
Lifelines Outreach

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Mail Donations to 3225 Knobdale Road, Nashville TN 37214

Lifelines Outreach shares the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and by making disciples in the greater Nashville area. Sharing includes feeding the hungry and loving our neighbors.

I have no doubt about the importance of a praying life and our desire to be a witness for Christ. You see this principle in the Book of Acts and all through the life of Paul in the New Testament. Paul was imprisoned when he was writing to the church of Ephesus when he said in Chapter 6:18-20 that we are to always pray and also we are to pray in the Spirit. He goes on to say that we are to pray in perseverance for all the saints. Then Paul asks for specific prayers for himself. He wants them to pray that he would be bold in his witness even under these terrible circumstances in his life. His heart's desire is to make known the mystery of the Gospel. He ends with the affirmation that this is what he is supposed to do as an obedient Christian and follower of Jesus. In the Book of Acts we see that every time the church had a prayer meeting, they went out and spoke the Word of God with boldness.

I have learned many witnessing plans in my years of being on church staff. The first one that I learned was Evangelism Explosion followed by Continuing Witness Training, Faith, and then Net Evangelism produced by the North American Missions Board (NAMB). Most of them I found to be so complicated and hard to remember. I picked up a copy of William Faye's book, *Share Jesus Without Fear*, and as I read the book, I thought to myself that this is something I could do. As God provided the opportunities I began using this method to share my faith. One of the things that really helped me in the process was witnessing on Saturday mornings with the homeless at a ministry called Layman Lessons. It was not unusual to share the Gospel with 10-20 people who expressed an interest in changing their lives. I did this each Saturday morning for nearly four years. The more I shared the Gospel each week, the more confidence I gained, and I became more competent as I refined the presentation to my personality. I learned the importance of having a plan to be ready to share at any time or at any place. God used these experiences to energize my prayer life and Bible reading. As I gained a better understanding of the Gospel and its importance in the Biblical plan God began to teach me more truth out of His Word. I found that having a plan helps you in several ways. First it presents the Gospel very clearly. It helps you have confidence when you are nervous. It gives you a guide to keep you on the subject. It presents the claims of Christ clearly without getting involved with other issues. *Share Jesus Without Fear* has the Bible verses printed out in case you forget. It gives you visual help as well as verbal help as you use the Bible. It offers suggestions for Christian growth, and it is easily taught to other Christians. Learning to share your faith is the most important thing that you can do to energize your Christian life. Take time today to think this over.

Thank you once again for your prayers and financial support. Remember to pray and to read your Bible everyday! -Richard Gay

Written by Russell D. Moore. He is the president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. We asked him to list 10 things he wishes people knew about Southern Baptists.

1. Westboro Baptist Church isn't one of us.

Sometimes people assume when they see Westboro Baptist Church with its hateful signs, picketing, and protesting that this church is one of ours. It isn't. As a matter of fact, Westboro pickets us, too, most years. They reject what we believe is the core of our belief — that the gospel is offered to all persons — and instead they believe that God delights in condemnation and damnation. We are a missionary people, who want to see everyone — including people who hate us — reconciled to God through the gospel. That's why, when I have reason to write about the group, I usually do so with the Westboro Baptist (sic) Church (sic). If I lived in a place called "Westboro," I would probably add a third sic.

2. We emphasize hellfire and brimstone, but probably not how you think.

Southern Baptists — like all orthodox Christians — believe in a coming Day of Judgment. Like Jesus and John the Baptist, we warn people of the eternal consequences of their spiritual decisions. But some think that Southern Baptists think the judgment of God is reserved for people who don't believe or behave like we do. That's far from true. One of the first things we learn as children is that "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). That includes us, and when we speak of "sinners," we are speaking about all human beings (except for One notable exception).

3. We are defined by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is good news.

We share our faith with our neighbors and send missionaries all over the world because we believe that God has made a way for sinful humanity to be reconciled to God. We believe Jesus took on our humanity, died under the curse we incurred with our sin, was raised from the dead, and stands now as our High Priest before the throne of God. Our lives are hidden in Christ, so that his cross is our cross, his life is our life. We are forgiven of sin, but this is not just some sort of amnesty for the afterlife. In Christ, God has adopted us as his children, and we are named "joint heirs" with Jesus so that his future is our future — and it is more than we could even imagine right now. This sort of peace with God is offered to anyone, no matter who that person is or what he or she has done, on the condition of repentance from sin and faith in Christ. When we're not as joyful as we ought to be, it's because we need to be reminded of how good it is to be those who were lost and are now found. This commitment to the gospel is why Southern Baptists, through their International Mission Board, support 4,734 international missionaries around the world and why the North American Mission Board supports 5,611 missionaries, not to mention 3,600 Southern Baptist chaplains who serve in the U.S. military. It's why when there's a disaster — whether it's Hurricane Sandy or the Nepal earthquake or a famine in Africa — Southern Baptists are among the first in and the last out to minister to those affected.

4. Southern Baptists are committed to a believers' church.

We don't baptize babies because we believe that people come into the Body of Christ not by physical birth but by a new birth that takes place when one is joined to Christ in repentance and faith. Baptism, for us, is a sign of our identification with Jesus in death, burial, and resurrection. That has implications for how we admit members to our churches — only those who profess personal faith in Christ and who follow him in baptism and in how we hold one another accountable in our churches to live lives that reflect the lordship of Christ.

5. We don't agree on everything, but we're more united than you might think.

Many think Baptists are always fighting, and there's some truth to that. We were birthed, after all, in dissent from established churches and we've lived through all sorts of controversies, so there's a fighting side to us. That said, Southern Baptists are unified around a common theology. We believe, for instance, that the Bible is completely true and is the Word of God. Our theological consensus is found in our *Baptist Faith and Message* statement. There are lots of other secondary issues where Baptists happily agree to disagree. We all believe in the Second Coming of Jesus, but we don't all see eye-to-eye on the timing of the Rapture, and so forth. We all believe in both the sovereignty of God and in the responsibility of human beings, but we don't all agree on how those two fit together. We gladly join together across such differences to affirm primary doctrines together and to work together through our funding mechanism (we call it the "Cooperative Program") to send missionaries, plant churches, and train future leaders.

We will publish the other five points of this article with our August newsletter. Stay tuned!