exposing their own twisted mindset and revealing for all who are willing to hear, exactly what is wrong with the way they believe. Make no mistake about it beloved. You can believe wrongly. You can place your faith in a false gospel that cannot save you. In a "false Christ" who cannot save you. The Bible is very clear about this.

[Might we then hope that the Bridge Network of Churches \(aka the former Norfolk Baptist Association\) will censor Pastor David Slayton for introducing "The Circle Maker" heresy into his church?](#)