

Just Announced: SBC Endorses NAR-Charismatic False Teaching

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“In such a time of kaleidoscopic changes, is there anything that remains unchanged? When so many things have proved to be untrustworthy, is there anything we can trust?”

“One point, at least, is clear – we cannot trust the Church. The visible Church, the Church as it now exists upon this earth, has fallen too often into error and sin.” J. Gresham Machen

If the maxim “the devil is in the details” can be granted interpretative equivalency, then “apostasy is in the details” might serve to accurately assess much of the Southern Baptist Convention. To be sure, much of the apostasy embarked upon by the SBC is not merely in the details. It can be seen strewn across the convention, from the stages of every center of seeker-sensitive hoopla wrongly called “churches” to the upper echelon of the shakers and movers of denominational influence.

Apostasy, simply put, is the abandonment of a previous loyalty. Note that it doesn’t require a full-blown renunciation of previously held beliefs. All that is necessary to deem apostasy present is the evidence of behavior or commentary that defies that previous loyalty.

For Christians, apostasy is turning away from the Word of God in His Scripture, and its clear teachings, by evident practice and proclamation of contradictory teaching. That proclamation, again, doesn’t have to be an actual renunciation of what God has clearly taught in the Bible and to which previous allegiance was evident; it can merely be the subtle relegation of doctrinal standards to a condition of disuse, replacing them with errant practices that, while most often done for personal or corporate (i.e., denominational) expediency, remain thoroughly unbiblical.

This is the SBC today.

While not every SBC cooperating church and pastor fall into the category of open apostasy, it's certain that the denominational powers-that-be are eager to openly engage, employ, and encourage much that is antithetical to the clear teaching of Scripture. Sadly, the Bible-centered, Gospel-proclaiming, doctrinally-sound, faithful churches that do exist within the convention are the rare exceptions that do not set the rule in a denomination determined to avoid fidelity to Biblical truth in pursuit of its own agenda. From the top down, the SBC seems more aligned with the apostle's Words about the malignant godlessness of the end times ... "having a form of godliness, but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:5) ... than it appears poised to receive Paul's apostolic words of commendation ... "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." (Philippians 1:3) Such is the condition of a denomination in downgrade.



Something like past SBC President Ronnie Floyd's eager participation with, as Spurgeon called it in his day, "known and vital" error by [joining the NAR-heretical IHOP cult](#) to "pray for America" doesn't require too much in the way of Biblical discernment. When Scripture says "avoid them," (Romans 16:17-18) it's not difficult to interpret the Lord's meaning.

Or when the currently embroiled SBC "ethicist in chief," Russell Moore (*see the postscript to this article for an op-ed segue on Moore*), eagerly aligns the convention with the apostasy of Rome in order to promote a social gospel agenda, not much Berean savvy is needed to ascertain the problem. (*Neither is much discerning Berean brain power called for to ascertain most any of Moore's [other egregious doctrinal dalliances](#).*)



Or when the gurus of church growth in the SBC will abandon all confidence in the sufficiency of Scripture and exhibit zero trust in Christ's words that "I will build my church," (Matthew 16:18) instead opting for Scripturally illicit, worldly methodologies to be relevant to the culture (*which means proclaiming "another Gospel," as the apostle calls it Galatians 1:8*) in order to grow the church, it's clear that abandonment of Scriptural standards has occurred. (*When the top churches in the SBC are the likes of Elevation, or Saddleback, or New Spring, then, yeah,*

apostasy is an evident problem.)

So not all apostasy – the abandonment of Scripture and its teachings – is a covert “devil in the details” within the SBC, but a recent one is. It is neatly tucked away in the run-up marketing campaign in anticipation of the 2017 annual meeting.

The devil in these particular details is nothing less than the full endorsement of the apostasy seen in the New Apostolic Reformation and its related, errant charismatic teachings. While not broadcast as a formal alignment with the heretical, charismaniacal NAR movement, the details of this marketing campaign to gin up enthusiasm for the next SBC meeting make clear its reliance on false teaching drawn directly from its errant theology. (For more on the NAR, go [HERE](#))

The [recently announced theme](#) for the SBC’s 2017 meeting is “Pray! For Such A Time As This.” That theme may not be as reflective of the denominational panic over the need to stem the decade-long, [massive bloodletting of membership](#) from the ranks which was seen in the most prior two conventions. In 2015, the theme was “Great Awakening. Clear Agreement. Visible Union. Extraordinary Prayer.” In 2016, the official theme dropped the adjectives and emphasized the American election year, “Awaken America. Reach The World. Agree. Unite. Pray.”

The panic in the SBC for “building the church” (*i.e., saving the convention from its historically-unparalleled slide*) may be subtle within those themes, but that panic exists. Current president Steve Gaines, speaking of the new theme, said, “I want to encourage all of us to prayer for spiritual awakening across the Southern Baptist Convention.” “Awakening” is SBC-speak, it seems, for a reversal of tick-marks denoting the continuing egress of former sitters of pews from the convention.

A true spiritual awakening is a noble desire, to be sure, but so long as Scripture in the SBC is used merely as emphatic big screen verses plucked and flashed to bolster Sunday morning positive thinking lectures from pulpit-less platforms ... so long as sound Biblical doctrine goes avoided in preaching and teaching ... so long as the true faith goes uncontended for against incessant error and false teaching (*much of it being sold for profit by the SBC’s own media and retail outlet [Lifeway](#)*) ... so long as the Gospel from Scripture is supplanted with a false “Jesus loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life” version ... so long as the explicit “theology” promoted is increasingly more “American” and less Biblical ... an authentic awakening will not come.

Awakening is a function not only – and perhaps not primarily – of prayer, but of Truth ... Truth apprehended by the diligent preaching and teaching of the Word and God’s working through it. If the desire for an awakening is to awaken people, not to emotional frenzy, but to divine Truth, the necessary starting point is Scriptural Truth itself. From Peter’s post-Pentecost sermon in Acts forward, authentic awakenings have been bathed in prayer, but they have been borne out of the power of God’s Word truly preached and soundly taught. Thus the increasingly Scripture-void SBC will find continued intercessory pleas for denominational rescue unable to pass beyond the parapet of Hollywood lighting and stadium speakers hanging over the pew sitters engaged in Sunday “worship experiences.” God has exalted His Name and His Word ([Psalm 138:2](#)) and when that is diminished, slighted, or outright avoided, as much of the SBC does now, God does not bless, awakenings do not come, sheep are not fed,



and goats remain goats.

The [preemptory marketing campaign](#) – a “call to prayer” – for the upcoming convention has its own theme ...”In All Things Pray. My Family. My Community. My Church. My Country. My World.” The missing prayer point, “My Denomination,” is absent but obviously implied.

As should be expected of a well-oiled, highly funded (*thanks to your gifts and offerings to the Cooperative Program*) marketing machine, this SBC campaign features all the accouterments that any respectable marketing blitz ought to have. It has its own website ... [InAllThingsPray.Net](#). It has a vast array of resources, including digital books and booklets, printed manuals, prayer calendars, prayer guides and even recommended “congregational prayer ideas,” because, with Scripture’s absence being so widespread in the Convention, churches might not know how to pray, presumably.



A Great Commission Prayer Experience



As if to point to the unimportance of Scripture-informed prayer, the website for this anticipatory marketing campaign features, in its digital sweet spot, “A Great Commission Prayer Experience.” This recommended guide for a sixty-minute time of corporate prayer includes 10 minutes for “Scripture reading,” a segment of time also to be shared with “public leadership and worship” elements. That three-pointed focus will, no doubt, translate into a couple of verses being flashed on the big screens. *No need to open the dust-gathering pew Bibles, we’re just not going to get that serious. Just watch the big screen. Besides, we’re here for an “experience,” not because we want you to actually “understand” anything.*

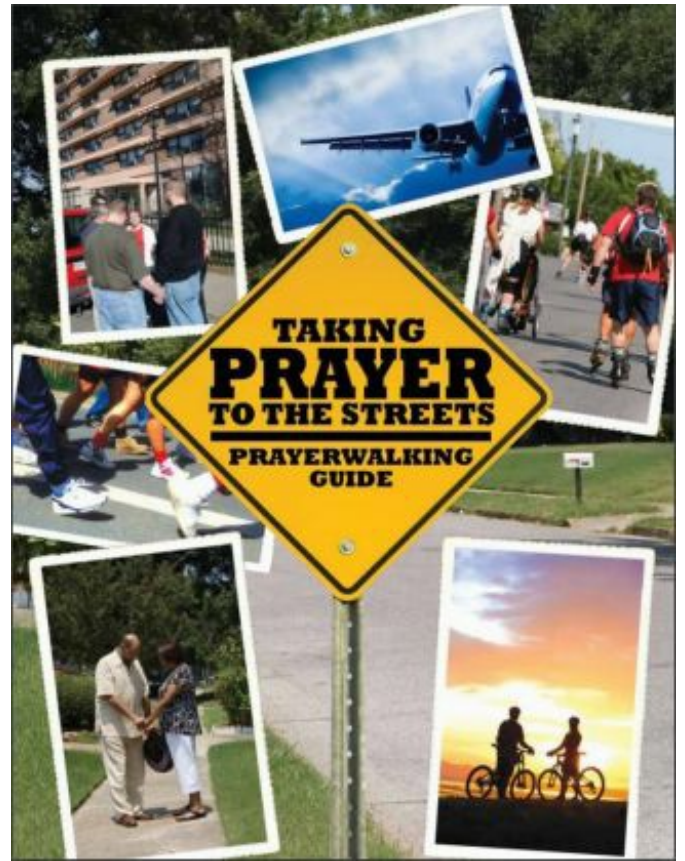
SBC REPACKAGING OF NAR TEACHING: A Downloadable PDF For Training Your Church

One of the resources offered by the In All Things Pray website comes in the category titled “Prayer Walking Guides.” Entitled Taking Prayer To The Streets: Prayerwalking Guidebook, this resource instructs churches on how to implement a prayer-walking program. It is within this 48 page PDF where the SBC’s covert endorsement of NAR false teaching may be found.

According to the Acknowledgements preface to the guidebook, “Taking Prayer To The Streets was written by Dr. Thomas Wright for the North American Mission Board (NAMB).” This guidebook, then, and the resources it explicitly recommends, were specifically developed and intentionally targeted for Southern Baptists.

The guidebook’s “Condensed Leader’s Guide” includes the following comment, re-emphasizing again the panic over continued numbers-crunching denominational demise.

“Probably one of the greatest sins among Southern Baptists is our prayerlessness. It is our greatest neglect, but at the same time, it is America’s and the world’s greatest need. The reason we aren’t experiencing a sweeping revival in America is because of the lack of urgent prayer. The reason our baptisms have been going down in the Southern Baptist Convention is because we don’t pray fervently.”



As is evident to any Bible-abiding believer ([John 8:31](#)) familiar with the SBC, the problem with the denomination is not primarily a lack of prayer; the problem is the profound and widespread disregard of Scripture. The solution to the problems of America and the world isn’t the ginned up frenzy of Scripture-void prayer; the solution is the Truth of God’s Word being clearly and consistently proclaimed. The lack of Scriptural Truth permeating the SBC, though, is echoed by the very culture it seeks to coddle into its pews with man-centered preaching, a gospel that is “all about you,” and Sunday after Sunday of feel-good experiences that entertain goats but starve sheep. Scripture – God’s Word – is the premise of the faith and Scriptural Truth is the solution for the SBC, America, and the world.

The prayer-walking guidebook, in offering instruction on how to implement the maneuver, serves up a number of Scripturally-spurious suggestions, many drawn from the unbiblical, NAR-charismatic approach to spiritual warfare. For example, the guidebook includes the point “**pray for the unsaved in your community**,” along with the instruction that participants should “**Ask God to deliver them [the unsaved] from the spirit of disobedience.**” But being “dead in trespasses and sins” as Scripture teaches ([Ephesians 2:5](#)) is not a function of the lost being enslaved to an evil spirit to be saved as the result of answered, fervent prayer; it is the default condition of every man as a result of the fall. ([Psalm 51:5](#)) Only God can make the dead live, and He does that not by answering believers’ prayers against the demonic, but by believers sharing the Gospel with the lost and God saving whom He will by that planted seed. Skip the hocus-pocus focus on the demonic. Spiritual warfare is fought when the Gospel is proclaimed. It is the power. ([Romans 1:16](#)) The Word is the weapon. ([Ephesians 6:17](#))

In justifying the need to pray for the unsaved, the guidebook gives a number of reasons with a glaringly unbiblical concluding point. “**Why pray for the unsaved? Because they can refuse to go to church. They can refuse to**

listen to your witness. They can throw away your tracts. They can refuse to let you in. They can hang up on you. But *they can't prevent Jesus from knocking on the door of their hearts in response to your prayers.*"
(Emphasis added)

❖ **Why pray for the unsaved?**

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- They can refuse to listen to your witness.
- They can throw away your tracts.
- They can refuse to let you in.
- They can hang up on you.
- But they can't prevent Jesus from knocking on the door of their hearts in response to your prayers.

From "Taking Prayer To The Streets," pg. 5

In case you haven't brushed up on Biblical soteriology lately, Jesus is not knocking on the door of anyone's heart. Such a notion is absent from the pages of Scripture. Jesus doesn't do that whether or not your prayers have implored Him to do so. What Scripture teaches is that salvation belongs to the Lord ([Psalm 3:8](#), [Revelation 7:10](#)) and He saves whom He will ([Romans 9:14-18](#), [Ephesians 1:11](#)) – not by pleadingly rapping on the door of the spiritually dead heart, but by opening the eyes to see, making the ears to hear and breathing life into dead souls. *And what is the mechanism of that divinely executed regeneration?* The Gospel is the power of God for salvation. ([Romans 1:16](#)) When it goes unshared, the already damned ([John 3:18](#)) remain unaffected by divine Truth.

The primary goal of prayer-walking, though, isn't evangelism. The guidebook does emphasize praying for the lost, but not actively proclaiming the gospel to the lost. In so much of the SBC and the wider evangelical church, the notion of "sharing the Gospel" has become wrongly synonymous with "inviting someone to church." But such an invitation is not a "witness," and, frankly, inviting an unbeliever to the typical SBC church might just be the absolute worst thing one could do, for the Gospel of Scripture is likely to have been replaced with "another Gospel" ([Galatians 1:8](#)) that will do them no eternal good (*though it might fill a pew, slosh the baptistry waters, and create another 'giving unit' for the church's coffers. The SBC might make a church member without the true Gospel, but God alone makes a saint for the kingdom through the authentic Gospel.*) Still, the guidebook does add, almost blushing, the suggestion, **"Try to share the Gospel with those who are not saved."**

Another way of "taking prayer to the streets," according to this SBC guidebook is to **"Claim your community for Christ."** **"We need to reclaim our streets for God,"** it states. What it doesn't state – and cannot state – is any Biblical command that substantiates this imperative. Scripture, in no place, tells the believer to claim anything for Christ or to "reclaim our streets" for God. This "territory view" is a patently false maneuver drawn from the errant spiritual warfare teachings of known NAR charlatans. (For more on this Biblically errant view of spiritual warfare, go [HERE](#))

"We need to bind the powers of the evil one over homes – whatever we bind on earth is bound in heaven."

The presence of this line alone in an SBC prayer-walking guide is proof that the SBC, NAMB, the "NAMB Prayer and Spiritual Awakening office," the "state convention prayer leaders, nor the "NAMB Intentional Community Evangelism (ICE) staff" – all of whom were engaged at some level in editing, revising, or augmenting the prayer-walking guide, according to its own "Acknowledgements" page – none of them care what Scripture actually teaches. This suggestion is unfounded in Scripture and, to the extent it cites Scripture, totally obliterates its proper usage. (For more on the illicit teaching of "binding Satan" see [HERE](#).)

"God awaits our prayers to release the spiritual power that enables us to follow through on His plan."

Quick, someone please get Kenneth Copeland on the phone because this Scripturally-noxious line from the SBC guidebook is right at home with the charlatan-rich word-faith crowd. However, it has no place in authentic Biblical Christianity.

“This intentional prayer releases God’s power and love, as we agree with His plans for an area.”

Again, this theological absurdity is rampant in charismatic circles but is absent from the teaching of Holy Scripture.

TAKING PRAYER TO THE STREETS

Acknowledgements

Taking Prayer to the Streets was written by Dr. Thomas Wright for the North American Mission Board (NAMB). This condensed version was produced to assist Southern Baptists implement God’s Plan for Sharing (GPS), “Every believer sharing and every person hearing by 2020.” The revisions were made by the NAMB Prayer and Spiritual Awakening office with valued input from PrayerLink, the SBC state convention prayer leaders. The NAMB Intentional Community Evangelism (ICE) staff contributed the condensed leader’s and listener’s guides that are used to train prayerwalkers before ICE outreach events.

2009, North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Alpharetta, Georgia

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TAKING PRAYER TO THE STREETS

ENDNOTES

- ¹Steve Hawthorne defines prayer journeys as “intercessors traveling to cities other than their own in order to prayerwalk within, throughout or around them.” *PrayerWalk Organizer Guide*. (Austin: PrayerWalk USA, 1996), p. 12. His definitive book is entitled *PrayerWalking: Praying On-Site with Insight*.
- ²Words by Joseph Scriven, Tune CONVERSE by Charles Converse. Broadman Hymnal, 1991 edition, p. 182.
- ³Finney, p. 85.
- ⁴Words by William Walford, Tune SWEET HOUR by William Bradbury, Broadman Hymnal, 1991 edition, p. 445.
- ⁵Thom Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), p. 79.
- ⁶*Power Through Prayer*, p. 43.
- ⁷T. W. Hunt, *The Doctrine of Prayer*, (Nashville: Convention Press, 11th ed., 1999), p. 123.
- ⁸William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 226.
- ⁹Quoted in *Purpose in Prayer*, p. 143.
- ¹⁰Charles Finney, *Revivals of Religion*, (Virginia Beach: CBN University Press, 1978), p. 65.
- ¹¹Henry Blackaby and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God*, (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1990), p. 32.
- ¹²Spurgeon, p. 49.

The SBC prayer-walking guidebook emphasizes much that might be popular in undiscerning pews but is decidedly absent from the clear teaching of Scripture. Part of the reason, no doubt, is that – beyond the SBC’s dire need to fill emptying pews through selling what goats will buy – the teaching relied upon to generate the guidebook is itself illicit. The guidebook sources numerous spiritually dangerous false teachers. Among those listed in the “Endnotes” are the epic charlatan and enemy of the sovereignty of God, Charles Finney, the “experience matters more than Scripture” mystics Henry Blackaby and Claude V. King, and, finally, author Steve Hawthorne.

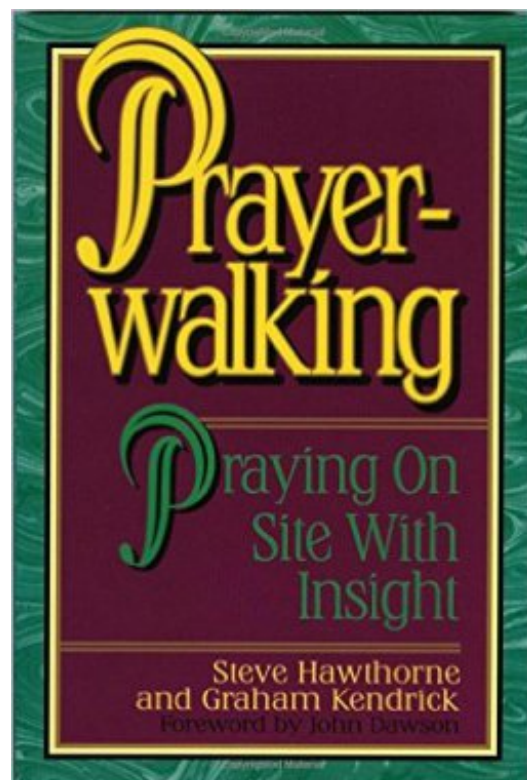
THE SBC ENDORSES NAR-RICH, CHARISMATIC RESOURCE FOR CHURCHES

Hawthorne, with Graham Kendrick, is the co-author of what the SBC touts as the “definitive book” on prayer-walking. (See “End Notes” screen grab above) It is this hearty recommendation of Hawthorne’s book, *Prayer-Walking: Praying On-Site With Insight*, in which the SBC is knowingly and willfully aligning the SBC with the apostasy of deceptive NAR-charismatic theology.

Provided below is a baker’s dozen of quotations taken from Hawthorne’s book, enough to show more than a glimpse of the false teaching it proffers and which the SBC heartily endorses.

“We define prayer-walking simply as praying on-site with insight.”

(This might sound like common sense, but Scripture does not prescribe the necessity of believers being in a specific place in order to apprehend the condition of the lost to be found there. The lost in a distant foreign land need the same thing as the lost across the street ... the Gospel. It is the one universal imperative for all men’s souls because Christ alone is “the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6) Thus, I can pray effectively for its proclamation, and I can do so on my knees beside my desk. Travel not required.)



“The act of walking emboldens prayers to push through feelings of futility and intimidation. Entrenched evil can post spiritual ‘No Trespassing’ signs which seem to enforce the misery of the status quo. Prayer walkers gently defy such fraudulent claims of darkness over their community.”

(Satan is, according to Scripture, the “god of this world.” ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#), [1 John 5:19](#)) The fact that he controls Main Street or any community on Main Street is a given verity. But if prayer-walking means taking back territory – which Hawthorne’s book and the SBC’s guidebook affirm – then the endeavor is fraught from the start with failure. Only the Gospel light penetrates the darkness of those whose minds are held in anti-God, anti-Christ, ideological fortresses. ([Colossians 1:12-14](#), [2 Corinthians 10:3-5](#)) The battle isn’t over Main Street; it’s over the darkened minds on Main Street and proclaiming the Truth to them.)

“...there is a place for binding demonic powers so that you can get on with the job. If we ever pray specifically against demons, we make sure we have mature Christians in small groups.”

(Well, in Hawthorne’s book, and according to the SBC, there might be a place for binding demonic powers – and binding, rebuking, and reviling the demonic is commonplace in NAR behavior – but according to Scripture, there is absolutely no place, prescription, or precedent for it. Believers are to proclaim the power of God – the Gospel – not presume to take authority over angelic majesties, or “glorious ones,” as Scripture calls them. [Jude 1:8](#), [2 Peter 2:10](#))

“...our task in spiritual war is to neutralize the ‘tractor beam’ hold these territorial strong men have over the minds and spirits of people who have welcomed them to dominate them.”

(Yep, another mishandling the Word of Truth. There are no mystical strong men that believers must first thwart in order to neutralize evil. This swashbuckling, Stars Wars approach to spiritual warfare may be popular in Bible-barren pews and pulpits, but it completely disregards what Scripture teaches about authentic spiritual warfare.)

“Take note of one simple proviso of agreeing in prayer: ‘where two or three have gathered in my name.’ Whatever else this gathering may mean, it must have something to do with physical nearness to each other. Incidentally, most prayer walking happens to be done in bands of two or three.”

(The illegitimate use of this verse in SBC-dom is about as prevalent as fried chicken at church dinners, but it is illegitimate nonetheless. There is not more power in prayer because “two or three” are gathered together. Jesus doesn’t suddenly spiritually show up when a crowd gathers. He hears your solitary prayers. The cited Scripture of two or three gathered is given by the Lord in the context, not of prayer, but of church discipline ([Matthew 18:15-20](#)), a practice that might just be worthwhile to implement for those who continue in teaching and affirming such a pathetic use of Scripture.)

“Faith exerted in prayer can be likened to the dynamic of leverage. Through prayer we lift matters of concern to God with our faith. Prayer walking simply provides a stronger leverage point.”

(This ... this is absurd on a logical, superficial level and, more importantly, on a Biblical one. To suggest that praying AND walking provides greater leverage with which to coerce God is, just on its surface, awfully unfair to Scripturally-obedient, spiritually mature, praying souls who are unable to walk because of age, or illness, or handicap, or any number of reasons. *I guess they just don’t get the advantage of the added spiritual leverage this maneuver purports to provide?* There may be no difference between Jew and Gentile, but according to this SBC-endorsed book, a walking pray-er has more coercive leverage over heaven than an immobile one. This is, yet again, thorough hogwash. If you are praying to God, walking or not, and believe that you exercise any leverage over Him, you neither know God nor Scripture. Examine yourself. ([2 Corinthians 13:5](#)) Here’s a well-known secret – God doesn’t *need* you. He doesn’t *need* your prayers. He doesn’t act on the basis of your prayers. He is sovereign and does as He wills. ([Psalm 115:3](#)) This teaching of spiritual leverage in prayer-walking is blasphemy against the sovereignty of God. *Thanks again, SBC. Your endorsement reflects much ... that isn’t Scriptural.*)

“...prayer is as much listening to God as it is speaking to God.”

(In case you are not aware of this, God does not speak to you in prayer. There is no still small voice. You are not Elijah. And yes, Jesus Calling is a violation of Holy Scripture in claiming to be the words of Jesus. Whoever that false teacher/author is hearing from, it ain't the Lord. As Justin Peters has said, “If you want to hear God speak, read your Bible. If you want to hear Him speak audibly, read it out loud.” This Peters procedure is highly recommended especially if you're a Southern Baptist; just try to do it, if you can, from behind a pulpit where's it's needed most!)

“Prayerwalking is an affair of vision. Physical sight boosts spiritual vision to sense God's future for a city.”

(Remember that time Paul and Timothy prayer-walked Ephesus in order to determine God's “spiritual vision” for the city? No? Me either. This sounds awfully spiritual, but it is nothing more than unbiblical, spiritualized fodder for the Biblically-illiterate gullible. You wanna know what God's “vision” is when it comes to you and your city or community? Go read the Great Commission ... [Matthew 28:16-20](#))

“Many prayer walks aim to expose, limit or displace the power of evil forces. They seek to bring healing in order to interrupt sinful cycles which feed entrenched evil. Malevolent powers are restrained so that good things may come forth.”

(More super-spiritualized, charismatic false teaching here, folks. The only mechanism we have at our disposal to displace the power of evil forces is the Gospel. When the Gospel is shared, God will act on that strewn seed as He chooses. The power of evil will remain in force until the Lord returns, but evil's power over the individual may only be thwarted by God acting according to His will through His Gospel to save. The Gospel is the power. ([Romans 1:16](#)) Your prayer-walking will not “displace the power of evil forces.” The Gospel does not need for “malevolent powers” to be restrained. The Gospel just needs to be proclaimed. *Did anybody in the SBC bother to read the Bible before endorsing this heresy?*)

“Our authority to possess the cities of earth as an inheritance has roots in our most ancient mandate: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. ([Gen 1:28, 9:1,7](#))”

(The Lord has not commanded us to “possess the cities of the earth as an inheritance,” and, frankly, you don't even want this world. If we know what's good for us – *and Scripture tells us what that is, btw* – you want, and I want, the new heaven and the new earth which is yet to come. ([Revelation 21:1](#)) This current one which Hawthorne and the SBC would have you prayer-walk to possess “as an inheritance” is facing a certain, fire-lapped, wrathful judgment. ([2 Peter 3:10](#)) But this teaching smacks of NAR dominionism, a false teaching that believers must first thwart the Satanic kingdom on earth so that the kingdom of God might be established. It is an anti-biblical theology that damns. For a helpful look at NAR dominionism, go [HERE](#).)

“We can be sure that the Son of God has asked the Father for the earth as an inheritance.”

(Again, smells like dominionism. Gotta take over everything for Jesus. Push back the kingdom of Satan so God's kingdom can be ushered in. *Ummm, no.* Scripture says, in [Colossians 1:16](#), “For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.” Jesus wasn't just the lucky beneficiary who won Himself a prize by His sinless life, atoning death, and death-conquering resurrection. Jesus IS God. He IS the Creator. He IS, as He said, “I Am.” ([John 8:58](#)) Everything is already His. So we don't need to take over territory, claim cities, or reclaim streets for Jesus. We need, simply, to proclaim the Gospel. Besides, Jesus, as Judge, has already told us what He's going to do with this divinely cursed world. ([Genesis 3:17](#)) It's rather explicit in [2 Peter 3:10](#).)

“...it's our responsibility to go and take the streets back, to reclaim the streets.”

(Umm, no. Wrong. Hit the “that's not in the Bible” buzzer. This is not found in Scripture, but it is rife in NAR teaching, and particularly within its teaching of spiritual mapping.)

“God creates by speaking words. When people bless, they align themselves with the creative force of God’s Word and release measures of God’s promise.”

(Yes, God speaks things into existence. He spoke and creation appeared. But the suggestion that when I “bless” I’m aligning myself with God’s “creative force” and thereby I “release measures of God’s promise,” is patently false. Turn on TBN and you’ll find gobs of word-faith heretics encouraging you to speak your reality of God’s blessing. But turn to Scripture and you will not find this teaching present. This is heresy. But again, according to the SBC, it’s a heresy that is recommendable.)



The SBC’s recommended “definitive book” on prayer-walking is actually a definitive book of false teaching. In his book, Hawthorne frequently cites known false teachers, NAR “apostles,” and word-faith charlatans. In it, you will find quotations from and/or references to such Biblically-noxious, spiritually dangerous sorts as C. Peter Wagner, George Otis, Jr., John Dawson, Dick Eastman, and Cindy Jacobs.

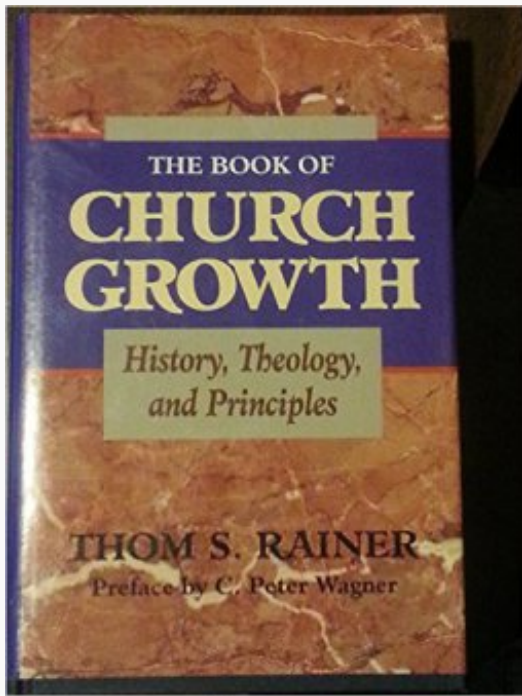
LONG BEFORE RONNIE FLOYD’S ALLIANCE WITH APOSTLE MIKE BICKLE AT IHOP – THE SBC’S AFFECTION FOR THE NAR

It’s noteworthy that the recently deceased grand apostle of the NAR movement, C. Peter Wagner, was well-known and well-lauded by many of the SBC elite. Thom Rainer, President of Lifeway, wrote his doctoral thesis at Southern Baptist Theological Seminar on Wagner.

In his heretical book, *Prayer Shield*, Wagner even lauds Rainer’s young son as “my favorite [aged] 1-3 intercessor,” citing correspondence from Rainer in which the then SBC pastor wrote, “By the way, my youngest son (two-and-a-half-year-old Jess) has heard your name so much that he concludes all of his prayers as follows: ‘...and thank you God for Peter Wagner, In Jesus’ Name. Amen.’” (*Prayer Shield*, pp. 124-125).

Rainer’s fondness for Wagner would find him, in his 1993 introduction to *The Book Of Church Growth* lauding Wagner as one of “two of my mentors.” “He [Wagner] is the primary reason,” writes Rainer, “I remain convinced that the best days of the Church Growth Movement are still ahead. The reader will see Dr. Wagner’s influence throughout this book.”

As to the possible charge that Wagner’s view of faith moved from what once might have been deemed orthodox to end up embracing the full-throated heresy of NAR charisma, a notion proffered by former SBC insider and Lifeway employee [Ed Stetzer in his obituarial praise](#) of Wagner, at the time Rainer was writing glowing endorsements about Wagner as his “mentor,” the charlatan had published numerous works with theologically erroneous positions.



The Book Of Church Growth, 1993

Wagner's books of heresy already in print at the time Rainer was lauding him included his 1991 Territorial Spirits, 1992's Warfare Prayer, Prayer Shield and How To Have A Healing Ministry .

By 1998, when Rainer's book was re-released – having dropped Wagner's name from the cover, but retaining his gushing endorsement of the apostle in the preface – Wagner had added further to his works of heresy.

His books Confronting The Powers (a Biblically illicit view of spiritual warfare, highlighting strategic level spiritual warfare, a/k/a spiritual mapping – see [HERE](#) for more on this), Praying Power, and, perhaps most notably, his feature book of the NAR movement itself, The New Apostolic Churches, were all in publication.

That Wagner was spiritually toxic would have been a hard Biblical reality for Rainer and the SBC to have missed.

This certainly begs the question, why would a high-level SBC official endorse a known false teacher, a man who claimed to be a modern-day apostle, and one that the apostle Paul anathematizes, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." ([2 Corinthians 11:13-14](#)) The clearest answer is the most obvious ... the SBC simply disregards the teaching of Scripture. The endorsement of a charlatan, frankly, isn't a surprise for a convention in which the sufficiency of Scripture is consistently, pragmatically absent. The Convention's willingness to endorse teachers that Paul clearly condemns as agents of Satan shows just how far the SBC, on the whole, has departed from Scripture and the apostolic gospel contained in it.

(No wonder, then, that Lifeway stores are replete with the works of false teachers and heresy hurlers. No one with doctrinal conviction is watching the store ... and no one is watching those who are tasked to be watching the store.)

Given the prevalence of charlatans – including Rainer's "mentor" – cited in Hawthorne's "definitive book," the SBC's endorsement of it is not a mere oversight. They didn't just have a Joel Osteen "oopsie" moment and mistakenly suggest something they didn't know was dangerous. The SBC endorsed it because it does not care what its pew-sitters are being taught so long as what they're being taught retains them as pew-sitters. *Just ask yourself, what is selling better among Scripture-ignorant goats than mystical, contemplative spirituality nonsense?*

Nothing. Just ask a LifeWay merchandiser. The SBC is willing to

endorse false teaching found in the heretical New Apostolic Reformation movement because it might bring crowds back to increasingly readily-available pews and, therefore, it is unwilling to "contend for the faith" (Jude 4) because doing so might alienate those prospective pew-sitting goats.

(Considering its million-member loss of the last decade, the SBC shakers and movers must be covetously eyeing the growth rate of pentecostalism around the globe. In 1970 the adherents to pentecostalism numbered around 63

million, but by 2014, charismania, most often accompanied by the spiritually toxic prosperity gospel, had claimed a staggering 631 million globally. Perhaps endorsing charismatic false teachers is an olive branch extended, inviting them in to an increasingly doctrine-void, Scripture-less SBC.)

When it comes to walking and praying, there is no Scriptural prescription for it, nor any Scriptural prohibition against it. In fact, to take seriously –as we should – the exhortation to “pray without ceasing,” (1 Thessalonians 5:17) then walking and praying, or driving and praying, or eating and praying, or doing anything and praying is not out of order for the believer. It is the undiscerning approval and insertion of heretical additives to the concept of “prayer-walking” that makes the SBC’s endorsement of the practice dangerous and unbiblical. It is the SBC’s eager promotion of NAR heresy that most clearly defines the convention’s posture as slouching towards apostasy.

The relationship of the SBC’s prayer-walking guide with the NAR-charismatic false teaching of spiritual mapping is evident. Speaking about this connection pastor and author Jim Osman said, “Prayer walking is not identical to spiritual mapping, but they do seem to both be related in that they are both a ‘territory’ approach to advancing some spiritual cause.”

“I wouldn’t be surprised,” says Osman, “if both practices have a common heritage, or if prayer walking was somehow adopted from the idea of mapping by those who might be a little less charismatic.” Given what associations the SBC has established in its own prayer-walking guide, the “common heritage” seems evident, for the SBC’s recommended, “definitive guide” on the maneuver is drawn specifically from the spiritual mapping/territory perspective.

“I think the practice [prayer-walking] should be avoided because it does communicate a territorial approach, the idea that we are claiming some ground, or advancing some spiritual cause over the area walked. I think it is too confusing to people ... I don’t promote or advance anything like prayer-walking.” Jim Osman

J. Gresham Machen was, as in the quote at the start of this article, giving an unwelcomed but accurate assessment of the woeful condition of the church in his day. Today his words ring with even louder clarity, if not too kind a tone. The “visible church” today – at least the portion occupied by the behemoth Southern Baptist Convention – isn’t merely falling “often into error and sin,” it is launching itself headfirst towards it.

The SBC, while bemoaning its numerical slide in membership, fails to see this very decline to be the direct result of the other slide which it refuses to acknowledge – the one away from sound doctrine, Biblical teaching, and Scriptural obedience. It is this doctrinal downgrade that is the impetus of denominational decline. When Christ in His Word is not exalted and obeyed, it is not a church of Christ at all. Christ will build – and is building – His church. The SBC cannot do it, as is abundantly evident from both its failing efforts and, more decisively, the teaching of Scripture. And millions of prayer-walking Baptists pleading for an awakening will not do it, either.

The decline in the SBC is directly related to the apostasy embraced, invited, taught, and endorsed by it. God does not bless disobedience to His Word. The SBC would do well to consider that. The sufficiency of Scripture is more than a printed claim on a doctrinal statement; it is the fundamental tenet upon which authentic, God-given faith is fleshed out.

Machen, supplementing his comments about the ever-changing world and the apostasy of the church, directs the reader to the singular place in which private faith and public denominational obedience must be founded.

“There are many things that change, but there is one thing that does not change. It is the Word of the living and true God. The world is in decadence, the visible church is to a considerable extent

apostate, but when God speaks we can trust Him, and His Word stands forever sure.” J. Gresham Machen

The SBC, today, is actively endorsing NAR, charismaniacal false teaching. It isn't just creeping in secretly ([2 Peter 2:1](#)); the SBC is inviting it, printing it up, and subtly serving it as though it were authentic. It's just yet another church growth maneuver to be relevant to an ever-changing, increasingly depraved culture. And it's evidence that the SBC increasingly is abandoning even the appearance of holding to, and teaching, sound doctrine. ([Titus 2:1](#)) In its doctrinal laxness and disregard of Scripture, the SBC is, as Machen observed of the post-war church in his day, “to a considerable extent apostate.” The SBC should repent and return to Scripture. As the inspired prophet wrote, that is the only firm thing standing in a world of constant change:

**The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever. [Isaiah 40:8](#)**

Please, whether you walk or not while doing it, please pray for the SBC. But instead of praying for the great awakening it wants, please pray for the awakening it truly needs ... the one that drives them solely to the Word. Until it finds itself there, its apostasy will continue ... And, when you can, share the Gospel with them ... believe it or don't, but I've a notion that many SBC pew-sitters haven't actually heard it ...

[Contributed by Bud Ahlheim]

A PostScript Segue on Russell Moore

Here's my take on the current Moore brouhaha, an uproar that speaks volumes about the overwhelming lack of concern by Southern Baptists for Biblical truth. Could the SBC be better served with “no Moore?” *Absolutely.* The ERLC is defense exhibit number one that proves the SBC's disregard for the sufficiency of Scripture. But, as if exhibiting the light-years of distance between the SBC and Scripture, while affirming its covetous desire for worldly alignment, political influence, and cultural significance, the SBC may actually jettison Moore for the entirely wrong reason. Moore was correct in his assessment of Trump, but the SBC, for whom political doctrine carries greater weight than Biblical doctrine, Moore may be “no more” for his vocal opposition to the now President-elect.

There is more than slight irony to the fact that, to all the egregious doctrinally progressive leniencies and ecumenical alliances incurred at the ERLC under Moore, the SBC has been blind and careless. But for him to attack the SBC's and God's “anointed man for the hour” has infuriated those in the SBC for whom politics matter more than faith. Nothing seems clearer about the SBC's utter disregard for doctrine than willingly tolerating Moore's progressive, ecumenical, social gospel agenda with nearly \$4m in annual funding only to then balk and shout “touch not God's anointed” when the “anointed” one happens to be the Republican nominee. Baptists can tolerate a man who insults Christ calling Him an “illegal alien,” but they can't trust a man who bad mouths Trump. This behavior isn't mere hypocrisy on the part of the SBC, it is abject worldliness that bears no resemblance to New Testament Christianity.

Perhaps this is one of those occasions when a 1st-century entreaty is divinely applicable: “Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear” ([Mark 4:9](#)) because, should the SBC pink-slip Moore *for political offensiveness*, it is giving vivid testimony to the world of its supreme allegiance to that false form of faith known as “American Christianity,” in which Christ hung from a cross draped in the folds of Old Glory. The SBC will be – by merely ejecting Moore to leave the ERLC intact – signaling its continuing, driving political and social ambitions, rather than witnessing to its absolute trust in the power of the Gospel and God's proclaimed Word. The SBC doesn't trust God to effect the change He wants in America and the world; instead, the SBC will lobby the halls of American power to achieve the results it desires. To pink-slip Moore *for his commentary about Trump* is to exhibit to the world that “contending for the faith” matters far less than compliance within the ranks to that impassioned, constant cry of pagan culture ... *tolerance.*

To pink-slip Moore AND leave open the ERLC is to effectively paste a “COEXIST” sticker on the bumper of the SBC bus as it goes careening doctrine-free away from Scripture and Truth.

Should, however, it shutter completely the doors of the ERLC, repent for its worldliness, and return to submissive obedience to God’s Word, THEN the SBC could serve a powerful witness to a dying world in desperate need of a bold Christian stance for the power of God and the transforming Truth of the Gospel. At the moment, though, that witness is not forthcoming from the SBC. The SBC decidedly is more concerned, by its evident behavior, with things below than things above, and to leave the ERLC intact is to solidify its clenched-jawed insistence on faith in temporal objectives. God may be sovereign in heaven but, through the ERLC, the SBC wants to call the shots here, as best it can. As it stands now, the SBC is increasingly becoming merely America’s protestant version of the anti-biblical apostasy found nestled on seven hills over by the Tiber.

Please pray that conviction and repentance would come to the convention and that Christ in His Word will be truly exalted above all other things in the SBC. Pray that authentic faith in God would be exhibited by evident trust in the sufficiency of His Word. Now THAT would be an awakening. B.A.

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