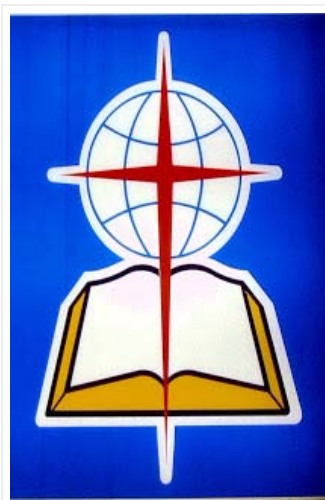


# Founders Ministries Blog

Commentary and observations from Tom Ascol, Executive Director of Founders Ministries

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30, 2012

## Response to "A Statement of Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation," Pt. 1



Today I had a document forwarded to me (from two different people) that was sent out to what looks to be a list of all the executive directors of state conventions in the Southern Baptist Convention. The title of the document is "A Statement of Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation."

The email to which it was attached came from Jeannie Maxwell, the administrative assistant to David Hankins, the executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, and included this statement:

Gentlemen:

I have attached a document entitled "A Statement of Traditional Southern Baptist

Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation" which some of us brethren have prepared. I believe it is self explanatory and that it can serve our Southern Baptist Convention well in these days. This document will be released to the general public soon. I wanted you, because of your leadership, to have an advance copy.

For what it is worth, I, along with other Southern Baptist leaders, am signing my name in support of the statement. The list of signers already includes Jerry Vines, Jimmy Draper, Paige Patterson, Malcolm Yarnell, David Allen, Eric Hankins, Mark Howell, Steve Horn, Emir Caner, Adam Harwood, and Chris Justice. Your comments are welcomed.

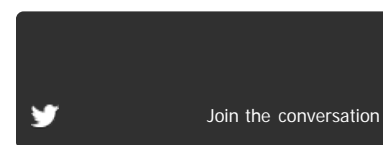
Fraternally,  
David Hankins

The opening paragraph of the Preamble gives the rationale for issuing such a statement.

Every generation of Southern Baptists has the duty to articulate the truths of its faith with particular attention to the issues that are impacting contemporary mission and ministry. The precipitating issue for this statement is the rise of a movement called "New Calvinism" among Southern Baptists. This movement is committed to advancing in the churches an exclusively Calvinistic understanding of salvation, characterized by an aggressive insistence on the "Doctrines of Grace" ("TULIP"), and to the goal of making Calvinism the central Southern



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### Baptist position on God's plan of salvation.

After professing to speak for the "vast majority of Southern Baptists" the statement outlines ten affirmations and denials on the following theological subjects.

1. The Gospel
2. The Sinfulness of Man
3. The Atonement of Christ
4. The Grace of God
5. The Regeneration of the Sinner
6. The Election to Salvation
7. The Sovereignty of God
8. The Free Will of Man
9. The Security of the Believer
10. The Great Commission

It is a serious doctrinal statement and is worthy of serious consideration. Over the next week or two, it is my intent to give it the evaluation that it deserves. I believe that this document, more than anything else that I have seen written on the differences that characterize many Southern Baptists on the doctrines of grace, has the potential seriously to disrupt the unity that Great Commission Resurgence has sought to foster and instead and to revive old suspicions and misrepresentations that too often have characterized past debates on these subjects.

I have no interest in participating in any such disunity. Neither do I care about denominational politics. But I do care about truth and especially the purity of the gospel. It is out of this latter concern, and with deep respect for many of the signers of the document that I intend to respond.

So join me in praying that the inevitable theological conversation that will result from this soon-to-be-published-statement will not degenerate into personal attacks or be carried out in a way that dishonors our Lord. Rather, may He grant us humility born of submission to His Word that will enable us to speak the truth in love.

[Continue to Part 2](#)

Posted by Tom at 5/30/2012 03:21:00 PM

+8 Recommend this on Google

Labels: Adam Harwood, anti-Calvinism, Calvinism, David Allen, Emir Caner, Eric Hankins, Great Commission Resurgence Jerry Vines, Jimmy Draper, Malcolm Yarnell, Mark Howell, Paige Patterson, Southern Baptist Convention

## 32 comments:

### Aaron Turner said...



Thanking God, that you are responding to this document, and praying for His wisdom in your life as you do.

3:34 PM, May 30, 2012

### Tom said...



Thanks for your prayers, Aaron. You are a dear brother and friend!

3:36 PM, May 30, 2012

### Prophet Among Them said...

My appeal is that humility, grace and sound exegesis prevail. I am bone weary of

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polemics. Some of the individuals listed on this document promote the "John 3:16" conferences. In doing so they camp on the 'whosoever' statement in that verse. There is NO SUCH WORD in John 3:16. Thus, my appeal for exegesis and not polemics. God is not schizdizophrenic and neither is His Word. This conversation is long overdue and I for one will be a participant with a motivation to see TRUTH prevail. All glory to the God of our salvation.

3:36 PM, May 30, 2012

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**Bob Cleveland said...**



The only people I have heard speaking of a movement to advance calvinism is those purporting to be opposed to such movement. I haven't, really, seen the movement itself. And, given the outline here, I'm wondering why the Baptist Faith & Message isn't sufficient. Particularly in light of the thought that most churches (with which I'm familiat) don't seem to have gotten around to teaching it anyway. Perhaps the signers should do that....

3:36 PM, May 30, 2012

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**Tom said...**



Bob and Prophet,  
Amen to you both!

3:37 PM, May 30, 2012

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**Matt Svoboda said...**



Bob Cleveland is right...

The ONLY people talking about a movement with "the goal of making Calvinism the central Southern Baptist position on God's plan of salvation" are non-calvinists.

Insecure, much?

(my quotation is from the document)

3:40 PM, May 30, 2012

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**Sean Crowe said...**



Thank you, Dr. Ascol. I appreciate your labour on our (SBC'ers who affirm the doctrines of grace)behalf. This was the first I heard of this upcoming document, and it saddens me, yet I look forward to your response to it. May God grant you grace and wisdom and boldness and gentleness as you do so.

3:44 PM, May 30, 2012

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**Martie said...**



The enemy seeks to divide us, discourage us, steal from us, kill us and destroy us. I'm asking God not to allow the old snake to capture any more to do his will (2 Tim 2:26). Asking Him as Jesus did to protect us from the evil one and to sanctify us in the truth (John 17:16-17).

3:49 PM, May 30, 2012

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**SAGordon said...**



Tom,

I am praying with you. I've also seen this document and agree that it poses a serious challenge to the common ground which has been gained in the last several years between Calvinists and non-Calvinists in the SBC.

4:11 PM, May 30, 2012

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**Bob Cleveland said...**

Baptists are generally susceptible to the teaching of other systems of doctrine, since they are generally unfamiliar with their own.


I have yet to anyone answer "Why does one have to be baptized to join a Southern Baptist church" correctly, be they member, teacher, deacon (a whole deacon body at once), or pastor.

Don't get me started.

5:19 PM, May 30, 2012

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**Ken Fryer said...**

 Tom,  
I am certainly praying for you that you will proceed in grace and truth. I pray that your brother Al is doing well...

6:16 PM, May 30, 2012

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**Matt Privett said...**

I concur with the opinion that this has the potential to do much harm... to in effect reverse much of the good and progress that has been done/made in recent years. I look forward to your response, Tom. Thanks for making this known.

6:47 PM, May 30, 2012

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**Prophet Among Them said...**

A house divided against itself cannot/will not stand. TRUTH does not produce error and confusion. TRUTH does not divide it unites. Seems the division is caused by those who seek to impose their definition of history upon others by popular opinion or polls. Only 2 spies had it right and the congregation wanted to stone them. But then, they were the only 2 of the 12 that entered the Promise Land. Go figure!

7:11 PM, May 30, 2012

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**justinwoulard said...**

 Well at least I know what I'll be talking about at the convention in a couple of weeks. I can't say anything about it at this point because I have not read the document, but I agree with everyone here that we have to move past our differences and focus on what we agree on. Some of my best friends in ministry are "new calvinists" others are not. I don't fall squarely in any camp. We argue over this kind of thing all the time, but it does not keep us from working together to build the kingdom.

I think this is more about the older guys losing the power they once had more than anything else, and seeing that the most influential people in SBC life right now are mostly reformed.

7:33 PM, May 30, 2012

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**Prophet Among Them said...**

In Cathcart's Baptist Encyclopedia you will read that the very first President of the SBC was the Chief Justice of the SC Supreme Court and he was a Calvinist. You cannot go back any further than the beginning and at the beginning the SBC was Calvinist!

8:02 PM, May 30, 2012

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**Joachim Rieck said...**

I write from Namibia, ( Africa) a former mission field of the Southern Baptists. Thank God for the "New Calvinism" , which has brought theological definition and doctrinal stability to the Baptist Churches in Namibia . In the hands of the SB Mission ( with its anti creedal/ anti confessional stance) we have lost many of our churches to the charismatics , and many more have closed down , but we thank God for the renewed passion He has given us in preaching , evangelism , church planting and missions. We thank God for our Reformed Southern Baptist friends in the USA.

7:14 AM, May 31, 2012

**Nate said...**

here is a link to the document:

<http://sbctoday.com/2012/05/30/an-introduction-to-%e2%80%9ca-statement-of-the-traditional-southern-baptist-understanding-of-god%e2%80%99s-plan-of-salvation%e2%80%9d/>

9:23 AM, May 31, 2012

**coramdeo said...**

When men cannot engage the truth to accept it they then seek to discredit it. To accomplish this they must misrepresent it and it's adherents. They lay out the same decoys their fathers laid out, so further generations are ensnared by the same falsehoods they succumbed to. The response must be gracious but swift and packed with bible truth to stop the mouths of those who reject it, and light the path to expose the errors lest men needlessly continue to stumble over falsehood masqueraded as truth.

10:09 AM, May 31, 2012

**Steve Loeffler said...**

Sad statement of severe arminianism that needs to be taken to task. These signers must receive an answer and a public answer using historic SBC docs - graciously but firmly. These signers believe they are the tradition when in reality they are the antagonistic late comers and not true representatives of the SBC faith. Go hard Tom; stand firmly gracious and graciously firm. There is little wiggle room. Let us see the downgrade and give opposition as Spurgeon once did.

5:07 PM, May 31, 2012

**GUNNY said...**

Tom,

I've got nuthin' but love for ya, brother. Thanks for being someone folks can count on to deal appropriately with such matters.

This most recent installment of bad bull beats me down, but I can only imagine how it must weary you.

I wish these guys would just say, "We don't like Calvinism and, contrary to the fact that its been widely accepted, if not heralded throughout our history, we wish it was more of a minority report than it is."

All the accusations about objectives and motivations have just become so tiresome.

I wish there were some who would say, "I'm not a fan of Calvinism, but can appreciate that those whose theology aligns with it are just trying to be biblical in their viewpoints."



How much more helpful and civil would these things be if folks took the approach of giving each other the benefit of the doubt?

Gig 'em, Ag!

7:43 PM, May 31, 2012

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**Tom said...**

Joachim,

Thanks for your comment and encouragement! Keep pressing on in Namibia!

ta

10:09 PM, May 31, 2012

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**Tom said...**

Steve,

Thanks for your exhortation. Pray that the Lord will use this to drive us all back to His Word and teach us His truth.

ta

10:11 PM, May 31, 2012

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**GUNNY said...**

FYI ... James White is planning to weigh in.

**Theological Fire Safety: Let's Put Out a Few Flaming Straw Men!**

10:11 PM, May 31, 2012

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**Tom said...**

Gunny,

You are a great encourager. I believe that much good will come out of this. It is helpful when brothers state their views plainly, even when doing so is mixed with unfortunate misrepresentations.

We must keep pressing on! Gig 'em!

ta

10:12 PM, May 31, 2012

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**Jeffrey Fisher said...**

What a waste of precious time, while souls are lost, Christians draw swords against one another.

8:15 PM, June 01, 2012

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**Steve Loeffler said...**

It is sad. But, when the truth of Christ and the gospel are at stake, just as was at the time of Dort, believers must take a stand. Spurgeon was the only one at one point taking a stand against the Baptist Union. May we be warriors for the truth in love though other believers get in the way because of some level of compromise. It is not so much that we are against believing Arminians as much as it over their doctrine. Oh, for grace.

8:38 PM, June 01, 2012

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**Unknown said...**

 Amen.

9:19 PM, June 01, 2012

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**Me said...**

 I'm not sure using historical grounds for a belief is a good idea. "Prophet Among Them" explained that William Bullein Johnson, the first president of the SBC was a Calvinist. He also used the Bible to support slavery. I'm sure there are times in our history where a majority of Southern Baptists believed some pretty bad things and used the Bible to support them

1:33 PM, June 05, 2012

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**Billy Edwards said...**

 Prophet Among Them...you couldn't be any more correct in saying that "whosoever" is not in John 3:16! The word is "pas," meaning "any, all, everyone". If you'll stick that definition in John 3:16, it will help your critics make their case ;)

3:20 PM, June 05, 2012

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**Doug said...**

 Billy, I'm not sure how "all the believing ones" which is the entire phrase literally translated helps critics of Calvinism. It doesn't help or hurt. In fact, the verse says absolutely nothing about how one comes to believe, which is what the Calvinist-Arminian debate is all about.

10:29 PM, June 06, 2012

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**Stephen Van Boeschoten said...**

 Pastor Tom,

Thanks for your understanding of the doctrines of grace and holding fast to the truth of God's word. I will be praying with grace Baptist here in Md for our Lord's wisdom to be with you.


And as you know my walk with the Lord, if not for articles 7 and 9 I would be on my own lost by own free will in #8. Thanks be to God that he directs my path and not me.

And on a side note some of my ancestors from the Netherlands were TULIP farmers. coincidence. I think to differ.

11:19 PM, June 06, 2012

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**Randy Volters said...**

 Are you aware also that another posting on the site has to do with the Sinner's Prayer and some motion to put to the SBC about it?

8:04 AM, June 19, 2012

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