

Dr. Frank Page
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Dr. Frank Page serves as elected President of the Southern Baptist Convention, and is Pastor of Taylors First Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina. A native of Greensboro, North Carolina, Page holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Gardner Webb University, and the Master of Divinity and Ph.D. degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Before coming to Taylors, where he has served the past six years, Page served as pastor of Warren Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia; Gambrell Street Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas; LaFayette Baptist Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and the First Baptist Church of Possum Kingdom, Texas. He is the author of the book, *Trouble with the Tulip: A Closer Examination of the Five Points of Calvinism*.

We are grateful for our SBC President to be our first guest host on the Baptist Blog! Please contribute your feedback and comments on the link provided at the end of the blog.

1. What do you see as the greatest strength of the Southern Baptist Convention right now?

I see the greatest strength of the Southern Baptist Convention being the massive number of godly people who truly desire to see our convention become a mission focused, Bible centered, evangelistic force for God in the 21st century.

2. What do you see as the greatest weakness or problem in the Southern Baptist Convention right now?

I believe the greatest weakness or problem in the Southern Baptist Convention right now is the deep factionalism that has occurred over many years. It is now so profound that many groups will not work together, fellowship together, or do missions and evangelism together.

3. What do you think is the greatest threat or challenge to the Southern Baptist Convention right now?

The greatest threat or challenge to the Southern Baptist Convention right now is the huge number of one-generation churches which predominate our denomination. Not only have a majority of churches failed to reach out to their neighborhoods with differing socio economic or ethnic groups, they have failed to reach out to other generations within their own ethnic group.

4. What do you believe is the greatest opportunity for the Southern Baptist Convention right now?

The greatest opportunity for the Southern Baptist Convention right now is the possibility of a selfless, unified movement where God's people seek God's agenda, God's control of our convention, and a Holy Spirit renewal from God. I believe that we stand in a time where this could happen. Many of God's people within our convention are so tired of the situation as it is now. I believe we have a great opportunity for coming together, recognizing differences, but pulling together in a common task.

5. Some have suggested that the Southern Baptist Convention is likely to decline in the near future. What is your assessment of the future of the Southern Baptist Convention?

I do concur with the assessment that the Southern Baptist Convention is likely to decline in the near future, if we maintain the present course. My assessment of the future is one of optimism. I do believe that there are a huge number of people in our convention who want to move forward in a positive way. I believe there are people in our churches who want to learn how to reach out to other generations as well as other cultural and ethnic groups. I see signs of hope! However, if we continue to fight among ourselves, then our future is dark.

6. What would you say to a young (or old) pastor who is considering leaving the SBC? Why should they stay a Southern Baptist?

I have said to many young and old pastors who are considering leaving the SBC that I would beg them to give our convention another chance. While some leave and some need to leave, I am asking our churches and pastors to move past any hurts, disappointments, and struggles to pull together in a common task of winning our world to Christ. I believe that we can do more together than we can apart. I am asking that the Spirit of Christ, which is a selfless, servant spirit predominate our convention and its leadership in the days ahead.

7. The resurgence of Calvinism in the SBC has been a controversial issue in some ways. What is your perspective on the resurgence of Calvinism in the SBC?

Most people know that I am a non-Calvinist in my soteriology. I do believe that the issue of Calvinism is going to be a major point of discussion in the days ahead. I believe that it can be a major point of division within our convention. I would ask pastors, ministerial students, and churches to follow the advice of Dr. Paige Patterson, President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in his call for total honesty when dealing with potential pastoral changes. I believe this will go a long way in helping avoid major division and disruption with the churches. Both pastors and churches need to know where they stand in this area and need to be honest about it one with another.

8. The issue of elder rule has been controversial in many churches. What is your perspective on ruling elders as an expression of Baptist church polity and ecclesiology?

I believe that the Bible is clear in its description of pastors, bishops, elders, and deacons. While it describes those offices in the church, it gives latitude as to how individual churches will implement the actual governance issues of the church. I believe that the current move toward elder rule is one of several options, but is not prescribed in the Bible. Personally, I feel that many issues need congregational input while at the same time respecting the leadership of the pastor.

9. What is your perspective on the emergent church movement?

I have been quoted in the past as encouraging the emergent church movement. When I encouraged the involvement of emerging churches and leaders, I was referring only to those whose message and methodologies are biblically based. I was referring to those churches of which I had at the time become aware. I was and am referring to a group of young leaders in churches who are reaching the lost with a clear message of Christ, albeit in non-traditional methods. However, they are biblically sound in both message and methodology. I have become aware of some groups, pastors, and churches who are obviously not biblically sound in either message or methodology. I encourage young and non-traditional leadership which is biblically based and sound.

10. What would you say is the most significant theological issue confronting Southern Baptists in this generation?

I believe that the most significant theological issue confronting Southern Baptists in this generation is the issue of ecclesiology. What is the church? What does Christ want the church to look like? Does Christ want the church to reach out to all generations? How can that be done in the 21st century? I believe that these questions must be answered if we are going to be able to reach this world in this new day. I believe this will call for churches and denominations to be willing to shift to new methodologies and practices which are biblically based but culturally relevant.