

Resolution on Gospel-Centered Revitalization

The messengers of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting together in regular conference June 22–26, 2009, at First Baptist Church in Elyria, Ohio,

Believing that we live among people who are lost and in need of Christ,

Recognizing that churches are dying at an alarming rate, as many as 4,000 churches reportedly close every year,

Understanding that believers are tempted to self-worship by doctrinal, generational, and cultural errors such as emergent theology, postmodernism, entertainment-driven living, psychotherapy, prosperity gospels, false religions, and evolution,

Affirming the core principles and power of the gospel as the sinfulness of man (Rom. 3:23), the sufficiency and exclusivity of the Savior's sacrifice (John 3:16; Acts 4:12), salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8, 9), our union with Christ by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6), eternal life guaranteed by the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:20–23),

Regretting that churches sometimes lose their focus on the Word of God and the lost people God loves, equating tradition with the Scripture, and practicing the power of God as if it is in methods rather than in the gospel (Rom. 1:16),

Obeing Scriptural commands to commit to the next generation a passion for the Lord and a focus on the gospel (2 Tim. 2:1, 2), we

Encourage our churches to emphasize the gospel doctrines as central to all we do, making that focus the foundation, motivation, and passion for ministry, understanding that our preaching, our service, and our daily walk are vital as they flow from the gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1–4);

Confess our own sinfulness, demonstrating a grace-bought humility in our ministries as we honor the Savior as preeminent (Col. 1:18; 2:8), cherishing faith in God's grace rather than worshiping our own efforts (Titus 2:11–14), teaching that our growth in love for others is empowered by the Holy Spirit and not by our self-effort (1 John 3:23, 24), focusing our treasure and hope on eternal life as our joy rather than on the pleasures of this present life (1 Cor. 15:51–58);

Demonstrate in our churches the beauty and power of the gospel (Titus 2) by placing a high priority on discipleship to help people live out the grace of God, and by emphasizing a passion for evangelism that demonstrates our joy in the power of grace to deliver sinners from the judgment of eternal Hell;

Assist our churches to start new churches so that the gospel may resound more fully in our nation;

Recruit and support young men from like-minded colleges and seminaries who will live the gospel vibrantly, preach it triumphantly, and plant churches in strategic places (2 Tim. 2:1, 2; Acts 1:8);

Renew struggling churches with love and resources, helping them to realize a renewed impact for Christ by making the gospel central within those churches and outward to their communities (1 Cor. 2:1–5);

Advance the gospel in all we do, demonstrating the power and plan of God until our Savior returns. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!