INSIGHTS ON LEADERSHIP:
GOD'S PREPARATION AND SELECTION OF THE
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION'S
CONSERVATIVE RESURGENCE PRESIDENCIES

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ABSTRACT

INSIGHTS ON LEADERSHIP: GOD’S PREPARATION AND SELECTION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION’S CONSERVATIVE RESURGENCE PRESIDENCIES

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006

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A review of current literature indicates that very little material analyzes the processes God used to prepare and then select the unique leadership group, within Evangelical Christianity, known as the Conservative Resurgence Presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention. Many writings have covered the history of the resurgence and some writings have analyzed the biographical history of these men. But none to date have integrated these two elements into a specific study of the leadership preparation of this group of leaders along with the office of the president. The primary source of gaining insights into their leadership preparation and abilities shall be through individual personal interviews. Practical leadership suggestions for future presidents and leaders shall be gleaned from this study. The office and function of the office of the president of the Southern Baptist Convention shall also be examined. Possible suggestions to improve the function of the office shall be examined.

Abstract length: 150 words.
DEDICATION

I’m so grateful to God for my lovely wife, Kim. She has been a constant source of encouragement and cheer in writing this dissertation. I’m forever thankful to our Lord for giving me such a great partner in ministry and such a splendid woman of God as my bride.

I would also like to dedicate this work to Dr. Adrian Rogers, my spiritual father. He has truly passed through this life as a prince among men. His consistent dignity and character in Christ have been an inspiration to all who knew and loved him. He invoked everyone he encountered to “come to Jesus.”

I’m also grateful to Dr. Frank Schmitt and Dr. Elmer Towns for their wise guidance and patience in my life, not only through this project but in my ministry life for the past thirty years.

And last but not least was the daily diligence and motherly patience exhibited by my typist, Evelyn Jarvis. She has been a faithful conscience in keeping deadlines and typing voluminous pages for this work. May God richly bless her dedicated effort.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The world in which we live, the world of the twenty-first century, is said to be in a crisis caused by a deficiency of strong moral leaders. We need look no further than the moral leadership collapse of the United Nations Security Counsel as they were bribed by the Iraqi Dictator Sadaam Hussein with the millions of dollars of oil for food subsidies. The moral leadership shortage has also invaded religious institutions such as the wholesale cover-up of clergy sexual abuses within the Roman Catholic Church.

Within this same time frame, the evangelical denomination known as the Southern Baptist Convention experienced a moral/spiritual regeneration attributed to the election of a string of conservative presidents who have demonstrated a clear courageous moral beacon to the nation, and especially, the denomination. Collectively, these thirteen men have been a scandal free, spiritual light to their denomination, nation and world. They have demonstrated deep time-honored convictions and have not compromised the truth of doctrine or scripture. The study of the characteristics of their lives and their development as leaders is of vital importance to the world in which we live. This writer has chosen this group of religious leaders to glean time-tested principles of leadership from their lives. They will be individually interviewed to determine how God developed their leadership skills and elevated them to the most influential evangelical leadership position in the world, president of the Southern Baptist Convention.
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to document the process God used in preparing, selecting, and using the recent past presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention to establish and maintain its current Conservative Resurgence. This paper will provide insights into the leadership style and development of this exclusive leadership group within evangelical Christianity, the past thirteen presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention.

This topic was chosen through consultation with one of the project readers, Dr. Elmer Towns, based upon the writer’s personal knowledge of most of the Conservative Resurgence presidents and his election to various positions within the convention. The driving force of purpose for this project is to glean the leadership factors from the study group’s lives, organize these factors and make them applicable for future leading pastors and officers of the convention. Although this group has been studied and papers published regarding their sermons and their various roles in the history of the Conservative Resurgence, the corporate gleanings of their leadership preparation abilities and their accomplishments have not been dealt with as of this date. This writer will attempt to document some of the major characteristics of these men’s lives leading up to their elections as presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention. Throughout this paper the Southern Baptist Convention will be referred to as the S.B.C., the Presidential Questionnaire will be designated as the P.Q., and all references to the past presidents will refer to them by their first and last names, no degrees or surnames will be used.

STATEMENT OF LIMITATIONS

This paper will not purport to be history of the Conservative Resurgence nor will it be a theological defense or documentation of that renewal. Any historical references will be solely to prove or document the leadership characteristics or accomplishments of the various presidents involved in that time frame. It will, however, document leadership development of these men and their process of selection through their denominational and ecclesiastical service. It will rely heavily upon the personal testimony and insights of these men pertaining to their acquisition of outstanding leadership ability, acknowledged by their peers, within their denomination resulting in their election to the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention.

This study will be restricted to the thirteen presidents elected from 1979 to the present. This time frame is acknowledged by church historians as the advent of the Conservative Resurgence within the Southern Baptist Convention.

This leadership group was chosen for this dissertation due to the tremendous influence its members wield within Evangelical Christianity and the greater scope of American politics and morality. The Lord Jesus stated in Matthew 11:12, “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.” This leadership group should not be misconstrued as violent men or egotistical men, but men with strongly held convictions who, through strength of courage and intestinal fortitude, exerted these deeply held beliefs to reclaim the Southern Baptist Convention for evangelism, missions and biblical preaching and teaching. As Martin Luther, of Protestant Reformation fame, stated, at the Diet of Worms,

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2 New International Version.
Your Imperial Majesty and Your Lordships demand a simple answer. Here it is, plain and unvarnished. Unless I am convicted of error by the testimony of Scripture or (since I put no trust in the unsupported authority of pope or of councils, since it is plain that they have often erred and often contradicted themselves) by manifest reasoning I stand convicted by the Scriptures to which I have appealed, and my conscience is taken captive by God’s Word, I cannot and will not recant anything. For to act against our conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us. On this I take my stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen. . .

Adrian Rogers, the first of the Conservative Resurgence presidents, was referred to as “Bulldogmatic” in his fervent quest to defend Biblical inerrancy within the framework of the S.B.C. and its’ agencies and schools. When told by liberals, “Adrian, if you don’t compromise we’ll never get together!” He replied, “We don’t have to get together. The S.B.C doesn’t have to survive. I don’t have to be pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church. I don’t have to live. But we have to stand for the Word of God.”

With convictions such as Adrian Roger’s, this group of S.B.C. presidents have been chosen for study due to their strength of moral and spiritual character.

The major source of their insights shall be a detailed questionnaire entitled, the Presidential Questionnaire or P.Q. The sum total of their responses shall be contained in the Appendix F. Appendix A shall contain a chronological list of the Conservative Resurgence Presidents. Appendix B shall contain a copy of the election results of the Conservative Resurgence Presidents. Appendix C shall give the educational background of the Conservative Resurgence Presidents. Appendix D shall contain a copy of the cover letter used to accompany the questionnaire. Appendix E shall contain a copy of the Presidential Questionnaire.


4 Quote taken from Dr. Adrian P. Rogers’s funeral, Thursday, November 17, 2005 at Bellevue Baptist Church.
This study will be completed when the leadership traits and abilities are gleaned and documented from the lives of these men—the thirteen Conservative Resurgence presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention. Included will be practical suggestions for future presidents and leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention relating to the office of the president.

**STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY**

The author will begin this project by establishing the parameters of this study relating to the development and selection of the Conservative Resurgence presidents of the S.B.C. The major foundation for the leadership insights gained shall be gleaned from the past president's responses to the P.Q. The rest of this project shall be organized around seven additional chapters.

Chapter two will examine how God prepared the resurgence presidents to serve. It will encompass their formal education, ministry experience and denominational service. Three questions will be asked relating to the preparation phase of their lives and their view of how others could prepare for the presidency of the S.B.C. The following questions were asked: Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the S.B.C.? How did your mega-church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency (denominational positions, speaking, administration, dealing with critics, dealing with media, vision casting, and goal setting)? Can a group of young pastors be trained and mentored to possibly serve as president of the S.B.C.? Would that in any way circumvent God's sovereignty in the selection-election process?

The third chapter will develop the selection process that promoted these men above their peers to one of the most influential positions within Evangelical Christianity. The three
aspects of their influence will be reviewed: the anticipation these men held for the office of
the president, the influence of the positions they held at the time of their election and the
influence of their relationships to other leading pastors and conservative leaders. These
aspects will be developed with the following questions. Did you have a sense of destiny early
in your ministry life? How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.? (Special
consideration will be given to the relationships that culminated in their election.)

The fourth chapter will describe the leadership traits of these men. Their leadership
ethic will be defined by their definition of successful ministry as they answer the question:
How do you define success in the ministry? Their leadership traits will be illustrated by the
intentionality of their goals, as they answer the following questions: Are you a goal setter?
Did your ministry follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your
ministry life? Their leadership traits will be demonstrated by their ministry accomplishments
and their presidential accomplishments, as they respond to the questions: During your tenure,
as president, what do you see now as God’s unique purpose for your presidency? Were you
aware of it at the time? Before your election? In your opinion, what was the most rewarding
aspect of your presidency? What was the least?

Chapter five will deal with the abilities and leadership traits that are necessary to
effectively serve as president of the S.B.C. regarding, personal convictions, relationships,
communication skills, financial resources and administrative abilities. Two questions were
used to garner this information: In light of your experience, as President of the S.B.C., what
influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the S.B.C.? and what are
the unique pressures and responsibilities of serving in one of the most influential evangelical
positions in the world?
Chapter six will consider the future of the presidency of the S.B.C. and will attempt to answer the questions: Can any Southern Baptist serve as president of the S.B.C.? Should the office of the president of the S.B.C. be changed? If so, how? One question was asked of each of the past presidents to examine the office of the president: If you could change the function of the office of president, how would you change it?

Chapter seven will include recommendations for future presidents and leaders to maximize their influence and leadership for the Kingdom of Christ. Some of the recommendations will be specifically related to the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention. Others will relate to insights on general spiritual leadership. These suggested principles shall be primarily obtained from the interviews of the past presidents as they answer the questions: How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ? (and) if you could serve again would you do anything differently the second time around?

Chapter eight will conclude the study by summarizing the findings of this research. The conclusions will be drawn from the shared wisdom and experience of the past presidents of the Conservative Resurgence within the Southern Baptist Convention.

The author will attempt to document the process God used to prepare, select and elect the presidents of the Conservative Resurgence within the Southern Baptist Convention. He will draw biblical leadership principles from the lives of these highly influential, evangelical leaders and apply them for future leaders to follow.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The author is aware of only one volume written directly on leadership by the study group. Bobby Welch published in 2004, You the Warrior Leader: Applying Military Strategy
for Victorious Spiritual Warfare. Welch’s stated purpose for the book is to lead pastors away from the C.E.O. model of leadership promoted in many church leadership writings today. He instead substitutes what he calls “the Warrior Leader” approach.

Ergun and Emir Caner have published two very helpful works on all of the past presidents of the S.B.C. up to and including the time of their publication. The first was published in 2003 entitled, The Sacred Trust: Sketches of the Southern Baptist Convention Presidents. There are four page bibliographies of each of the S.B.C. presidents. They begin with their birthdates and dates of election. The second book is entitled The Sacred Desk: Sermons of Southern Baptist Convention Presidents. In this volume the Caner brothers introduce the convention climate that surrounded the presidential address that follows each of these introductions. The messages were given by each of these presidents and contain helpful views into their heart and character that accompanied their leadership focus at the time they served.

Judge Paul Pressler’s book, A Hill on Which to Die chronicles his life and interaction with liberalism within the S.B.C. He details the advent of the Conservative Resurgence within the convention and the rise of the initial conservative presidents. As a major architect of the renewal he gives a firsthand view of the selection, election process of many of the initial resurgence presidents.

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Jerry Sutton has given the most detailed history in one volume of the Conservative Resurgence in *The Baptist Reformation: The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention*. He goes through great pain to detail all the nuances of the challenge the Conservative Resurgence presidents experienced as they were selected to lead the S.B.C. His background material was extensive, for example, when describing the influence of Jimmy Draper. He quotes Draper on the diversity of biblical interpretation; “What do we do when someone’s ‘interpretation of the Bible’ begins to strike at the very heart of Christian faith? Baptists historically have emphasized soul-competency and the right of individual Baptists to interpret the Bible as guided by the Holy Spirit. . .but it is crucially important for us to understand that such interpretational autonomy was always to be within the parameters of the historical Christian faith. Beyond those parameters, autonomous interpretations become denials of faith.”

James Hefley’s definitive work, *The Truth in Crisis: The Controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention*, was one of the first popular treatments of the Conservative Resurgence. He pointedly describes the leadership challenge put forth by the presidents considered in this paper. In chronological fashion he documents the original conservative president’s rise to power and influence. On the crucial difference of their leadership he writes, “Before 1979, those elected did not announce their intention to challenge the power of agencies. They

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probably could not have been elected otherwise. Since 1979, all have called for changes in trends and policies in the agencies. They probably could not have been elected otherwise.\textsuperscript{12}

All of these writers give valuable background and insight into the selection and election process of the Conservative Resurgence presidencies. Their leadership skills are highlighted by their various accomplishments as presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
CHAPTER 2

THE PREPARATION OF THE
CONSERVATIVE RESURGENCE PRESIDENTS

The daunting task of presiding over the largest evangelical denomination in the world demands a certain level of preparation. The Southern Baptist Convention currently claims more than 16.3 million members and 43,024 churches nationwide.1 The attendance at the Dallas convention in 1985 had 45,519 registered messengers.2 It was the largest governmental meeting of a Christian body in church history. The attendance at this convention was larger than most of the cities within our nation. The pressures attributed to presiding over a business meeting of this size are enormous.

The past presidents during their interviews reiterated time and again the complexities that accompany the current service of this position in S.B.C. life. The media of the twenty-first century has an insatiable appetite for talking heads to fill their news loop. (This aspect of the S.B.C. presidency will be developed later in this writing.) Those who fill this position in the future must not only be educated, but equipped with a good level of media savvy and expertise, as well as the ability to communicate to large crowds. The apostle Peter asserted, "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone..."
who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

THEIR EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION

The importance of proper formal education becomes apparent as the resurgence presidents are studied. All thirteen have undergraduate degrees. Four schools have two graduates each: Stetson- Rogers, Merritt; Ouachita- Smith, Elliff; Mississippi College-Chapman, Young and Hardin-Simmons- Patterson, Graham. Five schools have one graduate each: Baylor- Draper; University of Richmond- Stanley; Mercer- Vines; Georgetown- Henry and Jacksonville- Welch. Their undergraduate degrees can be summarized as: (7) Bachelor of Arts degrees, (4) Bachelor of Science degrees, (1) Bachelor of Business Administration and (1) Bachelor of Music. The influence on their lives of their various institutions of secondary education become much more homogeneous: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (6)- Smith, Draper, Stanley, Chapman, Elliff and Graham; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (5)- Rogers, Vines, Henry, Patterson and Welch; Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (1)- Young, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1)- Merritt. Only six of the thirteen have earned terminal degrees. The only institution to grant two of these terminal degrees was Luther Rice Seminary of Atlanta, Georgia. Moreover, the group’s educational achievements underscore the importance of academic preparation to serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention; all of the resurgence presidents have published books and articles articulating their beliefs.

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3 1 Peter 3:15. All Biblical references from this point on are taken from the New American Standard Bible.

4 Appendix C- Educational background of the Conservative Resurgence Presidents.
The various levels of liberalism these men encountered during their education also challenged them to be leaders. It challenged them to attempt a change within the denomination. Adrian Rogers stated,

I would say that what prepared me to be the president were the situations that I faced at a liberal Baptist college and some liberalism in my seminary, but not nearly what it was in college, and the antipathy that I had toward that. I remember being at a convention, seeing a man who was an unlettered preacher on the platform, trying to make a motion or move that certain literature be discontinued, or something that would be done about liberalism. The man was unlettered, untrained; he did not know parliamentary procedure. I stood out there in that convention hall and I watched them adroitly maneuver that man off the platform and literally, made a fool of him. At the least, they made him look like a fool. He was a dear man of God, and they got all over him. And I thought “they could have helped that man,” because what he was saying was true. He just didn’t know how to say it. They should have helped him to say it, and God spoke to me, Darrell. He didn’t speak to me out loud, but He said, “Adrian, you don’t have to wait for them to vote for you to do right”. . . all of that prepared me to be the president because I knew where the bodies were buried; I knew what the problem was; I came to the presidency not out of a matter of wanting to be honored, as to be the president, and not wanting to help to oil the ecclesiastical machinery, but to do something, to change the situation.

THEIR ECCLESIASTICAL PREPARATION

In regard to his church and denominational service preparing him for the presidency, Rogers said, “. . . I, by and large, never had any denominational offices. . . . Bellevue became quickly the largest church in Tennessee, to give the most, to win the most souls, and so forth. But never a recognition from the denomination. I was never on a board, an agency, not anything until I became president. . . . my pastorate equipped me. That was the irony of the whole thing, the fact that I had never been recognized at all, not that I wanted to be, but I had gone from 0 to 80 miles per hour. You know, not doing anything to now being the president of it.”
Bailey Smith attributed his preparation to serve as president to his ministry at First Baptist Church of Del City, Oklahoma. The rapid growth of the church placed him in relationship to several men...“people like Draper and Adrian Rogers...My name was just out there, but at least the name stood for evangelism and Biblical conservatism. So I think that exposure and my reputation for conviction is what brought me to their attention.”

Jerry Vines attributed part of his presidential leadership and passion to the liberalism he encountered in school. He asserted, “Well, really, when I was a student at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia and encountered firsthand the liberalism in the classroom, God really began to build in me a conviction and a commitment to, if I could, do something to help turn our convention back to its conservative roots.”

Jimmy Draper traced his presidency to the concerns over liberalism in the denomination he developed as a trustee at Baylor University. As chairman of the Academic Affairs Committee, Draper was to help find a new chairman of the Religious Department. Jack Flanders was recommended by Baylor staffers. Draper read and critiqued Flanders book, *People of the Covenant*. ... and got physically nauseated. I never read anything like that in my life. I had no idea that something like this had been taught and used as a text book for years in most of our Baptist colleges. So I raised questions about it....I’m with it if we teach all views and let the student make up his mind, but this doesn’t teach anything but the liberal view.” Draper was attacked for questioning the appointment and critiquing the book. He later attributes his election to those events. “It was kind of one of those things, you know, there wasn’t any scheming to get me there;’ he said. It was just that because of over the
years my involvement and the Baylor thing and early when I nominated Bailey Smith. It was something God just led in.”

Morris Chapman attributed his preparation by God for his presidency to his pastoral experience as well as his denominational service. He stated, “As I pastored increasingly larger churches, it exposed me to challenges, both from the pastoral perspective and an administrative perspective and even somewhat of a communication perspective, especially in my five years in Albuquerque, New Mexico (at First Baptist) . . . then also, I loved the Southern Baptist Convention and love the Southern Baptist Convention to this day. So when called upon to do something, even the least responsibility in the association, I always tried to be faithful to do what I was being asked to do, believing that God wanted me to be cooperative in that sense. So I was active in attending Southern Baptist Conventions, and you just learn by observing. I learned a lot just by osmosis, without thinking about how it might be teaching me something.” Ed Young, Sr. also acknowledges his pastoral experience as being crucial in his training for the presidency, saying- “. . . so I think God prepared me to be president by having a background that covers the whole spectrum of Southern Baptist life, from a rural background to county-seat backgrounds to mill-village backgrounds, to a young, exploding church background to inter-city church in a capital city First Baptist of Columbia, South Carolina background to the opportunity to build a large church in Houston, Texas. All of that, I think, prepared me for the full spectrum of being the person who was the number one servant in the S.B.C. for a couple of years.”
THEIR DENOMINATIONAL PREPARATION

The spectrum of denominational service and training ranged from sporadic involvement in the cases of Adrian Rogers' and Jerry Vines' to over twenty-six trusteeships and positions with Jim Henry. A few had held the position of president in their state conventions: Bailey Smith (Oklahoma), Jerry Vines (Alabama), Morris Chapman (New Mexico) and Bobby Welch (Florida).

Jim Henry believed his greatest training came from serving trusteeships for the International Mission Board and LifeWay. He too was touched by the liberalism of the convention as the LifeWay trustees went through the Broadman Commentary controversy over the Genesis volume. He also described his participation on the Peace Committee as allowing him to see what was really going on in the inerrancy struggle. "...so I had those denominational experiences that prepared me," he said, "and of course, church experience, being a large church with multiple staff and beginning to learn that a church like ours was in the public view and that we were going to be called on. We talked about radio and television, those experiences in dealing with learning to say the right thing in the right way without compromising. I believe all those things prepared me."

Both Tom Elliff and Paige Patterson began their tutelage toward their eventual national influence from their fathers. Both are pastor's sons; and both had fathers who held deep conservative passions and convictions.

Elliff describes the initial influence in his life that ultimately drew him to the presidency.

I struggled with that, because never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine that I would be president of the Southern Baptist Convention. However, I was privileged to be in the arena when the first salvos of the Conservative Resurgence were fired. We were living in Kansas City at the time, early '60's, and my dad was
pastor of Bethany Baptist Church. The book came out, the infamous book from the professor at Midwestern Seminary, Elliot, and my dad began to take these guys on. This was 1962-63. He actually had a debate there in our church, filling the church up with seminary students, going toe-to-toe on the issue of the inspiration of the scripture, and along with all of that we had our First Baptist Faith and Message Statement in California. But I viewed it from that perspective. After leaving there, my dad went to be a State worker in Arkansas, and so, all the way through, having been a third generation Southern Baptist preacher, and all the way through, I’ve been able to view the Conservative Resurgence.

Patterson also reflects on the original influences in his early life.

I had the good fortune of growing up in the home of a prominent Baptist pastor, who eventually himself became a denominational leader. Dr. T. A. Patterson was pastor during all my growing up years in First Baptist Church in Beaumont, Texas, which at the time was the sixth largest church in the convention. Dad was very much involved in denominational affairs, and eventually became Executive Secretary for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, where he served until his retirement. As a result of that, I understood how the convention worked, from almost as early back as I can remember. Dad had prominent pastor, prominent missionary, prominent evangelist after prominent figure in the church and in our home and I had opportunities to mix with them and learn about them. And Dad believed stupendously in the work of the Southern Baptist Convention, although he warned me repeatedly that there was going to come a day when there would be a great confrontation and that I must prepare myself for that. He never dreamed, of course, that at that particular stage, his son would be involved in it prominently, but he did try to prepare me for that because he said every great denomination in history has eventually drifted to the left and we are already doing it. He said there will come a day when you will have to decide whether you are going to go with the crowd or whether or not you’re going to stand, maybe alone. So Dad and my home and my home church prepared me very much to understand the convention, and to understand Baptist churches and Baptist people, and Dr. Land always liked to say that ‘Patterson was born a Baptist Prince.’ And so, I suppose there was this much truth in that. I certainly was not born into monied aristocracy but I certainly was born into denominational aristocracy, after a sense. So I just grew up with it and in that sense of the word, probably even had enjoyed some advantage over the men who served as president who came into it without that kind of a background.

Elliff’s pastoral experience was invaluable in preparing him for the presidency, he said: “...I don’t know that I really ever met any difficulties or problems or issues in being president of the convention that I had not met in some way in my pastoring experience.”

Most of the resurgence presidents, however, felt left out of denominational life before the
shift within the convention because of their conservative convictions. Said Patterson: responded to this by saying, “I did a few (denominational positions), but yeah, I’d have to confess to you that I was not often called on in those respects because the denomination never trusted me.”

James Merritt, the eleventh resurgence president, said his preparation was twofold: “I believe that God prepared me through His providentially appointing me to certain key positions in the S.B.C. (chairman of the Executive Committee, chairman of the Resolutions Committee, chairman of the Tellers Committee, etc.) as well as allowing me to become friends with many of the former presidents of the S.B.C.”

When Jack Graham was asked by the author about positions of denominational service that had prepared him for his presidency, he replied,

From State Convention Board in Florida, Baptist College Boards in Oklahoma Baptist University, of course I was on Liberty University Board, which is a quaisi Southern Baptist Board, Palm Beach Atlantic College which was an independent board but still Baptist related; so colleges, of course, executive committees, served as chairman of the Teller’s Committee back when I was in Florida. Let’s see, what else? President of the Pastor’s Conference of the S.B.C. Again, as I said early on in this interview, my inclination always when asked to serve was to say yes. I’d have to have a really good reason to say no. I said no very few times when I’ve been asked locally or nationally with Southern Baptists to serve.

Bobby Welch referred to a mixture of ingredients of leadership that God orchestrated in his life to prepare him for his presidency, explaining:

I do not believe I would have likely been elected to be president of the convention if it had not been for FAITH, because that is what drove me to criss-cross the country, no telling how many times, through the last eight years. I averaged speaking, over the last eight years, in two to three states per week. Well, of course, that allowed me to be in a lot of places and it identified me with evangelism and let people know, and that was what the Lord has done. And then I think of other places of service that I have been in. I think about being president of the Florida Baptist Convention, and I was second Vice President of the Southern Baptist Convention. I’ve been on a number of boards and agencies, and then the other thing is that God has put me into connection. There is connectiveness of needs among a number of
theses boards and agencies that has been an on-going relationship, the FAITH and these other things I’ve talked about, which was the Lord who put me in those places. But you put all that in the bowl and mix it up, it’s a pretty strong concoction that only the Lord could have done. Now there were a lot of those things that happened along the way that got me to be president, but those were the things that were uniquely God preparing me.

Bobby Welch added in the interview that his Florida Baptist Convention presidency helped him the most by allowing him to preside over an annual meeting similar to the S.B.C. The year he presided over the Florida Baptist Convention, they implemented a number of bylaw changes to the constitution, he noted.

In analyzing the background circumstances of the study group to determine how God prepared them to serve as leaders of the largest evangelical denomination in the world, several realities become apparent: All the past presidents recognized early in their ministry lives the need for higher education, and all of them sought and achieved undergraduate and secondary degrees. (Only two of them pursued undergraduate disciplines outside of pastoral preparation: Morris Chapman earned a Bachelor of Music and James Merritt received a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting.) Six of the thirteen had earned doctoral degrees: Charles Stanley, Jerry Vines and Paige Patterson have Doctor of Theology degrees; Morris Chapman and Jack Graham have Doctor of Ministry degrees and James Merritt has a Doctor of Philosophy. Many of the men have been granted honorary doctorates from numerous educational institutions in acknowledgment of their exemplary leadership.

Several of the past presidents acknowledged their presidencies stemmed from their encounters with liberalism of varying degrees in the different S.B.C. educational institutions they attended. (Not one of the study group directly referred to their formal education as a key to their preparation for the presidency of the S.B.C.) Five of them developed with detail
how their personal interactions with liberalism placed them on a corrective course to lead and serve the convention in its resurgence.

Adrian Rogers’ quote bears repeating as it best sums up the heart of these men; “God spoke to me (and) said ‘Adrian, you don’t have to wait for them to vote for you to do right’. . . all of that prepared me to be the president because I knew where the bodies were buried; I knew what the problem was (liberalism); I came to the presidency not out of a matter of wanting to be honored, as to be president, and not wanting to help oil the ecclesiastical machinery, but to do something, to change the situation.” Regarding inerrancy and the battle for the Bible, all of the past presidents this writer interviewed, expressed a deep concern for their appointments to the Committee on Committees of the S.B.C. In their regard they are all keenly aware of the tension between liberalism and inerrancy that has been within the convention. In fact, the resurgence could not have occurred had Judge Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson not pointed out the significance of the appointment process. This point is where previous inerrancy presidents, such as W.H. Criswell, fell short in implementing the steps necessary for a corrective resurgence within the convention. The steps spelled out for inerrancy presidents were as follows: The president each year personally appoints the Committee of Committees; that committee appoints the Committee on Nominations; the Committee on Nominations then appoints the trustees for the various institutions and agencies of the S.B.C. At every step each group is voted on by the messengers of the convention in session that year. So the influence of each president does not affect the trusteeships until three years after the election.

Due to Paige Patterson’s influence in this pivotal process of influencing the Conservative Resurgence, President Richard Land of the Ethics and Religious Liberty
Commission of the S.B.C., in their August 2005 annual trustee meeting awarded Patterson the Richard D. Land Distinguished Service Award. Dr. Land stated, "Dr. Paige Patterson was an essential man in the Conservative Resurgence. . .(noting the controversy) cost Dr. Patterson a lot personally and emotionally." He said, "Every Southern Baptist owes Patterson an incalculable debt of gratitude for his role in turning the S.B.C. around."

To glean from the experience base of the past presidents the author asked each one, "Can a group of young pastors be trained and mentored to possibly serve as president of the S.B.C.? Would that in anyway circumvent God's sovereignty in the selection election process?" The spectrum of responses extended from absolutely no consideration of training future potential presidents to optimistic views of how many potential presidents there are in training now in the S.B.C. James Merritt wrote, "I would not conceive of ever training or mentoring anyone to serve as president of anything. I do believe it would circumvent God's sovereignty. I believe the office should seek the man— the man should not seek the office."

Bailey Smith, the second president of the resurgence, emphatically stated,

I would say no! I think that we should meet with our leaders, which we don't do like we used to do. . . but I don't think anybody can be mentored to be the president of the convention. I can't think of any of them that have been, quite frankly. But I think they came on the merit of maybe their preaching or at least, their background. But I do think that the older men, which is even scriptural as you know, should take some of the young guys aside at times and fellowship with them but not with the intention of them later being president of the convention.

The third resurgence president, Jimmy Draper, stressed the general mentoring of young men with the exclusion of the presidency, "I don't think you can train somebody to be S.B.C. president. I think God has to raise them up." He said, "You can mentor them to be good leaders; you can mentor them to pastor large churches; you can mentor them to take significant positions, but not the presidency. God raises up leaders! You can have all the
training in the world, if God doesn’t have His hand on you, you aren’t going to succeed. So I
don’t think there’s any way to train somebody to be S.B.C. president.”

Bobby Welch and Jack Graham, when asked about training future presidents of the
convention, both stressed the importance of character. “My response,” said Welch “Is
young pastors would be best trained and mentored to be good and faithful servants and to
major on kingdom evangelism. Then God can win servants of His choice for His reason, in
His timing for the president of the convention.”

Graham, the twelfth resurgence president, gave a similar response,

I think the mentoring that needs to take place would not be for an office but in
terms of character and the ministry of the individual, and if you do that with the
young generation, you’ll have plenty of people who can serve as president of the
Southern Baptist Convention. … Did you get my point? I’m saying mentor them for
life and leadership, mentor them for character and their convictions. It is important
and we need to make sure we do a good job.

The opposite end of the spectrum of consideration regarding the S.B.C. presidency,
would be Paige Patterson’s response to the question.

Every young preacher I’ve got in my training is in training to be president of
the convention, potentially, or whatever else it is that God calls them to do. To be
honest, I think I’d put it to you this way; I don’t think there are any particular talents
that are called for in the president of the convention that ought to be a part of what
every pastor experiences. After all it’s only a question of how many people, because
even in my position as seminary president, I accept the title of president because
that’s what we do. I view myself as a pastor. I’ve got a kind of
an unusual church made up of a lot of people going into God’s work, but I’m useless
if I’m not a pastor. So I don’t ever think of myself in terms of president. I just see
myself as there to train these young preachers to be ready for whatever God calls
them to do. So ideally, each one of them, of course they all don’t have the talents that
will be noticed in that way, but many of them will. It’s just like in our convention
now, somebody told me one day, he said, “Who do we go to next? We just don’t
have any people in the convention that are capable of serving as convention
president.” I said, “Well, I just slightly disagree with you.” They said, “You do?”
And I said, “Yes, I think we probably have somewhere in the neighborhood of 5,000
that could be fine convention presidents. It’s just a matter of what God opens up.”
On that point, I am an ardent advocate of the sovereignty of God. He does what He
does.
The author finds this view very refreshing and optimistic. In one of his doctrinal seminars a professor shared that the president of a Bible college where he taught had claimed, as he observed the pastoral students, he knew the limits of their pastoral leadership. It was reported he would say, “See that young man over there? He can only pastor 200 people. That one over there will never pastor more than 100. Now, that preacher-boy, he is capable of pastoring a church of 500.” This writer applauds the optimistic attitude expressed by President Patterson.

Three of the presidents gave strong, emotional responses to the second part of the question in regard to circumventing God’s sovereignty in the selection-election process. Jerry Vines combined his concern over the training of future presidents with his rejection of the circumvention of God’s sovereignty, saying, “...I don’t think it would circumvent God’s sovereignty, I don’t know how you could circumvent God’s sovereignty. If God is sovereign, what could we do that would circumvent it. But I think that would be fraught with a number of problems there. Here would be some guys all being trained to be president of S.B.C., I think that opens you up for a lot of criticism there.”

Ed Young, in a very succinct way, completely rejected the premise of the question and openly demonstrated his camaraderie with the other leading presidents,

YOUNG: The next question I have a problem with. Would that in any way circumvent God’s Sovereignty? Darrell, nothing circumvents God’s sovereignty! I’d take that question out. Nothing circumvents God’s sovereignty! Adrian and I are the only ones that caught that?
ORMAN: You’re the two strongest on it.
YOUNG: I’m gonna jump all over Vines. I’m gonna call and tease him- “You’re so weak on the sovereignty, you Armenian”
ORMAN: He’s actually the third that referred to it. But you and Adrian were the two who said it was a bad question.
YOUNG: It’s a terrible question, but you understand that. You don’t circumvent God’s sovereignty.
ORMAN: Right, exactly.
YOUNG: I’m glad Adrian’s staying astute. . . . Adrian was here. He got a good report. I’m proud he’s my buddy, for a long, long time; warriors and intimate friends, Darrell.

Adrian Rogers, the only three-term resurgence president, demonstrated his bottom line analytical process by concluding,

Well, no matter what you do, you’re not going to change God’s sovereignty. So the second part of that is a bad question because God is sovereign and so if you were to train a group of young pastors, that would be under the sovereign hand of God, and if you didn’t, it would be under the sovereign hand of God, because God is sovereign. I don’t think it’s a good idea to groom or train. I don’t think it’s a good idea. I think that the cream needs to rise to the top, and I think that leadership is not something that is given. When I was president, some of the moderates said to me, ‘Adrian, you need to share leadership.’ I said, ‘I don’t want to share leadership. If you want to lead, have at it. A leader leads.’ I said, ‘I can’t make a person a leader by saying ‘now you’re a leader.’ If you want to lead, there it is. If they follow you, you’re a leader. Now, maybe they won’t want to follow you, and if they don’t follow you, then you’re not much of a leader.’ But I’m not going to give you some leadership. I can’t give it to you. . . . A leader is a leader is a leader.

In the preparation phase of each of the Conservative Resurgence presidents, several obvious factors come into play. Initially, as the correction of the S.B.C. began, the early presidents were primarily motivated by the need to document, address, and remove the liberal influences of the convention boards and agencies. The need to continue this correction was acknowledged by all in one way or another. Half of the study group believe their primary preparation to become president stemmed from their denomination positions and responsibilities. The other half elaborated on their ministerial experience and expertise. The mega church pastors within the group recognized their media exposure to be an advantage in dealing with the pressures of being a moral spokesman for the largest evangelical denomination in the world. The final area of preparation for their presidencies would be their relationships to one another and other conservative leaders within the convention. That area will be developed further in the next chapter. Two concluding
noteworthy observations would be that each of these men acknowledged God's hand in their election, as well as the other presidents who served and each man was uniquely prepared for the specific challenges he faced in service to the S.B.C. through it's presidency.
CHAPTER 3

THE SELECTION OF THE
CONSERVATIVE RESURGENCE PRESIDENTS
BASED UPON THEIR INFLUENCE

Any organization the size of the Southern Baptist Convention will, by necessity, have a political aspect within it. For the Conservative Resurgence to have occurred, the dominant liberal establishment had to be confronted, challenged and replaced by the conservatives. The resurgence presidents, as indicated in chapter two, were given by God a driving passion to return the S.B.C. to its original biblical heritage of inerrancy. Scripture itself commands, “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”¹

One of the great patriarch pastors of the Convention, B. H. Carroll, founder and first president of Southwestern Seminary, laid down the marching orders for resurgence leaders to follow years later. Speaking to fellow Southern Baptist, L. R. Scarborough from his deathbed declared,

Lee, keep the Seminary lashed to the cross. If heresy ever comes in the teaching, take it to the faculty. If they will not hear you and take prompt action, take it to the trustees of the Seminary. If they will not hear you, take it to the Convention that appoints the Board of Trustees, and if they will not hear you, take it to the great common people of our churches. You will not fail to get a hearing then.²

¹ Jude 1:3.
Adrian Rogers referred to the "adroit" manipulation of a concerned, conservative, godly pastor by the liberals at one of the annual conventions as a turning point for him personally within the resurgence. God used that event to call him specifically to action. Nancy Ammerman describes these same political processes in detail as she writes (she uses the terms moderates and fundamentalists to describe liberals and conservatives),

Moderates caucused backstage and controlled how issues were presented. They controlled the press, the institutions, and usually the presidency. Fundamentalists perceived that moderates have been trying to impose their agenda on Southern Baptists for years. It is only right, said fundamentalists, that they have a chance now. While moderates might admit that they had excluded fundamentalists in the past, they saw it as a kind of natural selection process. People who went to school together, stuck together. As one moderate told us, "They (fundamentalists) just weren't in the crowd; they didn't go to Southern together. They weren't part of the brotherhood.

The writer, at a recent Executive Committee meeting of the S.B.C., heard Paige Patterson declare, . . . "The real heroes of the resurgence were average Southern Baptists from all over the nation who drove their own vehicle all night, eating sack lunches, some sleeping in their cars, to vote for the inerrancy presidents."³

THE ANTICIPATION THE PRESIDENTS HELD FOR THE OFFICE

As we examine the circumstances that led to the selection of these men, we should first look at the expectations that God may have placed in their hearts for this position of service within the denomination. The interviewer asked each man in the study group, "Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life?" Surprisingly, the responses ranged from low expectations to general ministry expectations. Not a single respondent expressed a genuine "career path" anticipation of becoming president of the Southern Baptist

³ Executive Committee Of The Southern Baptist Convention, Quarterly meeting in Nashville, February 2006.
Convention. Some illuminative insights can be gained; however, from their comments concerning the path God took in selecting them for service through their ministries. The author found a genuine sense of humility demonstrated by each of the previous presidents as he responded to the question regarding his sense of destiny.

Jerry Vines, pastor of the 28,000-member First Baptist of Jacksonville, said,

No, I don't know that I did, really, Darrell. It just kind of unfolded for me, and I've been amazed every step of the way, to tell you the truth. You know what I mean? I've just been amazed. You know when I first started out, I thought I was probably going to stay pastor of a country church there in my home county, up in Georgia. So, everywhere I've gone has been an amazement to me that anybody had called me?

Ed Young, pastor of the 42,000-member Second Baptist Church of Houston commented,

Not at all. I just felt like, "God, here I am. I'll go anywhere, any time, any place." I almost went to Italy as a missionary. I just hung loose. I thought I'd be pastor of SoSo, Mississippi. When Jo Beth and I first got married, we'd drive by this nice little brick church and I'd say, 'Honey, do you think God would ever let us serve a church like this?' Ran a hundred or so. That was the only sense of destiny I ever thought about.

Jack Graham, pastor of the 25,000-member Prestonwood Baptist Church, asserted,

I don't believe that I had any sense of destiny serving. I didn't start a ministry with that intent. Many people have asked me did I ever expect to be pastor of a church like Prestonwood, and my answer is, 'You've gotta be kidding!' You know, thirty years ago churches like this didn't even exist. I just set out, again, going back to kind of my big world big picture personality. I said look, I'm going to try to reach as many people as possible in my lifetime and the church through evangelism. I've never prayed and asked God to give me one more member in terms of transfer. I just don't ever remember praying before a Sunday, 'Oh, Lord, give us new members today.' I have prayed for conversions and changed lives, and worked for that end, and knowing that Christians will come alongside of you and transfer in, but I focus on evangelism in a church that exists for people that are not yet here, created an environment and atmosphere for the congregation as pastor so that growth can happen. Most church growth doesn't happen because of barriers, hindrance and obstacles. One of the pastor's biggest assignments is to tear down those obstacles and hindrances and to open doors so that our God can work. Now back to your question, with all that, I would simply say I set out as a purpose to reach people for Christ, as
many as possible. I think every pastor starts out that way. I want to be used of God in a great way, but I never sat down and said to myself or anyone else, ‘Okay, now if I do this, that or the other then maybe I could be president of the convention.’

Adrian Rogers, pastor of the 29,000-member Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, stated,

No, Darrell, I’ve never had a sense of destiny. I am as surprised as anybody could be. And it goes back to that question about goals that you asked. My goals have been spiritual, to deal with integrity and faithfulness, and things that happened to me are far beyond, abundantly, exceedingly above what I could ever dream. I could never dream of myself as preaching worldwide television, radio, on 2,000 radio stations every day, in 15,000 television outlets on weekends, in 120-30 countries around the world. I could never conceive of that. I could not even have dreamed of a church like Bellevue, I mean, even conceive that it would be possible much less that I could be the pastor there, or that I could ever have been president of the Southern Baptist Convention. And it's happened to me. But it has not been that I had a sense of manifest destiny. I started out as a minister. I never thought about what I would have or would not have. I never ever thought about the size of the church. I just knew that God had called me and I was grateful.

Jimmy Draper, president of LifeWay Christian Resource, elaborated on his sense of destiny- or lack of,

No. I just knew God called me to preach, and I was happy to do that. . . .served seven churches totally. . . .At First Church of Dallas I was associate. I never really looked beyond that church and was always surprised.

I knew early on that God had blessed me because I started preaching youth revivals when I was a senior in high school and we were front page several times in the Houston papers. Great revivals! And God just really blessed. So I knew that God’s hand was on me on some things, but back then there weren’t any mega churches. You didn’t think about a mega church. The only two big churches in the convention were Bellevue and First Dallas, and we didn’t hear very much about them. First Dallas was running a couple of thousand. There just weren’t any huge churches so you didn’t aspire to a big church. I really thought I was going to the mission field. All through college I was a mission volunteer, and probably would have gone to the mission field. But they had a rule that the wives had to have a seminary degree and my wife- I married her right out of high school- never got to finish college. So we didn’t qualify. We couldn’t go. But as far as having a sense of destiny, I just knew God called me to preach. That was enough. I always loved what I was doing; I can honestly say I’ve never dreaded going to work a single day of my life. I just loved whatever I was doing, wherever I’ve lived.
Jim Henry, pastor of the 12,000-member First Baptist of Orlando described a limited sense of destiny in his life. He believed that God’s direction in his life revolved around leaving his home city of Nashville and his pastorate at Two Rivers Baptist Church to First Baptist of Orlando,

No, Darrell, I did not (have a sense of destiny). I guess the only sense of destiny was when I went to Orlando...God showed me in what I feel like was a supernatural way that I was to go to Orlando...I knew God sent me. That was the sense of destiny. That kept me through agonizing moments that we experienced, I believe that’s why He gave me a supernatural sense of Him sending me, because He knew I was going to go through that, and I believe that if I hadn’t have had that, I don’t know if I’d have cracked, or if I would have gone to another church thinking I’d made a mistake...I don’t know. Outside of all the speculation, I do know that He sent me and that kept me steadfast...

Then subsequently I got the privilege and joy of pastoring the Southern Baptist people a couple of years and I think that came out of it. In fact, if I’d stayed at Two Rivers, as much as I loved it, I don’t think that would ever have happened. If I had stayed in my county, my state, my home, if I hadn’t left, not that God wouldn’t have blessed, look what I would have missed. But it was those things that enabled me, when I became president.

The next four presidents, as they recalled their sense of destiny in the ministry, acknowledge various expectations regarding their future ministries. Tom Elliff describes a general concept of his destiny, as he recalled,

You know, when God called me to preach, one of the things I understood was that He had a plan for every man. He has a destiny for you and He has a destiny for everyone. I would hope that everybody lived with that thought in their mind. I never have perceived myself as destined to be president of the convention. I appreciate what the man said when somebody asked about what makes a man great. Well, he said, it’s not about doing something great, it’s about doing everything in a great way. I believe that we have to approach life like that. We ought to do everything different but yet with certainty. I believe that God promises that promotion doesn’t come from the north or the south or the east, rather but that God raises up the one He chooses. We’re all just a breath, anyway.

Paige Patterson indicated that his expectation was to be used by God evangelistically but not necessarily politically. His earlier denials of political aspirations came back to haunt him as he laments,
Yes, I suppose I did; however, I would not have conceived it in any means to be construed as political. I always saw myself as a pastor, an evangelist, a soul winner, and I thought that God had maybe even been kind enough to give me just enough ability that if I could really stay within the circumference of His will, that He would greatly use me to point people to Christ. And that’s the only real goal I had. So I suppose in that sense destiny, yes, in the sense of ever serving as president of the convention or the seminary, I had to eat a lot of crow because I was widely on record as saying one thing I would never do is be anybody’s president of anything. So at the end of being president of the third school now, and the convention, in addition, I’ve had to say, ‘Well, okay, it didn’t go like I thought.’

Bobby Welch was certain his destiny for service was linked to God saving him from a certain death injury while fighting in the Vietnam War.

I would say the answer to that is mostly a deep sense of calling from God and a certainty of His guidance and a blessing that would be my rendezvous with destiny, if there was any hint of a call early. I really believe that God had spared my life in Vietnam; there is no doubt about that. There has never been a day since that day that I didn’t intend, in whatever I did, to counsel with the Lord. There was never a day after that that I didn’t understand that I was living because He chose to let me live for His sake. It is an overwhelmingly humbling thing for me to be among the thirteen who have been president of the convention in the past. When you read their biographies and their backgrounds, where their momma came from and where their daddy came from, or their church background, I don’t have any of that. I came in the side door. But I think that should bring hope and excitement about the fact that God can use anybody if they’ll just try.

The only respondent to refer to a future presidency from their early ministry was a layman’s prediction to Bailey Smith,

I felt like, I guess I should answer this honestly, I did feel back in seminary that I probably would be pastor of a big church one day, and even though I felt that I never did anything to get there. I really never did. I never sent out a resume. In fact, I went to Del City because their former pastor looked at the committee and said, ‘Look, I’m gonna give you two names.’ I think you need to go hear Bailey Smith. And of course, as you know, Jimmy Draper, so I didn’t have a recommendation to that church. But I did sense in seminary that for some reason God would probably one day put me in a church of some note. I’m not sure why I felt that. I did have a man by the name of Brother Threat from Waldo, Arkansas, come up to me one day and I don’t guess I’ve ever told this to anybody but my wife, and he said, ‘You, Brother Bailey, one day you’re going to be one of our presidents.’
Several leadership principles can be gleaned from the responses of these influential pastor/leaders. The entire study group that responded to the interviewer’s “destiny” question stated that throughout their ministry life they had no expectations of service as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. However, they repeatedly indicated a fervent desire to fulfill God’s calling in their individual lives. When these ten quotes are reviewed, they refer to God’s will and leadership in the respondent’s lives twenty-four times. These great leaders exhibited a large dependency upon God’s direction and calling in their lives.

They also proved the scriptural principle that to be faithful in the small things is to be rewarded with much.⁴

Several of these mega-church pastors described an early willingness to pastor a small country church their entire life. Two expressed an early interest in being foreign missionaries. One actually served vocationally overseas. They referred to developing character above all else in their lives. . .“My goals have been spiritual, to deal with integrity and faithfulness. . .” They were diligent in their assignments, “. . .I always loved what I was doing; I can honestly say I’ve never dreaded going to work a single day of my life.”

They also demonstrated a sense of gratitude for all that God had granted in their lives and ministries. Their comments ranged from gratefulness to amazement over their tremendous influence through ministry and the presidency. “God called me and I was grateful.” “God called me to preach and I was happy to do that.” “God just really blessed.” “I got the privilege and joy of pastoring the Southern Baptist people a couple of years. . .”

⁴ Matthew 25:23.
"...a certainty of His guidance and blessing..." "...I've been amazed every step of the way ... Did I ever expect to be pastor of a church like Prestonwood? And my answer is, "You've got to be kidding!"

THE INFLUENCE OF THE POSITIONS THEY HELD AT THE TIME OF THEIR ELECTION

As has been noted earlier in this chapter, these men pastored some of the largest churches within the S.B.C. The only exception was Paige Patterson who was president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary at the time of his presidency.

After analyzing the attitudes and expectations of these leaders, it is of vital importance to examine the process God used to select them for this unique position of leadership within Christendom. Historians of S.B.C. life recognize the first election of Adrian Rogers as a crucial, pivotal election. Jerry Sutton writes, "The 1979 Southern Baptist Convention assembled in Houston, Texas, for its 122nd session. Because of the presence of the conservative voting block, the Houston Convention proved to be one of the most significant Southern Baptist gatherings in history. In fact, the Southern Baptist Convention would never, ever again be the same."\(^5\)

Because of the monumental nature of Adrian Rogers' election, here in its entirety is his response given during the January Bible Cruise of 2005, ten months before his death in November 2005.

ORMAN: How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.? How did He do that? You mentioned discussions prior to 1979?
ROGERS: Yes. I had no idea of or any aspirations of my willingness to be president, but to my surprise, I was elected as President of the Pastor's Conference, prior to 1979. A couple of years later, I was sitting out there, that's when they just took a vote by lifting up hands, and all of the sudden I found myself, now this was the

\(^5\) Sutton, 91.
Pastor’s Conference, and I found myself to be president of the Pastor’s Conference. At the same time, there was a man named Bill Powell who was an employee of the Home Mission Board, who had kind of figured out how the denomination worked, and how we could change the denomination. Bill came to me one time and said, “Adrian, would you serve on the board of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship?” which was a work group trying to do something about the convention.

ORMAN: That was his own paper, right?

ROGERS: That was his own paper, and it was all about the faith and message, and I thought about it. And I thought, “Well, why haven’t some of these other men who have influence done something?” So again, I said, “Alright, Bill, I will.” At the same time, I was the President of the Pastor’s Conference. Well, Baptist Press sniffed those two things out and they began to write against me. Example: Chauncey Daley of the Western Recorder, he came right to Southern Seminary, and he talked about how we saw the rising star in Memphis, he was talking about me, and you know, that we would do what we could to head him off, and so forth. Well, the irony of that is they caused it to happen. They began to toss my name around as being the president when I had no idea of being the president. So they made it an issue. And people began to line up behind it. Also, then Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson took me to lunch and explained how they felt that this change could be made, and again, I was very dubious and doubtful. But they said, “No, you need to allow your name to be placed for nomination again now.” Well, Darrell, I had preached a lot in evangelism conferences and God has given me the ability to identify with preachers, and so I was known with preachers and so forth, and they began to encourage me. I’d get letters, and I’d get phone calls. But I never did feel worthy to be the president, and I was still dubious that the plan would work, and I wasn’t interested in just an honorific position because I had plenty of fish to fry. But I kept getting these letters and these phone calls, and Joyce and I would talk about it and she would say, “Where are you on a scale of one to ten?” I don’t think I ever got above a six. We went off to the convention in Houston. I had made up my mind that I would not allow my name to be placed in nomination. Well, when we got to Houston, the talk was all over the street; people were there; it was the issue. That’s the first time a person came up to me with tears in their eyes, and say, “You’ve got to allow your name to be placed in nomination; I drove all the way from Timbuktu to come and vote for you.” Freddie Gage, an evangelist, said to me, “Adrian, you need to do this.” I said, “Freddie, God would have to write in the sky for me to do that.” And he said, “Very well, I’ll get a skywriting plane.” So it was that kind of talk. Well, I was heading off the pulpit, I don’t know whether you knew who Bertha Smith was or not, and Miss Bertha called me on the phone. She said, “Brother Adrian, God wants you to allow your name to be placed in nomination.” I said, “Miss Bertha, I don’t think so. I’m in the middle of a multi-million dollar building program; my kids are still in school; I’m pastoring a growing church; I’ve got more on my plate right now than I can eat.” She said, “Now, Brother Adrian, one time Charles Spurgeon thought he was tired and went out into the woods to pray, and to read the Scripture, and he read where God said to Paul “my grace is sufficient for thee.” She said, “Then Spurgeon began to say ‘Your grace for me?’ Your grace for me?” and Spurgeon got so happy in the Lord he began to laugh, thinking about God’s grace for him. Then she said, “Brother Adrian,
God’s grace is sufficient for you!” Well, I did not let her know how much that shook me to the foundation, and I was nice and polite to Miss Bertha Smith, who I highly respected as a godly woman. So when I got to the convention, and all this talk was on the street, I was standing near an escalator when a professor from Mid-America Seminary came to me and said, “Brother Adrian, Dr. Charles Culpepper could not come to the convention. He told me to tell you that he has been with God and God wants you to do this.” Well, Charles Culpepper and Bertha Smith were two of Southern Baptist’s premier missionaries. They were great examples of the Bible. And, I had to admit again, that made a great impact on me when Charles Culpepper would say he’d been with God and God said for me to do it.

ORMAN: I met him at Mid-America. I had some lunches with him.

ROGERS: So, I was still mulling this in my head, and my head now is beginning to swim, and it is Monday and I preached at the Pastor’s Conference. Right when I was standing on the platform, Dr. Criswell would preach after I would preach, and he said, “Now, Adrian, God wants you to do this.” I said, “No Dr. Criswell, I’m not gonna do it.” And then he got up as soon as I finished preaching and he said, “This will be a great convention if for no other reason than to elect Adrian Rogers to the president.” Well, I was put out, that he would do that right after I told him I wasn’t going to do it. He got a big rousing applause at the Pastor’s Conference. So it was Monday evening, I said to Joyce, “Let’s just get out of here. We’ll get away from the convention center, we’ll go out to dinner just the two of us.” So we went out to dinner and coming back to the hotel about eleven o’clock at night, now this is Monday night and the election was Tuesday. We met Paige Patterson and Jerry Vines. They said “Where have you been? We’ve been looking for you.” And I said, “Well, we went out to dinner.” They said “What are you gonna do?” And I said “No, I’m not gonna do that.” Of course, then we didn’t have any candidate at all, because they had put all their eggs in one basket, more or less. So they said “Let’s go pray.” I said “Well, come up to my room and I’ll certainly pray with you.” By then, it was probably midnight; Joyce put on a housecoat and got in bed. And Jerry Vines, and Paige and myself got in the middle of the floor, knelt and began to pray. Well, in that prayer meeting, it’s probably by now about 1 a.m., Paige began to weep, and to cry. And God moved into that room! And I looked over at Joyce; Joyce is a very godly woman and very wise. I looked over at her and she held up ten fingers. You know, we’d been allowing one to ten and she went like that, and that’s what it took. I said, “Well, if Bertha Smith and Charles Culpepper and Joyce Rogers say so, then it’s of God.” So I allowed my name to be placed in nomination. They had a hard time getting anybody who was gracious enough to nominate me. Dr. Homer Lindsey Sr. did nominate me, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, and I was elected on the first ballot, which was an incredible thing, because there were five people nominated that split up the vote, and so I got a majority over all five. Some of them were well-known Texans: Dr. Robert Naylor, who was the president-emeritus of Southwestern Seminary, and a godly man; Abner McCall, who was the president of Baylor University; Bill Self, who was at that time the president of the Foreign Missions Board, he was at Wieucca Road, and sort of a fair-haired preacher. So for me to get a majority vote over all of those, especially in Texas, it was like a miracle. Then they began to howl after I’d been elected and say, “Well, the ballot box was
stuffed; or somehow these people have done something.” Anyway, bottom line, that’s how I got elected.

Judge Paul Pressler gives an insightful background summary of the 1979 Rogers election. In all probability, one of the most important elections in church history. He writes,

Adrian did win without a runoff. He received 6,129 votes, or 51.36 percent. Robert Naylor (also a conservative but not one pledged to correct the problems), who was president of Southwestern Seminary then, ran second with 2,791 votes, or 23.39 percent. Bill Self, who said the establishment leaders called him and told him that it was his time to run and who had positioned himself at the Atlanta S.B.C. meeting the year before to run, ran third with 1,673 votes, or 14.02 percent.

The other candidates were as follows: Abner McCall, 643 votes, or 5.39 percent; Douglas Watterson, 474 votes, or 3.97 percent; Ed Price, 223 votes, or 1.87 percent. With this election, the conservative movement was under way and had started on what would prove to be a long path to climb that hill, the capture of which would bring our convention back to the principles on which it was founded.

Someone who was sitting close to Duke McCall, then-president of Southern Seminary, said that Dr. McCall and others of the leadership who had run the convention for so long reacted visually on hearing the news that Adrian Rogers had been elected S.B.C. president. A few conservatives believed that this was the beginning of a very difficult period for them, but most were unaware that this was the beginning of their control of the S.B.C. They reasoned that the election was due only to the personal popularity of Adrian Rogers. It is true that Adrian Rogers was elected because of his own popularity and not because of what Paige, others, and I had done. However, Paige has said on a number of occasions—and I think quite accurately so—that although Adrian would have been elected without our support, he would not have allowed himself to be nominated unless he had seen that his election could accomplish something.

The conservatives who had been elected president in previous years had accomplished little in changing the convention direction because they did not have a support team behind them. They accomplished little because they did not know how they could change the convention and what persons would be good appointees from various states. They were ineffective because they were forced to rely on the S.B.C. bureaucracy. Because of the system, doing anything effective without the bureaucracy’s guidance and control was extremely difficult. The powerful Committee on Nominations was heavily influenced by the executive secretary of the Executive Committee. The important Committee on Resolutions was dominated by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Christian Life Commission. In every way, the bureaucracy was involved in the actions that were taken. Members of the moderate group that controlled the convention at that time believed they could weather the storm. They had built a system in which the bureaucracy was dominant, and they did not believe it could be overcome.6

6 Pressler, 104f.
THE INFLUENCES OF THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PASTORS AND CONSERVATIVE LEADERS

After laying the foundation of the initial stage of the election of the Conservative Resurgence presidencies with Adrian Rogers’ election, the relationships between these men were key to their selection and election. An earlier quote revealed the heart of the liberal election process when one of their own said, “They (conservatives) just weren’t in the crowd; they didn’t go to Southern (Seminary) together. They weren’t part of the brotherhood.”

A similar unity of purpose developed among the innerrantist leaders. Jimmy Draper, commenting upon these relationships said, “My longest relationships in childhood were with people who now were opposed to what I stood for. There was a new camaraderie building with Adrian and Jerry and Ed Young and Charles Stanley and all of us, Bailey Smith. We’d all known each other but that congealed around 1979. God just kind of put it together.”

Bailey Smith referred to these same men as being pivotal in his nomination. “Adrian Rogers called my office one day in Del City, Oklahoma and told me that he had gone through gall bladder surgery and that he just felt weakened and did not have time to serve a second term, explained Smith. He said that the brethren, whoever that might be, had wondered if I would do it. And I said, ‘Adrian, I would only do it if I was the choice of those who were in conservative leadership because I certainly would not campaign for it.’ So sure enough, I was their choice for 1980 in St. Louis, and there were six nominees. I won on the first ballot, which was shocking to me.

\[7\] Bush, 122f.
Jerry Vines echoes Smith's sentiments about his own election. "Well, sir, (it was) really just a growing conviction on the part of some of the men in the conservative movement that I was really God's man during that particular time in history. . . (and) credits Rogers for his presidency. . . I think the Lord helped me grow into the role of my association with Dr. Adrian Rogers being president of the convention."

Morris Chapman describes his election to the S.B.C. presidency as "a story untold,"

From the mid-1980's on, because I was actively speaking my convictions about the inerrancy of God's Word, various individuals would say, 'Well, you need to be nominated for president.' So I had people mentioning it to me from the mid-1980's . . . As we came toward the election in 1990, I don't know why I felt this way, but I sensed that maybe this was God's timing. . . And, as it drew closer to the convention, it was about January or February, it was increasingly becoming certain that another individual was perceived to be the stronger if, in fact, one of the two of us would be nominated. . . So much of the talk began to gravitate toward him until enough people seemed to be in agreement that he was approached and agreed to be nominated . . .

I just had an overwhelming dilemma in that I fully accepted that I would not be nominated, but it was almost like God was saying, "You are going to be nominated," which I couldn't. . . It was overwhelming, I could hardly talk about it because the experience was so real. But at the time I just thought it was my own mind and heart still struggling. So I drove to the house, of course no one was home, turned on the lights, put down the suitcase, and almost within the next moment, not quite, but I got a call on the telephone. One of the major leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention, a pastor, was on the other end of the line and said, 'Morris, we believe you need to be nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Convention.' Of course, out of that experience it has been humorous over the years to hear others who had not been conservative talk about how cut and dried the selection for president had been. . . Yes, in fact, here was an instance where even the majority of conservatives thought one thing and God had something different in mind. I told the pastor who called me, 'Well, I don't mean to be contrary; you always know what you're talking about, but I just left Washington and left the person to be nominated and surely you're just behind in not knowing that he was to be, there's something not right here.' He said, 'No, he made the decision today that he didn't believe God wanted him to follow any further through with the nomination.' . . . The Lord affirmed some of the feelings I'd been having, and from there I felt that God wanted me to be nominated. I had no assurance that I'd be elected. I didn't know whether it was God's will for me to be elected but I knew now, I was convinced now that it was God's will to be nominated. I even wrestled with the fact that I might not only let the Lord down but the whole conservative movement because what if I was the first conservative to get defeated. So it became sort of a heavy burden to a degree. . . That
was early February, of the same spring; so we’re talking about five months; the answer to how God selected me, that’s just it, in a nutshell.

Ed Young described the influence of this fraternity in his selection.

Darrell, never did I seek in any way, shape, form or fashion. In fact, I did the very opposite because it was not something that I wanted to do, I desired to do or aspired to do, to my knowledge, or made one phone call or wrote one letter or did one single thing. Until finally, I came to the point and many of the people and former presidents said, ‘Ed, you’re it. Period. Selah. You cannot run. You cannot hide. We feel you’re God’s man for this time,’ and so I allowed my name to be presented and I guess God worked in the hearts of the messengers who were there. And they elected me...I feel it was something that God did through friends. They felt at that moment that I would be the best choice to be our denominational servant.

Jim Henry, although a close friend of the presidents before his election, was not their choice for the presidency in 1994. The previous presidents had announced their candidate to be Fred Wolfe of Cottage Hills Baptist in Mobile, Alabama. Jerry Sutton writes, “Also running for president of the Southern Baptist Convention was Fred Wolfe. ...Wolfe, who was presently serving as the chairman of the S.B.C. Executive Committee, had been extremely involved in the Conservative Resurgence from its outset and was considered heir apparent having the approval and blessings of several former presidents as the candidate of choice for the 1994 S.B.C. presidency.”

Jim Henry shared with the author that two previous presidents prior to the resurgence called him and asked him to run- Franklin Paschal and James Sullivan. Dr. Richard Land later viewed Henry’s election as a provision from God because, “Jim Henry putting his imprimatur on the restructure and reorganization made it impossible for the moderates to mount a successful campaign to scuttle it.”

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9 Sutton, 224.
That year the author overheard Dr. Jerry Falwell being asked by reporters at the Florida Baptist Convention Pastor’s Conference what he thought of Jim Henry’s election. He responded, “Both Fred Wolfe and Jim Henry are my friends. How can Southern Baptists lose when both are inerrantists?”

The nomination and election accounts of Tom Elliff and Paige Patterson mirror one another. Each man, when interviewed, referred to the other as they attended a meeting of around 50 conservative leaders in Atlanta in the fall of 1995. The meeting included a secret ballot. Only one or two votes separated Elliff and Patterson. The two men graciously discussed it between themselves with Patterson insisting Elliff run, which he did and became president in June 1996.

Patterson shares that Elliff spent part of his second year as president campaigning for Paige, who subsequently was elected in 1998 and 1999.

The conclusion can be drawn that a fraternity of trusted friendships developed through the struggle for the supremacy of scripture within the S.B.C. These relationships became crucial in the selection election process for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention. When the educational observations are added to focus the picture, one quote comes to mind. As the liberals stated, “They didn’t go to Southern together. They weren’t part of the brotherhood...” It brings to mind that eleven of the thirteen came from Southwestern (6) and New Orleans (5). These two seminaries, before the resurgence, had the reputation for being the most conservative.

10 Quote over heard by the writer. Fall, 1994.
CHAPTER 4

THE LEADERSHIP TRAITS OF THE
CONSERVATIVE RESURGENCE PRESIDENTS

In the modern world successful leadership is often measured solely by the bottom line. The emphasis flows away from faithfulness toward fruitfulness. Those who are considered successful in ministry mirror success in the corporate world. The leaders who are able to raise massive amounts of money, attract enormous crowds and build cavernous facilities are esteemed to be the most successful. It's important to note that all of these achievements, when spiritually motivated and scripturally accomplished, are noteworthy. However, when accomplished at the expense of the spiritual health of staff members and lay people, these accomplishments become less than impressive. In fact, under that strict rule of measuring success, the Lord Jesus Himself would have fallen short. In John chapter six Jesus fed the multitudes miraculously by the Sea of Galilee. After that a tremendous crowd continued to seek Him. When they caught up to Him, He stated, in verse 26, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled." Jesus proceeded to share the gospel with them. He also explained in very direct terms that He alone is the bread of life and... "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. (v.56) This analogy and direct speech caused most of the multitude and many of His disciples to leave Him. The Lord finally addresses his faithful twelve in verse 67, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" The modern means of
measuring success in ministry strictly by outcome and numbers would have judged Jesus as a failure at this point in His earthly ministry.

Henry and Richard Blackaby write regarding this trend. "It is easy for mega churches to proclaim excellence as the only standard worthy of God. After all, they have multiple staffs, huge budgets, spacious facilities and high-tech equipment. If excellence is understood to mean flawless, world-class productions in everything the church does, then the small, single-staffed, talent-challenged church might as well close its doors. If ‘excellence’ however, means following God’s will and honoring Him through our best efforts, any church can be an excellent organization."¹

THEIR LEADERSHIP TRAITS DEFINED BY THEIR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

When the interviewer asked the past presidents to personally define success in the ministry their responses were encouraging and Christ-centered. The major recurring theme in their responses related to “the will of God” for their lives. None of these leaders emphasized the size of their ministries or the number of people they influenced.

Adrian Rogers declared, “Success is simply fulfilling the will of God in the ministry . . . For a man to know from his heart that he has preached the Word of God, that he lived with integrity, he loved his people; he has been available for Jesus Christ, that’s success. And I think failure is succeeding at the wrong thing. So, I really believe that success is finding, and following, and finishing the will of God for your life.” Jerry Vines simply said, “. . .Success in the ministry is the will of God for your life.” Bailey Smith commented, that success is “. . .being right in the middle of God’s will for your life.” Morris Chapman’s quest

for success was “...very simple: discovering and doing God’s will.” Ed Young’s two-part definition for success was, “First of all, success is being in the middle of God’s will for your life. . .the second part . . .is where can I, with my giftedness, maximize my ability to be obedient to the great commission?” Jim Henry explained success as “...knowing, finding and doing the will of God, where He’s put you on His time table, and so living that purpose that you might know that to the best of your ability you have sought, found and done God’s will and left a footprint for others to see. . . .So if your life has been lost in His will, in that way you have been a success.” Jack Graham said, “Live your life with integrity, accomplishing God’s goal for evangelism and ministry in the local church and through the ministry of the local church.” Tom Elliff’s definition stood out as unique from the rest as he keyed in on effectiveness. “I think a minister ought to be concerned about effectiveness. . .most men I know who focus on success, they probably think they influence more than they do, but men who focus on effectiveness probably influence more people than they think they do,” he said. “The issue is that the impact, the permanent, spiritual impact you leave on the lives of other people, is how God can use you.” James Merritt followed in a similar and yet different train of thought as he wrote, “...Success in the ministry is following biblical principles in building your ministry. . .and then leaving the results to God.”

The last three respondents emphasized faithfulness as the key to successful ministry. Jimmy Draper said,

...Success has several ingredients. One, of course, is faithfulness to the Word of God. It doesn’t really matter whether you’re preaching to the 10,000 or 10, just be faithful in preaching the Word of God. Secondly, it is ministering and serving people. I think you earn your right to be the people’s pastor, if you do that, laughing with them, crying with them, serving them, ministering to them. . . .The third thing is when you help other people succeed. So helping people grow and realize their potential, helping them to mature in the Lord, to discover God’s calling to their lives, and to walk with the Lord.
Paige Patterson also stressed faithfulness,

I define success in the ministry as, at the end of it all having the Lord say, “Well, done thou good and faithful servant.” I doubt that there is any real success that can be attributed to numerical growth or pulpit oratory, but in the end, the only thing that’s going to matter that will actually define success is whether or not we have met God’s standards and hear Him say, “Well done, you good and faithful servant!”

Bobby Welch gave the most comprehensive definition to success based on his personal interview of famous pastors. He declared,

Three words. Good. Faithful. Servant. We all want to hear Him say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant!” . . . I have had several men now, fine well-known pastors, who have retired, and I’ve asked, “Okay, you’ve gone the distance, now what’s the big deal at the end of the road?” And each of those men, unbeknownst to the other, has said the same thing: faithfulness to the Lord and family. None of them told about how many books they read; none of them told about their average in Sunday School; none told about how many conferences they’ve gone to; none talked about positions they’ve held. They told about being faithful to the Lord and their families. And the other reason that is my heart is because everybody can do this. It has nothing to do with the size of the church, or the type of ministry. Everybody can be a good, faithful servant.

The leadership ethics demonstrated by their definition of success emphasize several important truths. There must first be a dependency upon the will of God; secondly, is to live life with integrity and moral convictions. The third principle is to love people (family, friends, church members, ministry recipients) as you go; and the fourth is to live life to please God and hear His commendation at life’s end.

THEIR LEADERSHIP TRAITS ILLUSTRATED BY THE INTENTIONALITY OF THEIR GOALS

All great leaders exhibit intentionality in their lives. Proverbs 29:18 reminds us, “Where there is no vision, the people perish…” These great leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention continually emphasized faithfulness in character and service to Christ. For many
of them their very definition of success in the ministry encompassed the theme of faithfulness. When asked the questions: Are you a goal-setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life? The resurgence presidents’ responses can be classified in three categories: those who say they are not goal-setters, those who say they are, and those who qualify the very nature of their goal orientation. Two of the presidents said specifically they are not goal-setters.

Jimmy Draper, the recently retired president of LifeWay Resources said,

I need to tell you I’m not a goal-setter. We do set goals now, for the institution. Since I’ve been here, we do a lot of strategic planning and that’s goal setting. It’s out there, and always a little beyond our reach. And then we track our budget and everything that we do, we kind of see how it measures up to our strategic plan, but as a pastor I never did that. I just felt like we should win everybody we could, baptize everybody we could, and give all we can, and witness to everybody that we could, you know. And that was sort of the tenure of my ministry. It’s always been. . . . Adrian Rogers has always said that whatever you have to do to get people, you have to keep them. So, if you’re going to bust the top out of evangelism, and you constantly have to beat last year, it can be a very debilitating thing. So I did not set goals that we pushed for. Now did we say, “Hey, we have to increase Sunday School units and attendance.” Yeah, we did those things, but as far as something we’d say to the church like “last year we did this and this is our goal this year.” I never did that.

Morris Chapman is currently the president and chief executive officer of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. He classifies himself more as a visionary than a goal-setter as he asserted,

I do not consider myself a goal-setter. I do believe I am a visionary, so therefore I see objectives. Often they’re long term objectives, but I do not follow through to the point of laying down all the weight points to get there. That’s not something I usually do. So, I would say I’m not a goal-setter but I would say that I did set a goal very early in 1960, God’s call to the ministry which came very early at the age of 12, and that was to try to be faithful. . . . I just told the Lord, “I’m right here in Rogers, Texas, central Texas, and you know, Lord, if you found me as a 12-year-old in Kosciusko, Mississippi, and if You want me to do anything else, You can find me.” I have religiously stayed by that covenant. . . . So the goal is to be faithful, and God’s honored that. Now I will say, in being faithful, I worked hard, applied myself, I am or near to being, a workaholic in the sense I don’t have a lot of avocations. Sometimes people would mistake that for some kind of built-in ambition, or drive that
was personal or ambitious. The fact of the matter is, it was just always a sense that I believe that God wanted me to do my very best with what was available at that moment.

Seven of the presidents specifically said they were goal-setters. James Merritt was the only one to mention his education as part of his life goals. He said, “I am a goal-setter but my ministry path only followed these goals to the extent that I got a Ph.D., which was my primary educational goal and only after that to simply preach the gospel. I established these goals early on.”

Tom Elliff succinctly commented that, “…my desire is to be a living illustration that God is faithful to any man who will take Him at His word.” Jerry Vines answered, “Yes, I am. Yes, I felt like my goal was to be a pastor, that’s all I ever felt God wanted me to be. And as I understood being a pastor, my responsibility was to lead the people in two goals. Number one was to lead lost people to Christ. Number two was to help those who did know Christ to grow in their Christian life. And that’s been my two primary foci since I’ve been in the ministry.”

Bailey Smith explained his primary goals were ministry related and not oriented toward any specific positions.

I had goals within my churches, goals within my ministry, but I never had goals of my ministry. By that I mean, I never had a goal to be a pastor of a certain church or to have a denominational position but when I got to churches, I certainly had goals to grow and increase Sunday School. I tried to set baptismal goals, so that’s really the answer. Never goals of a career, but certainly goals within the ministry itself.

Some challenges I had for goals came from staff members around me. At Del City, we went from about 1,400 in Sunday School to 3,100 average, and several Sundays over 5,000 in Sunday School. I’m not sure that I ever had a goal for that but I remember challenging the staff. It seemed like we spent about five years in the 2,000 range and it was hard to get over that. But we did. I did have a goal of averaging 1,000 baptisms a year and we averaged frankly about 1,100 a year for 12 years, which is pretty remarkable. Let’s see, goals. I had goals in my preaching, to
try to always improve. I guess evangelism, Sunday School and my preaching performance, those were essentially the goals.

Of all the resurgence presidents, Jim Henry was the only one elected outside of the prior presidents’ endorsement. He reflects this as he recalls his presidential goals,

I’m a goal-setter in terms more of the local church level rather than at the denominational level because I realize at the denominational level even as president you have about two years to make an impact of some kind, and then you’re old toast....The Holy Spirit began to teach me through the Word, and I walked with Him and got mentored, helping me to establish some goals. But if you don’t have a target you don’t know whether you’ve gotten there, you can’t pray specifically; you don’t know if God’s answered your prayers if you don’t have something to shoot for. So I try to do that. When I became president of S.B.C., the goals that I alluded to earlier were some of the goals I had in mind once I became president. That was also to be a healer, where I could, I knew some of the brothers were on the same page theologically, but I think politically and otherwise maybe felt at odds. If I could be a middle man without compromising, to bring people together to say “hey, there are more of us on the same page than we think so let’s not rupture what we’re doing, or what God’s doing for us in the Conservative Resurgence. Let’s stay together because we’ve got a lot of good people. Let’s don’t let that happen.” That became my goal, once I was elected.

Bobby Welch shares this vivid illustration of how God fulfills the goals in our lives,

WELCH: I am a goal-setter. Number two, “Did your ministry path follow your goals?” I would say pretty much so because my goal initially was to be a good and faithful servant to the Lord. And the answer to that would be, yes, I tried to follow that path. I’ve had plenty of opportunities. And, “at what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?” It was early on. But they have evolved through the years and gotten narrower and narrower in focus, and one of my goals as I said was to be a good, faithful servant wherever I was going to be. And that’s been some interesting places. And the second thing was: as I was a good and faithful servant or attempted to be, I wanted the net result to be reaching people who were lost to be saved. One of the most memorable experiences of my life, just about everything good that happened in my life that now I can trace back to that point, was when I became the director of the bus ministry in Nashville, Tennessee, at Park Avenue Baptist Church. I left seminary, where I pastored a full-time church for two years. I took the associate preaching job at Park Avenue Baptist in Nashville, Tennessee. Immediately they came up with no bus director and asked me would I do that. I had never ridden a bus in my life. Not a school bus or any other type of bus, but I was there to help the pastor, and I said I would. In a little over a hundred days, we went from seven buses and 185 riders to 20 buses with 1165 riders. But that was very, very trying and hard work.

ORMAN: You did that in a hundred days?
WELCH: Yes, actually less than a hundred days. But that wasn’t the thing I remember most. I remember one day, I would never go home until all the buses were in, too much liability out there, and I wouldn’t leave until all of them came in. And I would wait by the phone because that was before cell phones, and I’d often get a call where I had to go out and get somebody because the battery went dead or something, and that was the case on this day I’m telling you about. I was getting a battery out of one vehicle and taking it out to where a bus had gone dead with some kids on it, to try and get them home. And I remember going across the parking lot, I had on a new pair of shoes. I had taken off my jacket, I had on a blue suit, and I rolled up my white shirt sleeves, and I was carrying this battery out in front of me as much as I could. And there was a large reinforcing bar driven up in the ground with about four inches of it sticking up. I couldn’t see it for the battery, and I jammed my foot into it with my shoe and it just ripped the top of it open like a knife, ruined the shoe, a brand new pair of shoes, and just as I looked down at those shoes I heard a car horn blowing on Charlotte Pike Blvd and I looked and two carloads of my preacher friends were headed home with their families in their cars. The windows rolled up, they were laughing, just having a good time, eating lunch. And they were waving, nothing sarcastic about that at all; they were just waving at me. Well, when I saw that my heart broke. I thought, “Well, here I am, a seminary graduate; I can preach.” I’d already had people say, “Why are you doing that bus stuff? You ought to be preaching! You could be in a church; did God call you to preach or to drive a bus?” That day there was a real moment, just a moment of depression that came over me and I thought, what am I doing with my life? I thought I could be home with my wife and kids now, and here I am with a torn up shoe, carrying a battery, trying to fix a truck, and God came to me and said, “I know exactly what you are; I’m getting you ready for what I want you to do. Just trust me.” And I thought it was very interesting that thirty-something years later that I get back on a bus to go all the way across the country as president of the convention.

Ed Young shares insights into the interaction of his leadership style with the ministry productivity of his 1,000-member staff as he demonstrates the drive that enabled him to reach 43,000 members.

YOUNG: I am a goal-setter. I can’t say any goal for my ministry path. I just wanted to be faithful with where I was and maximize where God had called me. And everywhere I went, I went there to stay for the rest of my life. I never looked over my shoulder and said recommend me over there or oh I’d love to go there. I never, never, never did that. I said, “God, I’m your man, I’m here forever until you take me home.” Jo Beth and I thought like that, and that’s our ministry. So far as bigger and better and more, never, never, never. Some of the most effective pastors in our whole denomination, they’re probably in decline, but they’re doing a better job than anybody else, because they’re faithful and they stick by the stuff and that’s their calling, that’s their ministry. Look at the prophets in the Old Testament. How many of them were called to fail from the get-go. Hey, Isaiah said “How long?” and God
said “Isaiah your whole life long; it’s always going to be like this. They’re going to hate you, they’re not going to follow your message but preach the truth.” I set goals for my church, for each staff member, for what we ought to be doing, or how we can get there but I do not set personal goals except I’m responsible for the depth of my life with God. He’s responsible for the length and breadth of my life. Everything else doesn’t matter. The depth, the time with Him I vow, and there’s where I try to set spiritual goals for myself. Then our church has goals but I didn’t have any personal path to be a big church or a little church, I don’t think like that. In fact, I pray that I don’t think like that.

ORMAN: Is your drive then just how can I reach these people?

YOUNG: Absolutely. My drive first of all was, Lord I want to know you. It was knowing God. Then my next drive was with my giftedness, where can I be most effective. And I tell all my staff, and we have over a thousand staff members, “If you can go anywhere with your giftedness and be more effective in the kingdom ministry, get out of here. But if you can’t, you stay right where you are.” And I would say that to any pastor, any one who’s called a servant of the Lord. I established personal goals and I’m a very disciplined person but not in the sense of the size of church or ministry. We set goals here, now here’s where we want to be in baptism, here’s where we want to be in discipleship, here’s where we want to be in Bible study, I do all that but nothing that relates, that’s not who I am. The fact that I’m pastor of Second Baptist Church is not my identity, Darrell. That is not who I am.

ORMAN: Do you change out staff members if they’re not meeting goals? Are you pretty proactive?

YOUNG: Yeah, I move them around. We fire people. Absolutely! We fire people all the time. For them, we move them around to determine their giftedness. Most all my staff has had numerous positions on our staff. They didn’t start where they are now. We move them around. We like to see them in different venues. We’ve got three locations here. We’re starting five theatre churches here; we’re starting eight I think across the country by the end of February. We’re putting them all over. We’ve got teams in here we train, that’s another story.

Jack Graham explains how his goal-setting has helped raise over $100 million dollars for Prestonwood’s ministry. Jack reflects on his qualified view of goal setting,

I think I will have to answer that yes and no. I don’t set short term goals in terms of personal goals for ministry. I have general outlines of where we should go and what we should do in church and certainly me as a pastor. I believe in goal-setting, I do. I believe it’s vital to success. Now, I’m not one of these who sit down with a piece of paper and say that this year we expect a certain amount of increases in Sunday School, membership, or even baptism. You know, I have always kind of set the goal as the ultimate goal of the world as reaching as many people as possible as quickly as possible. If within the framework of our church, certainly our staff has intermediate goals and short-term as well as long-range goals, and these things don’t just happen, I mean the rural location of our church didn’t just happen, we obviously set parameters, purposes and had plans, but if you’re asking me am I the kind of a guy
who sits down at the first of the year and writes down ten goals and strikes them off, no, I don’t do that. I’m more spontaneous and free flowing, and I trust, I think my role there is more visionary. I’m a big picture guy. And I sort of set the big picture, and then I ask others to come along side of us and fill in the blanks and we put the picture together. The first phase was $60 million, the next phase was $36 or $37 million, and we’re over a $100 million now. Our seating capacity is 7,500.

Paige Patterson, considered one of the key architects of the resurgence, describes his goals as general and specific.

You know, I suppose it will be fair to say that I’m a general goal-setter, but not much of a specific goal-setter. Let’s take the Conservative Resurgence, for example. The real goal there, in my mind and heart, was never doctrinal conformity. I suppose I’m too much of a Baptist for that to begin with; and I just think that there is room for discussion of whether we’re dichotomist or trichotomist and so forth and so on. The real goal was that I, being something of a student of history, had observed that every time a denomination lost its confidence in the Word of God, that it wasn’t long until it was evangelistically and missionarily dead also. My one big concern, the only thing that ever wakes me up in the middle of the night, is 6.5 billion lost people in the world. And so my goal in my presidency, my goal in the whole Conservative Resurgence was the same, and that is to deliver a church as pure as possible doctrinally for the sake of winning the world to faith in Christ. So does the journal go. The goals were also general in nature. I realized fairly early on that our ability to do any of this was dependent upon keeping our own lives pure. For an old Irish-Texan like me, that was hard for many reasons. But, I knew that I had to be sure that in my own life I was exemplary and that I walked with God; and that it would be apparent even sometimes maybe to my enemies that I was, in fact, walking with God, even in all my weakness. I attempted to do that; I attempted to maintain my own personal witnessing in my life, that’s been a goal I’ve always believed. I always teach my young preachers that there are only really two things necessary to avoid burn-out and failure in the ministry, including moral failure. You have to keep your personal walk with God, no matter what else you lose in the process, you gotta keep that. And you gotta keep witnessing to people. Those two things will hold your feet to the fire. So those have always been goals!

Adrian Rogers summarized in his usual bottom-line fashion, “I’m not a goal-setter in the sense of quantitative goals. I am a goal-setter in the sense of qualitative goals. My goal has always been, and I don’t want to say it self-servingly, but to live with integrity, to live with anointing, to be obedient, and to be useable. The rest of it is more of a result than a goal.
... It seems to me that all of my life, I’ve been dragged along, rather than being out front.

God has just brought me.”

THEIR LEADERSHIP TRAITS DEMONSTRATED BY THEIR MINISTRY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The goals of an individual always become the bedrock of their accomplishments. The numerical ministry accomplishments of the study group are displayed in the following chart. Some have held that particular pastorate up until the time of the author’s writing. Their prior and subsequent pastorates are not included in the statistics. All of the men were pastoring the largest church of their ministry career at the time of their presidency. Their evangelistic fervor and Biblical concept of reaching people through Biblical preaching can be seen in the growth in membership and exceptional baptismal rates of these churches. Their passion for reaching people spilled over in the lives of their people. One example of this was given at Adrian Rogers’ funeral by Ken Whitten as he quoted a deacon from Bellevue who said, “One day Dr. Rogers was walking through the fellowship hall and my small son yelled ‘Hello, Jesus!’ I corrected him quickly for his misstatement when he said, ‘But dad, every Sunday he says, ‘Come to Jesus’.”

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2 Quote taken from Dr. Adrian P. Rogers’ funeral, Thursday, November 17, 2005 at Bellevue Baptist Church.
MINISTRY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE RESURGENCE PRESIDENTS
(THE STATISTICAL GROWTH OF THE CHURCHES PASTORED DURING THEIR PRESIDENTIAL SERVICE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th># Of Churches Pastored</th>
<th>Ministry Start Date</th>
<th>Beginning Church Membership</th>
<th>Current Or Ending Church Membership</th>
<th>Baptisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adrian Rogers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bellevue 1972</td>
<td>8,700</td>
<td>29,349</td>
<td>23,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bailey Smith</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1st Del City 1973</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>19,487</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Draper</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1st Euliss 1975</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>8,419</td>
<td>5,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Stanley</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1st Atlanta 1971</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>15,925</td>
<td>10,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Vines</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1st Jacksonville 1982</td>
<td>13,249</td>
<td>28,405</td>
<td>20,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris Chapman</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1st Wichita Falls 1979</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>7,854</td>
<td>2,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Young</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2nd Houston 1978</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>41,747</td>
<td>27,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Henry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1st Orlando 1977</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>12,535</td>
<td>10,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Elliff</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1st Del City 1985</td>
<td>12,498</td>
<td>14,575</td>
<td>8,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paige Patterson</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Southeastern Seminary enrollment 1992</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Merritt</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1st Snellville 1985</td>
<td>2,167</td>
<td>13,345</td>
<td>9,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Graham</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Prestonwood 1989</td>
<td>8,981</td>
<td>24,515</td>
<td>10,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobby Welch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st Daytona 1974</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>4,163</td>
<td>6,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
<td>80,495</td>
<td>222,519</td>
<td>148,775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GROWTH: 142,024 ADDITIONAL MEMBERS 148,475 BAPTISMS
These leaders added drastic growth to the churches they pastored while serving as president. Several of them shared the experience of tremendous grace in their lives attributed to the conventions' prayers for them. They added 142,024 members to the churches they served. Paige Patterson served during this time frame as President of Southeastern Seminary and grew it in enrollment from 400 students enrolled to 2,200. These men also baptized the astonishing number of 148,775 precious people through their individual ministries.

Several of these great pastors relocated their churches and the vast majority raised millions of dollars for world missions and to build enormous ministry complexes for the Kingdom of Christ. Adrian Rogers, for example, relocated historic Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee to neighboring Cardova on a thousand acres of land. Bellevue built its own expressway ramp for one million dollars off of Interstate 40 on the North Side of Memphis, and constructed over one hundred million dollars worth of buildings, all for the Glory of God.

Adrian Rogers also started a worldwide radio and television ministry in 1987 entitled, *Love Worth Finding*. Rogers said requests grew to the point “We knew God was leading us into a wider ministry.” Today, or at the time of his death *Love Worth Finding* is on over 14,000 broadcast and cable television outlets and 2,000 radio stations in over 150 countries. Rogers also authored 18 books and was chairman of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message Study Committee that revised the S.B.C. statement of faith. At the annual meeting of the S.B.C. in June 2005, Rogers was honored in a resolution from the Executive Committee that referred to him as the “Prince of Preachers and the preeminent pulpiteer” among Southern Baptists. Dr. Gray Allison, founder and President Emeritus of Mid-America Seminary, one

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of the greatest soul winners of our day, commented on the impact and leadership of Adrian Rogers in regard to the seminary. After his election as president of the S.B.C. in 1979, one of the state paper editors asked, “Dr. Rogers, now that you’re the president, what about Mid-America? You have been a big supporter of that school.” Dr. Rogers said, “Friends are friends and positions don’t change that.” He never waivered in that. . . Recently he led Bellevue to give us 35 acres of land on I-40. That’s the kind of friend he was to the Seminary. Also, I thought you need to realize that character makes a difference; integrity is important; and we should be people of character and integrity. I watched Adrian Rogers for over 50 years. He always was what he was, a man of God. He always kept his word, and you’ve benefited because of him, and the future generations that Jesus sends us will benefit because of him, and I’d just like to say thank God for Adrian Rogers.”

Bailey Smith, the second president of the resurgence, was a trend setter during his presidency. At the time of his election he was the youngest man to serve as president in the history of the convention. He was the first pastor in the history of the S.B.C. to baptize more than 2,000 people in a year. He was the only former president to enter Crusade Evangelism. Also, at the time of his presidency he led more people to profess Christ as their Savior than any other Southern Baptist pastor in our history for the particular timeframe of his pastorate. During his tenure as president TIME magazine referred to him as, “A formidable figure, a fiery, red-haired, old-style prairie stemwinder”. . . And Newsweek called him “A capable and growing leader. . .” He has authored five books including his bestseller Real Evangelism. Bailey also served as President of the S.B.C. Pastors Conference.

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Jimmy Draper, the third president of the resurgence, pastored seven churches culminating in a 16-year ministry at First Baptist of Euliss, Texas. In 1991 he was elected as the eighth president of LifeWay (then referred to as the Sunday School Board). He has also served as president of the S.B.C. Pastor's Conference, the Executive Board and other committees of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the Executive Board of Tarrant Baptist Association, chairman of the trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, trustee of Baylor University, trustee of Southwest Baptist University and trustee of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board. Draper has led evangelistic crusades, conferences and other activities in 33 countries around the world. He organized and led the Kenyan Coast Crusade in 1990 with 536 volunteers from 16 states and 81 churches. Over 60,000 professions of faith were made during that crusade.6

Charles Stanley, the fourth resurgence president, pastored four churches before his thirty-five-year pastorate at First Baptist Church of Atlanta. In 1972 he started a local half-hour television broadcast to the local Atlanta area. In 1978 C.B.N. began broadcasting the program nationwide at no cost to First Baptist. In 1982 In Touch Ministries was incorporated and penetrated every major radio market within the United States. In Touch is now broadcast worldwide and is seen on 204 stations and 7 satellite networks. The radio broadcast is heard daily on 458 stations.

Stanley has authored more than 45 books and attributes all of his influence to... “the Word of God and the work of God that changes people's lives.” His website proclaims,

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The goal of Dr. Charles Stanley is best represented in *In Touch*’s mission statement: To lead people worldwide into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and to strengthen the local church. Dr. Stanley’s heart’s desire is to get the Gospel to ‘as many people as possible, as clearly as possible, as irresistibly as possible, and as quickly as possible—all to God’s glory.’ 7

Jerry Vines, the fifth president of the resurgence, pastored five churches before assuming his co-pastorate with Homer Lindsey, Jr., at First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida in 1982. He retired there in February of 2006. He expressed as one of his greatest joys in pastoring First Jacksonville was to complete his goal of preaching expository messages from every book of the Bible while pastoring there. His final emotional message came from the end of Deuteronomy as he concluded a series of 12 messages entitled, “Sermons From A Leader To His People.” His final sermons dealt with Moses’ final sermons to the children of Israel before his death and their entrance to the promised land. Vines concluded the service by reading “Acts 20:26-27, 32 telling the congregation the passage is ‘my testimony this evening’: ‘Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. . . . So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.’ 8

Jerry Vines is also the author of many books and numerous Bible preaching and teaching aids. He served as President of the Alabama Pastor’s Conference and President of the S.B.C. Pastor’s Conference. He currently conducts “Power In The Pulpit” conferences and Senior Adult conferences, as well as maintaining his online website Jerry Vines Ministries. 9

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Morris Chapman, the sixth president of the resurgence, pastored three churches before being called to First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas in 1979. He served the 7,800-member church for thirteen years. During his tenure there he was awarded the Valley Forge Medal of Honor for his sermon “Hear this Word, America.” In five months of 1984 his congregation prayed by name for over 36,000 S.B.C. churches along with their agencies and institutions. Every year of his pastorate First Baptist was in the top one percent of churches within the S.B.C. in Cooperative Program giving and baptisms. First Baptist Wichita Falls increased its giving from 11½% to 15½%. Chapman left his pastorate there to become president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee on October 1, 1992. He also served as president of the S.B.C. Pastor’s Conference (Atlanta, 1986), and as chairman of the Committee on Order of Business of the S.B.C. (Dallas, 1985).

He also served two terms as president of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico (1976-1978). He was one of the first pastors in the nation to use 30-second TV ads to promote the ministry and profile of their church. He also served as volunteer chaplain of the University of New Mexico basketball team. 10

One of his most rewarding accomplishments while serving as president of the Executive Committee has been assisting as chief consultant to the S.B.C. for their establishment and enactment of “The Covenant For A New Century,” which helped downsize the convention bureaucracy from 19 to 12 entities by reassigning ministry

assignments and streamlining their functions to ultimately save millions of dollars in 
Cooperative Program funds, freeing these monies for ministry and missions.\textsuperscript{11}

Ed Young, the seventh resurgence president, pastored four churches before taking the 
helm of Second Baptist Church of Houston, Texas in 1978. During his 28- year pastorate 
there the church has grown to be one of the largest in the nation. Through 2005 Second 
Baptist has seen 27,326 people follow the Lord in believers’ baptism as well as seeing the 
church grow in memberships from 2,000 to 41,747, thus making it one of the largest 
churches in the history of our nation. He has authored a number of books including 
\emph{Romancing The Home, The 10 Commandments of Parenting, and The 10 Commandments of} 
\emph{Marriage}. He also has a world broadcast ministry entitled “The Winning Walk.”

Jim Henry, the eighth resurgence president, pastored three churches before being 
called from his home city of Nashville to First Baptist Church of Orlando in 1977. His 
relocation of First Baptist from downtown Orlando to the 150-acre property off of I-4 on 
John Young Parkway has been studied by many of the convention churches through the 
years. Under his pastoral oversight, First Orlando has grown from 5,000 to 12,535 
members and baptized over 10,000 souls. He has authored five books, \emph{Heartwarmers, The} 
\emph{Pastor’s Wedding Manual, Keeping Life In Perspective, In Remembrance of Me and The Two} 
\emph{Shall Become One}. His denominational service is by far the most extensive of the 
Conservative Resurgence presidents (as listed below).

\begin{itemize}
\item Vice President, Nashville Baptist Pastor’s Conference, 1968
\item President, Nashville Baptist Pastor’s Conference, 1969
\item Trustee, Belmont College, Nashville, 1970-77
\item Trustee, LifeWay Board, Nashville, 1969-75
\item Trustee, Tennessee Baptist Convention, 1969-74
\item State Campaign Director, Georgetown College Alumni, 1969, 70, 71
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{11} Phone interview with the author, March 2006.
Tom Elliff, the ninth resurgence president, pastored six churches and was commissioned as a missionary by the Foreign Mission Board to serve in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe before beginning his pastorate at First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Oklahoma in 1985.

During his 20-year ministry there the church baptized over 8,000 people. He has led international evangelistic crusades and conferences in Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Zimbabwe, South Korea, Germany, Norway, Austria, Switzerland, Argentina, the Caribbean, Dominican Republic, Australia, France, Peoples’ Republic of China, Cambodia, Thailand, Cyprus, Canada and across the U.S. He has nine books including America On The Edge, A Passion for Prayer, Letters to Lovers and The Seven Pillars of A Kingdom Family. He

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12 James B. Henry, personal resume.
believes one of the great ministry contributions of his life was the Kingdom Family Emphasis during his convention presidency.

Denominationally he served as chairman of S.B.C. Committee on Order of Business, member of the S.B.C. Committee on Boards, president of the S.B.C. Pastor’s Conference, and chairman of the Southern Baptist Council on Family Life.\(^\text{13}\)

Paige Patterson, the tenth resurgence president, pastored three churches during the early years of his ministry life and exhibited a passion for reaching people for Christ. He operated a coffee house while pastoring in New Orleans and attending New Orleans Seminary. He ministered to homosexuals, prostitutes, organized crime figures, runaways and bikers. Patterson has traveled and preached in 85 countries of the world. He has shared Jesus with six different heads of state, including Yasser Arafat and Menachem Begin. . . \(^\text{14}\)

He was president of Criswell College in Dallas, Texas and was under W. A. Criswell’s influence for 17 year, and in 1992 he succeeded Lewis Drummond as president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he served for 11 years. The enrollment, decimated from the liberal leadership of his predecessor, was down to between 400 and 500. During his presidency there, his strong Biblical stand on inerrancy and conservative theology swelled the school’s enrollment to over 2,300 students. His emphasis on missions and evangelism made it one of the fastest growing schools in the country.

Ryan Hutchinson, vice president of administration at the school, explained the transformation,

\(^{13}\) LifeWay Leadership Luncheon, Biography, 20 June 2005, Southern Baptist Convention. (Nashville, Tenn.)

\(^{14}\) Paige Patterson. Info, About Paige Patterson; available from http://paigepatterson.info/about.cfm; Internet; accessed 17 March 2006.
The meeting of the Board of Trustees this Monday and Tuesday will mark the 10th Anniversary of Dr. Patterson's service as president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. God has greatly blessed SEBTS during this time, and has used Dr. Patterson to guide this institution to a point of being the greatest seminary on earth. Over the past ten years our student body has grown from 500 to 2,300 students; we have completed over $18 million in construction/renovation; we have taken the lead in placing students full-time in some of the most difficult mission field locations in the world; we have seen hundreds of churches planted both stateside and abroad with tens of thousands coming to know Christ and are preparing to embark on the largest project of Dr. Patterson's tenure, a new 59,000 sq.ft. Campus Center projected at cost of $6.3 million. Of course, the greatest accomplishment is the sending out of thousands of students who understand the complete authority and sufficiency of God's Word and have a passion to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to this dying world.15

Paige Patterson will be recognized in church history as one of the key architects of the Conservative Resurgence within the Southern Baptist Convention. His fervent activity and passionate leadership can be seen at every advent of the movement. He was with Jerry Vines and Adrian Rogers in prayer to the early morning hours of the first Tuesday election. The organizational and informational meetings he led along with his voluminous correspondence, were indispensable to the inerrancy advance. Originally, he believed his political activity was denominational suicide. He proceeded, urged on by his convictions. This all culminated with two events in his life: his two-term election as president of the denomination and his hiring to be president of the largest seminary in the world, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary of Fort Worth, Texas in August 2003.

James Merritt, the eleventh resurgence president, pastored three churches before arriving at First Baptist Church of Snellville, Georgia in October 1985. Over the next 18 years the church would baptize 9,995 converts and grow in membership from 2,167 to 13,345. He served the denomination in a number of capacities: Chairman of Teller's Committee (1987), member of the Resolutions Committee (1989, chairman 1993), the

Executive Committee (1991-1999, chairman 1998-99), and president of the S.B.C. Pastor’s Conference (1995). He also launched the nationwide television ministry, *Touching Lives*. His burden for missions and evangelism motivated him to “become the first S.B.C. president in history to visit all fifteen regions of the world during his tenure.”

Merritt founded a new church in 2003, Cross Pointe, the church at Gwinnett Center near Atlanta, Georgia that presently averages 1,200 in attendance and has had 249 baptisms. They have 1,850 covenant members in new member process. He is also the author of 4 books.

Jack Graham, the twelfth resurgence president, pastored four churches before his pastorate at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas. His first church, East Side Baptist Church in Cross Plains, Texas, averaged thirteen in attendance. Graham and his young wife Deborah would drive kids to the church in their Pinto and nap on the pews in the afternoon. Graham commented that when the church finally exceeded forty in Sunday School he was as excited as when Prestonwood would later increase by thousands. During his seventeen-year tenure at Prestonwood, the church has baptized 10,692 people and has nearly tripled in size from 8,981 members to 24,515 members. He also relocated the church to North Dallas on 150 acres. As he shared earlier, Prestonwood has raised over 100 million dollars to relocate and expand their outreach and ministry. Graham is the author of six books and a nationally syndicated T.V. ministry. He has served denominationally as a trustee of Oklahoma Baptists University (1978-81), Executive Committee of Florida Baptist

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16 Ibid., 203.


18 Caner, *Sacred Trust*, 209.

Bobby Welch, the thirteenth resurgence president, has pastored only one church in his entire ministry life. He was called to pastor First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach, Florida in 1974. In the past thirty-two years he has baptized 6,176 people. He has led his church to give at least 15% to the Cooperative Program of the S.B.C. each year for the past 30 years. He is known throughout the S.B.C. for being the founder/originator of the FAITH Evangelism through the Sunday School Strategy. Welch is staunchly pro-life and was featured on the 2½ hour ABC special with Peter Jennings entitled “Abortion, the Next Civil War.” He has authored several books. His last book is referred to in this work You, The Warrior Leader: Applying Military Strategy for Victorious Spiritual Warfare.

Welch has held several denominational positions through the years such as: vice-president of the S.B.C., president of the Florida Baptist Convention, Committee on Resolutions S.B.C., Committee on Nominations S.B.C., and trustee of B.S.S.B./LifeWay.  

THEIR LEADERSHIP TRAITS DEMONSTRATED BY THEIR PRESIDENTIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Their presidential leadership accomplishments varied in emphasis according to the time frame in which they were elected during the resurgence. The initial presidents’ influence was in a minority position in the beginning years. They faced hostile agency heads and the media of the convention opposed and denigrated their leadership. Every appointment they made to boards and agencies carried tremendous weight for the outcome of the

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conservative movement. Every election was hotly contested. Every outcome was in question. Several of the original presidents expressed the concern that they would be the first inerrantist candidate to lose the election and set the movement back in its progress. Several of the later presidents have run unopposed and were reelected by acclamation. These events in the spectrum of the inerrancy movement have slightly changed the focus and urgency of their presidencies. At the present, all of our agency boards are either totally conservative or completely controlled by inerrantists. Within this backdrop we will examine the various accomplishments of these men relating to their presidencies. The author asked each man two series of questions to ascertain their significant presidential accomplishments in their own words. The first set of questions was: During your tenure, as president, what do you see now as God’s unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time? Before your election? The second set was as follows: In your opinion what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?

Adrian Rogers’ answers to these questions demonstrated his strategic, intentional thinking as God used him to have the initial flagship presidency within the resurgence.

God’s unique purpose for my presidency was to begin the process that has resulted ultimately in the transformation of the Southern Baptist Convention. I believe that with all my heart. I did not strive to do any spectacular preaching, come up with new programs or anything else. I said to myself, “This one thing I will do.” I’ll stay out of trouble as much as I can, my preaching will be spiritual but generic, with emphasis on the Bible; I’m not going to try to dabble in all the denominational intricacies, but I will only appoint people who believe in inerrancy. And that beyond a doubt was the most significant thing... the most rewarding aspect and continues to be to this day, is the change in the denomination. As I look back on my life, I feel that other than being a pastor of a growing church, this is the most significant thing that God ever allowed to happen in my life. And the reward is to look back and say, “Yes, praise God, the nation’s largest evangelical denomination that was drifting to the left is turned around.” And that’s indicative of history, the institutions that moved to the left just keep on moving and people start new institutions. Seldom, if ever, does anything that has begun to drift to the left ever come back to the right. So, I would say I received the most satisfaction from that.
The writer ate lunch several years ago with Dr. D. James Kennedy, pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Dr. Kennedy has a Ph.D. in History from New York University and a Master of Theology from Chicago Graduate School and is recognized as a notable historian in his own right. He commented to the author, “Darrell, what’s happening with the Conservative Resurgence within the S.B.C. has never happened before in church history. There has never been a major mainline denomination recover from a slide into liberalism. The usual pattern is for the smaller conservative group to break away and form a new denomination. That happened to us in the Presbyterian USA. I was appointed to various committees, years ago, as a token conservative but had no influence. Later our conservative pastors broke away and started the Presbyterian Church of America. If you have any influence within the S.B.C., use it to press the conservative movement to the wall. Never give up or go back.”

Rogers also gave very wise, Godly counsel on how he dealt with the “poison arrows” of criticism that came his way.

Nobody likes being judged but I can say this, and I say this with praise for our dear Lord and Savior. It never got under my skin. I never tossed and turned at night, never carried any bitterness. I don’t boast about that, I’m grateful for that because that’s the grace of God. I never took all that personally, but to the contrary, I have a little deal that I had worked out that if you take the praise, then you have to take the criticism. If you give the praise to Jesus, you can give the criticism to Jesus. When anybody would criticize me, if I knew it was false, if I knew it was for His namesake and for the Word, I would offer that to the Lord as a love offering. So, the most severe the criticism, the sweeter the offering. And it just gave me something to offer to the Lord, which I did. I said, “Lord Jesus, I thank you that I’m counted worthy to suffer shame for your name, and Lord, I give you this as a love offering.” And that just transformed me.

According to Bailey Smith’s own admission his greatest contribution to the Conservative Resurgence was to appoint one of the most conservative Committee on

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20 Interview with the author, Spring 1987.
Committees in the history of the convention. He recognized and worked diligently on his slate of appointments.

Jimmy Draper’s signal accomplishment of his presidency was to actually defeat “Mr. Southern Baptist,” Duke McCall, in the runoff ballot 8,331 (56.97%) to 6,292 (43.03%).

Richard Land describes it this way:

But when Jimmy Draper beat Duke McCall—I mean if there was a man who was Mr. Establishment Southern Baptist in the years from 1943 to 1982, it was Duke McCall, president of what became New Orleans Baptist Seminary at age 30, Executive Director of the Executive Committee from 1946-1952, and then President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1951-1981, and the current serving President of the Baptist World Alliance, and running against him was Jimmy Draper, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas. When Jimmy won, and convincingly won, it was 57 percent to 43 percent. Paige called W.A. Criswell and said, “Are you sitting down? Dr. Criswell, we won.” “You don’t mean it,” he said. “You don’t mean it. Draper beat Duke McCall? I don’t even know where Euless is. God be praised. It is of God. It is of God”... It was when Jimmy Draper beat Duke McCall that they began to take the Conservative Resurgence seriously. It was when Jimmy beat Duke that the conservatives began to think, we might actually be able to win.21

Draper talked about his unexpected win and how God used him to soften the denominational criticism leveled toward the inerrantists by the liberals.

They never thought we could win so they never took it seriously. They never gave us an opportunity. We had no state papers, that’s why the Advocate was published. We had no state papers supporting us at all. And the first one and only one we used was the Southern Baptist Journal, but the Indiana state paper was an advocate for us in the beginning but beyond that we had no way to get our message out. So I think God used me, people liked me, and had some exposure to me, so I was able to continue the strong conservative appointments without anybody questioning my Southern Baptist credentials. See, we’d been in the top fifteen, maybe top ten for the Cooperative Program giving for a number of years; I pastored First Southern and when I was there, we gave $30,000 to the Cooperative Program but had about a $300,000 budget. ...But I think probably the best thing I was able to do was continue the strong emphasis with a minimum of criticism.

Draper also contributed to the conservative movement by publishing his book in 1984, Authority: The Critical Issue For Southern Baptists. The writer, while attending a

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21 Sutton, 125-126.
Continuous Witness Training seminar at Sheridan Hills Baptist Church in Hollywood, Florida, encountered three pastors who were previous Midwestern Seminary students who shared that God used this book in their lives to counter the liberal theology they were receiving in some of their classes.

Charles Stanley was recognized for presiding over the largest Christian convention in history as 45,519 messengers gathered in Dallas in 1985. He presided in a loving and fair maneuver in spite of the antagonistic challenges to his rulings. In 1986 he introduced the use of a professional parliamentarian, Barry McCarty, to the convention. McCarty’s objective rulings from outside of the convention setting had a calming effect on the 1986 convention in Atlanta. He has been used as a parliamentarian ever since. The 1985 convention also passed the motion to establish the Peace Committee, as it was later named, by member John Sullivan. The committee became a vehicle to document variations found within the S.B.C.

The committee’s stated purpose was,

To determine the source of the controversies in our Convention, and make findings and recommendations regarding these controversies, so that Southern Baptists might effect reconciliation and effectively discharge their responsibilities to God by cooperating together to accomplish evangelism, missions, Christian education and other causes authorized by our Constitution, all to the glory of God.22

Jerry Vines believes the most rewarding aspect of his presidency “was to see the turnaround beginning to take place. And to see more and more of our grassroots Southern Baptist people understanding the issues and rallying around the Bible.”

Morris Chapman is absolutely certain that God allowed him to be president of the S.B.C. to emphasize prayer for a spiritual awakening in our nation. He said,

I was aware of it before, during and after, and to this day, and in its simplest vernacular: spiritual awakening. That, in no way, means feeling good to the exclusion of missions and evangelism, but a kind of national spiritual awakening that

22 Ibid., 148, 161.
would sweep the country like a prairie fire. It would set people’s hearts ablaze. The lostness of the world would be countered with a powerful visit of God’s Spirit. ... Out of that was born the idea for us to pray for every Southern Baptist Church and every entity and their leaders. So we developed what became a fairly complex system and adopted about a five to six month period, and our people, on Monday through Friday, prayed in thirty-minute segments for whatever number of churches we put before them by name, and if we were going to pray for a church that following Tuesday, we would mail out a post card on Tuesday or Wednesday so that they wouldn’t get confused (so that we didn’t have to date it.) But they would know that the next Tuesday the First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls was praying for them specifically. We didn’t use an 800 outgoing number but we used an incoming 800 number so that by our suggestion on the card, people could call that number and make special requests for their church on that day. And it became a phenomenal pilgrimage for the people of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, for all those who volunteered to pray; because many of them had an opportunity to talk to leaders in other churches. We would have people who had churches without pastors, saying “pray for us in the selection of a pastor.” We had pastors who would call us and say, “Well, you’re praying for us on Tuesday, or you’re praying for us on Thursday? We’ve moved our prayer meeting from Wednesday to that night so that we will be praying for you and others in the convention at the same time you’re praying for us.” All of that was in the context of believing that prayer, of course, is a definite ingredient necessary for revival. To this day, I’m still hoping and praying and time is running along, and I’m just praying that we’ll see a national spiritual awakening in my lifetime. I still have that urgency.

Chapman also believed one of his most rewarding actions as president of the convention was participating in the Kenyan Coast Crusade of Africa. He took part in this evangelistic mission endeavor with Jimmy Draper as they saw thousands of Kenyans give their lives to Christ and follow Him in baptism.

Richard Land gave a vivid illustration of the character and courage of Morris Chapman as he described an early organizational meeting of the conservatives as they were seeking Charles Stanley’s nomination in 1984.

There was a gathering group that was pretty solid. We were told that Charles had been praying about and agonizing about it and just did not feel the liberty to be nominated. At one point, we were praying seeking guidance.

It was a veritable who’s who of the conservative movement and finally at one point, coffee and sweet rolls were brought in, or ordered. This waiter came in bearing a tray and we were all on our knees in a circle praying. Bailey Smith looks up when the guy walks in and says, “Brother, do you want to be president of the Southern
Baptist Convention?” It provided a little comic relief to cut some of the tension. But as late as 9:30 on Tuesday morning, the morning we were going to have an election, we did not have a candidate.

Charles did not have liberty to come and be nominated. So Judge Pressler, always the practical one, always the fellow who wanted to bring things back into focus, said, “All right, we’ve got to decide what to do here.”

I said, “That is right, and we are in a situation right now where we have thousands of people who have come to Kansas City to elect a conservative president, and we don’t have a nominee. If it comes to it, I’ll have to go over there and nominate Paige. We’ve got to have a nominee.”

So Judge Pressler went around the room and asked conservative leaders, “If Charles is not willing to run, are you willing to run?”

I am not going to name some of the people in the room, but it was quite a list of people. One man, when he was asked that question, said, “Yes, if no one else is willing to run, I will agree to be nominated.”

That man’s name was Morris Chapman, and in that one instance of time, I learned everything that I ever really needed to know about Morris Chapman. This had been a huge gamble for him. It would have been a shock to go over there and nominate Morris. There had not been any preparation; nobody had known about it; nobody knew what was going on. He had an enormous amount to lose as a comparatively young man in a church; and yet with the conservative movement at stake, Morris Chapman was willing to put himself on the line. I have never forgotten it, and I don’t think anybody that was in the room has ever forgotten it. It told all of us everything essential that we needed to know about Morris. Shortly after that, word came down from Charles that he did have the freedom to be nominated. We went over and nominated Charles, and that is exactly what happened. 23

Ed Young demonstrated a very capable, determined form of leadership during his presidency. He will be credited by historians as initiating the reorganization of the S.B.C. His entrepreneurial style of leadership prompted him to see the top-heavy and overlapping hierarchy within the convention. He still speaks with a passion today as he recalls his steps of leadership during his presidency in 1992-94.

Least rewarding was all the silliness within the structure. That’s the reason I sought to redeem it. You see when you’re president of the convention, you’re not just ex-officio of all those boards, you’re on all those boards. And you try to go. I think I went to every board meeting at least once. That’s when I saw, Darrell, how foolish it was flying people around at tremendous expense on all these giant board meetings and you really didn’t get a lot of business done, and no real kingdom stuff done, in fact very little kingdom stuff done. That’s when I saw the very clear necessity of scaling down all of this and making it lean and efficient and more of a servant mode

23 Ibid., 142.
You know, I had a sense of purpose. I did a lot of things. We made a fresh theological statement which I thought we needed to do. I appointed twelve different study groups at no expense to the denomination and they did an extensive study of several areas. A part of that was a clarification of the questions and theological positions that we would have in our seminaries which came to fruition. And that became the theological statement rather than at that time the Baptist Faith and Message, which took on a sort of an ambiguity, as you remember, of people trying to interpret it in different kinds of ways. We cleared that up. I guess the main thing I did, we studied our denomination. It felt like we were so top heavy. We had too many employees. We had too many things that duplicated themselves, and as a result of that, there was a consolidation, after my presidency. I did the ground work with groups, and you’ll remember we had a secular entity that came in and said we’re going to combine all this. As a result of that, we now have NAM, the International Mission Board, and LifeWay instead of having, I don’t know how many, several, several, several different entities. We consolidated, cut out the fat, the repetition. We don’t have a zillion different boards, that fly in two or three times a year at great expenses to meet. So there was a cutting down of the size at the top of our denominational structure. That was the big thing that came. I did the study, and someone else actually got to follow through on its administration. Other than that, I hope that I put a genuine emphasis on evangelism. My cry was theologically we’re correct and now we get to take our Biblical theology based on the edicts of scripture and really begin to reach people for Jesus Christ. My thesis was the message remains the same, but the methodology continues to change and the tragedy today, Darrell, is that we haven’t changed our methodology. The tragedy today is we still call ourselves SOUTHERN Baptist Convention. In my judgment, the tragedy today is we still are not reaching the cities. We are still a basically blue collar denomination. We have to make this transition or the future of the S.B.C. to me is rather bleak.

One other insightful note that Edwin Young pronounced should be used as an insightful prophetic warning to future convention leaders. Young explains: “I think if we as Southern Baptists were alert when the thinking of the influential German theologians Bultmann, Barth and Barunner came to American theological circles, and we clearly identified what this was about in lessening the high view of God’s Word, God’s perfect truth, perhaps we would never have gotten into the situation we found ourselves in a few years back as far as theological education is concerned. Southern Baptists need to be alert to each new wave of theological thought that could affect S.B.C. life.”

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24 Ibid., 223.
As Richard Land noted earlier, Jim Henry’s leadership in this was calming and crucial to its implementation. He also gave strong emphasis to racial reconciliation by presiding over the adoption of the Racial Reconciliation Resolution. Included in this effort was a special offering for the African-American churches burned by fire bombings and a public apology to the African-American community for the institution of slavery. One of Henry’s most memorable leadership moments was when he introduced Billy Graham to the S.B.C. messengers. He recalls, “I remember he (Billy Graham) was running a little bit late, and I remember we were singing and whatever we were singing, they had to put him in a cart to bring him around and when he got up on the platform, they stopped singing and this roar began to come, and all of a sudden it was like electricity. He came up and the song instantly stopped and everybody was cheering and clapping. That was one of those electric moments that I’ll never forget, and to have the honor to introduce him, one of the greatest men in Christian history, is one thing I’ll never forget.

Henry’s presidency was questioned by some of the conservatives. But it should be remembered that his endorsement of Morris Chapman was crucial in that pivotal election against Dan Vestal. He released this strong endorsement of Chapman to Baptist Press in 1990,

“We unite around principles larger than any political aspirations,” He then concluded bluntly: “Two godly men seem to be the major nominees for the strategic position of presidential leadership. I know and love them both, but I can only vote for one. In deciding for the first time in my ministry to speak out on a presidential election, I am doing so not on the basis of personalities, but of a greater concern—a principle; the integrity and nature of Scripture. Our leader must be one who will affirm the course that will keep us off the reefs of denominational destruction; the “spiritual oil spill” that has polluted and practically destroyed every mainline denomination; the environmental hazard that has wasted too many lives and evangelical pursuits, the toxic waste of biblical compromise. I feel only one appears willing, according to my information, to appoint capable men and women who will adhere to the spirit and intent of the Peace Committee report as adopted by the
messengers to the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention held in St. Louis, Missouri. He went on to say: “The writer of Ecclesiastes said, ‘There is a time to be silent and a time to speak (Eccl. 3:7)’ In my time to speak, I speak for Morris Chapman as president of the Southern Baptist Convention when we gather in New Orleans. I encourage others to do so also in this crucial year in our denomination. I know you join with me and thousands of our beloved Baptists in fellowship elsewhere in praying God’s will to prevail and for a growing consensus in the course plotted for us by His Word and our Baptist heritage.  

Tom Elliff's stated calling for his presidency was two-fold: to strengthen families and to pray for and seek revival. His first year as president he organized seven one-day convocations at each of the six Southern Baptist seminaries and Mid-America in Memphis.

He referred to them as “A Call To The Cross.” Each of the seminaries called off all of their classes on the day of their convocation and met for prayer, preaching and worship. Elliff assembled a team to take with him: Henry Blackaby, Avery Willis, Ron and Pat Owens. The second year of his presidency in Salt Lake City he emphasized the strengthening of Christian families. One other event of significance during his presidency was the signing of a theological covenant publicly before the convention by each of the S.B.C. seminary presidents. Elliff asked Al Mohler, as head of the Seminary Council and author of the document entitled One Faith, One Task, One Sacred Trust to lead in the signing of the document. All six seminary presidents signed the document which included the statement, “Let the churches and the Southern Baptist Convention know that our seminaries are committed to theological integrity and Biblical fidelity. Our seminaries will teach the authority, inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of the Bible.” Mohler concluded, “This sacred covenant anchors the six seminaries of the S.B.C. to the solid rock of Biblical conviction.”

25 Ibid., 197-198.

26 Ibid., 243-244.
Paige Patterson was described by James Merritt in his nominating speech in Salt Lake City as a “proven leader and a champion of the cause of Christ. . . . Patterson is a man of courage and because of his commitment to his beloved Southern Baptist Convention, he was willing to lay his personal reputation and denominational future on the line in calling Southern Baptists back to their biblical roots. Patterson has never wavered for the infallibility and the truth of God’s word.”

Patterson has definitely been a key leader in the Conservative Resurgence. His inexhaustible groundwork and wise intentionality can be demonstrated by his tireless planning and correspondence before the first resurgence election in 1979. He writes,

Dear Friend:

There are several additional tasks which we need to care for almost immediately. If our new president is to be effective in the crucial role that he will play in the naming of certain committees, it will be of paramount importance that we have before him the names of reliable people, both preachers and laymen, whom he can appoint or recommend without fear of disappointment. These should be persons whose positions you know intimately. It is very important that persons not be included in such a list on the mere assumption that they are probably committed to the historic Baptist theological persuasion. This list must encompass only those about whose theological position we are absolutely certain. In addition, the list needs to be made up of men and women who are courageous and willing to stand alone for what is right if necessary.

He was also there in Adrian Rogers’ hotel room the morning of the election, weeping and praying for Rogers’ candidacy and nomination. His steady hand of leadership could be seen on every initial step of the resurgence. He categorizes and summarizes the various scriptural and moral issues he intended to lead on during his presidency.

I think there were two or three things that happened during my presidency which were important; and they were mostly matters of timing. Now from the very

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27 Ibid., 248.
28 Ibid., 94.
first of the conservative movement, I had had my head set on the *Baptist Faith and Message*, the confessional statement. I felt that there were neoorthodox elements that had crept into the ’63 version which had not been present in the original convention . . . I also felt like it was the time for us to make a statement about racism, which we had never made confessionally. And I felt questions about the family, we had adopted a family amendment under Tom Elliff, but we had not really dealt with the whole gender question; the question being a denomination favoring life in quite the ways I felt like we should have. There were other questions arising, for example, questions with regard to God with the openness of God movement. It was in its infancy then, but it was already clear where it was going, and I felt like we needed to make some clarification there because, in my opinion, your doctrines never change but the issues that you must address doctrinally do change from time to time. Former generations, for example, would have been unaware of any abortion, any necessity for life, because abortion was not considered a possibility, but in our generation it is, so we need to say something. And for all those reasons, it was critically important to me that we get the issue of a reassessment of our confession before the people. And particularly, of course, on the first article which was on the Bible. I’ve been angling for that for a long time, I confess, I will confess that I worked to get a motion on the floor of the convention a year before that the newly-elected president would appoint the committee that would bring revision; and so far as I’m concerned maybe the most important thing that happened during the years of my presidency, was the appointment of the committee to revise the *Baptist Faith and Message* Statement and the bringing of that, and I do think that the one hour debate that occurred at the time when the presentation was made is also one of the signal moments in Southern Baptist history; because more clearly than any of us would have ever believed to hope for, all the issues got out on the table. And Dr. Chuck Kelly and Dr. Richard Land and Dr. Al Mohler came as close in my estimation in their answers to being as divinely inspired as anybody has ever come since the Bible itself. They were just incredible in the way they fielded the questions and handled them. I would have to say that was a high point. There were some other things that we tried to do that were very important. We established Strategic Focus Cities, and got ourselves refocused on planting churches in the big cities of America where we didn’t have any, and that was a major emphasis. I also worked very hard during those years to get us refocused on all the various ethnic groups that made up the Southern Baptist Convention, and bring some of their leadership into prominence in the convention, from the African-Americans, from the Hispanics, and various groups of the Asians, and what have you. Had all the presidents from about 22 or 23 different groups that make up the convention ethnically, I had them come to a common meeting on the campus of Southeastern Seminary to encourage them. So those were some of the things that I think history will probably regard the most significant that happened during our presidency. We codified all that had been going on since 1979.

James Merritt was the first S.B.C. president to visit all 17 regions of the world.

Under the direction of the International Mission Board, he met with missionaries in all these
regions. He believes his unique purpose was to promote missions and preach the gospel globally.

During Jack Graham’s presidency, it becomes obvious that the role of the resurgence presidents shifted from change agent for the convention, as the initial presidents functioned, to spiritual spokesman and moral leader. Graham illustrates this, asserting,

'It was just an incredible experience seeing what God is doing around the world, just being able to see the worldwide influence and impact of Southern Baptists, and the fact that we have through the Conservative Resurgence, we have been pruned and prepared now to be fruitful now as never before in missions and evangelism. Bobby Welch, of course has been carrying the torch for evangelism, which I certainly obviously support. My time was a time of peace within the convention, and yet war in the world. It was significant in the sense that we are riding smoothly within the denomination, although that doesn’t mean there were no issues, conflicts or whatsoever, but at least our purpose is set, we have pruned the vine and we are prepared for the future. At the same time, we have all this in the world swirling around, I think it would be extremely rewarding now that whoever is president, that the people want to know, the press wants to know what do you say the Baptists think. We are now viewed as the heavyweight in the evangelical Christian faith and in the news of this strange world in which we are living, we have, and I had an opportunity to speak into needs and current events of our day. . . . Because of my friendships and relationship with President Bush, before he was governor, when he was governor, and now that he is president, I view my role is to support conservative value at the national level, try to support our nation in its time of crisis and try to get spiritual leadership and counsel in that. In one sense, because I view the role of the Southern Baptist President, at this point at least, I didn’t see my role as being one of changing programming. I mean, you couldn’t really change programming if you wanted to. It’s not a matter of trying to direct the Southern Baptists or Southern Baptist entities but rather to come alongside to support, to give vision, to give voice to Southern Baptists, but also to speak in behalf of the Southern Baptists. We all know of course no one speaks for the Southern Baptist, but to speak as president of the Southern Baptist Convention to the issues of our time. I had a lot of that going on. I believe there were seven missionaries killed by terrorists during my term. It was the largest number of missionaries lost during a twenty-four month period in Southern Baptists Convention history, in that short a framework.

Bobby Welch was the first president to take on the S.B.C. presidency as a full-time responsibility. He was very intentional from the beginning with his purpose to inspire the S.B.C. to pursue one million baptisms as a great harvest for Christ. He told the interviewer,
in response to the question: What do you see now as God’s unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time? Before your election?

I was aware of it at the time. I came to the conclusion that if I were elected, there was no doubt about it that I had received a mandate from God. I was never going to say that publicly; this is the first time that I’ve said it near publicly. But, I believe that if God allowed me to get elected it would be a mandate from God to press as hard as I could across this convention for unity of purpose for evangelism. So I did, and I guess when you say, “Did you notice before you were elected?” to the extent of what I just said, I did.

Upon his election he immediately took a bus tour of the nation in a specially-prepared tour bus funded by several of the S.B.C. agencies in conjunction: the Executive Committee, LifeWay and the Annuity Board. His trip and presidential theme has been “Everyone Can Win, Witness and Baptize A Million In A Year.” In his first year he visited 180 cities preaching several times in each city. James A. Smith of the *Florida Baptist Witness* interviewed Welch June 7, 2005 about his road trip experience as he shared, “I’m a million times more convinced than I ever have been in all my life... that we have good people doing good things. They just do not have the leadership to get focused and to come together on the main thing.” During his year-long non-stop conversation with Southern Baptists, Welch said he found that they know the right answers—“They’ve got it in their head, they’ve got it in their heart’ that Jesus is the only way and it’s their responsibility to share that gospel with the world. I think this entire convention is languishing over the lack of a unity of purpose as a collective body.”

As Welch began his first tour in the summer of 2004, he asked the author his opinion of his goals and efforts. The response was, “Bobby, how can you lose when you’re trying to motivate the convention to win a million people to Christ? There’s no way you can lose.”

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This godly goal and ambition calls for a supernatural effort, God has challenged the
convention in the past to pursue a million souls for Christ. The national motto of the S.B.C.
in 1954 was “a million more in ’54.” It turned out to be one of our greatest growth years in
the history of the convention.

Paige Patterson elected several years before Welch, in an interview after his initial
election said he intended to pursue in 2000 the goal of one million baptisms worldwide
through the influence of the convention. Bob Record, president of the North American
Mission Board stated July 18th of 1997 that he believed “God wants our churches to baptize a
million people a year by the year 2005.” This type of leadership and passion for the
expansion of the kingdom of Christ should be applauded, admired and most importantly,
assisted with all our strength.
CHAPTER 5

THE ABILITIES AND LEADERSHIP TRAITS THAT ARE NECESSARY TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE AS PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Oswald Sanders quotes Friedrich Stiler, of a century ago, “The critical juncture found none but second-rate actors on the political stage and the decisive moment was neglected because the courageous were deficient in power, and the powerful in sagacity, courage and resolution.”

These thirteen presidents have had both power and decisive courage to address the issues of their day. All have taken public stands against abortion, immorality, homosexual marriage and liberalism within S.B.C. institutions. They have with one voice, stood for the authority of holy scripture, biblical morality, strong traditional families, global missions, and evangelism of those without Christ.

PERSONAL CONVICTIONS

The study groups’ leadership traits were demonstrated extensively as they served the presidency of the S.B.C. There is not a more visible, public place of leadership within evangelical Christendom. Their opinions are aggressively sought by the national news outlets and their every word is extensively scrutinized. Two of these presidents received extremely harsh treatment due to their convictional responses to questions of their day.

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Bailey Smith, during his presidency, was a keynote speaker for the Religious Roundtable Conference meeting in Reunion Arena of Dallas, Texas. President Ronald Reagan was in attendance that August day of 1980. When Smith was speaking on the exclusive nature of Christ within a pluralistic society, he said, “With all due respect to those dear people, God doesn’t hear the prayers of a Jew because all prayer must go through Jesus Christ!”\(^2\)

Smith recounts that the then-liberal Baptist Press picked up the quote gave it legs to the other press outlets. Within days there was a tremendous, worldwide, public backlash that lasted for months. The writer was told that 300 negative or critical letters a day were sent to Smith over the next several months. TV talk shows did sketches on him, and major news outlets carried an edited version of his quote.

Smith described it as one of the most painful circumstances of his life. He said, “No one will ever know what it’s like to go through a national controversy until they’ve been in one.”\(^3\)

Later Jerry Vines went through a similar experience over his comments about Islam’s founder, Mohammad. During the S.B.C. Pastors’ Conference of June 2002, Vines said, “Christianity was founded by the virgin-born Jesus Christ. Islam was founded by Mohammed, a demon-possessed pedophile who had 12 wives, and his last one was a 9-year-old girl.” He cited his main source as the book *Unveiling Islam* by Ergun and Emil Caner, former Muslims who now teach Christian theology at Liberty University and Southeastern Seminary. Their book quotes the Muslim Hadity, a Qu’ran

\(^2\) Author’s phone conversation with Bailey Smith on 24 March 2006.

\(^3\) Ibid.
commentary, in 7:64 which says Mohammed was betrothed to a 6-year old girl named Aishah and consummated the marriage at 9."4 The reaction was identical in scope and emotion to Smith’s experience several years earlier. Baptist Press led into one of their stories on the comment by writing, “Southern Baptist convention leaders, ranging from pastors to seminary presidents, continued to voice support of Jerry Vines in the wake of a national media uproar over statements Vines made regarding the Muslim prophet Mohammed at the S.B.C. Pastors’ Conference. . . . The facts of Mohammed’s life, cited by Vines, are from the Koran and Hadith, specifically Surah 53; Hadith Volume 7, book 62, numbers 64-65. Vines, in documenting his information, invited Muslim scholars to explain their own documents to us all.”5

These two events highlight the tremendous influence and leadership these men wield after their election to the office of president within the convention. Adrian Rogers commented on this influence when he confessed,

I would say, also, that being president of the convention, opened up to me doors of influence that still exist today. I have counseled with four presidents of the United States, I have found myself in places, and the influence of this denomination is far greater than I realized. About that time, people were discovering who the Southern Baptists were anyway. When I was first elected, Jimmy Carter was the president, and he was a Southern Baptist. People would say “A Southern what? Who is that? What is that?” Carter said he was “born again,” they said “What is that?” About this time, Southern Baptists began to be known. Now, they know who we are; everybody knows who Southern Baptists are. But for me, personally, being elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention gave me a stature, and opened doors of influence that nothing else would have opened. I would be less than honest if I did not say to you that is gratifying.


He also indicated the level of intestinal fortitude that was necessary to exert moral force for change upon the convention. When asked by the interviewer if he coined the phrase “Bulldogmatic”, Rogers responded, “Yes, some things we ought not to be dogmatic about, some things we need to be bulldogmatic about. As a matter of fact, Ken Chaffin (from opposing side of the struggle) said, ‘Adrian, you’re like a pit bull with a steel bar in his mouth.’”

In response to the question of the moral and political influence of the Southern Baptist Convention presidency, Bailey Smith astutely connected the convention’s resurgence to the conservative political resurgence within the United States, explaining,

Well, during those early years, it was almost a parallel event between the political Conservative Resurgence, as Ronald Reagan was coming along, and the Conservative Resurgence in the convention. And, man, I remember someone read a letter from Ronald Reagan saying he’s proud of what’s happening and read it from the platform of the Southern Baptist Convention. Then, of course, when Ed Young was president he had, in New Orleans, George Bush, the First, on the platform. In fact I sat right by him and Johnny Cash had sung that night. I think that many in the political realm thought that our conservative movement of the world’s largest non-catholic denomination maybe in someway aided also the political turn to the right.

This historical connection would make a tremendous study for future scholars and historians. Adrian Rogers said repeatedly in many settings in which the author was present, “As the S.B.C. presidency goes so goes the seminaries; as the seminaries go so goes the Southern Baptist Convention; as the Southern Baptist Convention goes so goes Evangelical Christianity; as Evangelical Christianity goes so goes the church; and as the church goes, so goes America; as American goes so goes the Western World”. The deep level of personal convictions held by these men can be illustrated by an interview conducted in an April 1986 meeting of the S.B.C.’s Peace Committee Political Activities
Subcommittee. John Sullivan asked Paige Patterson and Paul Pressler about the
“inequities of appointments” to the trusteeships. “to which Patterson responded,
‘Charles Stanley will name only those persons who are inerrantists. But in the past 40
years, there have been many inequities. I am not for peace at any price. I am not for
peace in the S.B.C. if I have to compromise my convictions.’ Cecil Sherman then
commented, ‘Could I serve on a Seminary board?’ Pressler responded, ‘No.’ Cecil
Sherman comments, ‘That’s a glib statement.’ To which Patterson responded, ‘Not glib,
maybe it is simplistic but not glib.’ Sherman went on to ask, ‘What would you do, fire?’
Patterson responded, ‘I think friends will see me as longsuffering, but I will not sacrifice
my conscience.’ ‘Do you think it is a moral error or a heresy to believe in the inerrancy
of scripture?’ Sherman responded, ‘No.’ And then said, ‘Same question. Do you think
it is a moral error and heresy to not believe in the inerrancy of scripture?’ Patterson
responded, ‘Yes.’”\(^6\)

Jerry Vines defines his leadership character as simply being real when he says,

Well. . .you know there are all kinds of books out there on leadership and
virtually everyone of them has a different definition of what leadership is. I’m
not sure I know yet what leadership is. But to me, the best way to be a leader is to
be who you are, the way God has made you, the way God leads your personality.
I don’t think you can take on the characteristics of other men’s leadership style. I
think you can learn from others, of course, but I think the main thing is just be
genuine and be real. I have found that God’s people, if they find out that you’re
the real deal, they’ll tend to follow you. So, I just try to lead by being a Christ-
like-man, and challenging them to follow the teachings of God’s Word, to do
what God has put us into this world to do. And I’ve been fortunate along the way
to have people who are willing to do that.

\(^6\) Sutton, 452.
Morris Chapman’s reflects upon the influence of the S.B.C. president, reinforcing Rogers’ statement about the influence of the convention upon the nation. Chapman remembers,

I had an opportunity to be in the White House on a number of occasions. I had the opportunity to invite him (President George H.W. Bush) to address the convention in Atlanta that first term. I was invited by Dan Quayle and Marilyn for Jody and me to fly on Air Force II with him on one occasion. Now, you know you need the maturity to understand that all politicians are not doing this just simply because you’re such a great guy. They are trying to touch base with the various constituencies in America so you can’t get too heady with that sort of thing, and there again is the need for some maturity when a man is elected president because some opportunities will come to him that are so overwhelming he’d be no influence whatsoever because he’s just so awed, he’s dumbstruck. You have to realize that even the invitations that are open to you come as the result of the need of the politicians to touch base with you because of the 17,000,000 people. And you need to respond, but you need to respond with maturity and wisdom that will allow you to interact in a positive and helpful way. But simply being president I would say that the greatest opportunity to maximize and go beyond the convention is simply that you find yourself at the table with other evangelical leaders and have an influence on some aspect of American life.

Paige Patterson indicated that the moral character of the president gives him his influence, “He has influence more than authority; what authority he does have, or what my old daddy used to say is, ‘moral ascendancy.’ If he has an authority, it’s because people are convinced that he is genuinely a godly man and that they should follow him, Patterson said. “He has, perhaps, that kind of authority, but it is that, it’s moral in scope not written, not codified in any way.” It is a difficult time because the way the thing has evolved, it used to be almost purely honorary; all he did was just preside over the convention and that was about it.”

To even a superficial observer it becomes apparent that the moral character and convictions that propelled these men to one of the highest offices in evangelical Christianity also enabled them to have vast influence within the larger scope of national
politics and moral debate. The deep certainty of their convictions, based upon scripture, gave them the moral parameters of their influence.

RELATIONSHIP NETWORKS

Earlier in this writing it has already been established that the resurgence presidents developed a close fraternity among themselves. Their lives seemed to interconnect throughout their ministry life culminating in their intentional political activity to stem the tide of liberalism within the denomination. Three examples of these early interactions can be found in the testimonies of three of the most recent presidents. Jack Graham recollects, “As a young pastor in Oklahoma in 1975, I was amazed by his (Adrian Rogers) preaching ability, and determined to get to know him. So I called and made an appointment and then drove across the state to meet him in Bartlesville, where he was preaching a revival crusade. We had lunch at Long John Silvers. I was in awe; the warmth of his personality took me in. His interest in me, a young preacher, encouraged me. I soaked up every word and left knowing I had been in the presence of a man of God.” Bobby Welch recall, “Fresh out of his morning shower, hair still uncombed, barefoot and in his undershirt... hurriedly searching for his tie, there he was... the already legendary, Dr. Adrian Rogers! ‘In an hour or so he would speak the words publicly that would fire one of the starting guns in what would become an unprecedented and historical victory in the ‘battle for the Bible’ within the Southern Baptist Convention.

Most memorable to me was that I was sitting there on the edge of his hotel bed, having been invited in for his encouragement to become the pastor of the First Baptist
Church of Daytona Beach. I was a young associate pastor who had driven his pastor, Bob Mowery, to this impending meeting. Yet Dr. Adrian Rogers had taken time out of his intense and extraordinary life for an unknown and very ordinary and inexperienced guy like me. That act of kindness and encouragement has stayed here with me throughout all these many years and has urged me to try to be accessible to others on their journey for Jesus.”

Jim Henry also remembered two encounters he had with Rogers. One was earlier in his ministry. The other followed his election.

I have hundreds of wonderful memories with Adrian; two quickly come to mind. The first was when I was a supply preacher at Bellevue while they were searching for a pastor to follow Dr. Pollard. I was primed to preach, already in Memphis, when word arrived that the search team wanted to present a young man from Florida to preach in view of a call. Name? Adrian Rogers! I got bumped. Adrian was called, and I was in the congregation when they called him.

The second was the night I was elected president of the S.B.C. I came into a room where a large crowed had gathered. Adrian had come out earlier and endorsed my friend, Fred Wolfe, for the position. He said something to the effect of, ‘I promised Fred my support and I kept my word. Our people have chosen my friend Jim Henry to the office. He is our president, he is my president, and I will pray for and support him and urge us all to do the same and stand together.’ That kind of statesmanship was typical of Adrian. That moment of encouragement meant more than these words can describe.

Jerry Vines referred to the influence of two of the other presidents in his life and ministry. Regarding his election as president he told the author, “Well, you know an interesting thing happened that may be little known. But after the message that day (preached at the convention), Dr. Charles Stanley came to the platform and embraced me, really big, tightly, and just whispered in my ear that ‘God told me this morning that you’ll

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8 Ibid.
be the next president of the Southern Baptist Convention.’ And it scared the willies out of me, to tell you the truth, do you hear what I’m saying? The author queried Vines, ‘So God did tell him?’ Vines, ‘That’s right!’

He also recalled Adrian Rogers continual influence on his pulpit ministry, “I remember the many times we ‘sermonized’ together on the phone. He was a master expositor,” said Vines. “I’m not the only preacher I know who ‘creatively disguised’ his outline and used it! I heard him say so often, ‘If my bullet fits your gun, fire it!’ I also remember the times we rejoiced together over the victories God gave us in the Conservative Resurgence.”

Both Jimmy Draper and Jack Graham made references to the interaction of the previous presidents and their influence over the continuation of conservative president elections. Draper described the discussion of a possible candidate, “…but I just don’t think any of us can say ‘this is God’s man.’ We can give our best judgment, and what the presidents have tried to do, you know we talk once or twice a year, and just say ‘what are you hearing?’ or ‘how do you feel about these guys?’ We never have really gotten out and campaigned for anybody.” Graham said,

There is certainly a paternity within the core presidents in the resurgence. I don’t believe there are any formal meetings or conversation. The way it went down directly with me is Ed Young gave me a call and said that the former presidents, and again, of course the former presidents are not a nominating committee or anything like that, but he said it was their view that I should be nominated. And that I should consider to be nominated. So once you get a call like that and you have others telling you the same thing, then you have to be willing to say yes or no, and I was willing to say yes.

9 Ibid.
COMMUNICATION SKILLS

In ascending priorities these leaders were first recognized for their deep, uncompromised convictions. They then developed a close brotherhood of relationships that prompted their successive elections. Once elected their primary skill of leadership was communication. It has been pointed out that in the initial years of the S.B.C. the presidency was more of an honorific position that culminated in the moderator of the convention each year. With the advent of the resurgence in 1979, the convention presidency took on an entirely different and significant role. The new conservative presidents represented a distinct challenge to the liberal media of their day. This difference immediately thrust them forth as moral commentators of a different persuasion, and their interviews with this author reflect the importance and considerable attention they gave to their public discourse. It was noted earlier that the media avalanche that encompassed Bailey Smith’s remarks about God answering the prayers of Jews caused subsequent presidents to measure their words carefully. In fact, the vital importance of proper communication prompted the former presidents to conduct mock press conferences with later presidents. These conferences would include various former presidents playing the roles of current major newsmen of their day. They would assume their role and state their liberal positions and questions. The writer was told this was a tremendously helpful exercise for those presidents who were recipients of this process.

Paige Patterson describes this activity.

And, so one of the things that we used to do—unfortunately we’re not doing it right now but we used to do it all the time—every one of these men, who were president before me, and I did it too; we had a mock press conference with them on the telephone. All of us became the press, we even had some fun out of it. We would assign roles, one guy would be Dan Rather, another would be the New York Times, and we would just plaster the guy on the phone. We’d have long
phone conversations, sometimes maybe it lasted three or four hours. We would hit him with everything in the world and every time that he said something that could get him in trouble, we’d stop right there and somebody would say, “Well, now let me tell you, you may want to think about the possibility of saying this.” We just played ‘meet the press.’

Bailey Smith commenting on the pressure of the presidency said, “The pressure is that every word you say is monitored. Your phrases can be taken out of context. There has to be vigilance. I remember several men told me to be presidential. That’s pretty good advice.”

James Merritt said, “The access to the media is greatly intensified and depending upon your ability as a spokesman, can gain a very wide exposure for the S.B.C.

Knowing that every word you are answering is scrutinized by outside influences (such as the press) and realizing that even though it is technically not true, many people see you as the spokesman for eighteen million Southern Baptists.”

Jerry Vines described the vast influence of everything the sitting president says and the pressure that accompanies it. “. . . the pressures are to try to be careful not to make the statements and certainly not to say anything that would bring discredit on the Lord or our denomination,” he said. “Because he (the president) becomes a spokesman for the largest protestant denomination in the world, that’s huge. Know what I’m saying?

That is very, very big.”

Jim Henry also referred to the immense influence of the S.B.C. presidency, but also gave several helpful points of advice for dealing with the media.

HENRY: It exerts more than I imagined and, I didn’t realize it until I was in the office. Well, you’re a gorilla spiritually. You walk into a meeting of other groups and you represent sixteen million people, it’s the largest protestant denomination in America; in the world. You immediately have the floor. The second thing is, now, and the other guys before me began to experience it, and I did in my two years, the press and the media come in there first. Anything that happens, in the
national or international level, they’re going to try to get to you as representative of the largest protestant denomination to quote you.

ORMAN: So you’re like an evangelical pope?
HENRY: Just about, that’s close to it. I had a media guy on standby full-time. He took all the calls, from the television, radio, newspapers, magazines. It was a constant flow, wanting a quote. “What do you think about this” or “what are you all going to do about that” or “will Southern Baptists be on this” or “will you be on this program or that.”

ORMAN: That’s a difficult line to walk isn’t it? Knowing your scriptural convictions and knowing what the media is going to do with it?
HENRY: Yes, well, the media will not print scriptural convictions; the people reading it will tell you that. They don’t understand what you mean by those words. And that taught me something by talking to them. I learned that I had to phrase some things, saying the same thing, but using different words, you know, the language of Zion. And then I learned, also, a couple of things. One of them was to be nice to the press and not to avoid them. But also in talking to them up front, tell them that I want to be accurate. And I would tell them, “Now I’m going to trust you with what I’m going to say, and if it doesn’t come out, then don’t call me back, because I’ve got a responsibility to my church and to my people.” So I think I was able to, but because of my experiences early on, they helped me when I got hit with this broad side all of the sudden, in one minute.

Henry referred to three procedures he used, as president of the convention, to communicate efficiently with the media. First, was to hire a full-time media liaison to be the initial contact person for the press on moral issues. Second, was to always be cordial and accessible to the media. The third procedure was to hold them accountable for the way they handled his comments. If they mishandled the comments they would have no more access. These are very valuable suggestions for future presidents and leaders.

Bobby Welch, the president at the time of this writing also recognizes the gravity of his communication with the media. He elaborated,

Again, you have to remember that you are the only person who is in there speaking, and when you speak you are considered speaking for all the people of the Southern Baptist Convention. Now we know, and certainly every Southern Baptist knows, that you don’t speak for them, but the world believes you do. So it moves you to a whole new arena. You know its one thing to be out here and saying “Hello, world” on a 10 watt station. It’s another thing to have a television ministry. It’s another thing to speak around the country. But it’s another thing when you are seen as the leader of 16,300,000 people and 43,000 churches. They
do want to tie you to what you are saying and they want to tie everybody else to it, whatever it is. So that’s a very humbling and a very important thing to remember every time you open your mouth, millions of people are going to get tagged by what you say right now.

Welch described the difficulties of his nationwide “Everyone Can-...” bus trip, as he traveled several months to emphasize evangelism and outreach for the S.B.C.

One of the things that I find it best to do is I try never to be tired when I deal with the press, because you’re trapping yourself. I try to be rested, but that’s not always possible. On the bus trip that was an extraordinary challenge. Because they stayed on the bus, some of them even slept on the bus. But God was good. That is a huge challenge. You look at the Pope; he doesn’t utter a sound that it doesn’t go through four or five lawyers and everybody else. We don’t have that luxury, and I don’t know that we want it, and anybody that doesn’t understand that probably should ask themselves, “Should I be president of the convention?” They need to understand that. And I think everybody that I know that has been president does. Then, you could understand it, but you could slip and say something that you don’t mean or it comes out the wrong way or is translated the wrong way.

Welch also stressed the frustration of being accessed for general moral comments without being able to influence the outcome and effect of the positions taken.

You know, they’ll give you the standard questions, just sort of drive through on what’s your position on homosexuals, and what’s your position on gay marriages, and what’s your position on the family, whatever is the hot topic at the time. Yeah, yeah, I got calls, but that wasn’t moral or political. Just saying what do you think is going on, what are you all doing, did any of your missionaries get hurt, sort of general conversational stuff. And you ask well its news, but what does it affect and how does it move us toward our goals? Or how does it have anything to do with what we’re really here to do? I mean its good news, but does this also have opportunity outside the convention to move in the direction of our goals?

The writer, after conducting the extensive interviews with the past presidents, found one of the communication problems to be the nature of mass media communication compared to pastoral communication in a church setting. Pastoral leadership centers around bringing a monologue message within its own context. A pastor’s image and experience of a sound bite is a thirty to forty-five minute sermon or lesson. The media
centers around succinct sound bites with a usual duration of only a few seconds. These verbal depictions are completely divorced from their history, setting and context. Each statement stands on its own. This writer believes the future presidents and denominational leaders will be greatly aided by having a media ministry within their churches. They will think in terms of edited speech and time-limited sound bites as they broadcast their message.

Jimmy Draper’s answer to this problem was to use more notes when speaking. He shares his thoughts, “Well, it’s very simple. Everything you say is scrutinized. You just have to realize that. That’s when I started using extensive notes. I couldn’t even preach in my church without being on the front pages of the Star Telegram if I made some off the cuff remarks, or the Dallas Morning News... I didn’t read manuscripts, but I had much more extensive notes than I did before... When the convention met in Dallas in 1985, I was preaching through Ephesians... I was early in the book of Ephesians. I just preached what I planned to preach before the convention, but they interpreted it as some sort of political thing about liberal conservatives that were building in Dallas. So, you know, the unique pressure is that you have to realize you are not a private citizen. You can’t say this is not for public consumption. Everything is for public consumption... (the presidency) exerts a lot of influence, because the people think, the secular people, the non-Baptist people, they think you’re speaking for Southern Baptists. So you spend the two years doing press conferences, and speaking to every issue that comes up nationally. Of course, it’s so different now. We weren’t ready for homosexuality then. Abortion was an issue which I did speak to.”
As each president addressed moral issues of their day, they intersected and communicated with the sitting president of our nation. Adrian Rogers exclaimed, “Incredible! Again, I have talked and prayed with presidents of the United States . . . Jimmy Carter, then George Herbert Walker Bush, Bill Clinton, though when I talked to Bill Clinton I told him that I was not coming as any kind of an endorsement, just to get acquainted and we didn’t have much of a ‘love in,’ so I was not invited back, which has not broken my heart. I have met and prayed with Ronald Reagan in hotels with dinner, and then in the White House, and then invited to a state dinner when Ronald Reagan was president. I have been in conference with him; then also George W. Bush. It was my privilege not so very long ago to be in the Oval Office with him. I love him. Just to encourage him to let the joy of the Lord be his strength, and to pray with him. I held his hand and prayed with him. These have been tremendous opportunities that I would not have had in and of myself at all, and to meet a number of different people that I never would have met.” The writer asked Rogers, “Did you have a geometric progression in the contacts that were made from the media . . . immediately after each of your elections?” He answered, “Yes, almost exponentially.”

Paige Patterson pointed out that the S.B.C. presidency was often times more respected outside the convention than within it. Patterson said,

Well, there might be a real surprise to a lot of people. To be President of the Southern Baptist Convention in the minds of the average number of the public out there, is not quite the same as being Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. But it carries much the same ambiance and consequently, when you are introduced in any situation, suddenly it changes the whole thing. You’re either immediately hated and despised and all kinds of baggage put on your back, or else you’re overwhelmingly respected, welcomed and more of the latter than the former . . . Case in point: Richard Land came up to me just after I was elected and said, ‘Well, are you ready to go to the White House?’ Now you will remember that President Clinton was in the White House during those years, and I said, ‘No,
I’m not.’ And he said, ‘Oh, yes, every single president of the convention has been invited to the Oval Office,’ which was accurate, up until then. And I said, ‘No, I’ll not be invited.’ I said, ‘The president knows me very well and he will not invited me to the Oval Office.’ ‘Oh, yes he will.’ So we had a big discussion about that, but he did not invite me. But the very fact that each of my predecessors was invited, and I suspect everybody since has been invited, though I don’t know that for sure, is an indication of the fact that the nation understands the size of the Southern Baptist Convention. The politicians understand the impact of a quasi block vote coming out of the Southern Baptist Convention. The whole rest of the world is cognizant of the fact that something’s happened here that’s not happened since the reformation, and that was unlikely to happen. So all those things go together to make the position of the president much more powerful in some ways with the outside world than it is with Southern Baptists. Southern Baptists know us and just say, ‘Oh, yeah, so and so...’

It can be gleaned from the experience of these men as they related to the media of our country, that the vast majority of the moral influence of the S.B.C. presidency comes from his platform of communication as he speaks to the moral issues of the nation and world during his term of office. This influence is predominately outside the structure of the denomination.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

All of the previous presidents in their interviews indicated that their churches invested heavily in their presidential service. Their insights and experiences should be helpful for future leaders of the convention to revisit the funding of the expense provision for the presidency of the S.B.C.. The author recently asked James Merritt about the investment of the president’s church. He said, “Part of the presidential host church’s contribution is to the convention and the kingdom of Christ. It represents thousands of dollars each year they serve. Usually the president’s church choir sings during the convention at their expense, and much of the president’s clerical assistance and
correspondence—which is voluminous—is underwritten by the church budget. It’s always worth the investment for the kingdom of Christ.”

Paige Patterson described the financial impact his S.B.C. presidency placed upon Southeastern Seminary during his presidency there.

I admit the difficulty of it during the time that the man is president. He has some financial burden. It cost Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary a ton of money. The Executive Committee paid some, very generous in many ways, but it didn’t begin to cover the expenses. So, yes, Southeastern had a lot they had to bear, the president himself being out a lot of money, personally he certainly was, but I still don’t think it’s exorbitant.

He added,

I think if somebody came along and said, “Look, I see this as a great need and I want to put the money there to endow it,” that would be fine. But with the people we have around the world who still haven’t heard the gospel for the first time, I wouldn’t lift a finger to get out and try to do it. We’re making it, we’re doing okay with it.

ORMAN: In conferring with these other men, have their churches all borne those types of financial sacrifices?
PATTERSON: Unquestionably, every one of them sacrificed, some much more greatly than others.

Jack Graham’s experience mirrored the other presidents. “I will say... if you expect the president to travel, my church picked up a lot of the travel expenses that were related to the S.B.C. because there’s just not enough budget if you’re really going to be out there, doing what you need to do,” he explained. “So I think that is something that needs to be evaluated... I think it should be at least doubled... I don’t think the budget has kept up to the cost of what it really takes to be president of the convention.”

Bobby Welch, the S.B.C. present at the time of this writing, shares his current experience, “The way it’s structured, it doesn’t have a platform. You see, you have no office, no budget, except for traveling expense, you have no help. Anything you use

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10 Author’s phone conversation with James Merritt on 1 April 2006.
you're piggy-backing on something else. There’s no public relations office for you except Baptist Press that serves everybody in the country. . .the budget is, I think, $30,000 for everything. I think that throws in your convention expense, travel expense, everything including letterhead, everything you come up with. And if a vice-president has to go in your stead or if he goes somewhere else and you go here, it comes out of that. All the vice-president’s expenses come out of that. Whatever they do comes out of that.”

Two of the presidents, Morris Chapman and Tom Elliff pointed out that the investment was not just financial resources but also people resources such as staff personnel. Chapman said, “The church makes some financial contributions but a vast resource contribution is made because of the personnel and staff to keep you on the road.” Elliff concurred on the expense to the president’s home church—“Oh, of course- I say of course- they (First Baptist of Del City) provided a man, one of our staff members who received a salary. The convention would pay his way. I determined I would never travel alone. I either had my wife with me, or someplace nearby there was an assistant. Our church paid him a salary and I was grateful for it.”

Welch discussed the aspects of his unique bus trip and how some funding came together for that extended presidential event.

ORMAN: About your bus tour, my first executive committee meeting, I’m on the Business Finance Committee, they brought up your tour, and said we had to vote on it; I think, awarding $20,000, I think that’s what they said, or something like that. And I said, “Well this isn’t enough for what he’s doing.” They said, “Well, LifeWay is doing twice as much as this,” so they said there would be other tributaries coming in.

WELCH: The interesting thing about that is that most of this has never, ever been done before, so it’s all new waters. But our church funded everything until after the September Executive Committee meeting, which meant I was half-way through the bus trip by the time I got there. I was already way down the track by faith. Had I waited on that, I would never have gotten there. But that’s the nature of how it worked, no complaint on that. . .So what I’m saying is, to make any
forays outside the convention, you’re almost at the mercy of who outside the convention would invite you in the arena to do that. Now what I did is, I took the initiative to go into that arena with a bus. That was one of the large reasons for the bus. And we got tremendous press coverage, . . . just tremendous. CNN covered it, they were on the bus with us, the Boston Globe, the Chicago Tribune, the California papers, and the Orlando Sentinel, the Associated Press. . . it drew them to that. But that was by initiative outside the position of president, but it was my initiative, it wasn’t theirs.

Funding assessments for future presidents should consider travel for the president plus a companion; stationary and correspondence expenses; and any additional funding necessary for the particular emphasis or ministry trust God places on their heart.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITIES**

This particular area of the president’s skill set probably was discussed the least. Most of these successful pastors have become adept at delegating administration and focusing on the big picture of their ministry. It turns out that the two past presidents who developed this area the most later went on to be presidents of two of the major agencies of Southern Baptist Convention.

James Draper became the eighth president and chief executive officer of LifeWay Publishing in August of 1991 and served in that capacity until his retirement earlier this year (2006). He talks about how his pastoral administration helped equip him for both of his presidencies, the S.B.C., and LifeWay.

I think all of that. You know, our church was not huge, but we have $6 or $7 million dollars a year go through the church. Dallas is bigger than that but really not a whole lot bigger, I guess. They were $8 or $10 million dollars when I was there. We didn’t get that big in Euliss maybe $6 or $6.5 million. So you know, managing those things and helping to keep people on target; you have a large staff so you learn to deal with people. In Dallas, I administered the staff there, over 300 people; we had staff meetings from the PA system in the auditorium. Those kinds of things prepared me to see a bigger picture. And, I am a good delegator. I believe that if I have to do your job, then I don’t need you, I’ll
get a secretary. So my job is to give you a real assignment and let you do it. So I can trust you. I guess that’s a whole other area of philosophy but I believe in empowering people to work, and getting people better than myself, and then you’ll succeed. Then cut them loose and let them work, support them, take the blame for them, and let them take the credit. You do that and you know you’ll probably succeed. I think the larger churches helped me to be prepared not only for this assignment, but also for the presidency, because of the enormity of the task. . . . I think my strength is my selflessness. I really don’t care if I get credit for things. If my staff does something good, I’ll appraise it or applaud it, push them out in the middle of the stage and I think that is a strength I have. I’m not intimidated by who likes me. I think if you knew me well, you’d like me. So I don’t feel like I have to prove anything. So, I’m not really intimidated by people . . . We have about 3,000 full-time equivalent at LifeWay, but we use so many part-time and temporaries that there are 5,000 or 6,000 totally, for all the things we do every year, but full-time equivalent is around 3,000.

Morris Chapman has been the president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee since October 1, 1992. He summed up the administrative responsibilities of the S.B.C. presidency with one familiar phrase, “So much to do, so many places to be, so many people to meet, and so few hours.” Chapman said he believes his main giftedness centers around administration.

I think my spiritual gift is administration. That doesn’t mean that I’m a trained business administrator, but intuitively decision-making comes easy for me. My pattern is to look for the information, have the research done, have all the pertinent research to an issue, and then I have very little difficulty with a decision. I think that is my strength, and the only reason I can determine why God may have seen this as a kind of position for me. Dealing with critics has always been a little difficult for me on the same basis of the type of reserved personality I am. I am not inclined to try and escalate a conflict. I don’t even like conflict, and yet the Lord has thrust me into it time and time again. I keep asking myself, “Am I the cause of the various conflicts I get into?” And sometimes maybe I am. But again, even this job is largely a problem-solving responsibility. If there’s a problem, it starts out a conflict and the objective is to try and bring it to some kind of conclusion. So, decision-making, I’ve found that very easy; goal-setting, again for me, is just trying to focus on key objectives.

Another obvious successful administrator was Paige Patterson, who during the bulk of his ministry life has been president of three major institutions of higher learning for Southern Baptists. He was president of the Criswell College for 17 years; he served
for 11 years as president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina and now serves as the eighth president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. “The focus of Dr. Patterson’s leadership is made up of an intense commitment to evangelism and the global mission task based on a foundational component of demanding research and rigorous academic preparation.”

On the other side of the coin, Adrian Rogers admitted that administration was not his forte.

I can get along with people. I can talk to people. I’m not a strong administrator, although I’m not a weak administrator. I know how to use other people to do that. God has given me, I don’t know, I’m an influencer, and I have convictions. I’m not a compromiser. So sometimes, people who are very convictional are abrasive, and sometimes people who have good interpersonal relationships are not convictional. As I see me, and to compare, and to be very honest, I think those are my gifts.

The silence of many of the past presidents on the area of administration would echo the sentiments of Rogers on his ambivalence toward the gift of administration. Many leaders subconsciously view administration as a maintenance manifestation compared to leadership as a strong forward role.

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CHAPTER 6

THE FUTURE OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

There definitely is a need to study the office and function of the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. It was noted earlier that the complexity and influence of the position has grown as Adrian Rogers stated, “exponentially!” The pivotal importance of the presidency has been documented from several different perspectives. The president’s appointive powers cannot be overemphasized or diminished. Rogers emphatically said, “I certainly would not allow the presidents’ nominative powers to be taken away from him! Everybody will say that he makes his appointments in consultation with the first and second vice-presidents, but that’s all. He still makes the appointment. And I told my person who was vice-president the first time I was there. ‘If you have any names you want appointed let me know, but don’t give me the name of anybody who does not believe in the inerrancy of the scripture.’ And I held to that.”

M. E. Dodd, in his 1919 presidential address to the convention, stated the vital importance of the inerrancy issue for Southern Baptists and the rest of Christendom.

Only a while ago I had a private interview with a Christian statesman, evangelist, and scholar who has been around the world more than once and who is known wherever Christianity is preached. I asked him what he thought of the outlook for the vital truths of the gospel. He replied: ‘That rests largely in the hands of Southern Baptists. If they remain true, the outlook is glorious; if they give up, the fight is practically lost.’ More recently a Southern Methodist bishop remarked to a company of his denomination leaders that the only people on the earth who could stem the tide of present-day tendencies were Southern Baptists, ‘Because,’ said he, ‘all the rest of us have compromised ourselves in one way or another.’ Dr. James M. Gray, dean of Moody Bible Institute, says in [the 1919 issue of] the Christian Worker’s
\textit{Magazine}, ‘I am not a Baptist, but I am here to say that the insistent testimony of courageous Baptists to the holy ordinance which gives them their name has been a potent factor in restraining the apostasy of the church to this day.\footnote{Caner, \textit{Sacred Desk}, 1.}

Literally, the future of Southern Baptists ultimately rests in the appointive hands of the presidency. With this much influence resting on one person the question comes to mind, “Can any Southern Baptist serve as president of the S.B.C.?” Adrian Rogers commented, “I really don’t know how a pastor of a small church could ever be the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. The job is enormous. It’s like having another job superimposed upon your regular job.” Jerry Vines said, “I think it would be wonderful for a pastor of a smaller church to be president of the S.B.C., but on the other hand, it would be a very difficult thing to do. . . . The convention has gotten so large, you take even the Pastor’s Conference. I think it would be marvelous for the pastor of a smaller church to be president of the Pastor’s Conference. But there is a huge budget to raise. And normally, you’ve got to have a church that could kind of underwrite you there, in case you get in trouble. And that’s not peanuts we’re talking about either. . . . It’s regrettable, but I don’t see what you would do to change it. It’s just the nature of the beast.”

Jim Henry was asked if it would be difficult for a young rural pastor to be president of the S.B.C. He said,

I would say, I was in a large church and it kept me on my knees, I was calling up people and getting counsel. I wanted to say the right things, and do the right things. I had enough experience with the press, of course, with the different things we’d gone through in our church, and other leadership positions that I’d had that gave me some background of criticism, and dealing with our church and how it influenced where we were. That helped me, because I’d had some experience. I think, I would say, to have some of that background is certainly a plus in today’s society. I would want that man to respond, or at least have people around him that could help him respond in a way that would bring credibility and understand the complexity.
Bailey Smith contrasted his own experience as large church pastor, “You know, in a big church you do have to have some wisdom. We were on the radio and television and I did get into some controversy there so I learned to be a little thick-skinned but not too much, but that did help me by having a church behind me; of course, you said before, how did it prepare me? I think to know that they were with me and I felt all of their support. Of course, I was only 41. I was put out into that arena pretty quickly. But I think to have the radio and television exposure, to deal with a church of that size certainly gave me a little wisdom.”

Jack Graham believes a small church pastor could become president of the S.B.C. “Yes. He would have to organize, he would have to be a strong leader and organize support with jobs in making your appointments. I had a couple of people on that, just that aspect of it, the appointments, the phone calls. Even with that, we don’t do it alone, we ask people all over the country to help us, with recommendations. So, yes, a pastor of a small church, we’ve had lay people in the position in the past. . . . The Executive Committee was very cooperative and very helpful, Morris’ office, and they would certainly assist a pastor for someone who didn’t have the experience or the staff of a large church. The Executive Committee staff would be very helpful for a person in that situation.”

Morris Chapman predicts more diversity among conservative candidates for future elections.

Southern Baptists are earthy people, that’s who we are. And the fact is, we would do ourselves a disservice to ever believe that we’ve got to have some elite approach to electing our leaders. I believe that in the very near future, the farther away we walk from the Conservative Resurgence as a time period, that we will be back to having more than one person nominated-both or how ever many there are-being very qualified, conservative nominees. And I think it will be a good thing for Southern Baptists as we evolve back into that mode.
On this subject, Adrian Rogers was asked, "Would there be a prohibition for a pastor who doesn’t have any media savvy or experience; would that be a difficulty?” His response carries with it a valuable suggestion to future conservative leaders.

It would be very difficult, and I learned a lot of things about the games of the presidency of the convention and some access that I did not have. First of all, he comes into a context of processions to serve as president and he studies what they did and he builds upon that and there’s a fellowship. I didn’t have that. Also, we have learned more how to deal with the media, and the media now has become more friendly because, by and large, the Baptist State papers have turned also, not all of the but most of them. I had to learn to deal with the press and by God’s grace I have had the Lord just gave me a certain amount of native wisdom to deal with the press. For example, I would say to the press when they would interview me, ‘Now listen, my memory is not as good as I would like, you don’t mind if I tape this interview, do you?’ Well, right away that unnerved them a little bit to know that they were being taped. And then when I finished, I’d say, ‘Well now, you know, I don’t always express myself as well as I would like to, would you tell me what you think I said?’ And I’d say, ‘No, I didn’t mean that. Let me say it again.’ I was able to do a little review with them, kind of let them tell me what they think I said.

This brings to the surface another important question regarding the presidency of the S.B.C. Should the office of the president of the S.B.C. be changed? If so, how? Most of the previous presidents were reluctant to suggest changes to the office of the presidency. Generally they were satisfied with the current tradition of two one-year terms. This aspect of the position alone has not always been the case. At the time of this writing there have been fifty-three different presidents from 1845 to 2006. The first six served as presidents over the first fifty-one terms of the S.B.C. presidency. Patrick Hues Mell was president for seventeen different years (1863-1871, 1880-1887). Fifteen of the presidents served three terms. The most recent was Adrian Rogers (1979, 1986-1987). He was the first to do so out of the past twenty-seven presidents dating back to 1952. R. G. Lee, Rogers’ predecessor at Bellevue Baptist Church, was the previous last three term president (1949-1951).²

² Caner, Sacred Desk, cover fly-leaf.
Jerry Vines voiced a very strong opinion regarding current presidents serving longer than two one-year terms. Vines told the interviewer, “Well, I don’t really know what changes I would suggest there. You know, I think it’s pretty well laid out, really.” The interviewer inquired further, “Would longer terms, like election to a two-year term . . . be beneficial or not?” “I think a man would have to be crazy to do that. . . . I think a man would be nuts!”

Jack Graham agreed in spirit when he said, 

Not unless you’re willing to do what Bobby Welch was willing to do, which is practically go be president of the convention full-time. I don’t think it’s practical, for someone like me, to serve four years as president of the convention, if that’s the idea. Multiple terms of two. I can think of many people who are certainly capable of being Southern Baptist president, I don’t think we need extended tenure.

Morris Chapman concurred,

Well, number one, I think two in a row is fine. It makes us better presidents in the first year, just like it does for the president of the United States in his first term. Because, first of all, you’re not guaranteed the second year, and even if you assume that it might happen, still you want the people to understand you’re really trying to be a good president from day one. So I think it adds an element of urgency and no one has captivated that urgency quicker than Bobby Welch in his bus tour.

Bobby Welch’s response to changing the function of the S.B.C. presidency went in a different direction from the other responses. He called for a study of the presidency when he said, “Well, I’m going to say some things that I do not intend to say publicly at this point (January 2005), but by the time this paper gets published, I probably will have said them. It is likely that it is time for a fresh, new review of several things. The expectations of the president of the S.B.C., that’s in writing, and it probably needs a fresh look. . . . The length of the term, I am interested to do some fact finding about. Just what you said in #1, the expectations of the president in the future. Should the president be elected for two years instead of one? Maybe the president of the convention should be president-elect one year
before he begins his term. Whether it's one year and re-elected or whether it's two years, because given all that's thrown on you immediately...” The interviewer said, “It would be a learning curve!” Welch responds,

Sure, but not only that. Your calendar! I mean, your calendar is completely ripped to shreds. Anybody that’s going to be elected president of the convention is going to have a full calendar as it is. They just need a ‘heads up’, it seems to me. But I do intend to, before this year is over, get into that. In fact, I’ve already started digging around a little on it. Now where it needs to go, I really don’t have the answer, but I do know it needs a look.

Paige Patterson and Jim Henry recommended the convention provide some form of an assistant to the president. Jim Henry put it this way. “I’d get another person to help my secretary in the office. My assistant, I worked her too hard.” When asked if the convention should provide this person, he said,

They probably should. They give you a certain amount of money, I think it was maybe for the whole thing, which would not take care of getting a good assistant. Most of the guys come from large churches that I would figure could afford it, but I didn’t want to put that on our church. You know, we were going through a building program and I didn’t want to go and say, ‘Look, I need another secretary.’ My lady was wonderful! But the demand, at least the way I was working the office, if I had it to do over, I would have brought in another person on my staff who knew me and could handle phone calls, the press, etc. I would have done that.

Paige Patterson became more specific in his description of the job assignment for an assistant.

And one of the most important things, in fact, that he will have to do in my estimation, is to have somebody on his staff, that the first thing they do every morning is to find out what everything going on in the world is that he may have to make a statement about, and sit down with him very early in the morning, and say, ‘Mr. President, here’s what’s happening in the world. We’ve got a girl missing in Aruba. We’ve got five killed in Baghdad today;’ and just bring him up to date so he knows everything that’s happening so that he can formulate some sort of a comment in his mind in case he is called and asked by the press. I think that’s very important, and again, when you’re being asked by everybody in the world about things, it is so easy to make a mistake. It may be innocent enough, but just the least little thing can hurt a lot of people. And that’s where I think his prayer for wisdom and his people’s prayer that God will give him wisdom becomes strategically important.
The writer believes this is a very noteworthy suggestion and should be explored further. One possibility would be for the Executive Committee of the S.B.C. to hire and maintain "the Office of Presidential Assistance." This person should be trained and experienced with media relations and travel administration. He or she could research for the president and assist with travel and speaking engagements, direct correspondence and communication. His or her expertise should include historical and contextual knowledge of the S.B.C. agencies and the role of the officers of the convention. The individual's experience base would grow with each new president. Thus each successive president would gain from his assistant's experience.

Jim Henry also recommended some form of sabbatical for the president to be enabled to spend more time traveling and speaking.

There's as lot you could do because in one sense it's a figurehead responsibility. You carry influence but you're not a president, like in a political structure of a governor or something. You don't carry that because of the way we're structured, with trustees, etc. That's where the power lies in our denominational setup, which is probably as it should be. You're kind of limited in that you are an influence player. I think perhaps, and this is something else that we could set up denominationally, that is the president, because now that we're so large, and he's such a public figure, that he could have a leave of absence from his church, a sabbatical. Then the president could lead Southern Baptists, he could really give his time to go to all the really large framework of institutions that we are. Plus, getting on the local level- of which Bobby Welch did a lot with the bus tour-, getting out where the people are, and seeing he could do that, if he had that time. His impact and influence in pulling us together as a people could be far wider and somebody's going to come along and some church may have a co-pastor. Now, Bobby has a co-pastor. At that time, ten years ago, that was not a big thing. Today, more of the younger guys do that more, have a preaching pastor/co-pastor. But in the future, I believe it began with Bobby and a few others; he said if I'm elected, I want to go at it for two years because the impact of our denomination goes far beyond our local church. I'm a pastor first, but if they give me two years we could touch the world more, which we have the capability of doing. And, I'll preach some, but just let me go out with the pastors and the people and the laymen and love on them and tell them who we are and what we're about. We could generate probably more good will and dollars and understanding; if that could happen, I would recommend it.
If he had his presidency to do over again, Henry remarked,

I would have made it a point to have taken more time, and I took a lot of time, for travel. I became a platinum or whatever you call it Delta flyer, covered a lot of miles, but I believe I would have tried to have been a little more pointed and careful in where I went, and I would have tried to be a little more strategic... By my second year, I knew a little bit more about what to do; but there was no way I was prepared all of a sudden because there was no preparation time. In one way, I had the benefit of contact with others for my background, but once you get that responsibility, all of the sudden, it’s there, in one minute, and you’ve got everybody saying “Will you come speak to this?” or “Will you come to this meeting?”... I said yes to about everything that I could because I wanted to be their representative. And, for a lot of that, I needed to be there. But, in retrospect, I think I could have done maybe a better job and I probably would have traveled to at least two or three mission fields, like James Merritt. He did a good job of doing that. I went to all the mission board meetings, having been a trustee there earlier, and met with leadership there, but I feel like I probably should have done that more. I tried to go to some of the smaller conventions to let them know that they were a part of what we were, too. Some places I wasn’t invited to, but I probably should have tried to make at least a show at some of those places, just to make them feel connected to the leadership and all.

Jimmy Draper envisioned a more proactive approach for future presidents in their effort to quickly get on their message. He and Ed Young used the term “Johnny one note” to emphasize the single mindedness each subsequent president should exhibit. When Draper was asked if the president of the S.B.C. should be proactive with his agenda, he responded,

Yeah, of course, we’ll never have another Bobby Welch because his church just freed him up. He’s moving Nashville this month and will stay here for two or three months. He’s going to speak sixty or seventy times in the next ninety days. I think he’s doing more than a president should do, but I think the president ought to be a strong flag waver, a great ‘PR’ person, to Southern Baptists. He ought to be free to speak. Bobby is going all the way back to the grassroots and I don’t know that we can ever expect someone else to spend the time Bobby has. Jim Henry said, after he was president, that he felt it was a full-time job. Really a guy shouldn’t have to pastor a church or do anything, and we all knew that but we never thought we would ever see that. But now Bobby’s done that. But what I mean though, is Bobby has done what several of the guys did, and to tell you the truth I don’t know whether I did this or not because I hadn’t even thought about this, but he’s helped shape the program. Normally, the Program Committee does that, and I know that when James Merritt was president, and he had to wrestle them to the ground the whole year, not sure he had them. They basically took it away from him. I think the president... should be there waving the flag; he should have a strong influence in how the program is fixed, should communicate with the people.
James Merritt’s sole suggestion for change to the presidential office was, “I would change it by having the president have more direct input- if it would be accepted- both with the Executive Committee and the Great Commission Council.”

It should be noted at this point that several of the past presidents held deep convictions that the S.B.C. presidency should not take them away from their church’s pulpit ministry. Jack Graham and Ed Young told the writer that they never missed a Sunday at their churches due to their presidencies.

Bailey Smith rehashed the attempted change of the appointment powers of the presidency during his term and added one suggested change to the treatment of previous presidents.

Even in L.A. there was a proposal by the other side to make the president part of a committee that selects the names. I know you’re aware of that in the study you’ve done, and of course that was defeated. But they were doing that because, as you know, Judge Pressler discovered that if you elected the president you could control the convention because of his appointing powers. The constitution says that the president appoints the Committee on Committees, the Committee on Boards, in consultation with the vice presidents. Well, that’s a very loose phrase. Well, my consultation was I wrote the vice presidents letters and asked them for their suggestions. Some of them I talked to on the telephone, but that didn’t mean that I would have to accept it. . . . So, it’s good to keep that the way it is. Let the president have those powers. Don’t make him a committee member. One thing I would change is the treatment of the president. I do believe the former presidents should have their expenses paid to the convention for their lifetime. I think that’s important. And we are not. We do get a guaranteed room at the convention hotel. And I really think that’s unfair, because, frankly, my wife and I and my children paid a big price, and still pay for it. So I think that ought to be done.

Several changes to the function of the S.B.C. presidency were recommended by the previous presidents. Suggested changes or areas of study for change would be:

1. The traditional two one-year terms:
   - Should they be two-year terms?
• Should each subsequent president be given an extra year of preparation as a president-elect?

• Can they be elected to several one-year terms subsequently as previous presidents in the history of the S.B.C.?

2. The provision of a presidential assistant by the convention:
• Possible title: “The Office of Presidential Assistance”
• Trained and experienced with media relations
• Trained and experienced with travel administration
• Assist the president with general communication and correspondence
• Underwritten by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention

3. Assistance to the president with some form of sabbatical from his church during part of his presidency

4. Assistance to the president in expressing his message and agenda during his presidency. Aiding him to find and develop his “Johnny one-note”

5. Give the president more direct input with his agenda to the Executive Committee and the Great Commission Council

6. Make provisions for past presidents to attend the convention each year in honor of their service
CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PRESIDENTS AND PASTORS

Many of the responses from these leaders came from their response to the interviewer’s question: How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ? Their feedback is helpful, not just for future presidents of the S.B.C., but for pastors and leaders in general.

The overriding, preeminent recommendation of the past inerrancy presidents to future presidents and pastors was to make their highest priority the attainment of their vision from God for leadership. Scripture states, “Where there is no vision the people perish!” (Proverbs 29:18) The leadership vision required for the presidency for the S.B.C. varies in nature from leadership vision required for the pastorate. The presidential vision generally encompasses two years of national influence, whereas pastoral vision can encompass a large portion of a pastor’s lifetime in a specific region. The presidential leadership vision should also take into account the context of the direction of the S.B.C. at the time of their presidential term of service. There should also be a sensitivity to the existing corporate vision of the convention at large.

Jimmy Draper pointed this out for future presidents who want to maximize their time for Christ. He illustrates with Morris Chapman’s *Watchmen On The Wall* emphasis.

Well, I think the biggest way is not to come up with some new strategy that’s going to die in two years. Continue the strong emphasis on missions and evangelism, be an advocate for what has always made the Southern Baptists the strong group we’ve been. I think we went through a period of time in the ‘90’s
where each president thought he had to have something new, this is what I’m
going to push this year. Morris Chapman had the *Watchmen On The Wall*. Well,
it was a great emphasis, and had I not been here, though, it would have died a
natural death quickly. Because he basically said, “Would you all take it over?”
and we spent $100,000 a year sustaining the *Watchmen On The Wall*... 

Draper elaborates using Tom Elliff’s *Kingdom Family* promotion that was
emphasized during Elliff’s presidency,

Yeah, yeah, it’s a great emphasis, a needed emphasis, but where’d it go?
It would have been better to have been woven into the warp and woof of who we
are and have the full strength of the convention. As it turned out, it was Tom’s
program and we’ve not been able to sustain it. We tried, but I think if a president
wouldn’t think in terms of something uniquely his for two years to sort of say he
had this emphasis ... but none of us did that, though, until Morris. Jerry (Vines)
came the closest when he emphasized soul winning but he didn’t institute a new
dead. Morris was the first one that came up with this big plan of *Watchmen On
The Wall* but then each president since Morris has had the same kind of emphasis
on something ... .I think the president ought to seek to lead Southern Baptists in
our strength and not try to invent something new. ... .I think they need to lead,
and I just don’t think they need to try to create something though. I think we have
everything created that relates to the Biblical mandate for the church, we just need
to connect all the dots and get everybody working on that thing. That’s what a
president is supposed to do- help us focus.

A pastoral application of this discussion would encourage a local pastor when he
is new in a church to study the foundations and past ministries of that congregation and to
determine if he can enhance and strengthen the values God has already placed there.

Adrian Rogers speaks generally of the vision necessary to lead and gives
questions to ask to determine that vision.

To maximize the presidency, very similarly, you’ll want a pastor’s vision;
however, the Southern Baptist Convention is not a church. They need to look and
catch a vision, for that particular time, that particular moment in history. Often as
a pastor, I look at the church and I have two questions: “What is our soft
underbelly? Where can the devil attack? Where are we weak? Where do we
need to shore up?” The second question I ask is “What are the opportunities that
we’re not claiming?” And so I’d say to a president, he should ask the same thing,
he should be analytical and say, “What is the soft underbelly of the Southern
Baptist Convention? Where are we vulnerable? Where do we need to shore up?”
And then I would ask myself, “What are the opportunities that this convention has
handed to them that are absolutely unique?” When we take a resolution, for example against abortion, or against homosexuality, or when we make a resolution for the sanctity of marriage, and all of these things, in this world, that’s politically incorrect. The Southern Baptist Convention right now is a gigantic boulder in Satan’s Super Highway. You know, thank God for the convention because nobody else is saying this. Now sure, there are some independent churches around from smaller denominations, but for the Southern Baptist Convention to say that, is a powerful opportunity, and I would say that to any successive president – to realize the potentiality. Now I’m not talking about just political power, I’m talking about the spiritual and moral power that this convention has.

Morris Chapman and Ed Young focused on the leaders’ need to discern the “particular” time frame of their service and leadership. Chapman stated, “First of all, the pastor has to be aware of the Southern Baptist Convention, where it is, and what they think needs to be done at that particular time and where it needs to go. My only counsel would be, even if you served two years, and without assurance there’s going to be a second year, the time is short. You don’t have time to build in a lot of goals or objectives, and I think you’re most effective to concentrate and get the people to focus on one emphasis and at the most, maybe a secondary emphasis. . .”

Ed Young reinforced this idea.

That’s exactly what I said. I’d say “What is the greatest need in our denomination?” At that particular time, what could the churches do at this moment to get back to the business of evangelism and missions? To write that down, and give it their time and influence everywhere they go, everything they write or everything they do. That’s one thing I do. So we need a “Johnny one-note” now that just has a passion. . . The president of the convention needs to look at our denomination and see where the greatest need is, where we’re missing it, and they need to throw themselves into that gap with everything that they have. It’s very clear to me we’re missing it today in our cities. We must go to our seminaries and train to start new churches. We must attack our cities with a vengeance. Bob (Reccord) and NAMB (North American Mission Board) have done more studies than any group ever to exist on this earth. We could look at those studies and really trigger it, and that’s what the president needs to give his time and talents to and forget all the boards and the hog calling and all upper room conferences and all the big gatherings with people. . . I think you should really encourage him to look at his schedule and make sure it is used effectively.
I’m not sure preaching at every state convention and every evangelism conference is the most effective way a president can use his time. I doubt that.

Scripture states in I Chronicles 12:32 that “the sons of Issacar, (were) men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do...” By many accounts, no president of the S.B.C. has taken more initiative in establishing his vision for his presidency and executing the implementation of it with more intentional fervor than the current president, Bobby Welch. Jerry Vines praises Welch’s leadership as he advises, “I think I would put a large emphasis on my preaching. I would try to strike in my convention messages, what my burden, what my theme was for that particular time in the history of the convention. And that’s what I would hammer away on. I think that’s what Bobby Welch has done. I would commend Bobby. He has put the focus on evangelism through the Sunday School. He has taken his FAITH program and thrust it right into the presidency of the S.B.C. Not that it’s the FAITH program, but what I mean is that my main goal of the program would be winning people for Christ, and that’s been his theme, and I really commend him for it. I think he’s done an excellent job.”

Paige Patterson also applauded Welch’s singleness of focus. “Well, I warmly commend him for the excellence of being a one-issue guy right now. I think we were ready for that,” Patterson said. “I think we’ve been struggling through all of this for so long, now’s the time to say this is going to have a product in the end which is going to be the souls of men, and the growth of our churches. So I warmly commend him for that and tried to do everything I could to encourage him.”

Chapman echoes these sentiments on Welch’s million baptism emphasis. “Oh, absolutely. First of all, he seized the moment, and he had done his homework maybe better than any president in my lifetime, and then he was willing to give practically ful-
time to this, which of course is not asked because it can not be done by more people,” Chapman said. “It’s not expected, but fortunately for Southern Baptists, he’s able to do it. So the emphasis of winning people to Christ is just the note he is sounding, and a needed note as we find our way beyond the Conservative Resurgence.”

Chapman then addresses the concerns that Jimmy Draper expressed about unique presidential initiatives,

Well, other presidents said, you know, with some appreciation of course, at the same time those in sitting positions like I’m sitting now, would say ‘Hey; hey, programming committee.’ Not that I thought of it like that. But all of a sudden I may have set a bad precedent for our entity leaders; because now, many of our presidents have come in with these ideas and so the entity leaders are always running to catch up. It’s put an added burden on people who might be in that position. But I do think that it’s a good thing because you’re just about, at best, without that, what I would call almost a celebrity spokesman for the Southern Baptist Convention. And of course, for those two years, the world listens, the Southern Baptists listen. And that’s wonderful! But, you can say a lot of good things, and yet not help the people to see even a short-term vision. And I do believe Bobby Welch is tuned in precisely correct in that it needs to be an immediate objective; because you have no control over whether or not it is going to last. That’s right, in two years it’s over. And if another man comes in with another focus, well then that’s a little different, well, of course, it’ll be nuanced in that direction, in spite of the fact that we all talk about missions, evangelism and Biblical integrity. Obviously, after several presidents who have emphasized various things, Bobby is saying “Evangelism! Evangelism! It’s the reminder of who we are, where we’ve been, and what our convictions are. That is, to lead people to Christ.” It’s timely. He is effectively also speaking a great deal about the Cooperative Program, and I see that as an undergirding, secondary emphasis that every time he says that, it helps people realize that this financial lifeline is a key to Southern Baptist missions and evangelism. So, I may have been the one to start that, and depending on whom the individual was and their position on Baptist life, some saw it as very good and some saw it as not so good.

Bobby Welch discussed the difficulties he faced in his aggressive pursuit of leading the S.B.C. to emphasize evangelism and lead a million people to Christ.

Yes, of course, they’re helpless due to the format given because you have to follow that … Everybody says, “Well you’re going to get elected to your second term, you know you are, that’s the way it always is.” However, it is presumption to make a two-year plan, almost, because it comes across wrong. It
sounds arrogant and presumptuous. However, if you were elected for two years, you’d have time to run that ramp on out there. Now see, I have a second-year plan but I don’t feel at liberty and I won’t attempt to say, “If I get elected again, here’s what I’m going to try to do.” Rather than stand up the first year and say, “Now over the next two years,” you say that and somebody is going to say “What’s he talking about?” You see what I’m talking about? It really does put you in a quandary. Arrange to have more time to devote to the job of being president. That’s a hard thing because most pastors pastor large churches with very demanding schedules... The challenge is to be able to clear that schedule so you can devote time to the job of being president. And further I thought about arranging time to be gone from your church. Now many presidents feel, if not most, that really one of their big goals is to stay in their church while they’re president. However, that is not my goal. My feeling was that if I, myself personally, were elected president, that was God’s signal for me to get out here and extend myself for the sake of the convention, and the kingdom of God and lost souls. So I have, to some degree, placed my church at risk, doing this. But I’ve made arrangements for it not to be an uncalculated risk. But a president, if he can clear his calendar and if he can find ways where he could be absent to give more time to the convention, that would be good. The other thing I would say about a president is I would encourage him to see their opportunity as big. Now everybody doesn’t want you to see that opportunity as big, because sometimes it rocks the boat. Sometimes it goes contrary to the drift... It is extremely hard to rise above the norm due to the way the election works, and the uncertainty of the times. It almost pulls down the possibility of the potential of a president making a profound help to the convention, it’s very hard to do that.

Jack Graham also praised Welch for his personal dedication in giving his all during his presidency.

I commend Bobby for doing that. He is giving it heart and soul and life. Ministry is important. It’s been a great sacrifice for his church. He is their pastor and I certainly salute him and commend him for doing it. But I couldn’t have done that; I wouldn’t have made that kind of call, obviously unique in that approach. Most pastors probably, if elected as president, would not have that kind of latitude or ability to do that. Obviously, Bobby has given his all for that.

Welch referred to the difficulty in planning for a second term after being elected. There exists a dichotomy between being elected president of the S.B.C. and desiring to be president. Many of the resurgence presidents expressed a reluctance to be nominated until the final hours before election. Some of this could have been the pattern set by Adrian Rogers’ reluctance to be nominated for his initial candidacy. The other presidents
also referred to this dichotomy. Tom Elliff said, "...Remember, it’s for Christ. It’s not about you. Well, I think something like this seeks the man; the man doesn’t seek it. If you have a man seeking it, then you don’t have the man you want. So I would say to remember that it is for Christ. It’s all about Jesus. It’s all about Jesus.”

Morris Chapman addressed the issue of those with presidential ambitions who are not willing to serve in associational and state positions first. “Well, I think it is a natural way to learn. The fact of the matter is, why would you want somebody who says ‘I’m saving myself for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention.’ You’re looking for someone who loves the convention and wants to be part of it enough that when nobody is looking, he’s trying to be faithful to help.”

Adrian Rogers’ exchange with the writer is very helpful in understanding the tension between being nominated and being elected.

It is very difficult because in the Southern Baptist Convention, any man who campaigns for the office, generally, will not be elected. ... Yes, well, he can do it but he has to be very coy how he goes about it. Well, now, if they really want me ... da duh da duh da duh. But if a man overtly campaigns for it, he is dead in the water. But he has to do it adroitly, and you know, let his name be dallied. And he has to be a little bit demure. Now that’s not what I did when I was elected. I really did not want to do it. And as you say, when you really don’t want to do it, and people encourage you to do it, it almost sets the hook. So then they really feel, oh now we have to persuade him, and I wasn’t doing it for that reason, obviously, but that’s what happened.

ORMAN: It’s almost like in high school going after the girl that doesn’t like you.
ROGERS: Right. That’s exactly what it’s like.

Paige Patterson instructs future presidents to know the system of the convention.

I believe that one of the most important things that future presidents can do is to be absolutely certain that they understand the system going in. I think if you have some people on your staff who can work with you on the minutia of it, that you can alleviate yourself of a lot of the problems that come along just by not knowing. You have to know the system; you have to know the constitution and bylaws well. You have to decide what two or three things that you would like to
emphasize in your presidency, such as our present president has magnified evangelism and said, “This is what we’re going to do.”

Jack Graham recommended to future presidents to seek outside technical counsel for interaction with the media.

You know, early on in my presidency I met with a gentleman by the name of Larry Ross. Larry Ross is Billy Graham’s publicist and has been for twenty years. He’s the one who sets up Billy and his press conferences, his responses and all that. And I had several key meetings with him early on just in terms of dealing with the press, dealing with current events and issues, and he was kind enough to give me some guidance. I certainly think no one is prepared if they haven’t done it, for the press, and responded appropriately. I would recommend you get all the preparation you can get for that role and responsibility. It comes early.

Bailey Smith encourages future presidents to use their influence for mass evangelism.

But then I would say to do what I did. And what I did was, I tried to use the office for souls. I did fourteen area-wide crusades my last year as president of the convention. I not only had 2,000 baptisms that year in my church, but had about 3,000 or 4,000 saved. I knew that when it was announced a former president of the convention was coming, it didn’t matter if his name was Bailey Smith or Joe Blow, that some people would be interested in coming, so I tried to take advantage of that for exactly the last phrase of your question, for Christ. I think the man in that office should not do it for the S.B.C., he needs to do it for Jesus.

Patterson also shared how he dealt with opposition to his leadership. He would send various gifts to his critics. He elaborates,

No shirts (were given), but I would say more than 100 ties. Fruit baskets, flowers, green plants, I don’t know, probably another couple of hundred of those altogether. . . . But, you know what I discovered? When the Bible says to return good for evil, I puzzled over that for a while. Some people think that I do that in order to heap coals of fire upon the head of the critic. But that’s not true; because critics could even be right in some cases. The only reason I did it was, I discovered that it did something to me. I was just like every other human being, especially an Irish-Texan. I had enough anger in me if somebody said something really ugly about me or about my family or somebody I loved, the tendency to go after him or something like that was definitely present. At least resenting, and at least not to love him in Christ’s behalf, and what I discovered was that when I
would go to the trouble to go to the store- and I used to never send anybody for me, I used to go myself- make the purchase with my own dollars, I would get a secretary to address it and everything but I’d always put a note in there and the note was never about anything that they’d done to me. It would just say, “My dear brother so and so, I was thinking about you today and I paused to ask God’s graciousness toward you. I wanted you to know that I remembered you before God by this little gift.” And I would send it. And what it did was, it broke any antagonism I had towards them. And it enabled me then to be able to pray for them, because I did what I said I had done, and I would pray for them before I sent the gift, and I would try to remember to pray for them again and ask God’s blessings upon them. This worked something in me to keep bitterness, for I believe that bitterness is one of the great destroyers of preachers. And it broke the bitterness in me and kept me from becoming bitter toward those who said things about me that were hurtful. . . .In some cases, one man who’s now with the Lord, somebody complimented him on the tie that he had on, and he said, “That’s one of twenty-three that Dr. Patterson has sent me.”

Several of the presidents expressed regret over certain emphases that they were unable to accomplish as they answered the question, “If you could serve again would you do anything differently the second time around?”

For instance, James Merritt lamented not spending enough time with young pastors as he asserted, . . . ”Spend more time trying to develop younger leadership and involve younger pastors.”

Jack Graham said the greatest regret of his presidency was in not being able to see the S.B.C. change its name to a more national symbol,

I wish I could have done a better job at helping Southern Baptists understand the Kingdom agenda and getting as many people together for the sake of the kingdom as possible. But you know, there was one disappointment that I felt was related to the Kingdom agenda. My desire and the desire of many others across the denomination, was the study of a potential name change and that did not happen. The convention was not ready for that or responsive to that. This is about the fourth or fifth time they tried that and the convention said no. I don’t regret it for me, I’m pleased to be Southern Baptist, baptist pride, born and all that, but in talking to others, I got around to Montana and New York and places like that, I just know it’s an issue and what’s happening, more and more of our churches are taking Southern Baptist off their materials and signs and so on. And with it they’re losing their Baptist distinction. What I was trying to say was, “Look, you guys need to continue to say you’re Baptists or something else Baptist
like United Baptists or whatever it was going to be. I was thinking in the practical sense we could get more of these guys who want to take Baptist off their name, be supportive of Baptist, if it wasn’t Southern Baptist. . . Oh, the suggestion was the North American Baptist Convention. You know, the problem is you go to a convention like that, and when we took that vote and I didn’t get a very good feeling from it, if we had 3,000 people of the 10,000 registered messengers in the room, you know, all my friends and buddies said, “I think probably I wasn’t even in there.” We had lost by about 300 votes according to the committee, but there were 4,000 or 5,000 people standing out in the hallways. That was frustrating.

Ed Young believes the greatest, single, strategic move a future president could make would be to emphasize church planting in our major cities.

To me it’s easy. I will debate anybody who wants to stand up and tell you that the number one challenge of the S.B.C. is starting churches in the major cities of America that are basically unchurched, and that is Chicago, New York, Seattle, Brooklyn, and da da da da, North America. That is what we have to do. That’s where the people are. In that context, we’re not reaching the 18-year-olds to the 38-year-olds, that particular context. Those two goals within our cities is what we must be about. Underneath that of course is children, etc., etc., young families, but you must establish vibrant entities in these cites. And I could tell anybody who would listen, I think a basic plan to do it. And I won’t go into that with you today, but that is it. If there’s anything further that we need to do now, can you tell me what it is? Couldn’t manufacture that around the world, incidentally, but we better get our home base covered because the S.B.C., Darrell, is going out of business. Any other priority? What else would you want to put in that list? That’s it.

Adrian Rogers instructs future leaders in how to deal with the plurality issue and discrimination against Christian prayers.

You get into a lot of situations where, you know, I pray in the name of Jesus as you did. I tell people, ‘Look, you prayed about pluralism, but you don’t mean pluralism, you mean sensitivism. You want everybody to worship a mush God.’ Pluralism is: a Christian prays as a Christian, a Muslim prays as a Muslim, a Jew prays as a Jew. I would not expect you to pray in Jesus’ name because you don’t believe in Him. And I don’t get bent out of shape because he doesn’t. I’d have no respect for him if he did, if he didn’t believe in Him. If a Jew wants to pray in a prayer shawl, that’s the way he prays. If I’m a Christian, I pray in the name of Jesus. I met with a bunch of conservative rabbis, Orthodox rabbis and I said, ‘Now you guys, look, you get all upset with me when I pray in the name of Jesus, but that’s the way I pray. Are you going to tell me I can’t pray the way I pray? That’s religious persecution. You’re telling me that I can’t witness to Jews? I’m commanded to witness to everybody. Jesus is my Lord and Savior, if I
didn’t do that I’d be disobeying my King. If you tell me I can’t do that, you are practicing religious persecution. You’re free not to believe it, but don’t tell me I can’t do it.’

Jimmy Draper gave recommendations to pastors/leaders in how to grow their churches as he experienced at Euliss and Del City.

Well, we had 300 baptisms a year in Euliss. But they’ll say it was the greatest church I’ve ever been in. At that time, that was an unbelievable church. They would do anything to share the gospel. We were doing praise choruses with a praise band. We had a praise team. We did choruses, and hooped and hollered and shouted and raised our hands and all kinds of weird stuff, and got criticized a lot for it, but the people, the older folks, didn’t like it. But they said, “You know, we see God blessing and we’re not going to criticize it.” It was a great spirit. And I think that’s what characterized my years at Del City, and Dallas with the great response there. I was there for two years. It was just a willingness of the people to be flexible, a contentment, a willingness to follow the pastor to have a fellowship. A church that is going to be evangelistic has to have a fellowship that deserves evangelism. I mean, to win people in some churches is like putting a baby in a refrigerator. You don’t want to do that. So, the church had warm fellowship, they were pastor-led, not dictated but they followed the pastor, were happy to do that, trusted the pastor, had a very active Evangelism Explosion program back then. In Del City, the whole church was mobilized. Every Sunday afternoon, deacons visited, and people everywhere visiting, and utilized E.E. You just have to create an atmosphere where evangelism is natural.

Jack Graham also encouraged attention to the pastoral side of leadership.

On the spiritual side, I would say, ‘Depend upon the prayers of people starting with your own congregation,’ assuming you’re a pastor. And I would say, ‘If your faith doesn’t work at home, don’t export it.’ I would say, ‘Pray and pray hard that your local ministry to flourish so that you could be a model for other churches or other ministries.’ I don’t think it would give very good testimony for me, for the church, for the convention, if during my tenure the church wasn’t reaching and baptizing people and doing what I’d expect everybody else to be doing. I’ve been blessed with a congregation that is willing to do whatever it takes to reach the community and beyond. I would say strengthen the ministries of your life and let your presidency be the overflow, the extension of your life and leadership. Because I view the role of the president as a pastoral role, that’s obviously the way I would advise someone. You can’t be somebody or something you are not. You can’t all of the sudden turn into a CEO or an administrator. That’s not my view of the role of the president anyway.
Jim Henry recommended to future leaders of the denomination that they keep their people engaged by informing them of their activities.

Well, I tell you what, God was gracious. I told the church I would not miss a Sunday I ordinarily wouldn’t miss because of vacation or time away. I did not want to hurt my church because I felt that if I lost my church, in a sense, then I had to come back and pastor those people. So the church was wonderful and the church was able to keep moving forward, but by very virtue of the fact that sometimes you’re gone from Sunday afternoon to Wednesday, I did not get one letter of complaint, nor one note of criticism in the whole two years. Because I tried to keep my people informed, I had a display showing where I was going, what was happening, institutional or otherwise, where they could pray for me, so I kept them abreast on it so they could participate, and they laid hands on me and prayed for my ministry. But by virtue of the fact that you’re gone so much, you just can’t do the work that you do when you’re there all the time. So the church didn’t suffer. I think because of their participation through me, they seemed to grow by the experience I was having, but we were not able to do some things that if I had been on hand or on deck we could have done. So it did have an effect. On the other hand, it tired me physically. After I was president, Ed Young said to me when he gave me the gavel, ‘Two years from now you’re gonna run out shouting, like I am tonight.’ I didn’t know what he meant then, but I did later. It took me a while to recover, emotionally and physically and spiritually, because I was drained. I was running on high octane, propelled by prayer and by energy and strength the Lord gave me. The other guys had told me, expect it.

Both Graham and Henry refer to the vital aspect of prayer in their pastoral ministries and their presidencies. Several of the past presidents excitedly talked about the tremendous grace demonstrated in their lives and ministries as hundreds of thousands of Southern Baptist and Evangelicals prayed for them. They each experienced and described a noticeable difference spiritually when their successors were elected.

Tom Elliff describes this transition of prayer grace.

I didn’t realize this until the day after I was president. A unique blessing is that there are thousands of people praying for you. And the moment that you stop being president, they shift that to somebody else, and it is literally a physical, spiritual conscious awareness that these people are not praying for you the next day. . . . The other thing is that you’re standing there shaving the day after your presidency and all of the sudden you realize that you are not preparing for something because for two years, every day has its press conferences, every day has its television interviews, every day has its telephone calls, every day has its
letters to be written on the fly. You’re never at a moment when you are not preparing for the next place. Sometimes six or seven times a day, different places along the way. And you are in a constant state of preparation so that when you go to bed at night you’re thinking about tomorrow morning because you never know if the East Coast is going to call at about 5 o’clock a.m. and talk about abortion or perhaps they may want you on the ‘Today’ program or some other later program, so you are constantly preparing. In your mind you are constantly going over how you will address that issue or label. It represents somebody’s problem. You don’t want to make a bozo out of yourself, but more than that you don’t want to shame the conversation.

Morris Chapman describes the same experience.

Well, what happens is, the prayers shift to the new president. I sensed it within the first week. I couldn’t tell you the next day, but I can assure you that it was almost like the air going out of a balloon. Tom Elliff has come along, I know, after and said he experienced the same thing. In fact, Tom mentioned it a whole lot more often than I did, but you’re glad, because that’s what ought to happen, the people concentrate on praying for the president. But it is the extraordinary let down aspect of having been president of the convention. You can get over not traveling as much, not perhaps getting as many accolades and the things that come with the presidency, but what you cannot replace is the prayers that come from those people. And so, when they began to move that mass of prayer toward another individual, you just sense it. It’s just like you coming down to earth.

Jack Graham’s exchange with the interviewer highlighted the fact that the two most productive years of his ministry were during his presidency. He attributed this to the prayers for him and his church.

I did not miss a single Sunday because of convention travels or business or preaching. One of the things that I had prayed is that our church, in the two years that I was president, would flourish. And I think maybe some of the guys had experienced some tough times for their church because they were worried about disconnection with their church and you do, there’s no question. You have to divide your time, you’re somewhat disconnected with convention responsibilities, as well as your pastoral, but due to the fact that I have a wonderful staff, and also due to the fact that there were key moments in the life of the church, certainly, weekend services, and I was present and accounted for, we had the two best years we’ve ever had in the history of the church while I was president.

When asked if he credited that to the prayers of the convention he responded, “Absolutely; not two of but the two best years without question. One right on top of the
other. . .we had the two, 2002 and 2003. . .Statistically, spiritually, for our church, those were the two best years in terms of baptisms, growth, attendance, relating church spirit, life in church.”

Of all the recommendations given in this chapter to future presidents and pastors, none is more vital than the quest for prayer support for ministry. Every spiritual leader should seek maximum prayer cover before they attempt any great ministry for Christ. The writer has been told that the S.B.C. foreign missionaries are all aware that they are prayed for nationally on their birthdays. Many times, if they have a major ministry challenge facing them in the country of their mission, they will wait if possible, to attempt it on their birthday because of the prayer cover they receive.

Next to the emphasis for undergirding your ministry with prayer comes the urgent need for Spiritual leaders, whether S.B.C. presidents or local pastors, to develop a driving vision from God for their ministry. If they’re leading in the denomination they should undergird and strengthen the spiritual directions God has raised up within the denomination. If they’re a local pastor they should seriously evaluate the ministries God has already raised up within the congregation and help develop and strengthen those through their leadership. Adrian Rogers suggested several questions that would be helpful in determining the vision necessary to strengthen a ministry. The questions fell in two categories; What are our weaknesses? And, what are our opportunities? Under the weakness category his questions were: “Where can the devil attack? Where are we weak? Where do we need to shore up?” The second category of opportunities evoked this question: “What are the opportunities this convention has handed to them that are absolutely unique?”
The writer’s past interviews of several mega-church pastors from different denominations brought forth the same response Rogers gave for convention presidents regarding opportunities. One of their greatest concerns was to miss opportunities that God was giving them in the ministry. They search diligently for sources of spiritual momentum. And when they find them they aggressively capitalize on them. They also astutely evaluate their current ministries in light of these opportunities.

The past presidents also emphasized the need for singleness of purpose in effective vision casting. They used the term “Johnny one-note.” Several commended Bobby Welch for his total commitment to evangelism and baptisms during his presidency. He toured the nation in a bus tour; he spoke in venues large and small with multiple meetings each day; he built the theme and presentation of the annual convention around evangelism. Actual baptisms were performed at the conventions. This type of leadership is necessary on the national level with our denomination and on the local level with our pastors.

Several other noteworthy recommendations for future presidents that could be applied to local pastorates would be to develop and borrow expertise for dealing with the media. Lack of the application of this skill has cost the Catholic Church immensely in the United States. Their slow and sometimes complete lack of response to their clergy sexual abuse scandal has cost them multiplied millions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of members. Business Week magazine published a major article on the media debacle of the Catholic Church. In the cover story William C. Symonds writes, “Most appalling to many Catholics has been the insensitive way church officials have handled the crisis, putting the protection of well over 1,000 of its priests above the interests of the
victims. On a scale of 1 to 10, ‘this is an 11,’ says former Hill & Knowlton Chairman Robert L. Dilenschneider, who has managed such crises as Three Mile Island. ‘The Church has been hit by a truck and permitted the truck to back over it several times,’ he says. The quickest way to deal with a crisis is to tell it all and tell it fast.’

Another suggestion was to use the office of the presidency for mass evangelism. This activity would have to coincide with the evangelistic gifts of that particular president. It is worth noting that during the term of their presidency they have an incredible drawing power attributed to their “celebrity” status.

Paige Patterson’s suggestion of dealing with critics by sending them personally purchased gifts is of great value. It demonstrates the New Testament mentality of Christ. In I Peter 2:23 scripture says, “and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.” This practice of returning good for evil can only help protect the leader from personal bitterness as Patterson expressed.

Those suggested changes that past presidents regretted not accomplishing were: spending more time with and involving young pastors within the S.B.C.; changing the name, Southern Baptist Convention, to something more nationally identifiable, and giving greater emphasis to the planting of regional influence churches within the major cities of the United States.

Adrian Rogers counsels future leaders to defend their right to pray in Jesus name under the grounds of plurality. He points out that to not allow Christian leaders to pray in Jesus’ name is discriminatory.

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Draper and Graham encourage denominational pastors/leaders to build exciting soul winning worshiping churches as a basis for their leadership. They can only export what they live at home. They’re to view their role as pastor not C.E.O.

Jim Henry encourages pastors/leaders to take their congregations along with them, as they are given large responsibilities, like president, within the convention. He constructed visual displays at their church to allow the congregation to follow his travels and pray for his speaking and meeting itinerary.

All of these recommendations can bless the leadership of a pastor or denomination leader as they are implemented.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Abraham Lincoln, arguably one of the greatest leaders in the history of our nation, enunciated his thoughts on the power of persuasion in 1842 to the Springfield, Washington Temperance Society.

When the conduct of men is designed to be influenced, persuasion – kind, unassuming persuasion, should ever be adopted. It is an old and a true maxim, that a ‘crop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall.’ So with men. If you would win a man to your cause, firsts convince him that you are his sincere friend. Therein is a drop of honey that catches his heart, which, say what he will, is the great high road to his reason, and which, when once gained, you will find but little trouble in convincing his judgment of the justice of your cause, if indeed that cause really be a just one. On the contrary, assume to dictate to his judgment, or to command his action, or to mark him as one to be shunned and despised, and he will retreat within himself, close all the avenues to his head and his heart; and tho’ your causes be naked truth itself. . .you shall no more be able to (reach) him, than to penetrate the hard shell of a tortoise with a rye straw. Such is man, and so must he be understood by those who would lead him, even to his own best interest.1

In studying and interacting with these great moral leaders of our nation, the Conservative Resurgence presidents, the writer became intimately aware of the persuasive power of these leaders. Their influence upon the Southern Baptist Convention is now engraved in church history. The power of their convictions is played out every day in the decisions of the trustee boards of the various agencies and entities of the convention. The ripple effects of these changes have spilled over into the public arena of our nation. As several of the past presidents aptly noted, the Conservative Resurgence of

the S.B.C. paralleled and was a contemporary event to the Conservative Resurgence of politics in America, and more specifically the Republican Party.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the process God used to prepare and select these men to serve as presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention, and to glean (from their lives and experiences) leadership principles for future presidents, pastors and leaders, to profit from in their quest for persuasive leadership. The presidents are extensively quoted because their knowledge and experience base is the main source of leadership wisdom contained in this writing.

Chapter two examines the process and circumstances God used to prepare these men to serve as president of the S.B.C. Three aspects of their preparation leaped to the writer's attention. The first aspect was their educational preparation. In the undergraduate studies of many of the initial presidents, they experienced various levels of liberalism within their college classrooms. These blatant attacks upon the precious faith "once for all delivered to the saints" stirred these men to action. They acted because they "...knew where the bodies were buried..." as Adrian Rogers so aptly put it.

They operated under a compulsion from God to return the convention to its historic roots of inerrancy, evangelism, Biblical preaching and world missions. Their seminary background also aided the resurgence. Immediately prior to the renewal period, most of the denominational leadership and decision making within the S.B.C. centered around Southern Seminary and Southeastern Seminary. The liberals themselves primarily claimed these two institutions as their own. The two seminaries that carried the reputation of conservatism were Southwestern and New Orleans prior to the resurgence. Eleven of the thirteen resurgence presidents graduated from Southwestern and New
Orleans Seminaries. The first six presidents were from these institutions. Southwestern was considered the most conservative of them all. Four of the first six and six of the thirteen came from Southwestern. Less than half of the thirteen (6) have earned doctorates.

The second aspect of their preparation was their ecclesiastical preparation. The vast majority of these men attributed their leadership preparation and abilities to their pastoral experience. As their churches grew and the size of the subsequent churches they pastored grew, their leadership abilities were stretched and tested. Most of them started or participated in broadcast media ministries from their churches. This gave them experience in dealing with the media. They also had already encountered the results of publicly broadcasting their conservative thoughts and teaching. The outreach and substantial growth of their individual ministries also raised their public reputations within the denomination. This exposure allowed them to interact with one another and develop relationships with each other. Bailey Smith pointed this out when he said, “... because of all the sudden rapid growth of our church, I began to preach across the country and almost every State Evangelism Conference. I then became friends of people like Draper and Adrian Rogers. . . . My name was just out there, but at least the name stood for evangelism and Biblical conservatism. So I think that exposure and my reputation for conviction is what brought me to their attention.”

The third aspect of their preparation was their denominational service. Some of the men like Adrian Rogers, Charles Stanley, and Paige Patterson were given very few opportunities to serve in the pre-resurgence S.B.C. because of their ardently held conservative views. Some of the men like Bailey Smith, Jerry Vines and Jack Graham
were given select opportunities to serve. But some of these leaders—such as James Draper, Morris Chapman, Jim Henry and Bobby Welch—were given extensive denominational positions of service.

Denominational service ranked lowest of these three aspects of preparation for training to serve as president of the S.B.C. The most valuable aspect of the preparation was pastoring a growing, large church (ecclesiastical preparation).

Chapter three examines the selection process God used to nominate and elect the resurgence presidents. None of the past presidents expressed in their interviews an expectation of becoming president of the S.B.C. They primarily focused on becoming successful, faithful pastors. Several described a willingness to pastor a small, country church their entire lives. Two had early interest in becoming foreign missionaries. One actually served overseas. Their greatest concern was to develop character in their lives.

Part of the equation involving their selection was due to the influence they wielded from the influential churches they served. All of these men, with the exception of Paige Patterson, were mega-church pastors. The church with the smallest membership was First Baptist of Daytona Beach with 4,163 members where Bobby Welch serves as pastor. The largest is Second Baptist Church of Houston with 41,747 members, where Ed Young, Sr. serves as pastor. The extremely high profile of these churches added to the recognition of these men nationally within the convention. Paige Patterson’s role as an architect of the resurgence paved the way for his presidency with conservatives nationwide. The vast majority of these men also served, as a precursor to their presidency, as president of the S.B.C. Pastor’s Conference. In the early years of the
resurgence this became a crucial exposure nationally to precede their run for the convention presidency.

The selection of this group to the presidency of the convention also centered a great deal around their relationship to one another. All of the respondents in one way or another referred to “a new camaraderie” building between them. In chapter three of this writing, the interviewees referred to their contacts from the past presidents recommending they run for the office of the president. Only two of these thirteen presidents were not specifically endorsed by the past presidents: Jim Henry and Bobby Welch. But both of them received assurances of support and encouragement from the past presidents.

Chapter four evaluates the leadership traits of the resurgence presidents. As they defined success in the ministry, nine of the thirteen directly referred to “the will of God” as the source of their various ministry accomplishments. Three of the respondents emphasized faithfulness as the key to successful ministry. Bobby Welch’s comments on the subject bear repeating,

Three words. Good. Faithful. Servant. We all want to hear Him say, “Well, done, my food and faithful servant!” . . . I have had several men now, fine well-known pastors, who have retired, and I’ve asked, ‘Okay, you’ve gone the distances, now what’s the big deal at the end of the road?’ And each of those men, unbeknownst to the other, has said the same thing: faithfulness to the Lord and family. None of them told about how many books they read; none of them told about their average in Sunday School; none told about how many conferences they’ve gone to; none talked about positions they’ve held. They told about being faithful to the Lord and their families. And the other reason that is in my heart is because everybody can do this. It has nothing to do with the size of the church, or the type of ministry. Everybody can be a good, faithful servant.

Several important truths can be derived from these leaders definition of success. First, success in life is derived from the will of God. Secondly, life must be lived with
integrity based on moral convictions. The third principle is to fervently love people as you go through life. Finally, it's to live to please God and receive His final commendation of “Well done, my good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord!”

This study group’s leadership traits are also illustrated by their ministry goals. When the group was asked if they are goal-setters, several categories of responses emerged. One group said they did not set goals. Most said they do set goals and several qualified their goal-setting orientation. The seven who specifically said they were goal-setters established their goals for various forms of ministry accomplishment. None of the respondents expressed career-path goals to specific positions or offices within the convention or to pastoral positions within other churches. They spoke as a single voice to aspire to godly character and accomplish faithful ministry for Christ and His Kingdom.

The resurgence presidents’ ministry accomplishments demonstrate their leadership traits. When just considering the growth of the churches they pastor, from which they were elected, a phenomenal track record is established. For all but two of the men, it has been the last church they pastored. From their churches, not including the other fifty churches they pastored, they baptized 148,775 people and added 142,024 to the membership of their churches. Several of them started worldwide broadcast ministries, such as Adrian Rogers- *Love Worth Finding*, Charles Stanley- *In Touch Ministries*, James Merritt- *Touching Lives* and Jack Graham- *Power Point Ministries*.

Five of these leading pastors have relocated and built major ministry complexes for their churches at the cost of hundreds of millions of dollars. All have been published in various forms from pamphlets to periodical articles to books.
Their presidential accomplishments are enormous. They bucked the trend of the cycle of apostasy in mainline denominations by reversing the slide to liberalism. They documented and addressed the apostasy by the Peace Committee process. They redeemed the teaching of the absolute authority of scripture within the six denominational seminaries. They revised and edited the Articles of Faith of the largest evangelical denomination in the world, the *Baptist Faith and Message*. They downsized and streamlined the bureaucratic agencies of the S.B.C. from 19 to 12 entities under *The Covenant for a New Century*. This will ultimately save the convention millions of dollars in expense and increase the percentage of funds going to ministry and missions throughout the world. They called for national revival within our nation. They emphasized building strong families for the kingdom of Christ. And most recently they are calling for the convention to rise up with great conviction and urgency in the winning of our nation to Christ with one million baptisms a year.

Chapter five documents the leadership traits and abilities that are necessary to effectively lead as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Their deep, strongly-held convictions have been demonstrated by their often unpopular public stands on the moral issues of their particular day. Adrian Rogers was described by one of his theological opponents as "...a pitbull with a steel bar in his mouth." Bailey Smith indicated that these deeply-held conservative convictions influenced national politics as well when he said, "I think that many in the political realm thought that our conservative movement of the world’s largest non-Catholic denomination may be in some way aided the political turn to the right (of our national politics.)" These denominational presidents have counseled, prayed with and influenced leaders of our nation including the presidents
of the United States. Their influence came from “moral ascendancy” based upon the moral parameters of scripture.

The network of relationships established among the inerrancy leaders ultimately led to their presidencies. One overwhelming conclusion of this study would be the fact that these men recognized and developed relationships with each other based upon their shared conservative convictions and the awareness of their pastoral accomplishments. They recognized each other as they aggressively evangelized and grew their churches. The fraternity that developed among them enabled them to endorse and promote each other for the cause of Biblical inerrancy and the reclamation of the denomination. It is quite obvious to any careful observer that their relationships were a key factor leading to their nomination and election to the presidency of the S.B.C. Pastors and other spiritual leaders need to recognize and seek the camaraderie of like-minded leaders in the pursuit and accomplishment of their goals in ministry.

An essential ability needed to serve as president of the S.B.C. would be exceptional public communication skills. Immediately after their election they become the central spokesperson for 16.3 million members and over 43,000 churches. They must be quick in thinking on their feet. One of the greatest concerns expressed by the past presidents over their years of service was to say something publicly that would disgrace their Lord and their denomination. Jerry Vines expressed this fear, “The pressures are to try to be careful not to make the statement and certainly not to say anything that would bring discredit on the Lord or our denomination . . .”

The presidency of the S.B.C. is a tremendous bully pulpit. The weight of influence exerted by each subsequent president can be global in nature. Jerry Vines’
comments about Mohammed had an effect on missionaries around the world serving in Muslim-block nations. Paige Patterson reportedly told Vines that his comments would ultimately result in the conversion of thousands of Muslims around the world to Christ. The investigation of Vines' claims, as to their veracity, would cause them to abandon islam and embrace Christ.

In the area of administration, only two of the past presidents indicated that administration was their primary spiritual gift. These two, Jimmy Draper and Morris Chapman, proceeded from their pastorates and convention presidencies to become presidents and C.E.O.s of two of the most influential agencies within the denomination: LifeWay and the Executive Committee, respectively.

Financially, each of the presidents indicated that their churches contributed substantially to the expenses of their presidencies. They questioned, as a group, the ability of a pastor or leader to come from a smaller setting and succeed with the large financial demands incurred as serving as the president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Chapter six examines the future of the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention and asked the important question, “Can any Southern Baptist serve as president of S.B.C.” and “Should the office of president be changed?” Commenting on the first question, most of the past presidents indicated that the enormous responsibilities of the position preclude many from serving. The administration of the position requires a multiple-staff church setting. The financial demands require a certain size of church budget. The media exposure demands a certain level of expertise in dealing with the media. The leadership skills must be honed and developed with a large number of people
with varied backgrounds. All of these requirements call for a person with a unique level of leadership experience. The demands of the presidency are vast and unrelenting during the term of service. Some of the presidents indicated their belief that leaders from a smaller church setting could serve. They qualified that statement, however, by saying they must be exceptional in their leadership abilities and administrative skills.

The second question, “Should the office of president be changed?” solicited a number of varied responses. Most of the past presidents expressed a reluctance to change the office or its parameters. The first potential change that was evaluated was the tradition of two one-year terms. Bobby Welch advocated such a change to possibly two-year terms. Others indicated that the longer period would be detrimental to the president and the church they serve.

One of the strongest changes suggested was for the convention to provide each president with staff assistance. The writer recommended a potential title of “the Office of Presidential Assistance,” where a person would be provided by the convention to assist the president with correspondence, travel itineraries, interaction with media and general protocol of the convention. A person experienced in these areas could be of tremendous assistance to future presidents and take the load off of their church staff. The next change would be the provision of sabbatical time to each subsequent president from their local church duties to travel and represent the S.B.C. at home and abroad.

Another suggested change would be to give each president an immediate orientation to the current agendas and ministries of the various agencies of the convention and to assist him in finding his vision from God for his presidency. This would aid them
in giving their agenda to the Executive Committee and the Great Commission Council of the convention.

The final change recommended by Bailey Smith was to provide for past presidents’ expenses to the annual convention each year in honor of their service to be S.B.C.

The most noteworthy suggestion that seems to this writer as immediately do-able would be the provision of an assistant to each president of the S.B.C. The lengthening of terms has apparent drawbacks that were expressed by several of the past presidents. The provision of sabbaticals, due to the autonomy of the local church within the convention, would be solely the discretion of the president’s congregation.

Chapter seven deals with recommendations for future presidents and pastors. This chapter stresses the importance of pastors, spiritual leaders, and denominational leaders, finding and establishing their vision for ministry from God. This vision should coincide with the direction and ministry God has already established within the group being led, whether a local church or major denomination. Adrian Rogers recommended the use of two lines of questioning to determine this vision. What are our weaknesses? And what are our opportunities?

Jimmy Draper concluded that future presidents should avoid coming up with unique themes and directions specifically designed for their two years of service. They should instead reinforce biblical ministry directions already initiated by the convention. The vast majority of these men commended Bobby Welch on his passionate evangelistic focus of challenging the convention to attempt one million baptisms each year of his
presidency. His presidency became a positive role model for seizing initiative and driving a single-focus vision before the convention.

Paige Patterson encourages future presidents to develop understanding of the systems of the convention, such as the constitution and by-laws and how the various offices function. This would be very helpful. Some of the initial resurgence presidents expressed lack of knowledge in how to travel and represent the convention in light of their rights of office. They were uncertain of which meetings to attend and what their responsibilities were. The renowned W. A. Criswell, elected years before the resurgence, expressed regret over his ignorance of the appointment process of the president. He described signing off on a liberal slate of appointments to the Board of Boards, which was presented to him by a liberal denominational leader.

Three of the presidents expressed regrets over not being able to change the name of the convention from a regional emphasis (Southern) to more of a national identification. This became the only national agency name of the convention not overhauled through the Conservative Resurgence. The Sunday School Board became LifeWay. The Home Mission Board became the North American Mission Board. The Foreign Mission Board became the International Mission Board.

Ed Young strongly declared that unless the S.B.C. captures the major cities for Christ through aggressive church planting that our future is in peril as a denomination. Part of his warning has been heeded with the Mega Focus Cities Strategy. But much more is needed to accomplish this task.

Jimmy Draper and Jack Graham stressed the importance of future presidents building their own churches up and using them as a model of ministry for the convention.
Jim Henry supplemented this local church emphasis with the need to keep the congregation informed of the president’s travel and speaking schedule.

The most important suggestion to future presidents and pastors is to solicit and recognize the prayer support of others for their ministry. Jack Graham noted the two greatest years of Prestonwood’s ministry were while he was president of the convention. He believed the prayer support of thousands of Southern Baptists buoyed him.

Morris Chapman and Tom Elliff also referred to this phenomena during their presidencies as millions of Southern Baptists and Evangelicals prayed for them and their leadership.

In conclusion, the hand of God has been obvious in the preparation, selection and election of the Conservative Resurgence presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention. Church history has forever been changed by the advent of the election of these courageous leaders. Our nation and the world has been affected by the influence of these men and their appointments. “To God be the Glory! Great things He has done!”
APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Chronological List of the Conservative Resurgence Presidents

APPENDIX B: Election Results of the Presidents of the Conservative Resurgence Presidents

APPENDIX C: Educational background of the Conservative Resurgence Presidents

APPENDIX D: Cover letter to the past presidents

APPENDIX E: Presidential Questionnaire

APPENDIX F: Interviews in their entirety without editing
APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF
THE CONSERVATIVE RESURGENCE PRESIDENTS OF THE
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
(1979-Present)

1979, 1986-87: Adrian Pierce Rogers (Interviewed)
1980-81: Bailey Eugene Smith (Interviewed)
1982-9893: James T. Draper, Jr. (Interviewed)
1984-85: Charles F. Stanley (Interview Declined)
1988-89: Charles Jerry Vines (Interviewed)
1990-91: Morris Hines Chapman (Interviewed)
1992-93: Homer Edwin Young (Interviewed)
1994-95: James Bascom Henry (Interviewed)
1996-97: Thomas David Elliff (Interviewed)
1998-99: Leighton Paige Patterson (Interviewed)
2000-01: James Gregory Merritt (Interviewed)
2002-03: Jack Norman Graham (Interviewed)
2004-05: Bobby Welch (Interviewed)
APPENDIX B

ELECTION RESULTS OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE CONSERVATIVE RESURGENCE PRESIDENTS

1979-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Houston 1979</td>
<td>Adrian Rogers</td>
<td>6,129</td>
<td>51.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Naylor</td>
<td>2,791</td>
<td>23.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bill Self</td>
<td>1,673</td>
<td>14.02%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abner McCall</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>5.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doug Watterson</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>3.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ed Price</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>1.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis 1980</td>
<td>Bailey Smith</td>
<td>5,739</td>
<td>51.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Frank Pollard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Pleitz</td>
<td>1,516</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Jackson</td>
<td>1,089</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stan Boone</td>
<td>213</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jimmy Stroud</td>
<td>167</td>
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<td>Los Angeles 1981</td>
<td>Bailey Smith</td>
<td>6,934</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
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<td>Abner McCall</td>
<td>2,791</td>
<td>39.30%</td>
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<td>New Orleans 1982</td>
<td>Jimmy Draper</td>
<td>8,081</td>
<td>46.03%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Duke McCall</td>
<td>6,124</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Perry Sanders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>John Sullivan</td>
<td>1,625</td>
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<td>(Run-Off)</td>
<td>Jimmy Draper</td>
<td>8,331</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Duke McCall</td>
<td>6,292</td>
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<td>Jimmy Draper</td>
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<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dallas 1985</td>
<td>Charles Stanley</td>
<td>24,453</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winfred Moore</td>
<td>19,795</td>
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<td>Adrian Rogers</td>
<td>21,201</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winfred Moore</td>
<td>17,898</td>
<td>45.78%</td>
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<td>St. Louis 1987</td>
<td>Adrian Rodgers</td>
<td>13,980</td>
<td>59.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Jackson</td>
<td>9,331</td>
<td>40.03%</td>
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<td>San Antonio 1988</td>
<td>Jerry Vines</td>
<td>15,804</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Jackson</td>
<td>15,112</td>
<td>48.32%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Craig</td>
<td>276</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anis Shorrash</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Las Vegas 1989</td>
<td>Jerry Vines</td>
<td>10,754</td>
<td>56.58%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel Vestal</td>
<td>8,248</td>
<td>43.39%</td>
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<td>New Orleans 1990</td>
<td>Morris Chapman</td>
<td>21,471</td>
<td>57.68%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Daniel Vestal</td>
<td>15,753</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atlanta 1991</td>
<td>Morris Chapman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indianapolis 1992</td>
<td>Edward Young</td>
<td>9,981</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jess Moody</td>
<td>3,485</td>
<td>21.66%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nelson Price</td>
<td>2,619</td>
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<tr>
<td>Houston 1993</td>
<td>Edward Young</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Orlando 1994</td>
<td>Jim Henry</td>
<td>9,876</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fred Wolfe</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tom Elliff</td>
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<td>Dallas 1997</td>
<td>Tom Elliff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Atlanta 1999</td>
<td>Paige Patterson</td>
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<td>New Orleans 2001</td>
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<td>Nashville 2005</td>
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APPENDIX C

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE CONSERVATIVE RESURGENCE PRESIDENTS

Bailey Smith- Ouachita B.S., Southwestern M.Div.
Charles Stanley- University of Richmond B.A., Southwestern B.Div.,
Luther Rice M.Theo., Th.D.
Jerry Vines- Mercer B.A., New Orleans B.Div., Luther Rice Th.D.
Morris Chapman- Mississippi College B.Music, Southwestern M.Div., D.Min
Edwin Young- Mississippi College B.A., Southeastern B.Div.
Thomas Elliff- Ouachita B.S., Southwestern M.Div.
James Merritt- Stetson B.B.A.Accounting, Southern M.Div., Ph.D.
Bobby Welch- Jacksonville State University B.S., New Orleans M.Theo.
APPENDIX D

January, 2005

Dr. Adrian Rogers
Bellevue Baptist
Memphis, TN

Dear Dr. Rogers,

I am currently writing my Doctoral Dissertation for the Doctor of Ministry Degree at Liberty University. The title of my dissertation is: Insights On Leadership: God’s Preparation and Selection of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Conservative Resurgence Presidencies. My desire is to interview you personally to gain insights into God’s development of leadership abilities in your life.

I have enclosed my main instrument of research for this project; the Presidential Leadership Questionnaire, for your familiarization. My desire is for this writing to add a biblical, spiritual framework to the advent of the conservative resurgence within the Southern Baptist Convention. I hold the personal conviction that this was a sovereign act of God to maintain our beloved denomination’s evangelistic mission fervor. This is the bias with which I approach this project.

You may contact me if you have any questions. My secretary will be contacting your office to set up a phone interview with your approval.

Yours for The Kingdom,

Pastor Darrell P. Orman

DPO/emj

Enc.(2) List of Past Presidents
Presidential Leadership Questionnaire
1. How do you personally define success in the ministry?

2. Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

3. How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

4. During your tenure, as president, what do you see now as God’s unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time? Before your election?

5. Are you a goal setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?

6. If you could serve again would you do anything differently the second time around?

7. In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?

8. If you could change the function of the office of president, how would you change it?

9. How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ?

10. In light of your experience, as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the S.B.C.?

11. What are the unique pressures and responsibilities of serving in one of the most influential evangelical positions in the world?

12. Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life?

13. How did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency? Denominational positions?
   - Speaking
   - Administration
   - Dealing with critics
   - Dealing with Media
   - Vision casting
   - Goal setting
14. Can a group of young pastors be trained and mentored to possibly serve as president of the S.B.C.? Would that in anyway circumvent God’s sovereignty in the selection election process?
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEWS IN THEIR ENTIRETY
WITHOUT EDITING
DARRELL ORMAN: I’m with Dr. Adrian Rogers, past president of the Southern Baptist Convention for three years, and it is January 13, 2005, around 8:10 to 8:15 p.m. Dr. Rogers, how do you personally define success in the ministry?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Success is simply fulfilling the will of God in the ministry. I don’t think you can measure success by numbers. I don’t think you can measure success by popularity. For a man to know from his heart that he has preached the Word of God, that he lived with integrity, he loved his people, he has been available for Jesus Christ, that’s success. And, I think failure is succeeding at the wrong thing. So, I really believe that success is finding, and following, and finishing the will of God for your life.

DARRELL ORMAN: Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Well, I never aspired to be the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, ever. As a matter of fact, it seemed to me almost to be ridiculous that I would be a president. As a matter of fact, I was anti-denominational when I came up because of the incipient liberalism in the convention. And I was very conflicted because I knew what was being taught in some of the seminaries, and in most of our Baptist colleges. I knew the blandness of our literature even when we were not liberal, and I thought “this doesn’t make sense, for me to be preaching against one form of doctrine in the pulpit and then taking up an offering to help pay for it to be taught somewhere else.” So, there were times when I considered leaving the convention altogether. And in 1979, some men began to talk about changing the convention, that it could be changed, if we could elect a succession of ten conservative presidents, and have conservative presidents for ten years. I didn’t think it could be done, but I thought at least it was worth a try. I certainly didn’t think I was worthy to be the president because, frankly, Darrell, I knew very little about how the denomination worked. And in 1979, in Houston, Texas, I was elected. I went to the first press conference and I was like a piece of red meat in a pack of wild dogs. It’s not like that today. But it was all attack questions from the secular and the Baptist Press. And when I got elected, which I did not campaign for, I campaigned against really, but when I got elected it dawned on me, “Adrian, you’re going to have to attend every session. Number two, you’re going to have to pay attention.” It was something that was just different than I’d been used to, and I discovered I would have to learn the constitution and by-laws of the convention, I would have to learn who are the denominational leaders, and the heads of the various agencies. I would have to learn what the issues are in the convention. I’d have to bone up on Robert’s Rules of Order, and all that.

DARRELL ORMAN: That was pre-Barry McCarty, right?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Yes, that was before Barry McCarty. So in answer to your question, what prepared me to be the president? I would say that what prepared me to be the president were the situations that I faced at a liberal Baptist college and some liberalism in my seminary, but not nearly what it was in college, and the antipathy that I had toward that. I remember being at a convention, seeing a man who was an unlettered
preacher on the platform, trying to make a motion or move that certain literature be discontinued, or something that would be done about liberalism. The man was unlettered, untrained; he did not know parliamentary procedure. I stood out there in that convention hall and I watched them adroitly maneuver that man off the platform and literally, made a fool of him. At the least, they made him look like a fool. He was a dear man of God, and they got all over him. And I thought “they could have helped that man”, because what he was saying was true. He just didn’t know how to say it. They should have helped him to say it, and God spoke to me, Darrell. He didn’t speak to me out loud, but He said, “Adrian, you don’t have to wait for them to vote for you to do right...” And that’s the reason, I realized that I was a servant of God and no denomination could, in fact, control me. And so I decided I was just going to do right, regardless, and we began to designate money around the seminaries, and I discontinued that literature and some other things, so that was the kiss of death. It was denominational suicide for anybody to do that in those days, but I had no denominational aspirations, so what difference did it make? But, in a strange way, all of that prepared me to be the president because I knew where the bodies were buried; I knew what the problem was; I came to the presidency not out of a matter of wanting to be honored, as to be the president, and not wanting to help to oil the ecclesiastical machinery, but to do something, to change the situation. And I have to confess, that I was really very doubtful that it could be done. I’m both surprised and gratified at what has happened.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.? How did He do that? You mentioned, were there discussions prior to 1979?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Yes. I had no idea of or any aspirations of my willingness to be president, but to my surprise, I was elected as president of the Pastor’s Conference, prior to 1979. A couple of years later, I was sitting out there, that’s when they just took a vote by lifting hands, and all of the sudden I found myself, now this was the Pastor’s Conference, and I found myself to be president of the Pastor’s Conference. At the same time, there was a man named Bill Powell who was an employee of the home mission board, who had kind of figured out how the denomination worked and how we could change the denomination. Bill came to me one time and said “Adrian, would you serve on the board of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship?” which was a work group trying to do something about the convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: That was his own paper, right?

ADRIAN ROGERS: That was his own paper, and it was all about the faith in message, and I thought about it. And I thought, “Well, why haven’t some of these other men who have influence done something?” So again, I said, “Alright, Bill, I will.” At the same time, I was the president of the Pastor’s Conference. Well, Baptist Press sniffed those two things out and they began to write against me. Example, Chauncy Daley of the Western Recorder, he came right to Southern Seminary and he talked about how we saw the rising star in Memphis, he was talking about me, and you know, that we would do what we could to head him off, and so forth. Well, the irony of that is they caused it to happen. They began to toss my name around as being the president when I had no idea
of being the president. So they made it an issue. And people began to line up behind it. Also, then Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson took me to lunch and explained how they felt that this change could be made, and again, I was very dubious and doubtful. But they said, “No, you need to allow your name to be placed for nomination again now.” Well, Darrell, I had preached a lot in evangelism conferences and God has given me the ability to identify with preachers, and so I was known with preachers and so forth, and they began to encourage me. I’d get letters, and I’d get phone calls. But I never did feel worthy to be the president, and I was still dubious that the plan would work, and I wasn’t interested in just a honorific position because I had plenty of fish to fry. But I kept getting these letters and these phone calls, and Joyce and I would talk about it and she would say, “Where are you on a scale of one to ten?” I don’t think I ever got above a six. We went off to the convention in Houston. I had made up my mind that I would not allow my name to be placed in nomination. Well, when we got to Houston, the talk was all over the street; people were there; it was the issue. That’s the first time a person came up to me with tears in their eyes, and say, “You’ve got to allow your name to be placed in nomination; I drove all the way from Timbuktu to come and vote for you.” Freddie Gage, an evangelist, said to me, “Adrian, you need to do this.” I said, “Freddie, God would have to write in the sky for me to do that.” And he said, “Very well, I’ll get a skywriting airplane.” So, it was that kind of talk. Well, I was heading off the pulpit, I don’t know whether you knew who Bertha Smith was or not, and Miss Bertha called me on the phone. She said, “Brother Adrian, God wants you to allow your name to be placed in nomination.” I said, “Miss Bertha, I don’t think so. I’m in the middle of a multi-million dollar building program; my kids are still in school; I’m pastoring a growing church; I’ve got more on my plate right now than I can eat.” She said, “Now, Brother Adrian, one time Charles Spurgeon thought he was tired and went out into the woods to pray, and to read the Scripture, and he read where God said to Paul “my grace is sufficient for thee.” She said, “Then Spurgeon began to say ‘Your grace for me?’ and Spurgeon got so happy in the Lord he began to laugh, thinking about God’s grace for him. Then she said, “Brother Adrian, God’s grace is sufficient for you!” Well, I did not let her know how much that shook me to the foundation, and I was nice and polite to Miss Bertha Smith, who I highly respected as a godly woman. So when I got to the convention, and all this talk was on the street, I was standing near an escalator when a professor from Mid-America Seminary came to me and said, “Brother Adrian, Dr. Charles Culpepper could not come to the convention. He told me to tell you that he has been with God and God wants you to do this.” Well, Charles Culpepper and Bertha Smith were two of Southern Baptist’s premier missionaries. They were great examples of the Bible. And, I had to admit again, that made a great impact on me when Charles Culpepper would say he’d been with God and God said for me to do it.

DARRELL ORMAN: I met him at Mid-America. I had some lunches with him.

ADRIAN ROGERS: So, I was still mulling this in my head, and my head now is beginning to swim, and it is Monday and I preached at the Pastor’s Conference. Right when I was standing on the platform, Dr. Criswell would preach after I would preach, and he said, “Now, Adrian, God wants you to do this.” I said, “No, Dr. Criswell, I’m not gonna do it.” And then he got up as soon as I finished preaching and he said, “This will
be a great convention if for no other reason than to elect Adrian Rogers to the president.”
Well, I was put out, that he would do that right after I told him I wasn’t going to do it.”
He got a big rousing applause at the Pastor’s Conference. So, it was Monday evening, I
said to Joyce, “Let’s just get out of here. We’ll get away from the convention center,
we’ll go out to dinner, just the two of us.” So we went out to dinner and coming back to
the hotel about eleven o’clock at night, now this is Monday night and the election was
Tuesday. We met Paige Patterson and Jerry Vines. They said, “Where have you been?
We’ve been looking for you.” And I said, “Well, we went out to dinner.” They said
“What are you gonna do?” And I said “No, I’m not gonna do that.” Of course, then we
didn’t have any candidate at all, because they had put all their eggs in one basket, more or
less. So they said “Let’s go pray.” I said, “Well, come up to my room and I’ll certainly
pray with you.” By then, it was probably midnight; Joyce put on a housecoat and got in
bed. And Jerry Vines, and Paige and myself got in the middle of the floor, knelt and
began to pray. Well, in that prayer meeting, it’s probably by now about 1 a.m., Paige
began to weep, and to cry. And God moved into that room! And I looked over at Joyce;
Joyce is a very godly woman and very wise. I looked over at her and she held up ten
fingers. You know, we’d been allowing one to ten and she went like that, and that’s what
it took. I said, “Well, if Bertha Smith and Charles Culpepper and Joyce Rogers say so,
then it’s of God.” So I allowed my name to be placed in nomination. They had a hard
time getting anybody who was gracious enough to nominate me. Dr. Homer Lindsey Sr.
did nominate me, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, and I was elected on the
first ballot, which was an incredible thing, because I think there were five people
ominated that split up the vote, and so I got a majority over all five. Some of them were
well known Texans: Dr. Paul Naylor, who was the president-emeritus of Southwestern
Seminary, and a godly man; Abner McCall, who was the president of Baylor University;
Bill Self, who was at that time the president of the Foreign Missions Board, he was at
Wieucca Road, and sort of a fair-haired preacher. So for me to get a majority vote over
all of those, especially in Texas, it was like a miracle. Then they began to howl after I’d
been elected and say, “Well, the ballot box was stuffed; or somehow these people have
done something.” Anyway, bottom line, that’s how I got elected.

DARRELL ORMAN: During your tenure, as president, what do you see now as
God’s unique purpose? You’ve answered some of it, actually, for your presidency.
Were you aware of it at the time or before your election?

ADRIAN ROGERS: God’s unique purpose for my presidency was to begin the process
that has resulted ultimately in the transformation of the Southern Baptist Convention. I
believe that with all my heart. I did not strive to do any spectacular preaching, come up
with new programs, or anything else. I said to myself, “This one thing I will do.” I’ll
stay out of trouble as much as I can, my preaching will be spiritual but generic, with
emphasis on the Bible; I’m not going to try to dabble in all the denominational
intricacies, but I will only appoint people who believe in inerrancy. And that beyond a
doubt was the most significant thing.

DARRELL ORMAN: I like your phrase, I think you coined it....”bull dogmatic.”
ADRIAN ROGERS: Yes, some things we ought not be dogmatic about, some things we need to be bull dogmatic about. As a matter of fact, Ken Chaffin said “Adrian, you’re like a pit bull with a steel bar in his mouth.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Are you a goal setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?

ADRIAN ROGERS: I’m not a goal setter in the sense of quantitative goals. I am a goal setter in the sense of qualitative goals. My goal has always been and I don’t want to say it self-servingly, but to live with integrity, to live with anointing, to be obedient, and to be useable. The rest of it is more of a result than a goal. My goals have always been in different areas. Obviously, if you’re building a building you have a goal to get the building done; but not just make up some plan and then try to make it happen. It seems to me that all of my life, I’ve been dragged along, rather than being out front. God has just brought me.

DARRELL ORMAN: But that’s the layman, I guess, that apparently went and found you a property, your Cordova property and brought it back to you.

ADRIAN ROGERS: Well, my philosophy has always been if I develop the message, God will develop the ministry. I think, the ministry is just a scaffolding around the message. I try to be as true to the Word as I can be, and as filled with the Spirit as a human being can be, and not that I have acquired all that, but that’s been my goal.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could serve again would you do anything differently the second time around? Of course you’ve had that privilege to do that once. But even after two different terms, looking back, is there some advice that you could give to future presidents that would expedite their leadership?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Well, no, because the situation was different even when I was elected the second time in 1986; the battle was hotter than almost at any other time because it had dawned on the moderate faction that this thing was possible. At first they thought of us as interlopers, and that this would blow over. Then they realized it wasn’t about to blow over. So in 1985 at the convention in Dallas, Texas with 40,000 people, they were trying to have a town hall meeting. And Winfred Moore was elected first vice president, and they said it hands down, he would be elected president in Atlanta. Well, the guys said “No, we’ll bring Adrian out of moth balls.” So there, again, I was at that time serving on the Peace Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, a twenty-two member committee, that was generated in Dallas. We began to meet before in 1985, so again, the situation was different. For me to say what a preacher or a president would do today and at that time would be different. Kind of like a president of the United States being a wartime president. He has one major agenda. And I had one major agenda, and that was to finish what we had begun, and at that time we were working on a statement, called the Peace Committee Report, that was the watershed of this whole thing and, again, I was on that Peace Committee. It documented the liberalism, that’s what it did,
and as a result, once it got documented, Mom and Pop Baptist wanted to change it. You know what? They wanted to change what was going on.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you as leaders observe a momentum change after the publishing of the Peace Committee Report?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Absolutely! Absolutely! That was the final straw. Then the rest of it was just clean up. I don’t know that I could, out of my own experience, give a new president advice as to what I did except to be true to my convictions. For example, Bobby Welch today; I sure admire Bobby Welch, our president, because he now is putting an emphasis on evangelism and soul winning and involving young preachers in the convention. Well, obviously, if we study the matter in the Bible, that’s what needs to be done. Like a dog chasing a crook, once he catches him, what’s he gonna do with him? It’s a different situation as to what I did then and what I could recommend to a new president today.

DARRELL ORMAN: In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Well, the most rewarding aspect and continues to be to this day, is the change in the denomination. As I look back on my life, I feel that other than being a pastor of a growing church, this is the most significant thing that God ever allowed to happen in my life. And the reward is to look back and say, “Yes, praise God, the nation’s largest evangelical denomination that was drifting to the left is turned around.” And that’s indicative of history, the institutions that moved to the left just keep on moving and people start new institutions. Seldom, if ever, does anything that has begun to drift to the left ever come back to the right. So, I would say I received the most satisfaction from that. I would say, also, that being president of the convention, opened up to me doors of influence that still exist today. I have counseled with four presidents of the United States. I have found myself in places, and the influence of this denomination is far greater than I realized. About that time, people were discovering who the Southern Baptists were anyway. When I was first elected, Jimmy Carter was the president, and he was a Southern Baptist. People would say “A Southern what? Who is that? What is that?” Carter said he was “born again,” they said “What is that?” About this time, Southern Baptist began to be known. Now, they know who we are; everybody knows who Southern Baptists are. But for me, personally, being elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention gave me a stature, and opened doors of influence that nothing else would have opened. I would be less than honest if I did not say to you that is gratifying.

DARRELL ORMAN: Any least aspects of the experience?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Well, Darrell, I had a lot of poison arrows, a lot. And the unfortunate thing is getting mis-characterized and I had people come up and apologize to me at conventions. They’d say, “Will you forgive me?” And I’d say, “Sure, for what?” And they’d say “For the way I thought about you.” They’d say, “I never heard of you, never met you, and the Adrian Rogers I see up there is not the one I’ve been reading
about. So I’m sorry for judging you.” Nobody likes being judged but I can say this, and I say this with praise for our dear Lord and Savior. It never got under my skin. I never tossed and turned at night, never carried any bitterness. I don’t boast about that, I’m grateful for that because that’s the grace of God. I never took all that personally, but to the contrary, I have a little deal that I had worked out that if you take the praise, then you have to take the criticism. If you give the praise to Jesus, you can give the criticism to Jesus. When anybody would criticize me, if I knew it was false, if I knew it was for His namesake and for the Word, I would offer that to the Lord as a love offering. So, the more severe the criticism, the sweeter the offering. And it just gave me something to offer to the Lord, which I did. I said, “Lord Jesus, I thank you that I’m counted worthy to suffer shame for your name, and Lord, I give you this as a love offering.” And that just transformed me.

DARRELL ORMAN: That’s tremendous. That’s great. Absolutely! If you could change the function of the office of president, how would you change it to make it more influential?

ADRIAN ROGERS: I don’t think it needs to be more influential; I think it needs to be more organizationally powerful, let’s put it that way; that we would lose something of the balance in the ecology of the Southern Baptist Convention. I certainly would not allow the president’s nominative powers to be taken away from him. Everybody will say that he makes his appointments in consultation with the first and second vice presidents, but that’s all. He still makes the appointment. And I told my person who was vice president the first time I was there, “If you have any names you want appointed let me know, but don’t give me the name of anybody who does not believe in the inerrancy of the Scripture. And I held to that.

DARRELL ORMAN: My wife and I, I think Kim was appointed to the Committee on Committees, and then I was on the Nominating Committee.

ADRIAN ROGERS: I would not change that. I think it works real well. I think the reason that it did not work in the earlier years is because the presidents did not understand how the appointments would make the difference. So the state executives would just give them some names, you know, this is all boiler plate, good old boy system. The president was honorific to be the president, and he would preach and that sort of thing. But there is a great power in the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention, and, frankly, I don’t think there needs to be more.

DARRELL ORMAN: How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ? If you were to give counsel, what counsel would you give for them to maximize their presidency?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Darrell, to maximize the presidency, very similarly, you’ll want a pastor’s vision; however, the Southern Baptist Convention is not a church. They need to look and catch a vision, for that particular time, that particular moment in history. Often as a pastor, I look at the church and I have two questions: “What is our soft underbelly?
Where can the devil attack? Where are we weak? Where do we need to shore up?“ The second question I ask is “What are the opportunities that we’re not claiming?“ And so I’d say to a president, he should ask the same thing, he should be analytical and say “What is the soft underbelly of the Southern Baptist Convention? Where are we vulnerable? Where do we need to shore up?” And then I would ask myself, “What are the opportunities that this convention has handed to them that are absolutely unique?” When we take a resolution, for example against abortion, or against homosexuality, or when we make a resolution for the sanctity of marriage, and all of these things, in this world, that’s politically incorrect. The Southern Baptist Convention right now is a gigantic boulder in Satan’s Super Highway. You know, thank God for the convention because nobody else is saying this. Now sure, there are some independent churches around from smaller denominations, but for the Southern Baptist Convention to say that, is a powerful opportunity, and I would say that to any successive president - to realize the potentiality. Now I’m not talking about just political power, I’m talking about the spiritual and moral power that this convention has.

DARRELL ORMAN: In light of your experience, as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, and this is where you’ve been starting to go, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the S.B.C.?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Incredible! Again, I have talked and prayed with presidents of the United States.

DARRELL ORMAN: Which presidents?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Well, Jimmy Carter, then George Bush (George Herbert Walker Bush), Bill Clinton, though when I talked to Bill Clinton I told him that I was not coming as any kind of an endorsement, just to get acquainted and we didn’t have much of a love-in, so I was not invited back which has not broken my heart; I have met and prayed with Ronald Reagan in hotels with dinner, and then in the White House, and then invited to a state dinner when Ronald Reagan was president. I have been in conference with him; then also George W. Bush. It was my privilege not so very long ago to be in the Oval Office with him......

DARRELL ORMAN: I love him!

ADRIAN ROGERS: I do, too. I love him. Just to encourage him to let the joy of the Lord be his strength, and to pray with him. I held his hand and prayed with him. These have been tremendous opportunities that I would not have had in and of myself at all, and to meet a number of different people that I never would have met.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have a geometric progression in the contacts that were made from the media and so forth immediately after each of your elections?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Yes, almost exponentially.
DARRELL ORMAN: Would that be a prohibition for a pastor who doesn’t have any media savvy or experience, would that be a difficulty?

ADRIAN ROGERS: It would be very difficult, and I learned a lot of things about the games of the presidency of the convention and some access that I did not have. First of all, he comes into a context of possessions to serve as president and he studies what they did and he builds upon that and there’s a fellowship. I didn’t have that. Also, we have learned more how to deal with the media, and the media now has become more friendly because, by and large, the Baptist State papers have turned also, not all of them but most of them. I had to learn to deal with the press and by God’s grace I have had, the Lord just gave me a certain amount of native wisdom to deal with the press. For example, I would say to the press when they would interview me, “Now listen, my memory is not as good as I would like, you don’t mind if I tape this interview, do you?” Well, right away that unnerved them a little bit to know that they were being taped. And then when I finished, I’d say, “Well now, you know, I don’t always express myself as well as I would like to, would you tell me what you think I said?” And I’d say, “No, I didn’t mean that. Let me say it again.” I was able to do a little review with them, kind of let them tell me what they think I said.

DARRELL ORMAN: I experienced that. I opened our State House in Tallahassee in prayer and prayed for traditional marriage, for the lives of the unborn in their mother’s womb, and closed in the name of Jesus. And fifteen of the legislators walked out and held a press conference. So then the local stations picked it up, it was actually in the USA Today. I was interviewed by different national outlets. But the news came into my office to tape me with a video, and then they turned the video off and they kept the audio on and I didn’t know it. The Lord spoke to my heart because I saw a light blinking; the camera man had it down in his lap and I said “Is that camera still on?” They said, “Well, it’s running.” And I said, “Well, I thought we were through.” They were trying to get some audio.

ADRIAN ROGERS: Absolutely. They’re as tricky as they can be. You were wise, and you were blessed. You get into a lot of situations where, you know, I pray in the name of Jesus as you did. I tell people, “Look, you prayed about pluralism, but you don’t mean pluralism, you mean sensitivism. You want everybody to worship a mush God. Pluralism is: a Christian prays as a Christian, a Muslim prays as a Muslim, a Jew prays as a Jew. I would not expect you to pray in Jesus’ name because you don’t believe in Him. And I don’t get bent out of shape because he doesn’t. I’d have no respect for him if he did, if he didn’t believe in Him. If a Jew wants to pray in a prayer shawl, that’s the way he prays. If I’m a Christian, I pray in the name of Jesus. I met with a bunch of conservative rabbis, Orthodox rabbis and I said, “Now you guys, look, you get all upset with me when I pray in the name of Jesus, but that’s the way I pray. Are you going to tell me I can’t pray the way I pray? That’s religious persecution. You’re telling me that I can’t witness to Jews? I’m commanded to witness to everybody. Jesus is my Lord and Savior, if I didn’t do that I’d be disobeying my King. If you tell me I can’t do that, you are practicing religious persecution. You’re free not to believe it, but don’t tell me I can’t do it.”
DARRELL ORMAN: Isn't that, in the moral/spiritual, once you get outside the convention and get in the bigger pool, the bigger milieu of the nation, isn't that the difficulty for all of our conservative presidents, because when the media's coming, like Bailey Smith was asked, "Will God answer the prayer of Jews?" He gives a Biblical answer and it just blows up. How do you avoid that?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Well I say to them, I say, "Now look, let me tell you where I'm coming from. Before we ever start this interview, let me tell you where I come from. I'm a Christian, Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior, my Master, my God. Secondly, I believe the Bible is the Word of God, and so what I'm trying to tell you is my understanding of what I think His will for my life is and what it's worth to Him. They want to put it on your opinion. They'll say, "Who are you to say that?" And I'll say, "No, this is my understanding of the Word of God. Now, granted, my understanding could be flawed, but I have to be true to whatever understanding that I have." I found myself praying in the Jewish Embassy in Washington, at a time of crisis I was called on to pray, and a lot of the top brass of Jewish leadership in the United States were there. And I said, "Well, am I going to pray in the name of Jesus or not?" So I just said this. "And those of us who are Christians, pray in the name of Jesus." That was fine. I wasn't trying to force them to pray in the name of Jesus, I just said those of us who are Christians pray in the name of Jesus.

DARRELL ORMAN: I had a local rabbi in our area invite me to come speak at his synagogue and he was reformed. He was using profanity in there while we were meeting before I spoke. I was to speak on repentance and salvation. And so the Lord laid on my heart to use nothing but Old Testament verses, and they said they had one other evangelical and he quoted Billy Graham and did basically the four spiritual laws with Old Testament and they just chewed on it. Some of our people went to all of the symposium and at the end when I was praying, the Lord laid on my heart to lead them in the sinner's prayer, and so in the middle of my prayer, I just said that for any of you that the Messiah is knocking on your heart's door, pray this prayer. And as soon as I started into it, the Rabbi, on the microphone, said "Darrell, you're in a synagogue." And I paused for a minute, and I closed out real quick, and our people were spread throughout the crowd. And they said, "Pastor, we heard Jewish people praying with you all over the synagogue." But, there is so much pressure there, in that name.

ADRIAN ROGERS: You have to be wise. The Bible says, "let your speech be seasoned with salt. And as much as it is in you, be at peace with all men. And the servant of the Lord must not strive." You have to be bold and wise.

DARRELL ORMAN: What are the unique pressures and responsibilities of serving in one of the most influential evangelical positions in the world?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Well, the pressure is that you have to be ultra-careful in what you say, because when you speak, though you do not speak for the denomination, you're only the president, but still when the denomination votes you're not speaking for it, but still it
is taken defacto as speaking for the denomination. So you have to guard every word, figuring how this is going to play in the New York Times, you know, and what they would like to do. You don't give them a club to hit you with. So I would say that by your deportment, by your word, that on the one hand that you don't say anything that would be deliterious, but on the other hand you don't say it would be great. What was the other part of the question?

**DARRELL ORMAN:** It was not only the pressures, but the responsibilities.

**ADRIAN ROGERS:** All this is the same. The pressure is to be careful not to say anything hurtful, the responsibility is don't lower the flag.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** What you said a moment ago, that little technique thing of saying “my memory is not what it used to be” and “what did you think I said”, after you started using a technique with that approach, were you able pretty much to get the review with virtually every one of them from then on?

**ADRIAN ROGERS:** Pretty much. I learned not to let people steer the question. For example, after one convention, we'd had a very good session, I was presiding. It was in St. Louis, and a reporter came to me and said, “What do you think about all the acrimony in the convention session today?” I said, ”I don’t believe there was any acrimony.” Rather than letting him say that Pastor Adrian Rogers said “concerning the acrimony, duh da duh da duh.” You put it down if you’re going to talk to me that I don’t believe there was any. You kind of have to tell them. Now I’m a fundamentalist in that I believe in the fundamentals of the faith. When I played football I was a fundamentalist. I believed in blocking, tackling, kicking and running the ball, the fundamentals of the game. So the word fundamentalist today is a derogative term. The terrorists equated with Islam, they call it fundamentalist, then Adrian is a fundamentalist, that means they’re both alike. So I said to a man, I said, “Let me ask you a question. When you write this article, are you going to call me a fundamentalist?” “He said, “Well, I suppose the editor will want me to do that.” I said, “Well, he’s the editor, but now I want you to write in there that I requested not to be called a fundamentalist, but a Bible-believing Christian. Now if you are really trying to interview me and get what I think, that’s what you’ll write.” That really let the air out of what they were planning to do. He said, “Well, the editor....” And I said, “Let him tell you whatever he wants, but you put in the article what my request is.” So that deflated the whole thing and sidetracked them a little bit.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** Are there any other techniques or approaches that would assist future presidents in this moral area when they’re interacting with the media?

**ADRIAN ROGERS:** Well, we have begun now to meet the new president or the prospective new president, a group of us, get in a room and ask him questions, hard questions, to see how he answers them, almost like a mock jury, and become the devil’s advocate. See I didn’t have any of that. I was flatfooted, like a piece of red meat and a pack of wild dogs. We have built a backlog of answers and philosophies that are proven, but we’re not trying to manipulate him or gain anything, but sometimes your mind needs
to be refreshed and pointed up about these things, and a great help has been Barry McCarty, the parliamentarian, a tremendous help. And not that he's been unfair, because I’ve told a lot of people, if we have to win by publicity, I don’t want to win. If that’s not what the majority of Southern Baptists want, fine, I’ll become something else. You know, I just think that Mom and Pop Baptist and the liberals, all have the right to express themselves and all I’m asking for is a level playing field.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life? You know, you led me to Christ. I’ve heard your messages even though I was a member at Broadway there in Memphis years ago, you talked about doing termite work, and of course you pastored in the area that I’m in now, you were in Indiantown and Ft. Pierce?

ADRIAN ROGERS: I was in Fellesmere, not Indiantown, then Parkview. No, Darrell, I’ve never had a sense of destiny. I am as surprised as anybody could be. And it goes back to that question about goals that you asked. My goals have been spiritual, to deal with integrity and faithfulness, and things that happened to me are far beyond, abundantly, exceedingly above what I could ever dream. I could never dream of myself as preaching worldwide television, radio, on 2,000 radio stations every day, in 15,000 television outlets weekends, in 120-30 countries around the world. I could never conceive of that. I could not even have dreamed of a church like Bellevue, I mean, even conceive that it would possible much less that I could be the pastor there, or that I could ever have been president of the Southern Baptist Convention. And it’s happened to me. But it has not been that I had a sense of manifest destiny. I started out as a minister. I never thought about what I would have or would not have. I never ever thought about the size of the church. I just knew that God had called me and I was grateful.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, you’re still living in the home that you’ve had for years and years in Memphis, correct?

ADRIAN ROGERS: No, no, no, we sold that house about eight years ago, seven years ago.

DARRELL ORMAN: They put a study on that, didn’t they, back for one of your anniversaries?

ADRIAN ROGERS: What happened, was, we were two doors from the Methodist Church, actually one door from the Methodist Church. The pastor of the Methodist Church said, “Adrian, if you ever put your house up for sale, we want it. We bought the house three doors from the Methodist Church and you are kind of in between. And, we need your house.” Well, I said, “I was just ready to have an architect come and do some remodeling,” and I said, “if I do that, it’ll cost you and me more money.” Joyce did not want to move. We’d stayed there for many, many years, and it was the kid’s home. It was a nice house, but not a mansion, but we were very happy there. So I told the Methodist Church, “Tell you what I’m going to do. I don’t want to make any money on you, and I don’t want to make a contribution to you. You just get an appraisal, whatever
that is, I’ll take it.” So that’s what happened. So Joyce and I have now purchased another house, and the church at that time, paid to have a study put on the house.

DARRELL ORMEN: That’s wonderful. How did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Well, I learned how to work through other people. I learned how to access secretarial help. I had staff that had come along side. For example, I had an associate pastor named Bob Sorrell, and Bob was an executive in the business world, and when I became president of the Southern Baptist Convention, he came along to my side and did a tremendous amount of boiler plate work and leg work, and so forth. I really don’t know how a pastor of a small church could ever be the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. The job is enormous. It’s like having another job superimposed upon your regular job.

DARRELL ORMEN: Jim Henry, for example, recommended it would be good if the Convention could at least provide money for there to be, during the presidency, a secretary, at least, for the pastor in the church that hosts the president.

ADRIAN ROGERS: I was able to call upon the staff of Bellevue and our secretarial help and my administrative assistant. It would have been most difficult to do it without them, since at the time I was president with a church of that magnitude, crowds didn’t intimidate me. And big shots didn’t stampede me.

DARRELL ORMEN: Your denominational positions through the years, you mentioned the Peace Committee, for example, trusteeship, did you ever, earlier on, actually you did, I’ve seen the records from when you were in the Indian River Association you were the Moderator, you’ve held all those positions. What are some of the positions that you’ve held and which one, if you would look at that side of it, probably helped you the most?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Being the moderator of the Indian River Association was small fry. And I did that, that was something that was just passed around the preachers and it didn’t call for any real leadership, the job was not a significant job. I don’t mean to denigrate those who have that job, but I, by and large, never had any denominational offices.

DARRELL ORMEN: So that would have been one of the only ones?

ADRIAN ROGERS: That was it. They wouldn’t let me lead in silent prayer in Vacation Bible School. I mean in the denomination. In Tennessee, I was not interested. The whole thing was a mouthful of ashes to me because I was turned off by the denomination. I loved Southern Baptists but I was turned off by the liberalism. I was bound and determined, I thought you can have it, I’m not going to compromise what I believe. But to the contrary, when I was in Florida, I always led Florida in baptisms. Bellevue became quickly the largest church in Tennessee, to give the most, to win the most souls, and so
forth. But never a recognition from the denomination. I was never on a board, an agency, not anything until I became president.

DARRELL ORMAN: Peace committee was after you ……

ADRIAN ROGERS: No, Peace Committee was after the 1985 convention, that was formed but from 1979 to 1985, again, I still think to this day, well, yeah, I did become a trustee to Southeastern Seminary, but after that.

DARRELL ORMAN: But your pastorate equipped you.

ADRIAN ROGERS: My pastorate equipped me. That was the irony of the whole thing, the fact that I had never been recognized at all, not that I wanted to be, but I had gone from 0 to 80 miles per hour. You know, not doing anything to now being the president of it.

DARRELL ORMAN: What would you say is your personal leadership strength if you were to pick one area of leadership, what is your number one?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Conviction or interpersonal skills. I can get along with people. I can talk to people. I’m not a strong administrator, although I’m not a weak administrator. I know how to use other people to do that. God has given me. I don’t know, I’m an influencer, and I have convictions. I’m not a compromiser. So sometimes, people who are very convictional are abrasive, and sometimes people who have good interpersonal relationships are not convictional. As I see me, and to compare, and to be very honest, I think those are my gifts.

DARRELL ORMAN: You say your convictions pull people along.

ADRIAN ROGERS: Yes, but in such a way as to not bash them with the Bible or not to be argumentative, but not to yield.

DARRELL ORMAN: Can a group of young pastors be trained and mentored to possibly serve as president of the S.B.C.? Would that in anyway circumvent God’s sovereignty in the election selection process?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Well, no matter what you do, you’re not going to change God’s sovereignty. So the second part of that is a bad question because God is sovereign and so if you were to train a group of young pastors, that would be under the sovereign hand of God, and if you didn’t, it would be under the sovereign hand of God, because God is sovereign. I don’t think it’s a good idea to groom or train. I don’t think it’s a good idea. I think that the cream needs to rise to the top, and I think that leadership is not something that is given. When I was president, some of the moderates said to me, “Adrian, you need to share leadership.” I said, “I don’t want to share leadership. If you want to lead, have at it. A leader leads.” I said, “I can’t make a person a leader by saying ‘now you’re a leader.” If you want to lead, there it is. If they follow you, you’re a leader. Now,
maybe they won't want to follow you, and if they don't follow you, then you're not much of a leader.” But I'm not going to give you some leadership. I can't give it to you. It's some thing, a leader is a leader is a leader.

DARRELL ORMAN: What observation, in relationship to the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention, if a person declares they want the position, almost that declaration makes them unfit, and yet there's an aspect to it where, well, like even in the process, it occurred to you, your critics were unwittingly preparing your candidacy without your complicity, which is so different than secular politics. A man declares himself, he gathers, is that not a difficult dichotomy of aspects for this particular position?

ADRIAN ROGERS: It is very difficult because in the Southern Baptist Convention, any man who campaigns for the office, generally, will not be elected.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you feel that is a strong historical trend?

ADRIAN ROGERS: Yes, well, he can do it but he has to be very coy how he goes about it. Well, now, if they really want me ...... da duh da duh da duh. But if a man overtly campaigns for it, he is dead in the water. But he has to do it adroitly, and you know, let his name be dangled. And he has to be a little bit demure. Now that's not what I did when I was elected. I really did not want to do it. And as you say, when you really don't want to do it, and people encourage you to do it, it almost sets the hook. So then they really feel, oh now we have to persuade him, and I wasn't doing it for that reason, obviously, but that's what happened.

DARRELL ORMAN: It's almost like in high school going after the girl that doesn't like you.

ADRIAN ROGERS: Right. That's exactly what it's like.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, thank you, Dr. Rogers.
DARRELL ORMAN: I’m with Bailey Smith, the second president in the conservative resurgence. This is August 3rd, 2005. Bailey, it’s good to be with you. Love you, brother.

BAILEY SMITH: Thank you, Darrell. Love you, friend.

DARRELL ORMAN: Okay, first question. How do you personally define success in the ministry?

BAILEY SMITH: By being right in the middle of God’s will for your life.

DARELL ORMAN: Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention?

BAILEY SMITH: Well, of course, I’d have to go way back to my early years, being called to preach when I was 18, being the pastor of a church at 19. All of these were developmental years, but I was blessed enough to become pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Oklahoma, suburb of Oklahoma City. It was a visible church because of former pastors like John Basango and Jimmy Draper, so that gave me exposure, not because I had any talent, but because of just where I was. But because of the all of the sudden rapid growth of our church, I began to preach across the country and did almost every State Evangelism Conference. I then became friends of people like Draper and Adrian Rogers and these men. My name was just out there, but at least the name stood for evangelism and Biblical conservatism. So I think that exposure and my reputation for conviction is what brought me to their attention.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.? What events transpired preceding your presidency?

BAILEY SMITH: Well, pretty easy to answer. Adrian Rogers called my office one day in Del City, Oklahoma and told me that he had gone through gall bladder surgery and that he just felt weakened and did not have time to serve a second term. He said that the brethren, whoever that might be, had wondered if I would do it. And I said, “Adrian, I would only do it if I was the choice of those who were in conservative leadership because I certainly would not campaign for it. So sure enough, I was their choice for 1980 in St. Louis, and there were six nominees. I won on the first ballot, which was shocking to me.

DARRELL ORMAN: It was a miracle then, wasn’t it?

BAILEY SMITH: Oh, my gracious, yes, it was.

DARRELL ORMAN: During your tenure as president what do you see now as God’s unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time? Before your election?
BAILEY SMITH: Well, I think my purpose was to hold the line, and I didn’t do it because that was my purpose, I did it because that’s who I am. And I remember one denominational leader telling me “You can’t say the things you’re saying and be president of the Southern Baptist Convention.” And I said to him, “I don’t have to be the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, but I do have to be a man of God.” So I think that was my purpose, to hold the line, to appoint people to the Committee on Committees, now Committee on Nominations, that would keep the Bible true and focused in our schools.

DARRELL ORMAN: Are you a goal setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?

BAILEY SMITH: I had goals within my churches, goals within my ministry, but I never had goals of my ministry. By that I mean, I never had a goal to be a pastor of a certain church or to have a denominational position but when I got to churches, I certainly had goals to grow and increase Sunday School. I tried to set baptismal goals, so that’s really the answer. Never goals of a career, but certainly goals within the ministry itself.

DARRELL ORMAN: How many different sets of goals, like you mentioned baptism. Did you have Sunday School attendance goals?

BAILEY SMITH: Yes, we did.

DARRELL ORMAN: Worship goals?

BAILEY SMITH: I don’t know that those were. Some challenges I had for goals came from staff members around me. At Del City, we went from about 1,400 in Sunday School to 3,100 average, and several Sundays over 5,000 in Sunday School. I’m not sure that I ever had a goal for that but I remember challenging the staff. It seemed like we spent about five years in the 2,000 range and it was hard to get over that. But we did. I did have a goal of averaging 1,000 baptisms a year and we averaged frankly about 1,100 a year for 12 years, which is pretty remarkable. Let’s see, goals. I had goals in my preaching, to try to always improve. I guess evangelism, Sunday School and my preaching performance, those were essentially the goals.

DARRELL ORMAN: How would you measure your preaching performance? How did you try to accomplish that?

BAILEY SMITH: Well, I took my preaching very seriously, I wrote a lot of sermons and used to enjoy, in fact, coming up with a good original phrase.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you write manuscripts?

BAILEY SMITH: I did several, yes. I did not do it on a regular basis. Even today, at 66 years of age, I do full outlines, even though I don’t take notes to the pulpit, I have a wide margin Bible and put a lot of notes in the Bible itself. I do come up with a full outline.
Normally, I don’t have sub-points, sometimes I do, but mostly just points and normally four instead of three for some reason. Well, you know as a pastor, the hardest thing is to know what to preach but I would try to do series. A lot of series in my last church, preached through books. One of my joyful times is to preach through the Book of Revelation. Then you do what every pastor does, do the various series.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could serve again would you do anything differently the second time around, as president?

BAILEY SMITH: You know what, I might not. As you will remember, I was in a great deal of controversy and I remember reporters saying, “I guess now that your friend, Jimmy Draper is going to be president following you, that you would advise him to be careful what he says. And I said, “No, I would advise Jimmy Draper to speak the truth with boldness and take the consequences.” And there were some who’d say, “Oh, Bailey, you wouldn’t say the thing about the Jews again.” Well, of course I wouldn’t say that again.

DARRELL ORMAN: But it’s still true!

BAILEY SMITH: Well, yes, but if I were asked I’d say I hadn’t changed my mind.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, Bailey, I went through something like that. I opened the State House in prayer a few years ago and prayed for marriages, one man one woman for life, prayed for babies in their mother’s womb, and closed in the name of Jesus, and twelve of the legislators, mostly Democratic Jews walked out and held a press conference, just tried to beat me to death with it. In fact, it got into USA Today, once I got home from it I was getting calls from all these radio stations and TV stations. My daughter, one of the reporters talked to her and said, “Well, honey, don’t worry, I’m a Christian. Your dad’s in trouble right now, but it’ll blow over.” And Cherith said, “My dad’s not in trouble; he’s always like this.”

BAILEY SMITH: Hey, that’s a compliment. Yes!

DARRELL ORMAN: But I couldn’t believe it. Then I found out that at the time there hadn’t been any chaplain or pastor pray in Jesus’ name for like six or seven years. The last one before me was Bill Bright. It’s amazing.

BAILEY SMITH: Well, it was not a prayer! It was just words, I don’t understand that. Since I’m being taped I won’t mention them, but I’ve seeing so many well-known preachers on television today that have had so many opportunities to mention Christ, like the author of a great best selling novel The Christian World but he wouldn’t mention Christ. It broke my heart.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, They’ve user-friendlied it. You know? Next question. In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?
BAILEY SMITH: The most rewarding was to have people tell me that they were so happy that I did not compromise, the encouragement of the people who believed the word of God. I did get two standing ovations for both of my presidential addresses and I’m grateful for the response of that. So I would say what my addresses did and what my convictions did and the people’s reaction. To me, the people matter, those who believe the word of God. The least rewarding was all the meetings. That was probably the least rewarding.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you try to attend everything?

BAILEY SMITH: I attended every Executive Committee Meeting, course that’s only once....

DARRELL ORMAN: No, no, that’s quarterly. I’m on it now.

BAILEY SMITH: And so I attended every one of those. The first one was a real story. I went to the Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board; I did two overseas trips which they normally ask the president to do. I went to Kenya, East Africa. I forgot the second year, maybe Canada. But, yeah, I enjoyed the trips, and didn’t mind the meetings but I’m not much at meetings so that was probably the least rewarding.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did the Foreign Mission Board, I guess it was it Keith Parks then, did they assist you in trips or anything?

BAILEY SMITH: I don’t believe any denominational....they might have, do you mean pay my expenses?

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, and set them up. Jimmy, after you, said that he didn’t even know he could take trips and he finally insisted on it, going to Europe or somewhere on one of the mission trips and he had to set up the whole thing himself and they wouldn’t send anybody with him. He got a lot of resistance on that.

BAILEY SMITH: Huh. No in my case they really did it all. Foreign Mission Board, or I guess it was Harold Bennett’s office. They set it up really good, had all my appointments made with the missionaries that I was to be with. I certainly didn’t do any of it. They set it up. I remember several missionaries I visited in Kenya, Nairobi, Malinoi, and Mombasa, even stayed in a missionary’s home. So, yeah, they did that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Mombasa? Were you with Ralph Bethea?

BAILEY SMITH: I know Ralph Bethea. I’m trying to think of the missionary’s name. You might know this. His son was a kicker in the NFL. I stayed in the kid’s room that night because he was here, I can’t think of their last names anymore. I do remember Ed Horton was the name of one of the missionaries there.
DARRELL ORMAN: Ed Horton?

BAILEY SMITH: Yeah. In fact, they had a need. I came back and raised money, I think, for a couple of refrigerators, I believe. I was in Ed’s home. They had a real battle with black mamba snakes, I remember. They said they’d come in their drive and when their headlights would flash across the yard, they’d see those snakes slithering.

DARRELL ORMAN: What in the world?

BAILEY SMITH: Of course, if one bites you, you live eight minutes. They wanted to know if I wanted to stay all night. I said, “I don’t think so.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Good grief!

BAILEY SMITH: That’s what some of our missionaries put up with.

DARRELL ORMAN: Oh, my gosh. Okay, if you could change the function of the office of the president, how would you change it?

BAILEY SMITH: I don’t think I would change much about the function, I think I would. I believe well, let me back up a little bit. Even in L.A. there was a proposal by the other side to make the president part of a committee that selects the names. I know you’re aware of that in the study you’ve done, and of course that was defeated. But they were doing that because, as you know, Judge Pressler discovered that if you elected the president you could control the convention because of his appointing powers. The constitution says that the president appoints the Committee on Committees, the Committee on Boards, in consultation with the vice presidents. Well, that’s a very loose phrase. Well, my consultation was I wrote the vice presidents letters and asked them for their suggestions. Some of them I talked to on the telephone, but that didn’t mean that I would have to accept it.

So, it’s good to keep that the way it is. Let the president have those powers. Don’t make him a committee member. One thing I would change is the treatment of the president. I do believe the former presidents should have their expenses paid to the convention for their lifetime. I think that’s important. And we are not. We do get a guaranteed room at the convention hotel.

DARRELL ORMAN: But you have to pay for it yourself.

BAILEY SMITH: Right. And I really think that’s unfair, because, frankly, my wife and I and my children paid a big price, and still pay for it. So I think that ought to be done.

DARRELL ORMAN: Okay. That’s a good suggestion. Being on the Executive Committee, they do the same thing for us. They save us a room, but if you’re a pastor, they don’t pay anything for the convention Executive Committee because they say you’ve got it in the budget at the church. So they cover the lay folks
come but they don’t cover the pastors. Maybe they’re afraid they’ll take double or something, I don’t know.

BAILEY SMITH: Maybe you could tell them that about your cooperative program giving.

DARRELL ORMAN: I guess I’ve been doing it so long I’m just gonna let it go. But your suggestion is good. Is there anything else you would change in the function? Ten year policies? Should the convention supply them with support staff? Any of those other kinds of things?

BAILEY SMITH: Maybe not. I don’t know what it is now, but when I was president, they gave me $15,000 a year. Let me rephrase that. There was $15,000 a year for the president’s expenses and you never got any money but you got reimbursed if you made a trip like the trip I made to Kenya.

DARRELL ORMAN: Related to the office.

BAILEY SMITH: Exactly.

DARRELL ORMAN: It’s gone up. I want to say $25,000 or $30,000 now. It’s probably doubled.

BAILEY SMITH: One of the former presidents went about $10,000 over and they told me about that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did they cover it for him?

BAILEY SMITH: They covered it for him. Yeah. I don’t know who it was, I think that what he did was legitimate but it’s just that there were a lot of demands made on him.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, Bobby just really jumped out of the chute with this one, with “Everybody Can” and the bus trip. He really did a good job with that because he had raised support from Lifeway and Executive Committee and so all of them had kicked in specifically and, of course, and he tied it around those things, too. Lifeway, and all that, so it worked out real well.

BAILEY SMITH: He and I are going to be preaching together tomorrow night at St. Louis.

DARRELL ORMAN: What about the tenure aspect? Do you think that one at a time with two as the limit still good?

BAILEY SMITH: I think that’s good because you can come back. You know, Adrian Rogers, he had it for one year, and then came back for two consecutive years. So, yeah,
I could still be elected, Draper could, Stanley could. So, yeah, I think that’s fine, I think two consecutive is enough.

DARRELL ORMAN: And of course, I guess anybody could even do two and come back later and if they could get elected and do two more.

BAILEY SMITH: They could, but I’ll tell you what, I never knew anybody that wanted to.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, you know when you look back in history, like the turn of the century, early 1900’s, some of those guys were president like eight, nine and ten years in a row.

BAILEY SMITH: I believe R. G. Leigh may have had it six times,

DARRELL ORMAN: That may be right. But before that, in the infancy stage, some of the guys were like a decade or more. There was a lot of tenure there. How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ? If you were to sit down the next six or eight in a row in a room and Bailey Smith was to tell them “here’s how to maximize it”, what would you tell them?

BAILEY SMITH: Well, the obvious answer is and I will expand on it, is to those appointive powers. Make sure, you asked me a while ago if I would do anything different. I wouldn’t do anything different except I might be even bolder. Don’t give the liberals an inch in terms of appointment. Our job is not to try to appease the other side; but our job is to stay true to the Word of God. So I would tell them the way to maximize it, in fact, W. A. Criswell said this to me and I’m not giving anything away because he said it publicly, that he actually turned that over to somebody else when he was president because he did not realize the significance of it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, big mistake.

BAILEY SMITH: Yeah, and so, we owe all that to Judge Pressler. So I would appoint even more conservatives, and somebody might say, “Smith, that would be impossible for you to have people more conservative than you appointed.” But then I would say to do what I did. And what I did was, I tried to use the office for souls. I did fourteen area-wide crusades my last year as president of the convention. I not only had 2,000 baptisms that year in my church, but had about 3,000 or 4,000 saved. I knew that when it was announced a former president of the convention was coming, it didn’t matter if his name was Bailey Smith or Joe Blow, that some people would be interested in coming, so I tried to take advantage of that for exactly the last phrase of your question, for Christ. I think the man in that office should not do it for the S.B.C., he needs to do it for Jesus.

DARRELL ORMAN: Amen. I know as you all have met through the years, which one or two presidents would be credited probably with the most conservative
appointments throughout. Who would be #1, who would be #2? Where the others would consent, boy, that was our strongest year or whatever.

BAILEY SMITH: Wow! I would say that probably Smith, Vines and Rogers, in my opinion.

DARRELL ORMAN: The three of you all?

BAILEY SMITH: There were others who, and you know, I’m grateful for Ed Young who had some roads into some of the borderline people, and while he may have done a few things that some of the rest of us frowned at, I think we needed him at that time.

DARRELL ORMAN: So he kind of floated out some olive branches a little bit?

BAILEY SMITH: Yeah, that is a good way of saying it. Because there were some who believed what we believed, they just didn’t have the stomach for the fact. So, I think to have an Ed Young, who had some inroads with people that Jerry Vines and Bailey Smith wouldn’t was essential, I think it was good.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, he had converted over. I mean earlier on, he was really strong with the moderate camp wasn’t he, through his education years and that sort of thing, and then switched?

BAILEY SMITH: Well, yes, probably. I think they believed he was, I don’t really know about that.

DARRELL ORMAN: That was a public perception, I guess.

BAILEY SMITH: Yes, that’s right. There were some, Darrell, that wanted to stay back. I had one guy who said, “Now Bailey, what’s gonna happen to you guys is, you’re gonna do all this fight and it’s gonna die, and then the other guys are gonna take over because you’ve been too persistent and too bold in this effort,” but he proved to be wrong.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, sure. Well, it’s amazing, when Morris was running, he was running against, oh, what was his name, from Georgia, Dan Vestal, that one was supposed to be extremely close, so I was pastoring at Gardens. It was a real small church, and we went. We had six mission churches, and so some of those went as their own messengers. We took like twelve or fourteen. And then Lee Porter called one of the mission pastors up to the platform and he thought he was going to get an award for planting a church or something, and Porter chewed him out, said he was an illegal messenger. I guess he wanted to make sure that Vestal won. He had a Master of Mythology from Colombia. And Ed came to me and said, “Pastor, I thought I was going to get an award and that guy up there, that old man, chewed me out.” He was setting right next to Jerry Vines and Adrian Rogers, the two of them on the platform and he thought he was in high cotton and evidently, Lee chewed him out like he was a school boy.
BAILEY SMITH: You know, there were days when some of my friends were concerned about Lee Porter taking those ballots back and counting them.

DARRELL ORMAN: Oh, yeah, like tearing some of them up or throwing them away or?

BAILEY SMITH: But I think in all honestly that Porter had integrity through that. He certainly was not for us, he certainly would like to have seen us get beat, but I really think that he had at least integrity for the process.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, I believe. But you know, he would have gotten defeated that one year and Stan Coffey used that “stretching the tent” thing as a kind of a joke, a satire and I had gone to the rest room and when I came back our whole group voted for Porter instead of whoever Coffey nominated because they thought Coffey was a liberal when he said he wanted to stretch the tent. There must have been a bunch of people who thought that, you know.

BAILEY SMITH: I remember, but I forget who it was who told me that Lee may be a better help to us than we realize because maybe there are those, you know, who are borderline and if they see him up there and think, well, he’s not gonna hurt us. But there were times, I remember there was one time when he spoke to the Southern Seminary students at a convention, and he just gave this conservative resurgence down the river.

DARRELL ORMAN: Oh, yeah, I remember. He had mentioned Adrian and Jerry Vines as being demonic. Because I talked to Adrian at that convention and he told me what Porter had said at the luncheon. It probably helped, it incited some people, for sure.

BAILEY SMITH: You’re right. Well, my gracious, I’ve got so many battle scars, so many events that have happened, it’s unbelievable.

DARRELL ORMAN: In light of your experience as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the S.B.C.?

BAILEY SMITH: Well, during those early years, it was almost a parallel event between the political conservative resurgence, as Ronald Reagan was coming along, and the conservative resurgence in the convention. And, man, I remember someone read a letter from Ronald Reagan saying he’s proud of what’s happening and read it from the platform of the Southern Baptist Convention. Then, of course, when Ed Young was president he had, in New Orleans, George Bush, the First, on the platform. In fact I sat right by him and Johnny Cash had sung that night. I think that many in the political realm thought that our conservative movement of the world’s largest non-catholic denomination maybe in someway aided also the political turn to the right.
DARRELL ORMAN: I appreciate you saying that because that’s a premise I’m going to try to develop in this dissertation, that had we not had our resurgence that Bush the Second would not have been elected either time.

BAILEY SMITH: Well, I think you can have a lot of evidence to that.

DARRELL ORMAN: I appreciate you saying that. I’ll definitely put that quote in big. What about for you personally, was that amazing to you to be called about political issues and moral issues in the government and to be accessed to that degree? Didn’t that happen early, didn’t that happen immediately to both you and Adrian?

BAILEY SMITH: As a matter of fact it did. I was about to leave my hotel room, I was just doing the finishing touches, and my telephone rang. This voice said, “Mr. Smith, could you hold the line for President Carter?” I said, “Well, I guess I can.” President Carter had a very interesting phrase. He said, “Well, you know I’m Southern Baptist and you’re my president.” I thought that was interesting.

DARRELL ORMAN: Boy, that is interesting.

BAILEY SMITH: And I said, “Well, yes sir, how nice of you to call.” He said, “I want to invite you and, somebody had told him my wife’s name, and Sandy to the White House and visit with Rosaline and me. So we did go to the White House and to the Oval Office, and there was that real political connection. Of course, Carter later wasn’t too happy about the conservation resurgence but, at least he was kind. I think he has always been a very decent person.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, wasn’t that his re-election year and he lost to Reagan? Wasn’t that ’80? He was running for reelection.

BAILEY SMITH: Yes. I forgot which year he was first elected. Maybe ’78 or something like that.

DARRELL ORMAN: I thought ‘80 when he was defeated. Then the Iran hostages were released with Reagan’s inauguration.

BAILEY SMITH: Oh, I’m not sure about the chronology of that.

DARRELL ORMAN: It had to have been close. You think it was ’82? Well, let’s see. If it was ’80, was Reagan president your second year?

BAILEY SMITH: Yes, he was because I went to the White House with Reagan also.
DARRELL ORMAN: Because that fall he was running. I was at Liberty and Carter called Jerry and cussed him out on the phone. Did Falwell ever tell you about that?

BAILEY SMITH: No, but I read in the paper....

DARRELL ORMAN: He cussed him out with profanity.

BAILEY SMITH: Well, I remember reading in the paper that he said that Jerry Falwell could go to hell. And I was disappointed in that because I don’t think any Christian should say that to another Christian.

DARRELL ORMAN: Absolutely not. What are the unique pressures and responsibilities of serving in one of the most influential evangelical positions in the world?

BAILEY SMITH: The pressure is that every word you say is monitored. Your phrases can be taken out of context. There has to be vigilance. I remember several men told me be presidential. That’s pretty good advice.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, that goes for when you think you’re not, like when you’re just speaking in a church like you are now doing revival, and you think, well, I’m just speaking with friends and preaching to the choir, right?

BAILEY SMITH: Oh, yes, and if you were to ask me if I was ever paranoid during those days, absolutely, because the ABL even sent monitors to my church. They were out there.

DARRELL ORMAN: To Del City?

BAILEY SMITH: Yeah. And I know. I would have some of them introduce themselves. I remember one time, it was in Weatherford, TX, and some guy said I’m representing a group of people you know about and then he went on out. So the pressures are that the things you’ve said all your life now become controversial. You talk about the trouble you got into by your prayer. The reason people don’t come to our churches in the first place is they don’t like what we say. Then when we say it in public forum they really get upset.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, they don’t think we’ve got the right to say it.

BAILEY SMITH: Yeah, yeah. So I wasn’t going to compromise. There is certainly not anything wrong with being wise, by tempering what you say in certain areas, but my gracious. I’ve always been an evangelist, even when I was a pastor. That in itself means a sense of boldness and a sense of saying things prophetically. So every word you say is taken out of context. I stood with my wife before the New York press, over a hundred New York reporters there, and you talk about a hot spot. That’s the greatest pressure.
DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life? Like I know we’ve talked when you’ve been here about Ouachita and from there on, was there a sense of destiny anywhere along the way?

BAILEY SMITH: I felt like, I guess I should answer this honestly, I did feel back in seminary that I probably would be pastor of a big church one day, and even though I felt that I never did anything to get there. I really never did. I never sent out a resume. In fact, I went to Del City because their former pastor looked at the committee and said, “Look, I’m gonna give you two names.” I think you need to go hear Bailey Smith. And of course, as you know, Jimmy Draper, so I didn’t have a recommendation to that church. But I did sense in seminary that for some reason God would probably one day put me in a church of some note. I’m not sure why I felt that. I did have a man by the name of Brother Threat from Waldo, Arkansas, come up to me one day and I don’t guess I’ve ever told this to anybody but my wife, and he said, “You know, Brother Bailey, one day you’re going to be one of our presidents.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Really?

BAILEY SMITH; Yeah. And I said, “Well, Brother Threat.” Now here’s a church running 80 and I’m in first year in seminary.

DARRELL ORMAN: He was a prophet.

BAILEY SMITH; Anyway, he was either a prophet or a good guesser.

DARRELL ORMAN: That’s great. How did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency and/or denominational positions?

BAILEY SMITH: You know, in a big church you do have to have some wisdom. We were on radio and television and I did get into some controversy there so I learned to be a little thick skinned but not too much, but that did help me by having a church behind me, of course you said before, how did it prepare me? I think to know that they were with me and I felt all of their support, of course I was only 41. I was put out into that arena pretty quickly. But I think to have the radio and television exposure, to deal with a church of that size certainly gave me a little wisdom.

DARRELL ORMAN: You mentioned the speaking, administration, dealing with critics, dealing with media, vision casting, goal setting, we touched goal setting a little earlier. Any of the other things as far as administration or staff issues, or any kind of gleanings from that?

BAILEY SMITH: Well, not so much, because as president you know it’s an honorary position even though it does have a lot of power. You don’t have much administration work to do. I did find the convention very helpful during those days. Harold Bennett’s office was very helpful. Who was the guy who gave me, the head of the Baptist Press?
DARRELL ORMAN: Back then? Dailey?

BAILEY SMITH: No, no, he's editor in either North Carolina or Kentucky.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, he was Kentucky editor.

BAILEY SMITH: Who was that guy? He was the one that said I was going to be in trouble when I came to the first Executive Committee Meeting. But I did find the convention frankly very helpful to me; and Harold Bennett's office would do anything that I needed to be done, and that Harold was there when I needed someone to talk to. I did feel like Harold never really voted for me but I did think that he was a very good person. You didn't really need so much administrative skills because you had so much help there.

DARRELL ORMAN: What about those denominational positions? Did you do anything with the association or with the Oklahoma State Convention, did you hold any?

BAILEY SMITH: Well, very interesting, when Jimmy Draper nominated me, he brought out the fact that I was serving currently as the president of the Oklahoma State Convention. And I may be the only person who ever served both simultaneously. I don't know that, but I've been told that. Yeah, I did that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Any other positions in the state? Did you do any of the other things?

BAILEY SMITH: Oh, I was just on the Executive Committee, I was on the Board at Oklahoma Baptist University, that's about it.

DARRELL ORMAN: How about associational?

BAILEY SMITH: You know what? I don't think I've ever been moderator in the association.

DARRELL ORMAN: You know, Adrian was moderator of the association I'm in when he was at Parkview in Fort Pierce for a couple of years. I mentioned that to him about denominational positions to prepare him and he said that was a figurehead and he didn't really have any. He didn't really acknowledge that one.

BAILEY SMITH: I wonder how he's doing? Have you heard anything?

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, I've heard good things, I haven't talked to him lately. He's my spiritual father; he led me to Christ. I interviewed him during a cruise back in January and I've spoken to him once since then. My mother is a member at Bellevue and she said that he spoke recently in the last five or six weeks a couple of
DARRELL ORMAN: Just for their general leadership.

BAILEY SMITH: Their general leadership and their general commitment to the cause. Like a young preacher told me the other day, “Brother Bailey, I’m not trying to be unkind, but when you were president I was in junior high school.” So the years quickly get by and a lot of guys, Darrell, don’t even remember what happened. I would say we need to meet with them, and maybe mentoring is broad enough to include that, just to be let them be aware to encourage them and tell them, “Guys, you know, the price of liberty is constant diligence.” We’ve gotta be diligent.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you attend the Megas?

BAILEY SMITH: I don’t anymore. No.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you quit attending after you quit pastoring?

BAILEY SMITH: Yes. I’ve been invited to just come as a guest but I haven’t. In fact, I didn’t always do that as pastor. I did attend. I remember some of the conversations, in fact.

DARRELL ORMAN: Could that be a vehicle of preparation informally?

BAILEY SMITH: It could be. I like to think that God could elect somebody that wasn’t a part of that group.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, Bobby. Bobby never goes.

BAILEY SMITH: Right, yeah, well Bobby is a kind of a maverick in a lot of ways, which is okay.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, it is. In fact, I think a lot of people have found it refreshing that he is so conservative, you know. I think, I hope, his appointments are going to turn out in history to be good. I think they are.

BAILEY SMITH: Well, I made sure mine were good because I had people you and I love and trust to look at them, you know; because you know, some guy could be recommended to you as a conservative but really not be.

DARRELL ORMAN: Right. Exactly. Well, Kim has been on Committee on Committees; I’ve been on the National Nominating Committee and I actually, one of them I put on Jim Henry’s, I guess it’s his brother-in-law who is Hispanic, I put him on the Foreign Mission Board and some perceived him to be moderate. Of course, some of them are so right winged they make fundamentalists; you know independents, look liberal. Oh, me, but I did put Jim Leftwich on Southwestern and he was partially instrumental in getting Dilday’s resignation.
BAILEY SMITH: I like Jim Leftwich; I did a meeting, a revival for him.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, he’s a pistol. Let me develop one more thing, since you mentioned it earlier. Have you heard or seen anything that would document, you had mentioned the Reagan revolution corresponding with our own resurgence, which is dead accurate, have you seen anything or heard anything that would substantiate that, that political moral resurgence has tracked right along with us?

BAILEY SMITH: I can’t put my finger on anything right now but I guarantee if anybody would know the answer to that, it would be Judge Pressler. As you know, he’s like a family member with the Bushes.

DARRELL ORMAN: Okay, I’ll call him. He could probably document something. That won’t be the very heart of the dissertation or anything, but I definitely would like for it to be a strong point.

BAILEY SMITH: I don’t know if you could find anything on the internet or not, you might could; but I think it’s legitimate and accurate.

DARRELL ORMAN: I do too. I appreciate you saying that. In fact, the last three guys I’m going to see if they can reinforce that because I haven’t been asking that line of questioning that much.

BAILEY SMITH: Well, I wish you had a copy of the letter that was read from somebody, I think it was at New Orleans.

DARRELL ORMAN: Was that the Bush letter?

BAILEY SMITH: It could have been the Bush letter where it literally says that, “your return to conservative values has been a great asset in the conservative move in America.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Was it Bush or Reagan? Do you remember which convention it was?

BAILEY SMITH: I believe it was my last year in New Orleans.

DARRELL ORMAN: So that would have been ’81.

BAILEY SMITH: That probably would have been Reagan, because Bush was vice president, yeah.

DARRELL ORMAN: Reagan. And it was in ’81. Well, I’m sure they still have the video footage. Don’t they tape the whole thing?
BAILEY SMITH: Yes, they do, and that would be by the Radio and Television Commission.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you keep copies of your two years? Did they give you copies of it?

BAILEY SMITH: I have it mostly on audio, yes. I want to try and get some more, I’d like to get videos, you know, mostly for my sons.

DARRELL ORMAN: Absolutely, that’s a great thing.
DARRELL ORMAN: I’m with Dr. Jimmy Draper. It’s February 21st, and I’m interviewing him in relationship to his leadership in our convention and his presidency. It’s good to be with you, Dr. Draper.

JIMMY DRAPER: Glad to be with you. Hope I’ll be able to help you.

DARRELL ORMAN: How do you personally define success in the ministry?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, I think up front that you probably need to know that life is really not that complicated for me; you’ll probably get a lot of different answers for that. I tend to think in pretty simplistic terms. I think success has several ingredients. One, of course, is faithfulness to the Word of God. It doesn’t really matter whether you’re preaching to the 10,000 or 10, whatever, just be faithful in preaching the Word of God. Secondly, it is ministering and serving people, and how to use leadership as pastoral leadership, servant leadership. I think you earn your right to be people’s pastor, if you do that, laughing with them, crying with them, serving them, ministering to them. And I guess the third thing, which is very close to that is, I think success is when you help other people succeed. So helping people grow and realize their potential, helping them to mature in the Lord, to discover God’s calling to their lives, and to walk with the Lord. That’s the way to go. That’s the way I do my job now, and my job is not, I mean, I don’t do the work around here. It’s the people here, my job is to help them succeed. I think in a simple way, that’s the minister’s job, to help people succeed in their lives.

DARRELL ORMAN: How many employees do you have here?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, we have about 3,000 full-time equivalent, but we use so many part-time and temporaries that there are 5,000 or 6,000 totally, for all the things we do every year, but full-time equivalent is around 3,000.

DARRELL ORMAN: My sister works for you. She’s an editor, in your pre-school materials foreign language. She was a foreign missionary over in Africa.

JIMMY DRAPER: What’s her name?

DARRELL ORMAN: Elizabeth Orman.

JIMMY DRAPER: Elizabeth, O.K.! I have seen that name, I didn’t connect you two though.

DARRELL ORMAN: Number 2, looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, you know, I think you’ll hear this probably from everybody. It really was a God thing because in 1978, I was a Baylor trustee, no need to go into all the details but Ray Summers, who was chairman of the Religion Department gave a letter of retirement which none of us knew about. I was chairman of the Academic Affairs
Committee and we always had an agenda that was mailed out at the last minute. I had talked to Herb Reynolds, who was then executive vice president, about the need to make Baylor's Religion Department really the flag ship to serve our conservatives, just within six weeks prior to this. So I get down there and they say, "Well, Herb Reynolds and Abner McCall have a recommendation they’d like to make to your committee." So I came in on it without any notice. He read Summer's letter of resignation and recommended the employment or appointment of Jack Flanders as the chairman-elect of the Religion Department. Well, I didn’t know who Jack Flanders was, and I expressed that, but everybody else on the committee knew him and Abner said "Oh, he was the pastor of First Baptist when my first wife died," and so on and so forth, and "he’s a wonderful person." So okay, anyway, Flanders and I finally got together and he brought me his two books that he had co-authored with two others, the three of them had written *The People of the Covenant* and *Introduction to the Bible.* (I've got them back in my library). He inscribed them “to my new friend.” We met and had lunch. He gave me the books, so I picked up *People of the Covenant* and started reading it and got physically nauseated. I never read anything like that in my life. I had no idea that something like this had been taught used as a text book for years in most of our Baptist colleges. So I raised questions about it, and called Herb Reynolds. I said, "Herb, you won't believe what I found out", and I thought they would really be glad. So I wrote a critique on the book and Herb called me and said "Are you through with that?" I'm working on the critique; I didn’t send it to anybody, and gave it back through the channels. So they had a meeting, and wanted me to come down for a meeting with Flanders. Of course, I knew something was up when I walked in and there was the Baylor legal counsel and of course, several of the preachers were there, and of course nobody said anything. So I told Dr. Flanders then. I said, "Jack, you need to hear this from me. I don’t think you should be chairman of the Religion Department. The book does not reflect a balance." Abner McCall said at one time “Well, we have to teach all views.” And I said “Abner, that’s my concern. This doesn’t teach all views. I’m with it if we teach all views and let the student make up his mind, but this doesn’t teach anything but the liberal view.” The book discounted every miracle or ignored them. The 185,000 Assyrians killed out of Isaiah 38 and II Kings 18 and 19 were just ignored. They weren’t even mentioned in the book. So that kind of thrust me into a role, this was 1978, and of course, I immediately was the enemy, and they attacked me. They went all around the world. I was a “book burner” and all that kind of thing. So they kind of raised my visibility and I preached around the county for a long time. Then of course the conservative resurgence started in 1979, and those of us who really felt that there had to be a concern agreed. We had one principle that we would endeavor to do the right thing, and we would never run against each other. We knew we had to change it through the presidency. And so we agreed, if so and so’s going to run then the rest of us would oppose it. It was sort of a gentlemen’s agreement that we did stick by. And of course, Adrian ran, and was there one year. Then Bailey Smith; I nominated Bailey. Then Bailey Smith was elected in 1980. In 1982, it was kind of, you know, we were never taken seriously. The liberals never thought we could win. Russell Dilday later told me that. I later asked him if he ever thought we could win and he said “No.” Funny thing is we never talked about winning but we never thought about losing. We just knew we had to do the right thing. We didn’t have plan B. In 1982 it seemed like it came down to Ed Young and me. The guys basically just said, it
was kind of informal, “I wish we had all the scheming and planning and money behind us that everybody thought we had, but, they said, you and Ed, whichever one of you can.” Ed was president of the Pastor’s Council, meeting in New Orleans; but Ed and I communicated often through that year and he said, “This is not a good time for me. Our church is at a place where I don’t need to do this now. You ought to do it. But I’ll keep my name out there just so they won’t know for sure who’s going to be nominated.” I said, “Well, look, I mean this sincerely. If you change your mind, go for it.” And the night before I was elected, Ed had had George Bush and Johnny Cash and Billy Graham in the Superdome down in New Orleans. I went to his room and he was so hoarse he couldn’t even talk. But I went to his room and I said, “Ed, you just had the biggest pastor’s conference in the history of S.B.C. You could be elected easy. You can do this. I don’t have to be nominated.” He said, “No, you need to go ahead and do this.” It was kind of one of those things, you know, there wasn’t any scheming to get me there, it was just that because of over the years my involvement and the Baylor thing and early when I nominated Bailey Smith. It was something God just led in. Of course, I ran against the most powerful Southern Baptist of the twentieth century up until that time, Duke McCall. He was president of the Baptist World Alliance and had been president of Southern Seminary and was a recognized leader of the moderates; also ran against John Sullivan and Perry Sanders, who were very popular, very conservative and in Louisiana. John then became my first vice president. But it was a run off, I got 46% of the votes the first ballot and then got 56% the second time in the run off. But Duke got 43% and everybody was shocked. That’s a whole other story. You could see the hand of God. There was not any jockeying of positions, or scheming, we had something a whole lot bigger than who was president. We just knew we had to keep the presidency to facilitate the changes.

DARRELL ORMAN: What percentages did you say Duke pulled on the first vote?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, Jerry Sutton’s book could tell you that. I don’t recall. I had 46%, I think Duke had thirty-some odd percent and John and Perry pulled some, I don’t know how much. But those three together combined 54% of the vote, and I really don’t remember more. But I do remember second ballot was 56 to 44 or something like that. It was good. You could just see the hand of God preparing me through the Baylor days. You know, my dad always told me that as soon as something’s right you need to be for it, and if it’s wrong you need to be against it. You don’t have to be mean; you don’t have to be ugly. One of the things that probably made it easier for me was the fact that nearly everyone from both sides of the fence, in fact, my longest term friends were moderates. Cecil Sherman was preaching in my little church in Georgia. He preached two revivals for my dad when I was a teenager. And Ralph Lang and Foy Valentine preached for me. My longest relationships in childhood were with people who now were opposed to what I stood for. There was a new camaraderie building with Adrian and Jerry and Ed Young and Charles Stanley and all of us, Bailey Smith. We’d all known each other but that congealed around 1979. God just kind of put it together. I was, and am known as a reconciler, not a tire slasher, and I was able to, and I think history will verify this and that’s what people believe now. I was able to stand strong without being mean about it. Some of the other guys were viewed a little differently.
DARRELL ORMAN: Bailey was a little harsher.

JIMMY DRAPER: Bailey was a little harsher, and after Bailey I guess they were glad to get me. But, anyway, it was just kind of how the Lord did it. It was just one of those things that the Lord led in, I never aspired to be president, but God just did it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, we can answer number 3 with that. Number 4, during your tenure, as president, what do you see now as God’s unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time? Or before your election?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, I think so. I think that the purpose was that I was able to come from more of a relational perspective with everybody. I tried to get people talking, tried to see if there was some way to work it out because I’m pretty idealistic, figured if we could get everybody talking, surely we wouldn’t have that much disagreement. But, like Russell said, they never thought we could win so they never took it seriously. They never gave us an opportunity. We had no state papers, that’s why the *Advocate* was published. We had no state papers supporting us at all. And the first one and only one we used was the *Southern Baptist Journal*, but the Indiana state paper was an advocate for us in the beginning but beyond that we had no way to get our message out. So I think God used me, people liked me, and had some exposure to me, so I was able to continue the strong conservative appointments without anybody questioning my Southern Baptist credentials. See, we’d been in the top 15, maybe top 10 for the Cooperative Program giving for a number of years; I pastored First Southern and when I was there, we gave $30,000 to the Cooperative Program but had about a $300,000 budget but Bailey never increased it; it was a line item not a percentage, so a $1,000,000 budget with $30,000 you know, wasn’t much Cooperative Program. So people recognized the third generation of Southern Baptist preachers, they were supportive in the association, in the State Convention, in the Cooperative Program, all of those things, so we took a little of the sting out and they were shocked that I was elected. They couldn’t believe that Duke McCall wouldn’t win. They were just stunned! But I think probably the best thing I was able to do was continue the strong emphasis with a minimum of criticism. For instance, I had Gene Garrison and John Sullivan as my vice-presidents. Well, when I made the appointments, I pulled together the names that I had been recommended and then I put the ones that I thought could win over here, but I sought John Sullivan and Gene Garrison. I did the same thing also with Ed Price, a layman from Pittsburgh. I said, “Ed, these are our recommendations.” And we talked to him and he said, “okay, they’re our recommendations, too.” Well, I had moved aside those who didn’t approve, and John said “This is your decision. Anytime you say ‘that’s it,’ that’s the way we’ll go.” But when it was all over with, both of these and the vice-presidents said, “These are our appointments, too.” So I was able to get the appointments made without raising a lot of ire.

DARRELL ORMAN: That followed your chairmanship at Southwestern.....

JIMMY DRAPER: No, no, I wasn’t chairman at Southwestern until 89-90.
DARRELL ORMAN: Oh, okay, that was after your presidency.

JIMMY DRAPER: I was not on the Southwestern Board until the year after I became president. Looking back, it probably was a bad precedence with me to come right out of the presidency and go on the board. But the guys in Texas wanted me to do that, so I went on in '84, I went on the Southwestern Board. And I was elected in the fall of 1990 and I served three years.

DARRELL ORMAN: Dilday was a pretty hard-nosed operator, wasn’t he?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, he was, but you know, that’s another story. But I think my uniqueness was my relationships with people on both sides, even people that don’t agree with me basically don’t dislike me necessarily, so I think I was able to continue a strong deal of support without being abrasive. And a lot of our conservative guys thought that I was soft and so forth but they never found anything wrong with my appointments. You can be hard without being mean. That’s what I was able to do.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did you triage obviously the convention and the nation?

Did you use a system to get a name?

JIMMY DRAPER: Oh, yeah. Well, you get recommendations.

DARRELL ORMAN: Traditionally, it was the DOM’s and the Executive Directors of the State!

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, actually, traditionally, it was just the Executive Committee. When Criswell was the president, Porter Ruth gave him a list and said here’s who you need to appoint. That’s what you need to do. He said “okay.” So, by the time I was president, the state convention guys were already feeling kind of left out, you know, but what I did, I did what every president does. I wrote to the state execs, I didn’t write the DOM’s, but I did write the state execs, you know, for recommendations. Then you get the recommendations. And then I had help. I had people who did help me. I don’t think it was Fred Powell that early. I think Fred came on with Charles. But you know, we just get names; different names. Paul and Paige would come up with names. It’s hard you know, you have to make some 150 appointments and know something about each of them.

DARRELL ORMAN: Were there any conservative grassroots organizations back then to assist?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, not so much to assist in nominations, but there was a huge grassroots movement to attend the convention and elect the president. I mean I’m still running into people who tell me “I drove to Los Angeles and slept in my car to vote for Bailey Smith and I did the same thing in New Orleans to vote for you.” So there was a strong network of communication between grassroots people, but not necessarily to get
nominations. They were mostly to elect a president. But Paul and Paige were more in contact with the grassroots than any of the rest of us were, and they surfaced a lot of names coming out. There were people they knew and recommended. It was an informal thing, wasn’t anything formal about it.

DARRELL ORMAN: They were like advisors, sort of? Paige and Paul?

JIMMY DRAPER: Yeah, they were sort of the guys who kept us moving, and were passionate about it. But they allowed us to do it, you know. Once we got the names, it was our choice. It wasn’t that we had to do anything. That’s kind of the way we did it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Are you a goal setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?

JIMMY DRAPER: I need to tell you I’m not a goal setter. We do set goals now, for the institution. Since I’ve been here, we do a lot of strategic planning, and that’s goal setting. It’s out there, and always a little beyond our reach. And then we track our budget and everything that we do, we kind of see how it measures up to our strategic plan, but as a pastor I never did that. I just felt like we should win everybody we could, baptize everybody we could, and give all we can, and witness to everybody that we could, you know. And that was sort of the tenure of my ministry. It’s always been. I’m not an evangelist, even though I did start in youth evangelism. We averaged 300 baptisms a year in Euliss, for sixteen years and I very rarely ever preached evangelistic sermons. People said “well you preached for the church and then gave an evangelistic invitation.” Well, at times I didn’t even do that very well. It was just that I just found when you preached the Bible, and you got people committed to soul-winning and witnessing, you just want to see people saved. We were probably second in the convention when we had 743 baptisms that one year at Del City. I think only Homer Lindsey at First Jacksonville baptized more that year than we did. But I have never been one to say, “Okay, we baptized ‘X’ number last year; this year we’re going to top that.” If you do that, I think goal setting is good. Don’t misunderstand me. People who can do it and do it right, I applaud. But I found, I guess coming to Del City is what really did it to me, because up until then I was young and learning, but if you’re not careful, you begin to compete with yourself and you never win. I mean, what are you going to do if you beat last year? Then you have to beat this year next year now. You end up, you’re sort of spiraling and then whatever you do, Adrian has always said that whatever you have to do to get people, you have to do to keep them. So if you’re going to bust the top out of evangelism, and you constantly have to beat last year, it can be a very debilitating thing. So I did not set goals that we pushed for. Now did we say, “Hey, we have to increase Sunday School units and attendance.” Yeah, we did those things, but as far as something we’d say to the church like “last year we did this and this is our goal this year,” I never did that. I know some of these guys do that well.

DARRELL ORMAN: Actually, two of them so far answered, Adrian was one of them, just like you did.
JIMMY DRAPER: Yeah, well, Adrian and I are soul-brothers in a lot of things, and that’s one of them. Adrian is funny. When we get in a mega church meeting and they get talking about “what do you do to raise money” and Adrian says “well, you know, I must have missed something. We never had a financial campaign.” We just ask them to give and they give. We’ve never had pledge campaigns. But any way, that kind of answers that.

DARRELL ORMAN: In relationship to take that avenue a little bit, with growing Del City, what stimulated the outreach when you were baptizing 300 a year?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, 300 a year was in Euliss. But they’ll say it was the greatest church I’ve ever been in. At that time, that was an unbelievable church. They would do anything to share the gospel. They would do praise choruses with a praise band. We had a praise team. We did choruses, and hooped and hollered and shouted and raised our hands and all kinds of weird stuff, and got criticized a lot for it, but the people, the older folks, didn’t like it. But they said, “You know, we see God blessing and we’re not going to criticize it.” It was a great spirit. And I think that’s what characterized my years at Del City, and Dallas with the great response there. I was there for two years. It was just a willingness of the people to be flexible, a contentment, a willingness to follow the pastor, to have a fellowship. A church that is going to be evangelistic has to have a fellowship that deserves evangelism. I mean, to win people in some churches is like putting a baby in a refrigerator. You don’t want to do that. So, the church had warm fellowship, they were pastor-led, not dictated but they followed the pastor, were happy to do that, trusted the pastor, had a very active E.E. program back then. In Del City, the whole church was mobilized. Every Sunday afternoon, deacons visited, and people everywhere visiting, and utilized E.E. You just have to create an atmosphere where evangelism is natural.

DARRELL ORMAN: Let me ask you. I’m hearing this, I spoke in one of the Christian colleges a couple of weeks ago. It seems like they’re all pursuing the team leadership approach instead of the pastor-led type thing.

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, I don’t have any objection to teams but the pastor has to be the leader. Teams don’t lead, you gotta have somebody to lead. I think a good pastor will build good teams. My deacons were ministers. When I was in Euliss, the last ten years I was there, they didn’t discuss finances or do business or anything. They had a ministry team. They were administrators in crisis and benevolence, single mothers, and all the things that they did. So bottom line, there’s nothing wrong with teams, but you have to have a leader.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did the deacons initiate some of those ministries or did you all just ..... 

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, no, I actually initiated the ministries, out of necessity, when I became president of the convention. For nine months I told the deacons that I had been approached by some pastors which is the way it came about. I didn’t go into this, but Bob Eckland who was at First Baptist first, asked me way back in September before I
was elected that “some of us would like to see you nominated for president.” And I said, “Well, I’m gonna give you twenty-five names, and you call these twenty people, if all of them say they think it’s a good idea, I’ll consider it.” They all did. They were names from all across the board, a broad spectrum of names and so I told the deacons, when Bob approached me, I said, “Now, guys, there’s nothing to worry about now, but I want you to understand that if this becomes a reality, this is our decision, not my decision. It will require me to be gone much of the time for two years, and so every month they’d check, and I’d tell them nothing was new yet. So finally in May, and I said that I would probably be nominated. I went home and they left for a couple of hours and came out with a beautiful letter that basically said, “Look, we freed you up to accept that nomination.”

DARRELL ORMAN: That was the deacons?

JIMMY DRAPER: That was the deacons, so that’s when we organized even though the guys were kind of prepared for that. That’s when we organized into ministry teams, and they never went back. So the presidency was what kicked us into that kind of thing. Turned out to me to be the best thing to me that ever happened because the deacons didn’t get preoccupied, because it didn’t take much business to totally absorb the deacons so you keep them focused on the ministry and you know, you got a better group. So the presidency kind of was the catalyst that did that.

DARRELL ORMAN: You’ve had an opportunity with your experience base now to look back on your presidency. If you could serve again, what would you do differently the second time around, if anything?

JIMMY DRAPER: Yeah, I don’t think I’d do anything differently because I have to say, well it was that time frame. The movement was new; it didn’t come up when I was elected because nobody thought I could be elected, so you know, if I were to be president now I would do differently, but if I could go back to 1982, I don’t think I’d do anything any differently, I’d be wiser. I remember Dr. Criswell called me after I was elected, he said, “Lad, I just have one thing to say to you.” And I said, “Well, what’s that, pastor?” “You can never please the liberals! Just remember, you can’t do anything to please the liberals.” And that was a good word. I would be a lot smarter but I tried some things that I probably shouldn’t have but needed to be tried. Because I proved that you couldn’t talk to them. I proved that they wouldn’t dialogue with you. I proved that they wouldn’t give an inch, that we were outcasts, and they weren’t going to make any room for us. When I got through, there wasn’t any question that you could negotiate with them. I don’t know that I’d do anything differently.

DARRELL ORMAN: So in a sense you boxed them in?

JIMMY DRAPER: Yeah. Because I had meetings with all the seminary presidents, with the SBC executives and tried to get through to them; had a meeting with forty-two guys I called to Dallas, and all the way from Bill Self to Cecil Sherman down in Atlanta, you name it, the whole gamut was there. I tried. Now Bailey Smith took a group of
Baptists and Jews to the Holy Land in 1981, and they asked me to do it again in 1982 so I thought, "Well, if I can get six or eight conservatives, get Paige Patterson, and some of these strong conservatives and some of these moderates on a trip together, maybe they’d talk. And they did. They went but it didn’t do any good. When I got through, everybody knew negotiation was hopeless.

DARRELL ORMAN: In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, I think the most rewarding part was the feeling of being able to continue something that’s very important. I mean, we could have come apart at that time. Adrian only served a year, Bailey had been a kind of a pretty controversial president, especially his statement about God hearing the prayers of the Jews. We didn’t have a lot of credibility with our critics. It was rewarding for me, at that time, I had my credentials, you can’t criticize my SBC involvement or background. I think I was able to legitimatize even though Bellevue had been the leading church in dollars in Cooperative Program, the percentage was not large, but they didn’t even give Adrian credit for giving nearly $400,000 to cooperative programs because it wasn’t a big enough percentage. But our percentage was larger, though our funds were about the same, I guess, even though our budget was smaller but I think I was able to give legitimacy to the conservative thrust, and to continue it. So that was very rewarding to be able to do that. The least rewarding was discovering that to some people, scripture wasn’t that important. They would never admit that they were liberals, but the whole struggle was to keep us from having a foothold and being involved, we met with them but we were messing up their nest and they didn’t like it. To realize guys that I had known all my life and called friends were really not the keenly spiritual individuals I thought they were and that was very disappointing.

DARRELL ORMAN: I’ve experienced some of that myself. If you could change the function of the office of president, how would you change it?

JIMMY DRAPER: I think that I would not change a lot. I think Bobby Welch has done what I would envision, Bobby and he’s not the first one to do this.

DARRELL ORMAN: You mean be more proactive with his agenda?

JIMMY DRAPER: Yeah, of course, we’ll never have another Bobby Welch because his church just freed him up. He’s moving here this month and will stay here for two or three months, I’ve got his schedule somewhere here in my file. He’s going to speak sixty or seventy times in the next ninety days.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you think there’s a lot of wisdom in that?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, I think he’s doing more than a president should do, but I think the president ought to be a strong flag waver, a great “PR” person, to Southern Baptist. He ought to be free to speak. Bobby is going all the way back to the grassroots and I
don’t know that we can ever expect someone else to spend the time Bobby has. Jim Henry said, after he was president, that he felt it was a full-time job. Really a guy shouldn’t have to pastor a church or do anything, and we all knew that but we never thought we would ever see that. But now Bobby’s done that. But what I mean though, is Bobby has done what several of the guys did, and to tell you the truth I don’t know whether I did this or not because I hadn’t even thought about this, but he’s helped shape the program. Normally, the Program Committee does that, and I know that when James Merritt was president, and he had to wrestle them to the ground the whole year, not sure he had them. They basically took it away from him. I think the president needs to be; he’s the only elected position, the order of business committees are approved, but they’re not necessarily elected. I think the president should be there waving the flag, he should have a strong influence in how the program is fixed, should communicate with the people. When I was president, I didn’t even know then. I didn’t know I was ex-officio on all the boards; they never told me that. I was never invited to board meetings.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** So you didn’t go to any?

**JIMMY DRAPER:** For two years. In fact, I went to the International Mission Board for a retirement, and happened to be doing a trustee meeting, and I went down to NAMB for something, but as far as knowing that I was an ex-officio member of every board, no one ever told me that.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** Did they do that with several of the first conservatives?

**JIMMY DRAPER:** They probably did, but you know, we didn’t know some things. I think the president ought to try to attend at least one trustee meeting, visit the entities and be somehow involved. I don’t know that I’d change the function, but I think we ought to do it the way it’s outlined how it’s supposed to be done, and really do it that way.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ?

**JIMMY DRAPER:** Well, I think the biggest way is not to come up with some new strategy that’s going to die in two years. Continue the strong emphasis on missions and evangelism, be an advocate for what has always made the Southern Baptists the strong group we’ve been. I think we went through a period of time in the 90’s where each president thought he had to have something new, this is what I’m going to push this year. Morris Chapman had the *Watchmen on the Wall*. Well, it was a great emphasis, and had I not been here, though, it would have died a natural death quickly. Because he basically said, “Would you all take it over?” and we spent $100,000 a year sustaining the *Watchmen on the Wall* thing and……

**DARRELL ORMAN:** Is that kind of what’s happened with Elliff and the family emphasis?
JIMMY DRAPER: Yeah, yeah, it’s a great emphasis, a needed emphasis, but where’d it go? It would have been better to have been woven into the warp and woof of who we are and have the full strength of the conviction. As it turned out, it was Tom’s program and we’ve not been able to sustain it. We tried, but I think if a president wouldn’t think in terms of something uniquely his for two years to sort of say he had this emphasis.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you think it’s every man’s kind of innate desire to be a part of history sort of?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, it could be but none of us did that, though, until Morris. Jerry came the closest when he emphasized soul winning but he didn’t institute a new deal. Morris was the first one that came up with this big plan of *Watchmen on the Wall* thing but then each president since Morris has had the same kind of emphasis on something.

DARRELL ORMAN: Is that real good with Bobby and his million baptisms?

JIMMY DRAPER: I think he’s “Johnny One Note” and I think the president ought to seek to lead Southern Baptists in our strength and not try to invent something new. I’m not saying they all have done that. You look toward the future, don’t come up with some new idea until …..

DARRELL ORMAN: Anytime one of them just ask the Lord for a structure, like missions or evangelism or Sunday School that would be possibly…..

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, yeah, I think they need to lead, and I just don’t think they need to try to create something though. I think we have everything created that relates to the Biblical mandate for the church, we just need to connect all the dots and get everybody working on that thing. That’s what a president is supposed to do, help us focus.

DARRELL ORMAN: In light of your experience, as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the S.B.C.?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, it exerts a lot of influence, because the people think, the secular people, non-Baptist people, they think you’re speaking for Southern Baptists so you spend the two years doing press conferences, and speaking to every issue that comes up nationally, of course it’s so different now. We weren’t ready for homosexuality then; abortion was an issue which I did speak to.

DARRELL ORMAN: The presidential election?

JIMMY DRAPER: The presidential election, now that is a funny story. Reagan was running in 1982 or 84, he was running for re-election and I was residing. They called me in April and said he wanted to come to the convention. I wouldn’t let him. I said, “No,
this is an election year. Trust me, the Southern Baptists would be offended if he came during an election year because it would be a political move; he doesn’t need that.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Of course, we were in a different era then....

JIMMY DRAPER: Yes, you’re asked just about everything, everything from ethical to moral issues that come up and they’ll try to get you involved in political things. Back when I was president it was mostly the abortion issue, that was the big ethical issue; prayer in schools, we went to Washington more than once dealing with that issue. So, yeah, you have an opportunity to really speak to the various outlets, news, politicians and what not.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you feel like it’s much more amplified now than it was?

JIMMY DRAPER: Yes, I do, because I went to the White House several times but I wasn’t involved in any strategy sessions with the President. Of course, bear in mind, Jack Graham’s in Texas and George Bush was governor of Texas so there was a strong relationship there; the same with Richard Land in his position, because he knew the governor way back before he was governor. So, yeah, each era; I came in at a time when Reagan was from California, and I had met him when he was governor and had visited with him, went to a number of briefings up there. He had a wonderful religious liaison with Caroline Sunset whose husband was one of the big workers in Youth With A Mission in Kona, Hawaii, so there was a real connect there. So, yes, it’s very influential place for it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, looking back at your request from Reagan for the re-election year. Did you ever think maybe you should have done that?

JIMMY DRAPER: No, I think it would have been viewed as a political thing. DARRELL ORMAN: Too explosive?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, I thought it would lose him votes and I wanted him to win. And I thought the average Southern Baptist would say, “Well, this is election year. We never have presidents during election year.” I was even worried about George Bush being on the program. I think it went well; it’s a different time. He was able to address things in a certain way because, of course, he was the president. With Reagan, it was obviously a campaign thing. I think Bush would have done it whether it was an election or not, but I don’t think Reagan would have. With Reagan it was an election, and I knew his people, and I knew they wanted him because of the election. With Bush, if he was still the governor of Texas, or owner of the Texas Rangers, he’d have done the same thing. So I think it’s just different times.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, Richard Land told me that George Sr. was much more of an evangelical Christian than Reagan. Reagan was more of a cultural Christian.
JIMMY DRAPER: Reagan was a great communicator. He could move an audience, I never saw anything like it; better than anybody I’ve ever seen in my lifetime. Just unbelievable! The difference was, George Herbert Walker Bush was, I think, less convictional than George W. Bush. I think George W. Bush is a much stronger convictional Christian than George Herbert Walker Bush was. George H.W. Bush was a consummate politician, a good man, but he always wondered which way the wind was blowing. I don’t think George W. cares. He’s going to do what he thinks is right, and if the wind is not blowing in that direction, that’s okay. But the presidency offers you the opportunity to things. I came at a lull in the politics in Reagan’s second term.

DARRELL ORMAN: What are the unique pressures and responsibilities in serving?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, it’s very simple. Everything you say is scrutinized. You just have to realize that. That’s when I started using extensive notes. I couldn’t even preach in my church without being on the front pages of the Star Telegram if I made some off the cuff remark, or the Dallas Morning News or something.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you feel restrained at that point?

JIMMY DRAPER: I didn’t feel restrained, I just was careful.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you read manuscripts?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, I didn’t read manuscripts, but I had much more extensive notes than I did before. I mean, when the convention met in Dallas in ’85, I was preaching through Ephesians and I didn’t even know what….but I’d have to go back and look and see, I was already in the book of Ephesians. I just preached what I planned to preach before the convention, but they interpreted it as some sort of a political thing about liberal conservatives that was building in Dallas. So, you know, the unique pressure is that you have to realize you are not a private citizen. You can’t say this is not for public consumption. Everything is for public consumption.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, is that true, that the meetings for the next couple of days with the Executive Committee meetings are aggressive committee meetings?

JIMMY DRAPER: Not as much. The secular media has never paid much attention to the Executive Committee meetings. They pay more attention to the convention when it meets in the summer; and the president always has access to the secular media. Always, wherever he goes, he’ll have press conferences. I think the unique experience is you have to measure your words because they’ll come back at you, because they’ll quote you. You can’t have a lot of casual comments.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have any anxiety those two years over them misquoting or using things out of context?
JIMMY DRAPER: I was misquoted out of context one big time, especially. It was innocent and it wasn’t what Porter did but it was what the editors did when they got a hold of it. I said I might escrow funds in order to get us to the table, that was the context, but I never said we wouldn’t give the funds. And of course, by the time it got back to Texas, I had threatened to withhold funds and done all kinds of stuff. But that just comes with the territory, but I think the unique pressure is you realize you just can’t be casual. You really have to watch what you say. My position right now is not quite as visible as the president of the convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life?

JIMMY DRAPER: No, I just knew God called me to preach and I was happy to do that. My dad told me when I got my first church, “Now, son, you’ll likely won’t stay here the rest of your life, but you should serve like you’re going to be here the rest of your life.” And so I never took it lightly; I served seven churches totally, First Church of Dallas I was associate. I never really looked beyond that church and was always surprised. My dad was well known in Texas, and we had the seminary presidents and the state exec who were close friends, who were trying to help me get a church when I was looking for my first church. Every church I got came through the classmates, not one of them came through the political system. Even my dad was never able to get me anywhere. I was just preaching the gospel.

DARRELL ORMAN: Were any of the transitions where you went from one to the other you thought, “Hmmm, I don’t know whether I should have done this one or not?”

JIMMY DRAPER: No, I knew early on that God had blessed me because I started preaching youth revivals when I was a senior in high school and we were front page several times in the Houston papers. Great revivals! And God just really blessed. So I knew that God’s hand was on me on some things but back then, there weren’t any mega churches. You didn’t think about a mega church. The only two big churches in the convention were Bellevue and First Dallas, and we didn’t hear very much about them.

DARRELL ORMAN: Bellevue was running like a 1,000 in Sunday School.

JIMMY DRAPER: Yeah, maybe so. First Dallas was running a couple of thousand. First Oklahoma City never ran over 1,500 in their whole history. There just weren’t any huge churches so you didn’t aspire to a big church, you’d just envision...you know. I really thought I was going to the mission field. All through college I was a mission volunteer, and probably would have gone to the mission field. But they had a rule that the wives had to have seminary degree and my wife, (I married her right out of high school), she never got to finish college. So we didn’t qualify. We couldn’t go. But as far as having a sense of destiny, I just knew God called me to preach. That was enough. I always loved what I was doing; I can honestly say I’ve never dreaded going to work a single day of my life. I just loved whatever I was doing, wherever I’ve lived.
DARRELL ORMAN: How did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency? For example: denominational positions, speaking, administration, dealing with critics, vision casting?

JIMMY DRAPER: I think all of that. You know, our church was not huge, but we have $6 or $7 million dollars a year go through the church. Dallas is bigger than that but really not a whole lot bigger, I guess. They were $8 or $10 million dollars when I was there. We didn’t get that big in Euliss maybe $6 or $6.5 million. So you know, managing those things and helping to keep people on target; you have a large staff so you learn to deal with people. In Dallas, I administered the staff there, over 300 people; we had staff meetings from the PA system in the auditorium. Those kind of things prepared me to see a bigger picture. And, I am a good delegator. I believe that if I have to do your job, then I don’t need you, I’ll get a secretary. So my job is to give you a real assignment and let you do it. So I can trust you. I guess that’s a whole other area of philosophy but I believe in empowering people to work, and getting people better than myself, and then you’ll succeed. Then cut them loose and let them work, support them, take the blame for them, and let them take the credit. You do that and you know you’ll probably succeed. I think the larger churches helped me to be prepared not only for this assignment, but also for the presidency, because of the enormity of the task. And, of course, by the time I was elected I’d been all over the country: associational meetings, state conventions. There are very few states I haven’t been in, sometimes just to preach. I didn’t have any formal preparation or anything, it’s just that people know you....

DARRELL ORMAN: What do you view is your personal leadership strength of all the different.....

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, you know, I’m probably not going to give you the answer you expect, but I think my strength is my selflessness. I really don’t care if I get credit for things. If my staff does something good, I’ll appraise it or applaud it, push them out in the middle of the stage and I think that is a strength I have. I’m not intimidated by who likes me. I think if you knew me well, you’d like me. So I don’t feel like I have to prove anything. So, I’m not really intimidated by people.

DARRELL ORMAN: From Reagan on down?

JIMMY DRAPER: In fact, there’s a picture of me with Yitzhak Shamir in Jerusalem. It’s a funny story. It was 1990 and I had made contact with him. The day that I was going to visit with him, he had a crisis in his government. The Orthodox Jews bolted and they were breaking up the coalition. They tried to call me at the hotel and I’d already left. I showed up and they were going to cancel the appointment. So the taxi driver waited outside the Kinnesset convention, and I went in the Kinnesset convention. It was easier to get in there than in almost any airport security. I had a little Swiss army knife they took until I came back. Other than that, they hardly searched me. So when I went back out, the taxi driver said, “Yes, sir, the prime minister left the meeting with the Orthodox leadership to meet with some guest, you know.” (which is me.) So I looked at him and he looked real serious. I looked at him and said, “You look like you need a
Gatorade break.” He looked at me like, “What on earth are you talking about?” You know, not being unkind. I’ve been invited to the White House many times. And I say “You know, I don’t need to do that.” There are people that really, I’d rather Richard Land be there than me. I’d rather Bobby Welch be there, or Jack Graham be there than me. I don’t need that. So I think that my style is to try to encourage people, exhort people, and help them to succeed. I don’t know how that fits into leadership, you know, all these things that you have here. But I think that my personal strength has been my integrity, my honesty, and openness and willingness to let other people succeed.

DARRELL ORMAN: Can a group of young pastors be trained and mentored to possibly serve as president of the S.B.C.? Would that in anyway circumvent God’s sovereignty in the selection election process?

JIMMY DRAPER: I don’t think you can train somebody to be S.B.C. president. I think God has to raise him up. You can mentor them to be good leaders; you can mentor them to pastor large churches; you can mentor them to take significant positions, but not the presidency. God raises up leaders! You can have all the training in the world, if God doesn’t have His hand on you, you aren’t going to succeed. So I don’t think there’s any way to train somebody to be S.B.C. president. I think that you can train them for a lot of positions, but God just has to. And, looking back at the last twenty years, I believe that God’s hand has been on the presidents. And they’ve been elected through God’s will. When Jim Henry was elected, all of us supported Fred Wolf. Now, we didn’t campaign for him and we were not against Jim, but Fred had come out early and was going to be nominated, and there was never any campaign against Jim, but we all felt like Fred should be. The truth is we would never have the reorganization of the S.B.C if Jim Henry had not been president of the Convention. He supported the Covenant for the New Century. He surprised everybody.

DARRELL ORMAN: Why did he surprise them?

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, because he wasn’t the anointed of the conservative leadership, and it was viewed as sort of a set-back for the conservatives, which is kind of funny; because he was as conservative as anybody. But, looking back, I see God just did that. What moved Jack Graham to break with everybody else and nominate Jim Henry against Fred Wolf when Charles Stanley nominated Fred Wolf? It was just in God’s hands there.

DARRELL ORMAN: I had the opportunity that year to attend a lieutenant’s meeting in Nashville. The judge was there and some others from the different states and honestly several were really coming out against Jim Henry, saying that was a moderate set-back and so forth. And I asked the judge in front of the group, I said, “Now, if this were pre-1979 and Jim Henry were elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, wouldn’t everyone here view that as a great victory?” And he said, “Absolutely.” He said “I’m glad you said that”, you know.

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, the judge still, to this day, doesn’t recognize him. To him it was a lull. Truthfully, though, I got good trustees under Jim’s leadership. Jim
disappointed some of the people with his appointments; I was not disappointed. I got good, strong trustees.

DARRELL ORMAN: They said they didn’t think he used the system that’s been in place. They don’t believe Merritt did either; some of them believe that Merritt appointed some that were worse than Jim’s.

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, you know, I respect the judge. I’ve known Judge Pressler since I was in college. My brother campaigned for him. In fact in his book he says I campaigned for him and I never did correct him, but I was in college. My brother was in 9th or 10th grade and he was very politically active; he went all over town passing out circulars for Pressler’s first political campaign. I have great admiration and appreciation for him, but I just don’t think any of us can say “this is God’s man.” We can give our best judgment, and what the presidents have tried to do, you know we talk once or twice a year, and just say “what are you hearing?” or “how do you feel about these guys?” We never have really gotten out and campaigned for anybody.

DARRELL ORMAN: Is the First Jacksonville Pastor’s Conference kind of a spring board now, or a coming out …..

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, it could be. Jerry backed off of that. He really was ready to promote Bobby and then word came that Johnny Hunt might be nominated. Jerry said “Well, I’m not going to get in the middle of that.” He was probably going to put his preference on Bobby at this conference, then when some of them started talking about Johnny, he backed off. Homer is really the one. In the January 1988 Pastor’s Conference, Homer Lindsey got up and said, “Well, I’m here to announce that Jerry Vines is going to be the next president of the Southern Baptist Convention.” Jerry hadn’t even agreed to run. Jerry was surprised at this. Homer shocked Jerry! And so from then on, that conference was kind of veered as “who’s going to be the next nominee? You’ll find out at this conference.” But there are a lot of things like that. There are a lot of meetings around the country where people connect. Again, I just had to come back. Life’s not real complicated for me. I remember in John, Chapter 3, the portion that nobody ever preaches about. A great portion, in verses 22 through 25, right in there, where John’s disciples come up to him and said, “Master, the one that you testified to, he’s baptizing and everybody is going to Him;” which wasn’t true, because they weren’t going to Him; they always exaggerated things. And John said, “Well, now, wait a minute. I told you I wasn’t the Messiah; but I have been sent before Him. But a man can receive nothing unless he receives it from above.” Now you can think about pulling strings if he got in, but, I say if he got in, God did it! Doesn’t matter what you do. God is the one who appoints and we can plan and do our best, and we all do that; but still it takes God and that why I don’t think you can train anybody to do that. I think with leadership, the Holy Spirit will bring him to the top. I think, for instance, that’s what happened with Johnny Hunt. Now Johnny may never run. I think if he ever lets his name be presented again, he would win hands down. I think, in my judgment at least, God has anointed Johnny. There may be others, I just think God…..
DARRELL ORMAN: And everybody loves him. He's got a great heart in his leadership. One last question on your book. You wrote your book, I believe the title is “Why I Believe the Bible is Literally True.”

JIMMY DRAPER: No, mine was “Authority The Critical Issue of Southern Baptist,” and I have a revision. I’ll give you a copy of it. We revised it a couple of years ago. I wrote that in 1984 and I did it because of what our critics were saying, you know, that there was no issue with the Bible.

DARRELL ORMAN: Didn’t you draw the analogy of the slide?

JIMMY DRAPER: Yes, you can stop going down a slide but there’s no logical reason why you should. You just have to reach out and grab the side to stop. But because of the direction of the slide you may not stop. That’s kind of the way it is with liberalism. A man may move toward liberalism and stop anywhere along the way. But there is no logical reason why he should stop, once he’s started, the logic leads him right to the bottom.

DARRELL ORMAN: Through the senior pastoring in the convention, I’ve been every year to the convention, and the early crunch days we took every messenger from the small churches that we could. Well, I met some guys at a C.W.T. training conference that were Midwestern students and they said that your book, at that stage in Mid-western’s life, just pulled them right up out of a hole. They said they were in despair with what they were experiencing there....

JIMMY DRAPER: See, that was the interesting thing that I did. Paige used to have every Criswell student that enrolled, he gave them a copy of it. I raised $80,000 and mailed one to every pastor in the convention. So I bought 36,000 copies. It ended up selling about 60,000 copies and I bought 36,000 of them. It was amazing how many of the guys wouldn’t accept it. It was drop shipped from the Revell Publishers in New York and so they didn’t know, they didn’t want it. I probably got a couple of thousand back; they just refused to accept it. But you know, I hear that all the time. People say it really made a difference. That’s why I wrote it for laymen. I’m not complicated. I’m not capable of writing a really Al Mohler-type theological treaty. I had on my staff Dr. Bill Bell, from the Dallas Baptist College; only God knows, the Southern Baptists will never know, what kind of influence that man had. We would just sit down and talk, I’d ask him a question and he’s just take a tape recorder and he could give me more information in five or ten minutes than I could get in a week of studying, things that were out of my comfort zone. So I had a good staff, we all worked together to pull all the material together, and God blessed me.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, they said that a group of students there at the school had studied your book together on their own and that it turned several of them back to the authority of scripture, , and redeemed their ministry.

JIMMY DRAPER: Well, that’s a neat thing.
DARRELL ORMAN: That's a wonderful, wonderful heritage. Well, thank you, Dr. Draper.
DARRELL ORMAN: This is June 16th, 2005. I'm with Dr. Jerry Vines, the 5th president in the conservative resurgence. Dr. Vines, how do you personally define success in the ministry?

JERRY VINES: Well, to me, success in the ministry, is the will of God for your life. The will of God is your success in the ministry, as far as I'm concerned.

DARRELL ORMAN: Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention?

JERRY VINES: Well, you know, I think in the process of time, God put previous presidents in my path, Dr. Herschel Hobbs and J. Roy Weber. They were both my successors at Dolphin Way at Mobile, Alabama, when I became pastor there. Then I think the Lord helped me grow into the role by my association with Dr. Adrian Rogers being president of the convention. I think I learned a great deal from him, and from my other predecessors in the conservative resurgence era.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

JERRY VINES: Well, sir, really just a growing conviction on the part of some of the men in the conservative movement that I was really God's man during that particular time in history.

DARRELL ORMAN: During your tenure, as president, what do you see now as God's unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time? Before your election?

JERRY VINES: I think the purpose for my presidency was to bring to the sharp focus that the issue in the conservative struggle was the nature of scripture. And I think really, one of the reasons that I was elected president of the convention, is because the previous year at the S.B.C., I preached a convention sermon and it was entitled "A Baptist and His Bible." Some have said that was a watershed message in the convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: Were you aware of it at that time?

JERRY VINES: Well, you know an interesting thing happened that may be little known. But after the message that day, Dr. Charles Stanley came to the platform and embraced me, really big, tightly, and just whispered in my ear that "God told me this morning that you'll be the next president of the Southern Baptist Convention." And it scared the willies out of me, to tell you the truth, do you hear what I'm saying?

DARRELL ORMAN: So, God did tell him.

JERRY VINES: That's right.
DARRELL ORMAN: What about before your election, did you have this purpose, was it growing in your heart, was God growing that in your mind and your heart, your purpose for the reestablishment of the nature of scripture.

JERRY VINES: Yes, yes, I really did have a growing conviction about that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Where did it stem from? Was it the interaction with people from events across the nation?

JERRY VINES: Well, really, when I was student at Mercer University in Macon, GA and encountered first hand the liberalism in the classroom, God really began to build in me a conviction and a commitment to, if I could, do something to help turn our convention back to its conservative roots.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, you were early enough in the draw, probably all the way up through Chapman, that it was touch or go for any of you whether you would be elected or not, isn’t that right?

JERRY VINES: Yes, and at my point in time, really they didn’t feel like there was much of a chance; because Dr. Richard Jackson was running for president and he was running out there in Texas, his old home ground. I was not well known in that part of the convention. In addition to that, you know, we were told that Johnny Baugh had spent quite a bit of money to get messengers there. It was off the beaten path for our strength. Dr. Jackson was a leader in baptisms. He gave over a million dollars to the Cooperative Program. He was in many ways your ideal man to be president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, sure, I was there. It was really well organized.

JERRY VINES: That’s exactly right. There was no doubt about that, was there?

DARRELL ORMAN: It sure was. No doubt about it. Dr. Vines, are you a goal setter?

JERRY VINES: Yes, I am.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did your ministry path follow your goals? Has it followed basically with what you feel the Lord laid on your heart?

JERRY VINES: Yes, I felt like my goal was to be a pastor, that’s all I ever felt God wanted me to be. And as I understood being a pastor, my responsibility was to lead the people in two goals. Number one was to lead lost people to Christ. Number two was to help those who did know Christ to grow in their Christian life. And that’s been my two primary foci since I’ve been in the ministry.
DARRELL ORMAN: At what point did you establish those goals for your ministry life?

JERRY VINES: I established them in my first church out of seminary. I started through the Book of Acts, I just had a growing conviction that this was it. This was what God wanted done.

DARRELL ORMAN: How many churches have you pastored, Dr. Vines?

JERRY VINES: I’ve had eight churches.

DARRELL ORMAN: That encompasses how many years of pastoring?

JERRY VINES: Fifty years.

DARRELL ORMAN: Fifty years. And of course the longest tenure was First Jacksonville?

JERRY VINES: Yes, uh huh, I’ll finish out here in February, I’ll be about a little over 23 ½ years. It’s been a great journey, I’ll tell you that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Congratulations. Wow! I was talking to Darrell Robinson. Right at the point when I came here, Dolphin Way had contacted me back, I guess that was right after Larry Thompson, and Darrell Robinson talked to me and said that Dolphin Way was the best years and the worst years of his life, at the same time.

JERRY VINES: Well, having been there I understand. It could be a difficult place, it really, really could. But there were a lot of good people there, too.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could serve again as president, would you do anything differently the second time around?

JERRY VINES: Serving, as president? No, not really. I don’t know that I would do anything different.

DARRELL ORMAN: Any procedural things, would you speak in more locations? Would you speak in fewer locations? Would you have staffed your church differently?

JERRY VINES: No, I was fortunate. I had Homer Lindsey here; he was tending the store while I was gone. Although, I didn’t go as much as some presidents have gone, in recent years, especially. I just didn’t do that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Were you more selective in your speaking engagements?
JERRY VINES: I was selective, I didn’t miss a Sunday from church here except for the
convention Sunday.

DARRELL ORMAN: Wow! Of course, where could you have spoken where you
would have spoken to more people?

JERRY VINES: Exactly. People coming through all the time, too, I’m in pastor’s
conference, you know. I had a pretty wide exposure.

DARRELL ORMAN: On that note, while you mention that, I just want to commend
you. I’ve taken our staff to a bunch of them, we’ve been to different ones, and yours
has always been the very best. And I’m not saying that to butter you up. It’s just
the practicality of it. Spirituality, my favorite is the Friday night testimony times of
all your soul winners. It’s my favorite time.

JERRY VINES: Thank you.

DARRELL ORMAN: In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your
presidency? What was the least?

JERRY VINES: Well, I think maybe the more rewarding aspect of it was to see the
turnaround beginning to take place. And to see more and more of our grassroots
Southern Baptist people understanding the issues and rallying around the Bible. I guess
probably the least rewarding aspect of it was the sheer exhaustion of trying to carry out
all the responsibilities in addition to being a pastor.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, sure, it’s two full-time ministries at the same time.

JERRY VINES: Well, it is.

DARRELL ORMAN: On that note, would you have any suggestions for future
presidents, how to juggle those two balls at the same time?

JERRY VINES: Well, I would tell them that they don’t have to do some of the things
they think they have to do. They don’t have to be everywhere they may think they have
to be. I would just say focus in on the absolute essentials, you hear what I’m saying?

DARRELL ORMAN: Yes.

JERRY VINES: And not just be all over everywhere. I just don’t think it’s necessary,
you know?

DARRELL ORMAN: Yes.
JERRY VINES: It’s not a full-time job. You could easily make it a full-time job.

DARRELL ORMAN: Would you say there’s one aspect of it that’s kind of honorary in nature?

JERRY VINES: There is an honorary aspect to it, of course; you’re sitting president to the largest protestant denomination in the world. But, the responsibilities of the committee appointments and those kinds of matters override the honor part of it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, absolutely. Did you try to attend all the committees? Did you attend all the executive committees, you know, the different boards and agencies while you were president?

JERRY VINES: I went to all of the executive committees; I tried to go at least one time to all of the major boards and agencies during my two years. I didn’t try to go to all of them every year.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you try to go one time each year or one time in the two years?

JERRY VINES: One time in two years. I just didn’t feel like I could do it, know what I’m saying?

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure. I’m serving now on the Executive Committee and just making that and making it consistently is a job. If you could change the function of the office of president, how would you change it to make it more efficient?

JERRY VINES: Well, I don’t really know what changes I would suggest there. You know, I think it’s pretty well laid out, really.

DARRELL ORMAN: So you feel like, with the foresight that’s already been given to it, that it’s seated pretty well. Would longer terms, like election to a two year term, or, would that be beneficial or not?

JERRY VINES: I think a man would have to be crazy to do that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sign up for two twice, or whatever?

JERRY VINES: Yeah, uh huh, that’s right, I think a man would be nuts!

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you find any adverse aspects of it as far as just the time factor in relationship to your own ministry at First Jacksonville.

JERRY VINES: Well, again, I had the advantage of Homer being here. So that was a great help. You know, our church just prospered and flourished through every bit of it. I
think that it needs to be carefully watched so that the man doesn’t let his own church suffer.

DARRELL ORMAN: So, on that note, probably pastors from smaller churches would have a great deal of difficulty with that, wouldn’t they?

JERRY VINES: Yeah, but you know what? I think it would be wonderful for a pastor of a smaller church to be president of the S.B.C., but on the other hand, it would be a very difficult thing to do.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure.

JERRY VINES: I mean, you know, the convention has gotten so large, you take even the Pastor’s Conference. I think it would be marvelous for the pastor of a smaller church to be president of the Pastor’s Conference. But there is a huge budget to raise. And normally, you’ve got to have....yeah, you’ve been involved in that......and you’ve got to have a church that could kind of underwrite you there, in case you get in trouble. And that’s not peanuts we’re talking about, either. You know what I’m saying?

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, for some of those churches it would probably be their annual budget.

JERRY VINES: Well, exactly. It’s regrettable, but I don’t see what you would do to change it. It’s just the nature of the beast.

DARRELL ORMAN: How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ? If you were to sit down, let’s say, with the next four or five in a row, and you were able to talk with just the four or five of them, what would you say to them that would maximize their presidency?

JERRY VINES: I think I would put a large emphasis on my preaching, wherever I was. I would try to strike in my preaching and in my convention messages, what my burden, what my theme was for that particular time in the history of the convention. And that’s what I would hammer away on. I think that’s what Bobby Welch has done.

DARRELL ORMAN: Would you commend him on the way he has come out of the gate?

JERRY VINES: Yeah, I would commend Bobby. He has put the focus on evangelism through the Sunday School. He has taken his FAITH program and has thrust it right into the presidency of the S.B.C. Not that it’s the FAITH program, but what I mean is that my main goal of the program would be winning people for Christ, and that’s been his theme, and I really commend him for it. I think he’s done an excellent job.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, absolutely, I agree with you.
JERRY VINES: Yeah, he’s done a great job!

DARRELL ORMAN: In fact, several of the past presidents that I’ve already interviewed have all said the same thing. There were one or two that felt like any president that sets his own theme for his presidency, that sometimes might get in the way of the agencies. But for the most part, the others have said they really commended him, thought he was wise just coming right out of the chute as fast as he could.

In light of your experience, as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the S.B.C.?

JERRY VINES: It’s huge! It’s huge! Because he becomes a spokesmen for the largest, protestant denomination in the world. That’s huge. Know what I’m saying? That is very, very big.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, even though it’s past your presidency, your comments about Mohammed’s pediphilia, could you elaborate on the fall out from that for just a second? Because I know that would be an excellent illustration of the influence. What you said was absolutely true.

JERRY VINES: Well, see, really, I think I was a bit naïve that night. I was preaching to the Pastor’s Conference, and if you go back and listen to the message, that was just a tiny, little portion of that message. It was just something that was used as an illustration but it was said in an atmosphere in America where even our president, whom I greatly love and respect, was saying that Islam is a religion of peace. Now any knowledgeable person knows that Islam is not a religion of peace.....

DARRELL ORMAN: Never been true.

JERRY VINES: ......and I got tired of hearing him say it. I felt like somebody needed to say something to the contrary, but I was speaking, my setting was the pastors of the Southern Baptist Convention......

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, you thought you were preaching to the choir.

JERRY VINES: Right, see. And, of course, I should have known better. My mistake, if I made a mistake in it all, and I’m not convinced I did, but I should have been aware that there would have been reporters there; and there were reporters there. But the interesting thing, you know I would never have made that statement on a national platform. I would never have gotten up at the President’s Prayer Breakfast, for instance, and made that statement. Nor would I ever go into the home of a Muslim and say something like that. I’m smarter than that, I think.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, empathetically, you want to try to win them so you don’t hit them on the nose, about their leader.
JERRY VINES: So that statement was never intended for Muslim ears, although I should have known that a reporter would be there. But having made the statement and believing it to be a true statement, I couldn’t back down.

DARRELL ORMAN: Amen!

JERRY VINES: And therefore, I refused to back down, as you recall.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, praise God. I’ve been doing, you know we have radio here, and I periodically do the same thing with illustrations, because it’s true. And I don’t think enough evangelical pastors are telling the truth about it.

JERRY VINES: I couldn’t deny that which I believe to be true, so I had to stand by the statement. You know, there was tremendous pressure put on me to recant, back down, and apologize, and I just wouldn’t do it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have death threats or have you had any contact from the Muslim community in America?

JERRY VINES: I’ve had repeated threats.

DARRELL ORMAN: Isn’t that something?

JERRY VINES: Oh, yes.

DARRELL ORMAN: In our country.

JERRY VINES: Over a religion of peace.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, exactly.

JERRY VINES: Oh, yeah, I went through all kinds of death threats, especially in the early times. But, the interesting thing about it, Dr. Patterson told me and you may if you want to, you can verify this statement with him, but Paige told me, he said, “I think really that you having made that statement will result in millions of Muslims coming to Christ.” And I said, “Why?” He said, “Well, you took them off guard. Before they realized it, this statement about Mohammed was scattered all over the Muslim world, and before they even realized it, here were Muslims who had never heard that statement and they went to their doctrines and found out.

DARRELL ORMAN: He married a thirteen year old girl.

JERRY VINES: Yeh. They found out I was absolutely correct, and he said this couldn’t help but disillusion millions of them and I believe millions of them will be won to Christ as a result.
DARRELL ORMAN: Well, that's beautiful. That's good.

JERRY VINES: And you know the interesting thing, within six months after that statement, in our own church right here, the head of our international ministry here in church told me we had won to Christ and baptized twenty Muslims. So, there you are.

DARRELL ORMAN: Praise God! That's wonderful.

JERRY VINES: You know, there you are! That's kind of where I am, you know.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, God bless you. I'm proud of you. I was then, and I am now.

JERRY VINES: Well, thank you. It's been quite interesting, never bothered me to tell you the truth. I had a perfect peace about the whole thing. Really.

DARRELL ORMAN: Good for you. Well, the Lord was leading you and you gotta say what Jesus tells you to say. What are the unique pressures and responsibilities of serving in one of the most influential evangelical positions in the world?

JERRY VINES: Well, I guess the pressures are to try to be careful not to make the statements and certainly not to say anything that would bring discredit on the Lord or our denomination.

DARRELL ORMAN: Isn't that difficult now with the nature of media where they can pull sound bites, and they're pulling out of context, and you're saying things that were never in your heart.

JERRY VINES: Exactly right.

DARRELL ORMAN: Even though they did come out of your mouth.

JERRY VINES: Exactly right.

DARRELL ORMAN: Now let's see, what else? What about pressures? We talked about the time frame and the media pressures. Any other pressures?

JERRY VINES: Well, I think there are always the family pressures, and you want to be careful that you don't let Convention responsibilities cause you to be neglectful of your family responsibilities.

DARRELL ORMAN: Is that difficult now that you speak every year at the national convention, if you will, you are the personality within the convention obviously, is that not difficult if you and Janet are in a restaurant at the convention and people are always interrupting, isn't that difficult?
JERRY VINES: Well, no, not really. You know, Janet doesn’t even go to the conventions anymore.

DARRELL ORMAN: She doesn’t go?

JERRY VINES: No, she just said a few years ago, let’s make a deal. She said if you go tend to the convention, I’ll stay here and take care of the home front.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, my wife’s at the same spot. She doesn’t even like the good politicking. She doesn’t like the powwows which we all get into…….

JERRY VINES: Yeah, we like all that kind of stuff. But, you know, that’s alright.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life? Your first church or two, seminary, college? Did you have a sense of destiny of how God was going to use you?

JERRY VINES: No, I don’t know that I did, really, Darrell. It just kind of unfolded for me, and I’ve been amazed every step of the way, to tell you the truth. You know what I mean? I’ve just been amazed. You know when I first started out, I thought I was probably just going to stay pastor of a country church there in my home county, up in Georgia. So, everywhere I’ve gone has been an amazement to me that anybody had called me. You know what I’m saying?

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, absolutely.

JERRY VINES: And I’m absolutely astonished that God has let me be here 23 years.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency?

JERRY VINES: Well, I think it gave me understanding of committee work; it gave me understanding of finances; it gave me some understanding of how to be a leader of men; you know what I’m saying? So I guess that was part of it.

DARRELL ORMAN: On the leadership of men, what do you feel is like a key element to that, as far as leading men in a church setting? Leading business men, professionals, middle class workers, just everybody.

JERRY VINES: Well, you know, I think, to me, I’ve never really……you know, there are all kinds of books out there on leadership and virtually every one of them has a different definition of what leadership is. I’m not sure I know yet what leadership is. But to me, the best way to be a leader is to be who you are, the way God has made you, the way God leads your personality. I don’t think you can take on the characteristics of other men’s leadership style. I think you can learn from others, of course, but I think the main thing is just be genuine and be real. I have found that God’s people, if they find out that
you’re the real deal, they’ll tend to follow you. So, I just try to lead by being a Christ-like man, and challenging them to follow the teachings of God’s Word, to do what God has put us into this world to do. And I’ve been fortunate along the way to have people who are willing to do that.

DARRELL ORMAN: My wife, Kim, is very discerning, and she thinks the world of you. She can sense that in your life as well.

JERRY VINES: Well, I appreciate that. I just try, Darrell, to be what I am. I figured out a long time ago that I wasn’t going to be the next Billy Graham. And I found out real soon that I wasn’t God. In fact, I figured out I wasn’t even assistant God. You know what I’m saying? I’m just trying to be who God made me to be, what He wants me to be. I don’t have any illusions about who I am, or what my abilities are. I’m just grateful for whatever God’s been willing to do. How long you been where you are, Darrell?

DARRELL ORMAN: I’ve been here thirteen years.

JERRY VINES: I thought you’d been there a while, yeah.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, I’ve been here thirteen years, its unique challenge, sweet spirit, God’s blessed, things are going the right way, for sure.

JERRY VINES: How old are you now?

DARRELL ORMAN: Forty-eight.

JERRY VINES: Ahh, you’re just a boy.

DARRELL ORMAN: I appreciate that. Sometimes I feel like a boy, and sometimes I feel like my dad.

JERRY VINES: I understand. One of these days you’ll look in the mirror and you’ll see your dad.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, I’m starting to. The kids are telling me that, “You look like grandpa, Dad.”

Let me ask you this, Dr. Vines, on denominational positions. You’ve held denominational positions along the way. I know when I talked to Adrian, he said he really didn’t hold any of those. Did some of those help you before your presidency, what positions have you held? Have you been Moderator, or Director of Evangelism for the Association? What kind of things have you done along the way?

JERRY VINES: I didn’t do a whole lot of that either. I never really was selected to do a whole lot of that along the way.
DARRELL ORMAN: Well, the convention at that stage when you were coming, developing your first churches and preaching the Word, being conservative, they were probably suspicious of you, thinking you were independent or something, because you were conservative?

JERRY VINES: Well that's when I got that criticism along the way.

DARRELL ORMAN: I saw that with Brother Bobby; Brother Bobby Moore is one of my spiritual fathers in Memphis, Adrian led me to Christ, but Brother Bobby was just soul-winning all the way all along, and he was criticized for that, and he's been Southern Baptist all his life.

JERRY VINES: I think it's the same kind of criticism. I did things a little bit differently in my churches. For instance, in Training Union back, way back in the 60's, I started teaching courses in Training Union on Sunday night. The people weren't coming to Training Union so I just thought up something to get them to come and then they started coming, and I got criticized because I didn't have a real Training Union.

DARRELL ORMAN: Oh, my.

JERRY VINES: You hear what I'm saying?

DARRELL ORMAN: Now most of them are doing something different or not doing it at all.

JERRY VINES: Exactly. And you know, I found out later we didn't know each other at the time. After I started offering those courses like that, I found out Homer was doing the same thing down here quite successfully. So, you know!

DARRELL ORMAN: I know you held trustee positions and some of those things before your presidency. Did........

JERRY VINES: No, I never was. I was never a trustee.

DARRELL ORMAN: You never did, not a trustee anywhere. What about offices in the Florida Baptist, have you held any offices in the Florida Baptist Convention?

JERRY VINES: No, you may not remember this or it may have been before you got here, but they were going to put me on the Board of Missions one time, and they called me and asked me if they could. I had been dealing for several years with the criticism that I didn't participate. So I remember Homer and I talked about it, and I said, “Well, Homer, maybe this is a chance for me to participate. You know, I get criticized for not participating, so maybe this is an opportunity. I'm going to take that.” Well, at the time, Jack Brymer was the editor of the paper, and so I was not able to be at the convention, I was preaching at another convention. I got a phone call from Jack and Jack said, “Would you like to make a statement?” And I said, “Well, Jack, a statement about what?” And
he said, “Well, they kicked you off the Board of Missions; they voted not to put you on the Board of Missions.” I said, “They did?” He said, “Well, yeah. A pastor there in Jacksonville got up and told them that you didn’t attend the Jacksonville Association Pastor’s Conference, which was true, and that you shouldn’t be on the State Board of Missions.” And he said, “They replaced you with somebody else.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Oh, my.

JERRY VINES: So, I mean, you know.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well you know, Adrian has never been elected President of the Tennessee Convention. It’s amazing, it really is. So that didn’t really come to play as it was more your church committee work that trained you.

Last question. Can a group of young pastors be trained and mentored to possibly serve as president of the S.B.C.? Would that in anyway circumvent God’s sovereignty in the selection election process?

JERRY VINES: Well, I don’t think it would circumvent God’s sovereignty, I don’t know how you could circumvent God’s sovereignty. If God is sovereign, what could we do that would circumvent it. But I think that would be fraught with a number of problems there. Here would be some guys all being trained to be President of S.B.C., I think that opens you up for a lot of criticism there. I’d be a little hesitant to get into that one.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, the mega-conference, does that come into play at all in that, the interaction of the different ages of men, pastoring across the nation, would that come to play at all?

JERRY VINES: I don’t know that it does. I don’t know that I’ve ever seen it be involved; although, by the very fact that some of them have big churches, I guess maybe so.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, in relationship to your Jacksonville Pastor’s Conference, I know there have been many times that’s been a platform for announcements for different ones’ candidacies. Has that been instrumental? Has that been helpful?

JERRY VINES: Well, you know, it has been a place where that has happened. I think it has just been a place where, back in the conservative resurgence years, we were all coalescing around a candidate and basically, your men out here, in the churches were looking to certain conservative leaders to see “who’s our man?”

DARRELL ORMAN: Right, exactly.
JERRY VINES: And it didn’t matter who it was. So that’s the kind of a place where we say, “This is our man.” That is, if we had any kind of a consensus at all that this was our man.

DARRELL ORMAN: Right, right. I guess out of the last thirteen during the conservative resurgence, the only ones that didn’t seem to follow the pattern were Fred Wolf and Jim Henry.

JERRY VINES: Yeah, that was kind of a “blip on the screen” there.

DARRELL ORMAN: Right. I attended a conference; it was Jay Strack’s golf thing, where it seemed like it was kind of a younger group that were duplicating the senior groups’ activities. You’re aware of that, I’m sure.

JERRY VINES: Yeah, uh huh.

DARRELL ORMAN: I went once, I wasn’t really comfortable, didn’t really enjoy it that much. I enjoyed the golf with the guys, enjoyed the fellowship, but the angle of it was a little different.

JERRY VINES: Yeah, but they’re all good guys.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, they are, and some of them overlap, for sure.

JERRY VINES: Some of them, looking back on all that, realize that the way they went about it was not a good thing. But you know, we all make our own judgments, and our mistakes along the way.

JERRY VINES: Yeah, I would agree with you. Jim’s a good man. I love Jim. In fact, I think, his wife is having surgery today.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, all of you all are retiring here pretty close to the same time.

JERRY VINES: Well, that’s right.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, there’s a shift going on.

JERRY VINES: A shift going on, you’re right.

DARRELL ORMAN: One last question: what word would you use to describe your leadership, specifically your presidency; but, even larger than that maybe your life in ministry, but specifically your presidency? One word, either a character word, a ministry word, what word would you use?

JERRY VINES: I guess I would use the word “exposition.”
DARRELL ORMAN: O.K., that's excellent.

JERRY VINES: In fact, Darrell, if God lets me live and finish out this year, I'll do a series on Wednesday nights on the Book of Deuteronomy, and if the Lord lets me complete it, I will have preached a series of messages on every book of the Bible. And I'm thankful for that! I have a good feeling about that. I mean here, in Jacksonville.

DARRELL ORMAN: That's great.

JERRY VINES: A lot of people have had exposition of Scripture. That's what I'm trying to do with my ministry, expound the Scriptures.
DARRELL ORMAN: I'm with Morris Chapman, the sixth president of the Southern Baptist Convention Conservative Resurgence, it's February 23rd. It's good to be with you, Dr. Chapman.

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you, sir. It's great to have you here.

DARRELL ORMAN: How do you personally define success in the ministry?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, for me, it's always been very simple: discovering and doing God's will.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, you know, virtually every president I've interviewed thus far has almost said exactly the same thing. Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, I never thought of it at the time as preparation, of course, so it is definitely looking back. Obviously, as I pastored increasingly larger churches it exposed me to challenges, both from the pastoral perspective and an administrative perspective and even somewhat of a communication perspective, especially in my five years in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where the population was largely Catholic. So to be pastor of First Baptist Church of Albuquerque was not a readily noticeable thing in the city nor were the numbers of Baptists so large that people really even paid attention to Baptists. One of the great challenges there was to try to establish a Baptist presence in the city. Now, not that there were not already good churches, in fact, First Baptist Church of Albuquerque was the mother church of Baptist work in Albuquerque, and the entire state of New Mexico. Over time they started a multiple, large number of mission churches all over the state. But, the community in Albuquerque hardly took notice of First Baptist Church and Baptist work in general, so the challenge set me on a course toward trying to communicate to the larger community. That led me in the early days when a commercial was referred to as a "television spot" for thirty seconds. I do not know for certain; I'm not sure but that I was either the first or one of the first pastors to utilize thirty second or sixty second television spots to publicize the church and the work in the community.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you find those very effective?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, they were at the time, you know. I'd question whether they would be as effective today in what has become the electronic age, and with so much information. But in that city and in that state, again, it was just a total surprise to anybody watching television that something would come up about Baptist work. And they were very professionally done. We had a production company that worked with us, so it was not a fly-by-night operation. They were messages in context, just like a little work-through vignette then the final word from me all in thirty seconds. It came to sixty seconds. The pastors all over the state expressed deep gratitude. I thought perhaps they would feel a little sense of competition and jealousy that we were being able to do that. But just the opposite occurred. They said in all parts of the state people were hearing about Baptists for the first time and just our presence on television with those spots really
brought attention and credibility to the Baptist work in the state. So, I think just the course God led me on, number one, in the churches I pastored was preparation. Then also, I loved the Southern Baptist Convention, and love the Southern Baptist Convention to this day. So when called upon to do something, even the least responsibility in the association, I always tried to be faithful to do what I was being asked to do, believing that God wanted me to be cooperative in that sense. So I was active in attending Southern Baptist Conventions, and you just learn by observing. I learned a lot just by osmosis, without thinking about how it might be teaching me something.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, it's a story untold. I've always been what I would perceive to be: a mystic in the best sense of the word, that is, I believe God communicates to us and He communicates to us in the light of the truth of His Word. And obviously, if it doesn't line up with God's Word, it may be somebody else talking to us. But in the sense that I believe God impresses our hearts and guides us along the way, I would be considered a mystic in that sense. From the mid 1980's on, because I was actively speaking my convictions about the inerrancy of God's Word, various individuals would say, "Well, you need to be nominated for president." So I had people mentioning it to me from the mid 1980's. I had no way to know that would ever become a reality. You can't help but sometimes think about it when people start to mention it to you. You don't have to have an ambition or a goal to do that. But, nevertheless, if they start telling you, it begins to implant stuff in your mind. So I realized that maybe there would be some possibility but as we came toward the election in 1990, I don't know why I felt this way, but I sensed that maybe this was God's timing. I have nothing to pin that on. In fact, the feeling grew so strong that I felt that either I would either be nominated in 1990 or never be nominated. You know, that was okay. But I still had to deal with those inner feelings, and make them a matter of prayer and say, "Lord, guide me, just help me to stay on point in my service to You, if that's what You want, well help me know. If it's not, it's fine but help me know that it's not so I'm not struggling with confusion. And, as it drew closer to the convention, it was about January or February, it was increasingly becoming certain that another individual was perceived to be the stronger if, in fact, one of the two of us would be nominated.

DARRELL ORMAN: From the conservative side?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Yes, from the conservative perspective. And, so much of the talk began to gravitate toward him until enough people seemed to be in agreement that he was approached and agreed to be nominated. I'd gone to Washington, DC to be in a meeting with William Bennett who became the drug czar and was strong in education, the Secretary of Education. A number of conservative leaders, and a number of evangelical conservatives, and the individual who was to be nominated was also there. So the night before I checked into the hotel and I thought well maybe some of the others were there, actually sort of walked the halls of my floor to see if I could hear any "Southern Baptist voices," and I happened to hear one I recognized and it was the individual who was to be nominated that summer. So I knocked on the door, he was in
there. We came in and, of course, he was a very affable man and a good friend of mine, and all conservatives. What I'd heard was him reviewing some of what he was going to begin to tell the press later in the coming week, about “well, he was to be nominated, and a sense of God’s direction”, so he would review some of it and ask me how did that sound, and I’d say “Boy, that sounds great.” I’d come to accept that he would be the nominee, and based on some of the feelings that I had, that I would not likely ever be, which was okay. But I just had to get the thought removed from my mind. So the next day we had our meeting, it ended at noon. I had dinner and flew home to Wichita Falls. My wife had served not only on the Peace Committee but was a trustee at Lifeway on the Sunday School Board, and she was on her last term and in her last meeting that very Monday night and Tuesday. So even from Washington, I sent her a dozen roses to be presented to her at the trustee meeting. Ironically, Becky Chandler was the one I’d talked to who ordered the roses, who has become my associate now for the last twelve or thirteen years. So, on the way home that night, I talked to Jody, and we sort of rejoiced over the end of her term there and the fact that I would not be nominated for president of the convention meant that we were going to have a little more free time than having been engaged quite so extensively in Southern Baptist life. I got home and flew into Wichita Falls, TX, of course it’s not a large city, about 100,000 people, and driving in from the airport, I just had overwhelming dilemma in that I fully accepted that I would not be nominated, but it was almost like God was saying “You are going to be nominated,” which I couldn’t.....it was overwhelming, I could hardly talk about it because the experience was so real. But at the time I just thought it was my own mind and heart still struggling. So I drove to the house, of course no one was home, turned on the lights, put down the suitcase, and almost within the next moment, not quite, but I got a call on the telephone. One of the major leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention, a pastor, was on the other end of the line and said “Morris, we believe you need to be nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Convention.” Of course, out of that experience it has been humorous over the years to hear others who had not been conservative talk about how cut and dried the selection for president had been.

DARRELL ORMAN: Like there was a batting order?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Yes, in fact, here was an instance where even the majority of conservatives thought one thing and God had something different in mind. I told the pastor who called me, “Well, I don’t mean to be contrary; you always know what you’re talking about, but I just left Washington and left the person to be nominated and surely you’re just behind in not knowing that he was to be, there’s something not right here.” He said, “No, he made the decision today that he didn’t believe God wanted him to follow any further through with the nomination.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Who was it? Was it Richard Jackson?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: No, let me tell you after the interview. I don’t want to get into that. But I will tell you at the end, because he’s a great guy. But anyway, I was so shaken, so many mixed emotions, that all I could say was “Well, let me just pray about it over night.” You know, I was in shock. So I prayed about it over night, and sure enough,
the Lord affirmed some of the feelings I’d been having, and from there I felt that God wanted me to be nominated. I had no assurance that I’d be elected. I didn’t know whether it was God’s will for me to be elected but I knew now, I was convinced now that it was God’s will to be nominated. I even wrestled with the fact that I might not only let the Lord down but whole conservative movement because what if I were the first conservative to get defeated. So it became sort of a heavy burden to a degree.

DARRELL ORMAN: What was the time frame from then until the election?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, if I remember correctly, that was early February, of the same spring; so we’re talking about five months; the answer to how God selected me, that’s just it, in a nutshell. It was a story untold because first of all not a lot of people are interested, they’re thinking more of the political angles of those kinds of things, and secondly, I never wanted to discuss it more than just as confidence that God was leading me. There was no reason to try to prove that there was anything else to it or the dynamics of it, and of course, it brought in the discussion of another individual to tell it, but that was how God called me.

DARRELL ORMAN: During your tenure, as president, what do you see now as God’s unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time? Before your election?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: I was aware of it before, during and after, and to this day, and in its simplest vernacular: spiritual awakening. That, in no way, means feeling good to the exclusion of missions and evangelism, but a kind of national spiritual awakening that would sweep the country like a prairie fire. It would set people’s hearts ablaze. The lostness of the world would be countered with a powerful visit of God’s Spirit.

DARRELL ORMAN: You initiated the Watchman Prayer program then?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Yes, it was not my idea originally, but I did that with the help of the one who was actually the author of the idea, and he was willing to sort of ramp it up and be more visible in it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Was that Larry Thompson?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Uh huh. One of the things I had done in the early to mid-eighties, at my church, we were such strong Cooperative Program givers, that I asked myself the question as a strong Southern Baptist, “Is there anything else as a local church I can do, and we can do, besides give Cooperative Program gifts?” Out of that was born the idea for us to pray for every Southern Baptist Church and every entity and their leaders. So we developed what became a fairly complex system and adopted about a five to six month period, and our people, on Monday through Friday, prayed in thirty-minute segments for whatever number of churches we put before them by name, and if we were going to pray for a church that following Tuesday, we would mail out a post card on Tuesday or Wednesday so that they wouldn’t get confused (so that we didn’t have to date
But they would know that the next Tuesday the First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls was praying for them specifically. We didn’t use an 800 outgoing number but we used an incoming 800 number so that by our suggestion on the card, people could call that number and make special requests for their church on that day. And it became a phenomenal pilgrimage for the people of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, for all those who volunteered to pray; because many of them had an opportunity to talk to leaders in other churches. We would have people who had churches without pastors, saying “pray for us in the selection of a pastor.” We had pastors who would call us and say “well you’re praying for us on Tuesday, or you’re praying for us on Thursday? We’ve moved our prayer meeting from Wednesday to that night so that we will be praying for you and others in the convention at the same time you’re praying for us.” All of that was in the context of believing that prayer, of course, is a definite ingredient necessary for revival. To this day, I’m still hoping and praying and time is running along, and I’m just praying that we’ll see a national spiritual awakening in my lifetime. I still have that urgency.

DARRELL ORMAN: On that note, would you classify yourself as an intercessor and a leader?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, you know, I do not pray often enough in the sense of just time set aside and lengthy praying, so I probably would not classify as an intercessor, but I have had a burden for this nation. I certainly have a heart for international missions, but based on the strategy of Acts 1:8, which we’re now emphasizing more than ever in the convention, I’ve always believed that if our hearts are not right in America, we have very little to share overseas. If we’re not careful, we’re going to see the people we’ve led to Christ overseas become missionaries back to this country because we’ve failed to do the job. That’s already happening. So, you know, on the Wednesday night of my first term as president in Atlanta, we had a massive emphasis upon spiritual awakening and at that time, Bellevue Baptist Church was one of the few churches and certainly the only one of that size that had multiple banners. It had just been introduced, and so with their help that night, we had a presentation including those banners and music and people calling for prayer. It was the time when some of our prayer leaders were emphasizing; do you remember that time and what it was called? Like the tabernacle, Henry Blackaby and some of the prayer leaders were emphasizing that particular emphasis on prayer. The inclination had been, for those who assisted me from a committee perspective on planning, kept wanting to sort of move it toward praying for reconciliation in the Southern Baptist Convention. I just felt like that would be almost a mockery in the sense that some of the people who would be trying to pray for that had no intent because they didn’t believe the time was up to see some changes. And the people were still going to be irritated with each other; we needed to pray for the right spirit, but nevertheless let’s not pretend we’re praying when we know we’re going to continue to press.

DARRELL ORMAN: Was that called “enlarge the tent”?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: That’s right. That was sort of the theme upon which I was nominated. So I was very careful to steer it back to spiritual awakening for the nation. If
we see spiritual awakening for the nation, God will bring the kind of unity to Southern Baptists we need.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** Are you a goal setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals? And at what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?

**MORRIS CHAPMAN:** I do not consider myself a goal setter. I do believe I am a visionary, so therefore I see objectives. Often they’re long term objectives, but I do not follow through to the point of laying down all the weight points to get there. That’s not something I usually do. So, I would say I’m not a goal setter but I would say that I did set a goal very early in ’60, God’s call to the ministry which came very early, at the age of 12, and that was to try to be faithful. Since God’s call at the age of 12, I never looked to the right or the left or back. I’m a very poor career counselor, because I was drafted at the age of 12. I never considered what else to do other than a ministry of some sort. Now I have to sort it out in time, and I was 21 before I had a definite sense of a call to a preaching ministry. But, as far as whether it had to do with that I was put here for the simple purpose of serving the Lord, there seems to be no mistake since 12. So just trying to be faithful for that reason early in my ministry, and, of course, I do understand political aspects of influence and persuasion. Even early on I realized that I could get myself in trouble by trying to press on to another church, or seek fields or pastures that are greener, and so in my first pastorate I made a covenant with the Lord that I would hardly even admit, much less suggest, that maybe humanly I might feel I’d be good for another pastorate. I just told the Lord, “I’m right here in Rogers, Texas, central Texas, and you know, Lord, if you found me as a 12 year old and in Kosciusko, Mississippi, and if You want me to do anything else, You can find me.” I have religiously stayed by that covenant. Now, not to overemphasize it, I can’t say that I did that so much out of just a strong spiritual urge as I did understanding myself enough to say, “Lord, I need some protection here and I don’t want to ever take control of anything.” And I’ve been able to stay with it and one of the exciting features of that is that whenever a pulpit committee came or any search committee, I was usually more surprised than anybody in the country that listens closely to Baptist grapevines, because I just wouldn’t let myself anticipate anything. So the goal is to be faithful, and God’s honored that. Now I will say, in being faithful, I worked hard, applied myself, I am (or near to being) a workaholic in the sense I don’t have a lot of avocations. Sometimes people would mistake that for some kind of built-in ambition, or drive that was personal or ambitious. The fact of the matter is, it was just always a sense that I believe that God wanted me to do my very best with what was available at that moment. I just had to live with the fact that some people would think that no one would work that hard just for the sake of doing the right thing. But that was not the way most people responded. Occasionally, I’d run into that.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** How many churches did you pastor?

**MORRIS CHAPMAN:** Four. I had pastorates of 2½ years, 5 years, 5 years and 13 years.
DARRELL ORMAN: If you could serve as president again, would you do anything differently the second time around, looking back?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Perhaps, but, I gave it all the time and energy and wisdom I had, and I wouldn’t know what to say. I wouldn’t know how to specify or quantify. As I’ve watched other presidents since that time, with each one I say, “Well, I could have done that” or “I should have done that.” But, you know……

DARRELL ORMAN: On that note, are there any points that pop out because Bobby Welch is seeking a little counsel here and Johnny Hunt, he’s talked with me at lunch, and I think they’re going to seek counsel from these interviews. Are there two or three things or a couple things……

MORRIS CHAPMAN: First of all, the pastor has to be aware of the Southern Baptist Convention, where it is, and what they think needs to be done at that particular time and where it needs to go. My only counsel would be, even if you served two years, and without assurances there’s going to be a second year, the time is short. You don’t have time to build in a lot of goals or objectives, and I think you’re most effective to concentrate and get the people to focus on one emphasis and at the most, maybe a secondary emphasis trailing it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you think Bobby Welch was good then, jumping off with this million …..

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Oh, absolutely. First of all, he seized the moment, and he had done his homework maybe better than any president in my lifetime, and then he was willing to give practically full-time to this, which of course is not asked because it can not be done by most people. It’s not expected, but fortunately for Southern Baptists, he’s able to do it. So the emphasis of winning people to Christ is just the note he is sounding, and a needed note as we find our way beyond the conservative resurgence.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, I’ve had some of the previous presidents I’ve interviewed say that they believe you were the first president to come in with a programmatic agenda, with the Watchmen and that sort of thing, the spiritual awakening aspect.

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, other presidents said, you know, with some appreciation of course, at the same time those in sitting positions like I’m sitting now, would say, “Hey, hey, programming committee.” Not that I thought of it like that. But all of a sudden I may have set a bad precedent for our entity leaders; because now, many of our presidents have come in with these ideas and so the entity leaders are always running to catch up. It’s put an added burden on people who might be in that position. But, I do think that it’s a good thing because you’re just about, at best, without that, what I would call almost a celebrity spokesman for the Southern Baptist Convention. And of course, for those two years, the world listens, the Southern Baptists listen. And that’s wonderful! But, you can say a lot of good things, and yet not help the people to see even a short term
vision. And I do believe Bobby Welch is tuned in precisely correct in that it needs to be an immediate objective; because you have no control over whether or not it is going to last. That’s right, in two years it’s over. And if another man comes in with another focus, well then that’s a little different, well, of course, it’ll be nuanced in that direction, in spite of the fact that we all talk about missions, evangelism and Biblical integrity. Obviously, after several presidents who have emphasized various things, Bobby is saying “Evangelism! Evangelism! It’s the reminder of who we are, where we’ve been, and what our convictions are. That is, to lead people to Christ.” It’s timely. He is effectively also speaking a great deal about the Cooperative Program, and I see that as an undergirding, secondary emphasis that every time he says that, it helps people realize that this financial lifeline is a key to Southern Baptist missions and evangelism. So, I may have been the one to start that, and depending on whom the individual was and their position on Baptist life, some saw it as very good and some saw it as not so good.

DARRELL ORMAN: Because they think every two years we go off on something new. I had dinner with some of the trustees last night and three of them that would probably be considered maybe more insignificant, one of them is a layman from California, and so forth. They, all three, said that the Bobby Welch election has been refreshing to them, and all their friends. They viewed it as unique and they really appreciated it.

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, he’s a unique personality that God brought to us for such a time as this and I think people have responded to him readily and with excitement.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, one of them said he’s the first president that’s been, he’s way out west somewhere, and he’s the first president to have been in their state that they know of while he was president. Let’s see. In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: I think the most was getting to meet and observe Southern Baptists in the context of their own lives and minister. Because of the travel, you know, being in a number of places in the United States. It’s an experience that helps you understand as never before just how vast the Southern Baptist network really is. And how faithful these people really are, even though I was always back in my own pulpit on Sunday morning, nonetheless being out there among them, I realized more than ever, how many people at churches are worshiping every Sunday morning who are akin to who we are at First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls at that time. So I would say that was the highlight that was enhanced by.....immediately after my election, I had already planned an evangelistic crusade effort in Kenya in which Jimmy Draper had been very involved in the preparation. So Jody and I planned to go, it was a four-week crusade, and we went the last two weeks. The Drapers might have even gone for more time than that. First of all, we saw thousands come to Christ. The last day we all went down into the Indian Ocean. The national pastors, those of us who were there to visit, all lined up, and people just began to move by mass into the waters. And we were just baptizing like this, I don’t know the number but it was thousands. It was the Kenyan Coast Crusade. It was over in the Mombassa area. It was extraordinary, and it came right off of my being president, but
rather than canceling because I was president. I thought it was even more reason to go.

Then the Baptist World Alliance was occurring that year in Korea, in Seoul, so Jody and I
went to that the very next month. We came home for about ten days, and then back to
Seoul. The Korean Baptists had decided to bring all their unbaptized people to the
Baptist World Congress, an every five-year event. So all of their unbaptized believers
came, and toward the end of that week, we had a massive baptism in the Hong River.
Again, it was surely in the thousands, not near the size of the group in Kenya but still a
large number because they came from all the churches in South Korea. I remember Billy
Kim and I were down in the water together. He’s the almost outgoing president…. he
will conclude his five years as president of the BWA this next summer. But, we were
together, and again, many of the pastors were baptizing their own people, but there were
so many, there were always others for us to baptize. So really, the first and second
months after I was elected, I had two of the greatest mission trips that I had ever
experienced. The other one thing that had to do with travel is that, again having a heart
for America, I wanted to somehow touch base around the country so the Home Mission
Board devised a strategy that we would symbolically go to all four corners of the United
States. So we left on a Monday morning and by Friday we had been in all four corners of
the United States, having gotten out and visited and toured some of the work, and seen
the DOM’s and the state executives and got back on our plane and headed to another
corner. That was an exhilarating and encouraging experience. That’s when we met you
in your church.

DARRELL ORMAN: We were one of the corners?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Right, you were one of the corners, down in Florida. And then,
the state executives were the ones who made the design and determined the few churches
we’d be able to visit in like a day and a half’s time.

DARRELL ORMAN: That’s neat. So, what was your least favorite experience?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: You know, in that position, God just gives you a strength and a
sense of confidence that I don’t know I’ve had at any two years in my whole lifetime,
before or after.

DARRELL ORMAN: So many people praying for you!

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Yes, it makes a huge difference. You know, there’s a sense to it
where God has laid on you a certain authority upon you for that period of time and the
people are praying, so really, when the media came, I never considered myself quick with
an answer, which maybe spared me sometimes from saying the wrong things, but,
nevertheless, before the media I just said what God put on my heart and didn’t look back.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, you were far enough down the line; you were the 6th,
where you weren’t getting all that initial flack.
MORRIS CHAPMAN: Right. I remember, for instance, I was the chairman of the Order of Business committee in Dallas in 1985 and that was before we had the mob box that registered the microphones sequentially so we’d know who got there next at any of the microphones, and it was the year that we had a paid parliamentarian. So even though we had parliamentarians, as chairman of our business committee, I was just in the thick of everything and Dr. Stanley had not versed himself a lot in parliamentary rulings, and I wound up at the microphone on the platform on a number of occasions because it was such a rowdy convention that I wound up sometimes explaining just as the chief parliamentarian did, both of us amateurs in that sense, how to get through this thing. I mean, it was a zoo. But I did have an opportunity to nominate Charles Stanley for his second term as president, and may have coined, but certainly did call him “America’s pastor” at that time, and of course God gave a wonderful victory. But I remember because of that office.

DARRELL ORMAN: Was that the 45-47,000?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Yes, 45,000 messengers. You know, that was the only year in my lifetime that only messengers could be allowed in at the time of the voting sessions. It was exhilarating,........but it was tiring.

DARRELL ORMAN: So you were the chief parliamentarian?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, I was the chairman of the Order of Business. Wayne Allen, from Memphis, was the Chief Parliamentarian, but again, that was the year before the paid parliamentarian, so you know we’re all doing some good but we’re doing it not from a professional perspective.

DARRELL ORMAN: The Crowder Law Suit?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: That came up at that time.

DARRELL ORMAN: I remember. One of them was using profanity?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Yes. Somebody said they were throwing chairs back in the back but I never got to see that. For me, it was quite some convention because it started with me preaching at the Pastor’s Conference and W. A. Criswell nominating me to be President of the Pastor’s Conference the next year in Atlanta. And I’ve often said that was the surest nomination ever in history because nobody wanted to nominate somebody to run against whoever W. A. Criswell was nominating. You know, a lot of my election might be due to who nominated me, not because of me.

DARRELL ORMAN: I don’t know, but you’re right, a strong nominator........

MORRIS CHAPMAN: You know, obviously, I certainly felt that it was helpful.
DARRELL ORMAN: If you could change the function of the office of president, how would you change it?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: In our policy, I believe there are few possibilities, and I’ve not spent a lot of time thinking about it, but you know, the unofficial authority that comes with having been elected by the people, puts you in a strong position to have opinions, express your opinions, speak for the convention, speak to the convention, but beyond that the Southern Baptists are never going to allow a titular head, whether it be the President of the Southern Baptist Convention or the President of any entity.

DARRELL ORMAN: They always say we don’t speak for them, we just speak.

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Right. You know, there’s one thing I found and that is that entity leaders, state executives, Southern Baptists, pastors and people, all have a very high regard and respect for the office of president, whoever holds it. You don’t realize while you’re president how many people are praying for you. But there comes a point when you do realize it. And that is the day after a new president has been elected.

DARRELL ORMAN: The grace. Does the grace evaporate a little bit?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, what happens is, the prayers shift to the new president.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, could you sense that the next day?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: I did within the first week. I couldn’t tell you the next day, but I can assure you that it was almost like the air going out of a balloon. Tom Elliff has come along, I know, after and said he experienced the same thing. In fact, Tom mentioned it a whole lot more often than I did, but you’re glad, because that’s what ought to happen, the people concentrate on praying for the president. But it is the extraordinary let down aspect of having been president of the convention. You can get over not traveling as much, not perhaps getting as many accolades and the things that come with the presidency, but what you cannot replace is the prayers that come from those people. And so, when they began to move that mass of prayer toward another individual, you just sense it. It’s just like you coming down to earth.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, on that note. Changing the office, what about the one year terms. Now it’s the tradition, you just get two in a row; do you think that should change at all? Should it be two year terms? I know, years ago it was seven, thirteen, you know, back in the beginning.

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, number one, I think two in a row is fine. It makes us better presidents in the first year, just like it does for the president of the United States in his first term. Because, first of all, you’re not guaranteed the second year, and even if you assume that it might happen, still you want the people to understand you’re really trying to be a good president from day one. So I think it adds an element of urgency and no one has captivated that urgency quicker than Bobby Welch in his bus tour.
DARRELL ORMAN: Do you think it helped that the people that talked to him and supported him, (I've already interviewed him,) that they came out like the day after the convention the year before? So he had a whole year to really think about it, but of course, that's an anathema because that's one of the curses, if you want it then you don't qualify, which is crazy. That's not in any other form of politics.

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, you know, a part of that is good. Some of it might be a little over-reaction but the fact of it is, we look for people who are genuine. We want leaders to be genuine, and if someone, you know I wouldn't say that it's certainly not wrong for a person to think that maybe I would be president, or maybe there are signs that are developing that would indicate there may be some possibility of at least being a nominee. I like the word “nominee” as compared to candidate because I think the individual ought to be a nominee of the people and not a self-declared candidate. Again, Bobby Welch felt the strong leadership of the Lord and he was unapologetic about acting upon it. But, nevertheless, if he hadn't been affirmed over the year prior to his nomination, he would have either backed off or just not been elected.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, I had the opportunity to attend his candidacy the December before the election, you know, December a year ago, at one of these conservative meetings when there was a group there that, well, within the group not the entire group, they were pushing for Richard Land, just so that they could nominate him. My response in the meeting, I just spoke out and I said, “Now, this fellow over here, you served with Bobby on, I guess it was North American Mission Board trustee or whatever, now in the eight years there, or ten, did he ever vote with moderates?” “No, never.” “Well, then why would you want to nominate someone ..... of course, then a couple of guys said that “We don’t know that Bobby is presidential,” and there was a kind of that grooming mentality of whether you are a certain person in a certain area and dress a certain way.

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, Bobby Welch is a man of the people as well as a man of God, and there is a certain earthiness about him, but you don’t have to think very long. Southern Baptists are earthy people, that’s who we are. And the fact is, we would do ourselves a disservice to ever believe that we’ve got to have some elite approach to electing our leaders. I believe that in the very near future, the farther away we walk from the conservative resurgence as a time period, that we will be back to having more than one person nominated both or however many there are, being very qualified, conservative nominees. And I think it will be a good thing for Southern Baptists as we evolve back into that mode.

DARRELL ORMAN: I think one thing that it seems just that because of the nature of technology, and how tight the news loop is with the internet just now, that the president of the convention, I don’t think he could be a little country pastor anymore. I think he would be, it seems like to me, he would be crushed, well, with the media responsibilities, the titular head you mentioned a little earlier.
MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, he would be crushed just by the magnitude of all that needs to be done.

DARRELL ORMAN: Leaving his church, it would probably destroy his church.

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Because the church makes some financial contributions but a vast resource contribution because of the personnel and staff to keep you on the road. Also, to the question of whether or not there should be more than two years, I think we’re fine to see something like happened with Adrian, where he was nominated one year which left it open in the minds of the people that he could be re-nominated and then there’s nothing to say you can’t repeat two consecutive years. And, as far as that goes, he could have been two years early and two later. But the matter of continuous presidents is much less needed today; and I think, because there are that many more Southern Baptists than before. If we don’t have enough people to pass around the leadership of the presidency of the SBC, well, then we are in more dire straits than we believe. Why shouldn’t there be a greater sharing of the office?

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, I have a picture of the convention 1923 that one of our seniors gave me laying out in my office now and there were a few hundred of them there in Jacksonville. It was like a crowd in front of a tent. It looked like a tent revival.

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, we don’t only have a lot more people; we have a lot more qualified people, to be president of the convention. And, on top of that, in this day and age, the type of communication and travel required, you know, presidents are humanly and physically tired after two years. It’s good to have a fresh body, ready to move.

DARRELL ORMAN: How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ? Just kind of in a nutshell? (The things we’ve already discussed?)

MORRIS CHAPMAN: I’ve thought of a few words here. In our vernacular now, kingdom mindedness, laser-like focus, and a lifelong participation in the Southern Baptist Convention; at least a strong awareness of whom we are and where we should go.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you think it would be preferable if they would work their way up through associational positions and state positions?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, I think it is the natural way to learn, the fact of the matter is why would you want somebody who says “I’m saving myself for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention.” You’re looking for someone who loves the convention and wants to be part of it enough that when nobody is looking, he’s trying to be faithful to help.

DARRELL ORMAN: In light of your experience, as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the S.B.C.? Where did you see your impact, outside of the convention?
MORRIS CHAPMAN: Primarily an opportunity to be at the table. Depending upon the stature of the president, by personality, by training, by depth of understanding would gauge some of the influence.

DARRELL ORMAN: President Bush, Sr. was your president, right?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Right, and you know, I had an opportunity to be in the White House on a number of occasions. I had the opportunity to invite him to address the convention in Atlanta that first term. I was invited by Dan Quayle and Marilyn for Jody and me to fly on Air Force II with him on one occasion. Now, you know, you need the maturity to understand that all politicians are not doing this just simply because you’re such a great guy. They are trying to touch base with the various constituencies in America so you can’t get too heady with that sort of thing, and there again is the need for some maturity when a man is elected president because some opportunities will come to him that are so overwhelming he’d be no influence whatsoever because he’s just so awed, he’s dumbstruck. You have to realize that even the invitations that are open to you come as the result of the need of the politicians to touch base with you because of the 17,000,000 people. And you need to respond, but you need to respond with maturity and wisdom that will allow you to interact in a positive and helpful way. But simply being president I would say that the greatest opportunity to maximize and go beyond the convention is simply that you find yourself at the table with other evangelical leaders and have an influence on some aspect of American life.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did that help you develop relationships outside of our denomination also?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, sure, in my instance, I came back in and wound up in this office. So some of those relationships have continued, on the other hand this has been such a crush of work that it’s not like I just continue based on fellowship but a little more professional perspective.

DARRELL ORMAN: What are the unique pressures and responsibilities of serving in one of the most influential evangelical positions in the world?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: I think I would sum it up this way: so much to do, so many places to be, so many people to meet, and so few hours.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you had to do it over again for the two years, would you have triaged your acceptance of invitations differently? Would there have been some that you wouldn’t have done or would you have done more as well as speaking and going?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: I fairly well guarded that; I stayed on the road a lot, others have stayed even more, because I very definitely was committed to preaching on Sunday
morning, rarely was there a Sunday morning I was not in my pulpit. I traveled often Monday through Friday. I think that I maximized the time as best I knew how. You can’t take everything, but I tried to be conscious of accepting opportunities from smaller churches, from frontier-size churches as well as from big events. So, I did try to consciously balance it and I didn’t just say “yes” based on the fact that there would be more people there. Now, having said that, sometimes you do have to take that into account because the fact that more people are going to be at a particular event is another way to maximize your time, more people hear you a certain amount of things you can say. I think another aspect that comes in at that point is time and schedule management.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: I did, but not for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention. Just to serve Christ. I think my thoughts can best be captured in this. I stayed at school until I received a Doctor of Ministry degree, not out of any great love to be in the classroom. It was a positive experience; but I can think of a lot of other things that I might have enjoyed doing. But I looked at it this way: I don’t know what God has for me, but I don’t want to be the limiting factor. Let God restrict or limit me in any way He wants to, but if God has a chore for me or a task for me, I don’t want somebody human to walk away because it would appear that I was unprepared. So I had that sense of destiny. Now I had no idea how that would reveal itself in time. But I did have a sense of destiny to prepare yourself as best you can; I was invited into the PhD program at Southwestern, but I just didn’t sense that God was calling me into the classroom to teach, and felt like something more practical would be the best pursuit for me. So therefore, there was a time gap between getting my Master of Divinity and getting the Doctor of Ministry because the Doctor of Ministry degree did not exist when I graduated with my master’s degree. So there was a gap of three or four years and when they introduced it, I was in the first resident class at Southwestern Seminary doing the Doctor of Ministry because I said this is like God’s reached down and said “Okay, here’s the package you need.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, obviously, that’s what I’m doing now and I’ve got quite a bit more gap.

MORRIS CHAPMAN: But you know, my desire was to obey God the best I knew, and that drove it on.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did your mega-church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency? Also denominational positions along the way? And, then following up on that, what would be your personal leadership strength?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, with regard to the several words you mentioned, several ingredients of leadership, like speaking, dealing with the media, all relational aspects have been, the Lord and my wife have had a lifelong challenge, because by nature, I’m more reserved in personality. My life has been a lot of just God pulling me out of myself. It is not my nature to engage in just incidental conversation. I often find myself
inadequate to even carry on conversation about just things, just everyday occurrences. And, so just having some sense of confidence to interact with people, especially in a small group environment, I’ve always been very uncomfortable one on one; I’ve always been very comfortable one on two thousand. I’ve never had a fear. Obviously, as you first begin to do it, it’s excitable; but never a fear of preaching to however many people would ever be in any given place. You put me in a Sunday School Class and tell me I’m gonna teach ten people, I just don’t do it well.

DARRELL ORMAN: Is that hard then, being on the “Meet and Greet” with your position now, where you’ve got certain people that maybe you don’t know very well?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Well, it is not, see here’s where God has sort of helped me that I didn’t have to solve the whole problem. When I’m in the position where I’m the host, of where I’m a person of some authority, like pastor of the church or in the position I hold here, well, in that environment, then it is a lot easier because people tend to gravitate to come to me and begin a conversation, and in many instances will lead the conversation. In fact, in some instances they will just say “it’s great to see you”. They don’t know what a great favor they’re doing me. If I go into a situation where the focus is around other individuals, then to this day, it’s a struggle for me. You can get all the former presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention together then I’m relatively quiet in that kind of conversation. And I’ve learned over time that I can go ahead and say what I’m thinking; some of it has been me getting old enough to have confidence that my idea might have some merit.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you find there is always a pecking order? In any group of men when they get together like that?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: Why, sure. Because if they’re individuals to whom almost everybody will gravitate every time, they have great respect for them, they’re unique individuals. They’re extraordinary in many senses, or they might just be a person who commands attention by their very presence. Obviously, that’s true. That’s one of the reasons that while people would tell me I might become president of the Southern Baptist Convention, I never really let myself think about it because I wasn’t sure I was the kind of individual that could sufficiently fulfill that role.

DARRELL ORMAN: Okay, if you were to give your personal strength what would your personal strength be, just one word or one leadership trait.

MORRIS CHAPMAN: I think my spiritual gift is administration. That doesn’t mean that I’m a trained business administrator, but intuitively decision-making comes easy for me. My pattern is to look for the information, have the research done, have all the pertinent research to an issue, and then I have very little difficulty with a decision. I think that is my strength, and the only reason I can determine why God may have seen this as a kind of position for me. Dealing with critics has always been a little difficult for me on the same basis of the type of reserved personality I am. I am not inclined to try
and escalate a conflict. I don’t even like conflict, and yet the Lord has thrust me into it time and time again. I keep asking myself, “Am I the cause of the various conflicts I get into?” And sometimes maybe I am. But again, even this job is largely a problem-solving responsibility. If there’s a problem, it starts out a conflict and the objective is to try and bring it to some kind of conclusion. So, decision-making, I’ve found that very easy; goal setting again for me is just trying to focus on key objectives. Now your question, as I thought of some of the things you’ve brought up this evening, did I miss anything?

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you hold denominational positions along the way, did you do associational things, and did you do State things?

MORRIS CHAPMAN: I did. Early on, I was chairman of the association or whatever they called the position. I served on associational committees. To tell you the truth, when I was in high school and college, I was nominated to be president of the student bodies in both of those eras, and defeated both times. With the last defeat in college, I concluded maybe there was something that I had my eye on that was not serving me well, maybe there was something that seemed too important to me. So I said, “Lord, I’m never going to, in any way, put my mind on getting a position like that, any kind of elected position.” You know, because you don’t want to be rejected too many times. But as it turned out, I guess once I made that decision, and then lived long enough to gain hopefully some other wisdom and maturity, well, as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Albuquerque, I went there when I was 33 years old, so when I was 36 and 37, I was president of the New Mexico Baptist Convention. It just came; it was something that everybody else began to talk about, I didn’t encourage it in any way and everything I’ve been elected to since that time has been that way. So I’ve trusted and accepted that as God’s will, but He did show me early on that it was not about me, and when I was able to get that into perspective, then God had some intentions I couldn’t have anticipated.
DARRELL ORMAN: I’m with Ed Young. Praise the Lord for him. He is the seventh president in the conservative resurgence. Ed, just a few questions real quickly. How do you personally define success in the ministry?

ED YOUNG: First of all, success is being in the middle of God’s will for your life. And how do you determine God’s will. The Bible primarily tells us. There are five things: we’re to be saved, we’re to be spirit-filled, we’re to be sanctified, we’re to be serving, and we’re to be submissive. There are specific scriptures that belong to each and every one of those. And then I go to Proverbs 3, “In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path” and that is the primary way to determine God’s will. So, any definition for success is being in the center of God’s will for your life. Now the second part of the question, I think it has two palis, is success in the ministry. Therefore for me, it is where can I, with my giftedness, maximize my ability to be obedient to the great commission? Where with my giftedness and my ability can I maximize my commitment to the great commission? That’s how I personally define success, in the middle of God’s will is how with my giftedness I can be most effective in fulfilling the great commission!

DARRELL ORMAN: Amen. Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

ED YOUNG: Well, we always knew God’s hand yesterday in retrospect. I think it’s an excellent question, Darrell. You know, in my life I was brought up in a rural background, a blue collar family. We were poor but we didn’t recognize that. I worked my way through college, seminary, etc. and then I was pastor of two mill village churches. I was pastor to a county-seat church, I was pastor of a young suburban church that was just beginning. I went to an inter-city church that was dying. Then I came to a metropolitan area in Houston where I’ve been for 26 years, and went to a very small church having come from a large church, the First Baptist Church of Columbia, and seeing the progress there. So I have had the opportunity to start churches. I have been in stale churches. I have been to almost every kind of church that you can imagine and had the privilege of seeing those churches grow. And I think that is so important for me. We went to the church in Houston, Darrell, that was running 300 to 400 in Bible study, they’d been without a pastor for two years, and we now have 31,000 members and we run over 20,000 every weekend at ten services, etc., etc. So I’ve gone for many years in obscurity as far as the world knows to now a different kind of ministry. But it doesn’t matter where you are. You can be at a big church, a little church, suburban church, beginning church, the best church is a church, I think, without any members. Zero members. People want to go to a big church. No, No. You want to go to a zero church and then you can build the church, step by step, in the methodology that you use. The Bible never changes but our methodology must change. And that’s been a thesis of mine, Darrell, throughout my whole ministry. So I think God prepared me to be president by having a background that covers the whole spectrum of Southern Baptist life, from a rural background to county seat backgrounds to mill-village backgrounds, to a young, exploding church background to inter-city church in a capital city First Baptist of Columbia, South Carolina background to the opportunity to build a large church in Houston, Texas. All of that, I think, prepared
me for the full spectrum of being the person who was the number one servant in the S.B.C. for a couple of years.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

**ED YOUNG:** Well, God worked through individuals, in that sense, for many years. Before Charles was elected we prayed together a couple of times in Washington while we were on our knees. He said, “You should be the one” and I said, “No, Charles, you’re the one.” I went through this with Jimmy Draper. When I was president of the Pastor’s Conference in New Orleans, Jimmy felt he couldn’t be president of the convention and he flew to Houston and we drove around. He got the flu and gave me the flu. And we prayed together and he became president, but it was something I definitely, Darrell, never did seek in any way, shape, form or fashion. In fact, I did the very opposite because it was not something that I wanted to do, I desired to do or aspired to do, to my knowledge, or made one phone call or wrote one letter or did one single thing. Until finally, I came to the point and many of the people and former presidents said, “Ed, you’re it. Period. Selah. You cannot run. You cannot hide. We feel you’re God’s man for this time,” and so I allowed my name to be presented and I guess God worked in the hearts of the messengers who were there. And they elected me. But you find a different thing with all our presidents. I won’t go into it, Darrell, but some of them worked very hard for it. They sought it in many, many ways. For some, the presidency came to them, for others they went hard after the presidency. I’m not saying there’s any merit, or any kind of procedure there, or one was right or one was wrong, so I feel it was something that God did through people, through friends. They felt at that moment that I would be the best choice to be our denominational servant. That’s how I would answer that.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** What was God’s unique purpose for your presidency and were you aware of it at the time or before the election?

**ED YOUNG:** You know, I had a sense of purpose. I did a lot of things. We made a fresh theological statement which I thought we needed to do. I appointed twelve different study groups at no expense to the denomination and they did an extensive study of several areas. A part of that was a clarification of the questions and theological positions that we would have in our seminaries which came to fruition. And that became the theological statement rather than at that time the Baptist Faith and Message, which took on a sort of an ambiguity, as you remember, of people trying to interpret it in different kinds of ways. We cleared that up. I guess the main thing I did, we studied our denomination. It felt like we were so top heavy. We had too many employees. We had too many things that duplicated themselves, and as a result of that, there was a consolidation, after my presidency. I did the ground work with groups, and you’ll remember we had a secular entity that came in and said we’re going to combine all this. As a result of that, we have NAM, the International Mission Board, and now we have Lifeway instead of having, I don’t know how many, several, several, several different entities. We consolidated, cut out the fat, the repetition. We don’t have a zillion different boards, that fly in two or three times a year at great expenses to meet. So there was a cutting down of the size at the top of our denominational structure. That was the big
thing that came. I did the study, and someone else actually got to follow through on it in administration. Other than that, I hope that I put a genuine emphasis on evangelism. My cry was theologically we’re correct and now we have to take our Biblical theology based on the edicts of scripture and really begin to reach people for Jesus Christ. My thesis was the message remains the same, but the methodology continues to change and the tragedy today, Darrell, is that we haven’t changed our methodology. The tragedy today is we still call ourselves SOUTHERN Baptist Convention. In my judgment, the tragedy today is we still are not reaching the cities. We are still a basically blue collar denomination. We have to make this transition or the future of the S.B.C. to me is rather bleak.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, yeah, of course the statistics are bearing that out, that we’re flat.

ED YOUNG: Good guy. Well, see, we’ve handled everything theologically. That’s the answer. We’ll begin to explode evangelistically when we get our theology cleared up. But it hasn’t because the churches are still so bucolic. I know a lot of people who believe every word of the Bible, preach it dogmatically with great power, but people are not being saved. They haven’t changed their methodology, and until the methodology changes, and it has to in every generation all the way since the first century, and some people just will not make that change. And they’re going to be in churches that are dying, or churches that are stagnant or churches that are not on the cutting edge of life in the 21st century and I can preach that for a long time. You heard me preach. You hear that over and over, but I’ve been saying that for, goodness, 25 years.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, what have you done with Second Houston to retrofit it that way?

ED YOUNG: Well, that’s a long, long question, but that doesn’t have an easy answer in here. But it’s exactly this. We have about five different styles of worship in our church for openers. We’ve geared ourselves for the people who aren’t even here yet. Most churches spend all their time on people who are already there.

DARRELL ORMAN: How many? Ten services. You’re not preaching all those?

ED YOUNG: Three of those, and then one is a screen service, that’s a simulcast with 19 theatres, that’s a whole other world there.

DARRELL ORMAN: Oh, I’ve read about it.

ED YOUNG: That’s one reason why we’re raising $86,000,000 now.

DARRELL ORMAN: The cinema churches, yeah

ED YOUNG: That’s part of it.
DARRELL ORMAN: How many different music venues? That’s primarily the difference, it’s the same message, right?

ED YOUNG: No, no, no. We have different messengers. I have a team of preachers, young, old, middle-aged, in between. We have three of us who preach the same scripture but it can be different messages.

DARRELL ORMAN: Oh, I see. So, you all will pick the text.

ED YOUNG: I pick the text.

DARRELL ORMAN: Then everybody makes messages around it.

ED YOUNG: Yeah, and we cooperate some. That’s like asking me to tell you how God made the world.

DARRELL ORMAN: Are you a goal setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals?

ED YOUNG: I am a goal setter. I can’t say any goal for my ministry path. I just wanted to be faithful with where I was and maximize where God had called me. And everywhere I went, I went there to stay for the rest of my life. I never looked over my shoulder and said recommend me over there or oh I’d love to go there. I never, never, never did that. I said, “God, I’m your man, I’m here forever until you take me home.” Jo Beth and I thought like that, and that’s our ministry. So far as bigger and better and more, never, never, never. Some of the most effective pastors in our whole denomination, they’re probably in decline, but they’re doing a better job than anybody else, because they’re faithful and they stick by the stuff and that’s their calling, that’s their ministry. Look at the prophets in the Old Testament. How many of them were called to fail from the get-go. Hey, Isaiah said “How long?” and God said “Isaiah your whole life long; it’s always going to be like this. They’re going to hate you, they’re not going to follow your message but preach the truth.” I set goals for my church, for each staff member, for what we ought to be doing, for how we can get there but I do not set personal goals except I’m responsible for the depth of my life with God. He’s responsible for the length and breadth of my life. Everything else doesn’t matter. The depth, the time with Him I vow, and there’s where I try to set spiritual goals for myself. Then our church has goals but I didn’t have any personal path to be a big church or a little church, I don’t think like that. In fact, I pray that I don’t think like that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Is your drive then just how can I reach these people?

ED YOUNG: Absolutely. My drive first of all was, Lord I want to know you. It was knowing God. Then my next drive was with my giftedness, where can I be most effective. And I tell all my staff, and we have over a thousand staff members, “If you can go anywhere with your giftedness and be more effective in kingdom ministry, get out of here. But if you can’t, you stay right where you are.” And I would say that to any pastor,
any one who’s called a servant of the Lord. I established personal goals and I’m a very
disciplined person but not in the sense of the size of church or ministry. We set goals
here, now here’s where we want to be in baptism, here’s where we want to be in
discipleship, here’s where we want to be in Bible study, I do all that but nothing that
relates, that’s not who I am. The fact that I’m pastor of Second Baptist Church is not my
identity, Darrell. That is not who I am.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you change out staff members if they’re not meeting
goals? Are you pretty proactive?

ED YOUNG: Yeah, I move them around. We fire people. Absolutely! We fire people
all the time. For them, we move them around to determine their giftedness. Most all my
staff has had numerous positions on our staff. They didn’t start where they are now. We
move them around. We like to see them in different kind of venues. We’ve got three
locations here. We’re starting five theatre churches here, we’re starting eight I think
across the country by the end of February. We’re putting them all over. We’ve got
teams in here we train, that’s another story. That’s got nothing to do with S.B.C.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could serve again as president, would you do anything
differently the second time looking back?

ED YOUNG: I don’t think so. I really don’t. I’m sure there are many things I would do
differently, but I don’t know what that was. When I was president I never missed a
single Sunday in the pulpit of my church because I was president of the S.B.C. Period.
Not one. I did all I did for the S.B.C. during the week because I was in a thriving church
and that was my first calling. I think presidents…..

DARRELL ORMAN: You wouldn’t discourage Bobby Welch though for taking a
sabbatical and going off and doing it the way he’s doing it which is exactly opposite.

ED YOUNG: Well, he ought to resign his church.

DARRELL ORMAN: Really?

ED YOUNG: Well, I would say that to a lot of people who did this full time. If you’re
going to do this full time if you have a church and that’s your first calling. I just don’t
see that.

DARRELL ORMAN: They’re paying your bills. You’re their shepherd.

ED YOUNG: Well, yeah, that’s right. I’m not just being critical; they can do what they
want to do and I hope you understand that, but I don’t think that way. To some people
being president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Darrell, that’s the highlight of their
ministry. That’s what they’re all about. They’re defined by the fact that they’ve been
president. That does not define me in any shape, form or fashion. Now that does not say
anything good or bad about that but that becomes the suma bonum of someone’s life.
That’s fine. That’s not where I was, that’s not where Adrian was or where Jerry Vines was or Charles Stanley, or others. To others that’s been it. That’s not saying whether that’s good or bad. That’s the truth.

DARRELL ORMAN: In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?

ED YOUNG: Well, let me see. The most rewarding thing I think, was getting to a lot of people, and be able to encourage some folks, listen to some folks and to learn a lot of things about churchanity and about life and just to have the privilege of loving some people, listening to some people and speaking in some venues that I trust some how in some way that God worked and made a difference was the rewarding thing for me.

DARRELL ORMAN: The least?

ED YOUNG: Least rewarding was all the silliness within the structure. That’s the reason I sought to redeem it. You see when you’re president of the convention, you’re not just ex-officio of all those boards, you’re on all those boards. And you try to go, I think I went to every board meeting at least once. That’s when I saw, Darrell, how foolish it was, flying people around at tremendous expense on all these giant board meetings and you really didn’t get a lot of business done, and no real kingdom stuff done, in fact very little kingdom stuff done. That’s when I saw the very clear necessity of scaling down all of this and making it lean and efficient and more of a servant mode in the thing. It was frustrating to see how so many times we spin our wheels or somebody decided I’m gonna retire next year and they just sort of folded their tent. You see a lot of the bureaucracy of nice fine gentle Christian people who do not function. They do not really work. They’re not personally evangelistic. They are not on top of what they do. They have no passion for their position, they’re just serving out their time. And when you see hundreds of people like that caught up in the denominational structure, it’ll break your heart.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, absolutely.

ED YOUNG: I’m a mean guy, Darrell, you see that already, don’t you?

DARRELL ORMAN: No, no, actually you’re pragmatic. And that’s a good thing for sure. Let me try...

ED YOUNG: One more thing that was rewarding. In trying to pastor the pastors, it was rewarding but terribly painful to hear all the brokenness within the pastorate, within staff people. How so many in the churches treated so many unfairly and how so many people within the ministry operated in such an ineffective unbiblical way in the way they did their church, that was so tough for me. So many people got in so much trouble that was unnecessary. So many churches were so hard and mean on their staff people, and all of that was terribly, terribly painful for me. I’ll tell you, it is rewarding to pray, and counsel and make recommendations, I still do a lot of that. Because that’s heartbreaking to me, you’ve got a lot of people who can preach who are not leaders. You’ve got a lot of people who are leaders who cannot preach. You’ve got a lot of people who are biblically
wonderful but their people skills honestly are totally ineffective. You’ve got all these
different kinds of people functioning in the church, and it is so tough on the church and
tough on them when they are miscast and misplaced, that’s tough to see in the scale but I
see it throughout Christiandom.

DARRELL ORMAN: The next question. If you could change the function of the
office of president, how would you change it?

ED YOUNG: Well, I don’t know, I’d have to look at it. I think you should really
courage him to look at his schedule and make sure it is used effectively. I’m not sure
preaching at every state convention and every evangelism conference is the most
effective way a president can use his time. I doubt that.

DARRELL ORMAN: What would you recommend?

ED YOUNG: The president of the convention needs to look at our denomination and see
where the greatest need is, where we’re missing it, and they need to throw themselves
into that gap with everything that they have. It’s very clear to me we’re missing it today
in our cities. We must go to our seminaries and train to start new churches. We must
attack our cities with a vengeance. Bob and NAMB have done more studies than any
group ever to exist on this earth. We could look at those studies and really trigger it, and
that’s what the president needs to give his time and talents to and forget all the boards
and the hog calling and all the upper room conferences and all the big gatherings with
people. If the president were to get in there and work that and he would be given the
freedom to work that, in the seminaries in these cities. I think, without any question,
that’s where the president today should maximize his time and his efforts.

DARRELL ORMAN: With the title comes a tremendous amount of open access. If
you were to become president again, for example, could that position be used to try
to reach heads of state, because you can get in?

ED YOUNG: Oh, yes, you do that. I jogged with Clinton, I conversed with Gore. I
spent a couple of hours with Clinton. I knew Bush of course from Houston during those
years, and I’d been with Reagan, so Darrell, you know these people. But that is not
where the action is, Darrell. That’s just an ego type thing, temporary, your influence
there can be on moral issues, questions of family and marriage, etc., etc., but that’s not
where you want to spend your time and energy, at state dinners and the likes. I did some
of that and I continue to do a little bit of it, but I discovered that does not have a lot of
kingdom benefits.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, would you have access to like kings or leaders of other
countries through that position?

ED YOUNG: Well, sure you do. But I don’t know, other than speaking to them
concerning missionary efforts. You know, we have a ministry now in our church. My
son has a group in India right now; we just built four schools in India; we’re building
boats in Indonesia; we started five churches in Toronto. We’ve got people just from my church around the world and as you talk with presidents, we’ve got dental clinics in Recceppi, Brazil. We’ve built twenty-two churches in Recceppi; we’ve got 122 churches in Mexico now, we have over 200, just my church. And you have to talk with governors and so forth. But you can get caught up in all this, Darrell. And all the show business stuff, the big time stuff and all the statement stuff, and miss the thrust of what you are. I think the best thing is to build an evangelical mission-minded church where you are, and the presidency is just a little thing that for maybe a couple of years you can maybe influence the denomination and hopefully point them into directions that are effective. If you put in too much time in formality and travel, I don’t think a lot of that is necessary. I cut all the fat out of that real early in my presidency.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you were to speak to the next half dozen presidents, if you could get them in a room, how would you tell them they could maximize their presidency?

ED YOUNG: That’s exactly what I said. I’d say “What is the greatest need in our denomination?” At that particular time, what could the churches do at this moment to get back to the business of evangelism and missions? To write that down, and give it their time and influence everywhere they go, everything they write or everything they do. That’s one thing I do. So we need a “Johnny one-note” now that just has a passion. We all say “Oh, we want to be evangelistic, etc.” But you gotta say, “How did this happen? what do we do? what do we change? what do we leave off? how do we refinance? And then we gotta fight for those issues, use that platform—that bully pulpit to see what’s going to take place. Because we could all sit in a room, every former president, every mega church or small church pastor, and we could all agree, I believe, as to where the pains or the problems are. It’s just we’re not gonna give up our islands of selfishness, our hunk of the budget if we dip into the cooperative program, Darrell, to see these things take place. We’re just like the State Department or the U.S. Government in a lot of ways. Somebody has to get in there and battle this and it will clear in time.

DARRELL ORMAN: Technically, then, because the presidencies are restricted to two years, really a president doesn’t even have time to do that.

ED YOUNG: That’s exactly right. He can start it, and hopefully, some kind of common interest is there and hopefully some of our denomination structure will begin to see how we have to reprioritize this thing or we’re in mammoth trouble with God and His kingdom.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, I’ve served trusteeships a couple of times, and now I’m on the Executive Committee, and I found that in most agencies it’s the agency heads, that are good, bad or indifferent running the agenda.

ED YOUNG: Yep!

DARRELL ORMAN: We basically come in and okay what they’re doing.
ED YOUNG: You basically come in and referee the pot of money they all want more of. That’s what you do. And they’re at each other’s throats tragically, and this can be corrected too. Right now you need someone also who can do some reconciliation that’s genuine.

DARRELL ORMAN: In light of your experience, as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically, and we’ve alluded a little bit to that, outside of the S.B.C? You mentioned, there’s a lot of the figure head stuff....

ED YOUNG: Yeah, I think there is. They look at whomever is the president, they look at that person, his wife, his family and say “This represents the S.B.C.” It’s like you as pastor of your great church in Stuart, they look at you, you represent that church and your family, whether you want to or not. And that’s true in a wider spectrum in the S.B.C. presidency.

DARRELL ORMAN: I’m trying to get my handle around some of the things you said. If I were to talk to the next three presidents in a row, and say, its not the travel, it’s not meeting with President Bush, it’s not preaching, how could they get that, you said “Johnny one-note”? How could they find that note? How could they do that Johnny one-note?

ED YOUNG: Tell them to call me. I’ll tell them in a skinny minute. I told Bobby; I told a couple of them. That’s what I think.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, in that sense, I think Bobby has done real well, because it’s straight soul winning. I mean, it’s baptize a million people.

ED YOUNG: I understand it, Darrell, but how do you do it? How do you set goals and travel on buses. I love Bobby, he’s got a great heart. I’ve talked to him. But you’ve got to put some structure to this thing. You’ve gotta say this is what it’s going to take to do that and you’ve got to change a lot of what we do in order to do the main thing. If you don’t change all of that, you can’t get around to doing the main thing. And we’re not willing to change all that in order to do this.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, after being president of the S.B.C. for two years, how would a new president pick what thing to change and how would he start on it?

ED YOUNG: To me it’s easy. I will debate anybody who wants to stand up and tell you that the number one challenge of the S.B.C. is starting churches in the major cities of America that are basically unchurched, and that is Chicago, New York, Seattle, Brooklyn, and da da da da, North America. That is what we have to do. That’s where the people are. In that context, we’re not reaching the 18 year olds to the 38 years olds, that particular context. Those two goals within our cities is what we must be about. Underneath that of course is children, etc., etc., young families, but you must establish vibrant entities in these cites. And I could tell anybody who would listen, I think, a basic
plan to do it. And I won’t go into that with you today, but that is it. If there’s anything further that we need to do now, you can tell me what it is. Couldn’t manufacture that around the world, incidentally, but we better get our home base covered because the S.B.C., Darrell, is going out of business. Any other priority? What else would you want to put in that list? That’s it.

DARRELL ORMAN: What are the unique pressures and responsibilities of serving in one of the most influential evangelical positions in the world? What are the pressures, unique pressures?

ED YOUNG: Well, you get pressure. My church where I pastored to make sure I stayed faithful there. And then the responsibilities, you’ve got to put yourself in neutral sometimes. You realize there are some things you have to do. But this thing, in any kind of leadership position, is your priorities. And if you can get your priorities right, you won’t have any problems saying no. You’ll have no problem saying yes. And that’s the big thing you run into.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life?

ED YOUNG: Not at all. I just felt like, “God, here I am. I’ll go anywhere, any time, any place.” I almost went to Italy as a missionary. I just hung loose. I thought I’d be pastor of SoSo, Mississippi. When Jo Beth and I first got married, we’d drive by this nice little brick church and I’d say, “Honey, do you think God would ever let us serve a church like this?” Ran a hundred or so. That was the only sense of destiny I ever thought about.

DARRELL ORMAN: When you first started, you were discussing how your church and all the way up to the mega church helped prepare you for the presidency. How did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency? Denominational positions?

ED YOUNG: Yeah, I did. I was president of the Pastor’s Conference in South Carolina. I was of president of the Pastor’s Conference in the S.B.C, I served on all kinds of board in North Carolina. Wherever I’ve been, I’ve been active in our denomination not so much in our association but on the state and in a lot of different entities, seminary boards, sort of like you’re doing. You’ve been on a lot of stuff.

DARRELL ORMAN: Have you been president of State Convention?

ED YOUNG: Never was.

DARRELL ORMAN: You know that’s funny. Most of the men I’ve interviewed have not. In fact, well, Adrian, Tennessee just blocked him out. In Florida, Jerry Vines said he was going to be appointed on the State Board and then they took him off. It’s been some crazy local things like that. That was a different day.
ED YOUNG: Well, for example, I’ve never spoken at the Texas Baptist Convention, of
the southern entity, of course. Not anything of the BGCT. When I was in South
Carolina I keynoted the Texas Baptist Convention, since I’ve been here. I built a pretty
good little church right here. It’s interesting. Adrian’s been there. We’ve been through
all that. It’s no big deal.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, you know. I guess it was right after 9-11, its recorded
that you and Junior, ya’ll had the largest worship under a father and son in
church history that Sunday after. I don’t know if you heard those things or not?

ED YOUNG: I don’t remember that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah. It was published. I read an article about it. Years ago
in SBC Today or Evangelism Today, they highlighted three evangelistic churches, I
don’t know if you remember that. It was you all and Johnny Hunt, as a large
church and then us, a medium church. First Baptist of Stuart. That priority of
winning people to Christ, that’s neat because we leave everything else behind.

ED YOUNG: That’s right, that’s right, I’m sorry I’m in such a hurry, by the way, I
apologize but my phone is ringing. Call me back.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, not a problem. When do you want me to call you back?

ED YOUNG: Let me call you. Let’s go through these things we can do generally. I
believe with the mega church, I think you need a church of some substance, I don’t like
the word mega, to be able to really understand the SBC. I really do. I just think it would
be wonderful to get a guy whose a pastor of a county seat town but I just don’t think they
have the capacity or they haven’t yet demonstrated the capacity to get their arms around
this thing.

DARRELL ORMAN: Right, they have to ...

ED YOUNG: To act with a group of young pastors to be trained to serve, I think that
would be absolutely foolish. It would be statistical. It would be counter-productive and
it would be something that I think would not work. The next question I have a problem
with. Work that in any way that would circumvent God’s sovereignty. Darrell, nothing
circumvents God’s sovereignty. I’d take that question out. Nothing circumvents God’s
sovereignty.

DARRELL ORMAN: Actually, with having that in there, I’ve got that response
from really only three, and you and Adrian were the two strongest.

ED YOUNG: Glad he caught it. I was gonna say if I’m the only one who caught that.

DARRELL ORMAN: I’m glad I worded it that way because it’s gotten them to
come back on how strong they see God’s hand in everything.
ED YOUNG: Adrian and I are the only ones that caught that?

DARRELL ORMAN: You’re the two strongest on it.

ED YOUNG: I’m gonna get all over Vines. I’m gonna call and tease him, you old Armenian. He and I are good friends.

DARRELL ORMAN: He’s actually the third that referred to it. But you and Adrian were the two who said it was a bad question.

ED YOUNG: It’s a terrible question but you understand that. You don’t circumvent God’s sovereignty.

DARRELL ORMAN: Right, exactly.

ED YOUNG: Adrian was here. He got a good report, by the way. I’m proud he’s my buddy, for a long, long time; intimate friends, Darrell. I have got to go, Darrell.
DARRELL ORMAN: I’m with Jim Henry, the pastor of First Baptist, Orlando. It’s January 11th, 2005, and I’m interviewing him in relationship to his leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention as one of our past presidents.

DARRELL ORMAN: Jim how do you personally define success in the ministry?

JIM HENRY: I would define success as the best you know; knowing, finding and doing the will of God, where He’s put you on His time table, and so living that purpose that you might know that to the best of your ability you have sought, found and done God’s will and left a footprint for others to see. That is, a footprint that brings glory to God, and further the kingdom of God. Leave the wood pile bigger than you found it! It makes your life more than a success, it makes it a significant success. Unless a seed falls to the ground and dies and brings forth fourfold. So if your life has been lost in His will, in that way you have been a success.

DARRELL ORMAN: Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

JIM HENRY: I think there are several things. I had a rural urban background. I was converted in a little church, baptized in an urban downtown church. My grandparents were rural, but I was raised in the city. So I had touch with people from both backgrounds, which our constituency is, rural and urban. Then I also had the privilege of pastoring two rural churches, a small suburban church that grew into a large suburban church, and then a downtown church that relocated out to the outer edge of the same city. So I had the opportunity to pastor just about where every pastor pastors. A lot of the S.B.C. presidency is related to pastors. It’s a significant thing, that and then the end.

DARRELL ORMAN: Was Two Rivers the location?

JIM HENRY: No, I was thirty-three years old when I went there. They had about 100 in Sunday school and it grew to be 1,000. So I had a chance to take it, watch it grow, and learn, and as I was growing, I was “learning the ropes,” so to speak, in a changing, evolving church. I think also, being in Nashville, raised in Nashville, and pastoring later in Nashville, I was around the institutions; the Sunday School Board, I served as a trustee there; I served as a bench trustee in another institution. I was around the people, and the leaders of the First Baptist Church. I can remember some great men in FAITH at the First Baptist Church, so I had a touch of the history and the flow before my nomination. I used to sell Christmas cards down at the institutions when I was a little boy, before Christmas. I was in all the offices down there and talking to all the people. I went to Ridgecrest, too. So, that gave me a sense of the width and the breadth and the scope of Southern Baptists. I was introduced to missionaries, denominational leaders, and preachers when I was a teen-ager. That prepared me, while I didn’t know at the time it was preparing me. But I had a sense of who we were, and our history, but it was an evolving part of it. Then I was educated in a Southern Baptist College. Those people and the people that I met, and the inter-working, connecting the dots through those years, gave me an opportunity
to meet a lot of people and see who we were and what we’re about. I think that helped me too. It helped preaching in evangelism conferences and state conventions; I began to be invited. So I got to travel across the convention. I was in all-sized churches and state conventions. So I began to know the people at the state level, at the denominational level, and at conferences, so all of these things at the time I didn’t know what was happening, I was just experiencing.

DARRELL ORMAN: You did a great job for us, by the way, on that relocation topic.

JIM HENRY: So those things helped me, I believe, prepared me, for the Southern Baptist presidency. But I had this rich history of all my life being in touch with Southern Baptists at every level.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

JIM HENRY: That’s a mystery. I’m still awed by that. I think the best way I could explain, a lot of people have said for several years, you know, are you going to be put up for president, etc. I just didn’t feel led at any particular time to do it. When the time came for it to come to Orlando, I was in Orlando pastoring and the convention was coming for the first time to Orlando. I was in my fifties; the church had relocated, and I got some of those things behind me. I realized that if I was ever going to be nominated, I didn’t know whether I’d get elected or not, just nominated, that would probably be the logical time. So I prayed about it, fasted, and thought about it a lot. Didn’t talk to many people about it, I just prayed a lot. And my wife, of course, was into it, and some people would call and tell me they were praying for me; people who were unsolicited. It got complicated by the fact that Fred (Wolfe) came out earlier that he knew he was going to be nominated, and I knew enough about Fred to respect him very deeply. I thought if I say “yes,” then people might think and misconstrue it as trying to stir up trouble or something. But I felt like my heartbeat was with Fred. I didn’t know of any differences that we had. I recall other Southern Baptist meetings where we had several people nominated for presidency, it wasn’t just one person, there were several to be nominated. So I was praying one night, and walking around, which I do sometimes in the still of the night, and said, “Lord, as best I understand it, at least I should put my name up. I don’t know whether I’ll get elected or not,” so I took that step. And I shared it with my church first, after my family. I don’t usually ask for signs, not that I’m beyond that, but, I used to all the time. I don’t do it much now. But that time I said, “Lord, I’m going to do it whether you give me a sign or not.” I feel like the sign is in my heart. But if it’s an affirmation that I should at least go on, let someone of significance that I respect that knows Southern Baptist life give me a call.” Because, no, I had not said anything to anybody that I was going to. I hadn’t even said anything to my wife, except just that night when I was praying. I said, “Lord, within the next two or three days, just one affirmation that I’m on the right track. And within three days I got a phone call and a letter from a person in Southern Baptist life that was very instrumental; they wanted to submit my name. That’s who they were, and like I told I you, I was right where I was supposed to be and got nominated.
DARRELL ORMAN: Was that Jack Graham?

JIM HENRY: No, no, but what I did then, I asked Jack to nominate me. I've known Jack; he used to come preach at youth meetings, dumped my son in the lake out of a boat, so we had a lot of fun kidding about that. I didn't know if Jack would do it or took my saying that I'm gonna be available as trying to create strife, which I wasn't. I wouldn't do that deliberately. I was a little surprised at some of the response I began to hear that some of them said that I would lead in the wrong direction. Things like that. That wasn't me. But that affirmation from those two men, well-known in Southern Baptist life, as leaders, they did that. I knew I was supposed to do it. I didn't even know about it when I found that Dr. Stanley was going to nominate Fred. I thought, "Well, there goes that." But, I had this strongest peace, it was just a quietness in my spirit, and I said, "I may win or I may lose, I'm fine either way. My life is not built on whether or not I'm president of that convention, at least I'll know what it's like to be nominated."

DARRELL ORMAN: Are you at liberty to share who the men were that confirmed it for you?

JIM HENRY: Yes, I guess it's okay. I don't think anything would be wrong with that. It was Franklin Paschal and James Sullivan.

DARRELL ORMAN: During your tenure, as president, what do you see now as God's unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time? Before your election?

JIM HENRY: Once I was elected, then my heart was set on two or three things. One was: I wanted to stress the Cooperative Program. I felt like that was one of them, but my nominees on positions of leadership were strong cooperative program conservatives, but also cooperative program supporters. Because there was a lot of talk about losses, trouble with support and that kind of thing, and there's been some criticism of it, about not supporting the Cooperative Program. I thought, "well, the president ought to be a leader in that, and the people who are going to serve Southern Baptists ought to be people who are supporting our heartbeat, which was Cooperative Programs, missions and evangelism." So there I felt that if I could do that, "like, hey, the Southern Baptist president heartily supports the program and for people who might be wondering, say this would be a good signal." Secondly, I wanted it to be an encouragement to some guys I knew who were conservatives, but were a little discouraged about some of the infighting and felt like a little politicizing, and I would say, "Hey look, we're still open. Anybody that God puts His hand on can still be in a place of leadership, so don't feel like it's a closed docket here. It's open." If they elected me, then it makes sense, we're not steamrolling people in to the presidency. I wanted that to come across because I knew there were good brothers who I was afraid we'd lose. Third, I wanted to show that you can be a conservative, strong on the scriptures, strong on the Cooperative Program and a spirit of cooperation to reach out to others who may be questioning, and say, "We are approachable as conservatives, not mean-spirited." I think the presidency of the convention wasn't like that."
I want to encourage younger pastors. A lot of the younger guys came up to me later and said, “I think I can stay in now.” Because I think some of them were beginning to feel there was not a place for the younger men. I wanted us to reach out to the younger guys which would make them think they could get the baton in the future.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** The mission trip I went on that year, the missionaries I talked to were very encouraged about your candidacy. Wade Akins was one of them. Do you know Wade?

**JIM HENRY:** Yes, I know Wade. Sure.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** He was talking about specifically First Orlando under your leadership, giving a million dollars a year or more to the C.P. So, they were speaking very highly of you on the mission field.

**JIM HENRY:** That was one of the things I think about initially. I didn’t think a lot of that was for the election but I was beginning to hear these things, getting letters about it.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** Are you a goal-setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?

**JIM HENRY:** I’m a goal-setter in terms more of the local church level rather than at the denominational level because I realize at the denominational level even as president you have about two years to make an impact of some kind, and then you’re old toast. I first learned in the local church, so in the local church, I do set goals; for the church, for myself personally in my own walk with the Lord, and for the church from time to time. It does not happen every month or every year but from time to time, like this is the direction we ought to go, and I’ll set out goals and I’ll share them with the church. So I am a goal-setter in that way. Then, I try to follow them in my ministry path, with those goals. Once they’re set, then the goal kind of determines what I’m going to be doing in fulfilling that goal that I believe God has given me, or given the church. When it came to what I just said in the ministry life, I don’t think there’s a point where I said I’m going to start establishing goals. I believe that came along as I was moving and growing and maturing in the faith. Then the Holy Spirit began to teach me through the Word, and I walked with Him and got mentored, helping me to establish some goals. But if you don’t have a target you don’t know whether you’ve gotten there, you can’t pray specifically; you don’t know if God’s answered your prayers if you don’t have something to shoot for. So I try to do that. When I became president of S.B.C., the goals that I alluded to earlier were some of the goals I had in mind once I became president. That was also to be a healer, where I could, I knew some of the brothers were on the same page theologically, but I think politically and otherwise maybe felt at odds. If I could be a middle man without compromising, to bring people together to say “Hey, there are more of us on the same page than we think so let’s not rupture what we’re doing, or what God’s doing for us in the conservative resurgence. Let’s stay together because we’ve got a lot of good people. Let’s don’t let that happen.” That became my goal, once I was elected.
DARRELL ORMAN: Good, good. Back, just a little bit more elaboration on the nominating process. The convention is nationwide, 40,000 congregations, fifteen to sixteen million members, how in the world does one man within each year cipher through a nominating process like that?

JIM HENRY: Well, this one I worked at the hardest. I wrote all the presidents of seminaries, all the state convention leaders, all the executive secretaries (or whatever) of the state convention agencies, and they also put out the same thing in the state paper, that if you know people being nominated, send in their names. So I did that, and I got names from that. I was surprised that there weren’t as many names coming as I thought there would have been.

DARRELL ORMAN: How many names? Just a ball park figure.

JIM HENRY: I can’t tell you how many names, but it was a lot less. I thought I would be overwhelmed, but it wasn’t as much as I had thought. Particularly when I had pushed through what I thought were the channels through the publicity and the state papers, give me some names. I’m open. I haven’t chosen anybody. I’m in nobody’s back pocket. Just kind of wanting God’s men. So I was a little surprised about not having more. I got some good names. Some of them I was able to use and some of them I wasn’t. The second thing I did, was I called, when I didn’t get much response, I began to call a lot of the leadership and asked, “Don’t you have any names in your state?” I had several qualifications. And I thought everybody that was elected on the original board and the second year that I was president, I called and solicited them personally. And that was to say that they were committed to the infallibility of the Word of God, that they were active participants in the Cooperative Program giving at least 7% to Cooperative Program, as a minimum. And that they were involved and cared about Southern Baptist life in their church. Then the other one was have you served before? If some of them had served on two or three agencies already, I tried to bring some fresh people in that had the commitment that we are all staked to but had not had the privilege to serve before to bring some fresh fertilization, so to speak, into the process to go with the people who have been around, bring some new blood into the system, which I thought was healthy for us in the long term. So I worked really hard at that process to get those kind of people, and they had to verbally tell me that before I asked them to serve.

DARRELL ORMAN: So you interviewed each one of them personally?

JIM HENRY: I interviewed those on the key committee personally with those questions.

DARRELL ORMAN: That would have been each of the trustee agencies or would it have just been Executive Committee?

JIM HENRY: Once you select that committee, they go in and select the trustee. I can’t go that far. After a while, I guess you could, but I was not going to try to put my stamp all the way across the board.
DARRELL ORMAN: Your responsibility was Committee on Committees. That’s true.

JIM HENRY: That’s right, I only get those kinds of people, and then I asked them in the process, “will you pick people of like spirit to be put on that leadership team?” But that’s where we’ve got to go, I had a commitment.

DARRELL ORMAN: So how many Committee on Committees members did you have?

JIM HENRY: Well, it gave us that convention, you know. I think, I don’t remember exactly, but I think at that time we had twenty-eight or thirty-something state conventions. I don’t remember exactly.

DARRELL ORMAN: So about sixty to seventy people.

JIM HENRY: Right. So those I did personally, then you have appointment power for the chairman, certain committees that function at the convention, too. So I appointed those. The rest of them I asked the order of business. Of course, the order of business was already set up, I inherited, you know, the past president and others, etc. They were already in place.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you get to do that on your second term?

JIM HENRY: No, I think Executive Committee does that, each time. My input could basically be that Committee on Committees and the one that they picked for the agencies. So I said, “Here’s where we’re going, would you stick with those kinds of people? When you select people to serve, would you ask them if they are those kinds of people?” I felt like that would be best of all worlds. We had people committed to the Word of God, we had people committed to the Southern Baptist in their own practice, and that were committed by their own giving. Jesus said, “Where your treasury is that’s where your heart is.” I felt like if they were committed and giving the money, then they should serve and represent as well.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could serve again, would you do anything differently the second time around?

JIM HENRY: I’d get another person to help my secretary in the office. My assistant, I worked her too hard.

DARRELL ORMAN: Would the convention provide a person like that?

JIM HENRY: They probably should. They give you a certain amount of money, I think it was maybe for the whole thing, which would not take care of getting a good assistant. Most of the guys come from large churches that I would figure could afford it, but I didn’t want to put that on our church. You know, we were going through a building
program and I didn’t want to go and say, “Look, I need another secretary.” My lady was wonderful! But the demand, at least the way I was working the office, if I had it to do over, I would have brought in another person on my staff who knew me and could handle phone calls, the press, etc. I would have done that. Second thing, I would have made it a point to have taken more time, and I took a lot of time, for travel. I became a platinum or whatever you call it Delta flyer, covered a lot of miles, but I believe I would have tried to have been a little more pointed and careful in where I went, and I would have tried to be a little more strategic.

DARRELL ORMAN: How could you have done that, been more strategic? What criteria would you have used?

JIM HENRY: Well, that would have come with prayer and knowing, I think. By my second year, I knew a little bit more about what to do; but there was no way I was prepared all of a sudden because there was no preparation time. In one way, I had the benefit of contact with others for my background, but once you get that responsibility, all of the sudden, it’s there, in one minute, and you’ve got everybody saying “Will you come speak to this?” or “Will you come to this meeting?” ......

DARRELL ORMAN: So the first year you said “yes” to everything?

JIM HENRY: Yes to about everything that I could because I wanted to be their representative. And, for a lot of that, I needed to be there. But, in retrospect, I think I could have done maybe a better job and I probably would have traveled to at least two or three mission fields, like James Merritt. He did a good job of doing that. I went to all the mission board meetings, having been a trustee there earlier, and met with leadership there, but I feel like I probably should have done that more. I tried to go to some of the smaller conventions to let them know that they were a part of what we were, too. Some places I wasn’t invited to, but I probably should have tried to make at least a show at some of those places, just to make them feel connected to the leadership and all.

DARRELL ORMAN: As president, aren’t you ex-officio of all committees that occur that year?

JIM HENRY: Yes, and there are so many, I went to some of them.

DARRELL ORMAN: Would you recommend that for future presidents?

JIM HENRY: Well, you need to be there for the institutional meetings, I mean, you represent them, and you are ex-officio. And if you don’t show, you don’t know what’s going on. When you don’t go, then you lose track with your people that you’re leading, in a sense. How can you get up and speak at the convention when you haven’t been listening to what they’ve been struggling with? So I tried to get to a lot of those. I did that. I went to a bunch of institutional meetings which I think is important to do as president.
DARRELL ORMAN: Is all that travel hard on your church?

JIM HENRY: Well, I tell you what, God was gracious. I told the church I would not miss a Sunday I ordinarily would miss because of vacation or time away. I did not want to hurt my church because I felt that if I lost my church, in a sense, then I had to come back and pastor those people. So the church was wonderful and the church was able to keep moving forward, but by very virtue of the fact that sometimes you’re gone from Sunday afternoon to Wednesday, I did not get one letter of complaint, nor one note of criticism in the whole two years. Because I tried to keep my people informed, I had a display showing where I was going, what was happening, institutional or otherwise, where they could pray for me, so I kept them abreast on it so they could participate, and they laid hands on me and prayed for my ministry. But by virtue of the fact that you’re gone so much, you just can’t do the work that you do when you’re there all the time. So the church didn’t suffer. I think because of their participation through me, they seemed to grow by the experience I was having, but we were not able to do some things that if I had been on hand or on deck we could have done. So it did have an effect. On the other hand, it tired me physically. After I was president, Ed Young said to me when he gave me the gavel, “Two years from now you’re gonna run out shouting, like I am tonight.” I didn’t know what he meant then, but I did later. It took me a while to recover, emotionally and physically and spiritually, because I was drained. I was running on high octane, propelled by prayer and by energy and strength the Lord gave me. The other guys had told me, expect it. They said to expect that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Jerry Vines, right after his second term, I ran into him and we were talking for a few minutes. He said, “I’m a has been, Darrell.” He had just served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

JIM HENRY: What happens is, you’re praying for a lot of grace, beyond your church. I got letters from people all over the world.

DARRELL ORMAN: Could you feel that grace?

JIM HENRY: Yes, I could, I could, that’s what I’m saying, for about two years, and it was just like I was in a bubble. People were praying for me, I didn’t even know. I got some of the greatest letters from people in little churches, big churches, prayer groups in churches, saying, “Hey, we prayed for you today by name”, “praying for the convention”, and whoa, what a strength that was.

DARRELL ORMAN: Would you think that blessed your church and staff, those two years?

JIM HENRY: Yes, it did. They all kind of grabbed hold of things a little bit more because they knew I was stretched, and they got under it with me.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you see blessings in your family, like your kids and grandkids?
JIM HENRY: Yes, it did, because they got to share in it with me. Because the experiences I was having, for instance, when Billy Graham spoke at the convention, I got to introduce him, he was back there, my family got to meet him. That was a great opportunity. That was a moment. I mean, how many people get that opportunity? President Clinton was president then, and he invited me to go to two historic events; I was at the White House a couple of times along with Henry Blackaby, then I got to go and see the signing of the peace treaty in the Mid-East, and to Rabin’s funeral. That was my church, my preaching, my family got to vicariously share those historic moments in history, and I feel like they were blessed by it. I think that helped them to help me know what was happening... I was in on a period of history, it was strategic denominationally, in the framework of the world, and with the President even though we had a lot of huge differences with him, but for some reason he included me even though I had told him I didn’t vote for him. He still was kind to me, and wanted me around. So having all these experiences, you know, and I love history, were something that I feel like was a blessing to a lot of people.

DARRELL ORMAN: Would you recommend a man run for president if he feels God’s calling him, if he has some staff problems in his church? Or should everything be in order at home before a man takes on that obligation?

JIM HENRY: He’d have to determine what the nature of the problems are, how big they are. As far as I know, I didn’t have any major staff problems. I think if I’d been struggling with major staff problems and the church was in some upheaval, I don’t think I could. But we had what we call the “Pax Romana” Roman peace going on at the church and we’d gone through several hurdles and there was a sweetness in the spirit of the church. That I think gave me a climate of not having to look over my shoulder all the time, that I was going to come home and the church would be off in ten different directions.

DARRELL ORMAN: In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?

JIM HENRY: Well, there were several. Meeting Southern Baptists, at all levels, there are some great people. My, I was just enriched; we’ve got some great people out there. That was a fabulously rewarding experience. The love they have for the Lord, and for the president no matter who he is. I might not be mentioning these in order but having the privilege to introduce Billy Graham. His health was already failing, and I think it was the last time he spoke to the Southern Baptists personally. I had the privilege to be there, and I remember he was running a little bit late, and I remember we were singing and whatever we were singing, they had to put him in a cart to bring him around and when he got up on the platform, they stopped singing and this roar began to come, and all of a sudden it was like electricity, he came up and the song instantly stopped and everybody was cheering and clapping. That was one of those electric moments that I’ll never forget, and to have the honor to introduce him, one of the greatest men in Christian history is one thing I will never forget. I got to preside during the 100th Anniversary of Southern
Baptists, to preside at that meeting when we celebrated that special time in history. That was special! We did restructuring of the convention during those years, a huge thing. We restructured everything. Changed some names, we didn’t know how that was going to go, there was a lot of spark and fire in that, but we saw that come through. The resolution was passed on racial reconciliation, I happened to be a part of that process and to see the process in our denomination, and the way we accepted it so beautifully. There was hardly any question about it on the convention floor. Christ was in the place. And then when I got the letters and I’d go to African-American churches, I was with some of their leadership, and saw how much they appreciated it, and how the Southern Baptists came alongside. That was very satisfying for me. To me, those things right in there, that I didn’t know were going to come during my presidency, that happened during the presidency, that I was in there at such a strategic historical time and I’m glad the Lord let me be part of it.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** What were some of the aspects that you like the least?

**JIM HENRY:** There were two or three things. One would be some of the ugliness, some people not understanding who we were from outside, and sometimes inside who we are, at best.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** The homosexuals weren’t lobbying yet at that time were they?

**JIM HENRY:** At that time, it was about infrastructure and the internalized things we were doing some from the outside about it. You know, you read the letters and ..... 

**DARRELL ORMAN:** Did you read them yourself?

**JIM HENRY:** I had a pastor, an assistant, who read them first, and he said, “You don’t need to get this one.” Some of them were hate mail, and I never saw those again. It was not, so much, directed at me, it was for Baptists, and it was coming from all over the place.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** I think everybody gets some of that.

**JIM HENRY:** Yeah, I think they do. I’m sure they did. They must. I don’t know how they could avoid it. That was unpleasant. The other was the Disney situation. That came right at my last session as president when that resolution came up.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** That was tough for you.

**JIM HENRY:** Yeah, it was. Of course, because I was presiding and if presiding, you have to be fair and you gotta hear everybody, you know, to be fair.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** What percentage of your church is employed by Disney?
JIM HENRY: I don’t know, but there was a lot, there still is a lot.

DARRELL ORMAN: A good portion of quality professional people?

JIM HENRY: Uh huh, some good Christians. Of course, I didn’t know all the ramifications that were going to flare up later, because by then I was walking out and Tom was coming on. But I knew when that happened, that it was not gonna fly that well. I believe you take a stand on mountains you die on, and I didn’t think that was one we should die on. And I tried as best I could, as a former president, because as a president presiding I got a lot of media because I was still the president for a while, and the press was all over it that day. They had a roomful. They were going crazy. Then afterwards, as a former president and a pastor now in Orlando, I did a survey. I went out in kind of disguise right after that in Orlando, and I went to a shopping center. And I said, “Have you read about Southern Baptists and Disney? Do you think that is good? Or bad?” And I surveyed probably about fourteen or fifteen different people. They recognized me and nearly every one of them had read about it or knew about it and without exception they said, “You’re nuts! How you doing that?” And I knew then that the man on the street, though we think we’re trying to do the right thing, there was not an exit plan or a game plan and it would hurt us. So I did not go along with that recommendation. I just felt like we didn’t do the right thing.

DARRELL ORMAN: So you say the politics side of it gets kind of ugly at times?

JIM HENRY: Well, in what way are you talking about the politics? What do you mean “politics”?

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, one of the things within the convention setting. It’s one of the things that have disappointed me, through the years.

JIM HENRY: Yes, I think probably that surprised me maybe the most, as a conservative. I thought “Well, what have I said or done that would create that sense?” And that puzzled me. It didn’t make me angry, I baptize several hundred a year, I’ve always preached the Bible, and I support every conservative president. I thought, I’m one of us. Why would someone now be perceiving me as the enemy? I knew I wasn’t there. And that bothered me. Not to the point of getting mad.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, I heard Jerry Falwell interviewed at a state pastor’s conference, maybe Michael Hayley was the president of the state that year, and Falwell was one of the speakers. And they were interviewing him over some other controversial thing and they said “Well, what about Jim Henry running for president?” And he said, “Praise God! He’s born again, Bible believing”...he just went the litany, you know, and so is Fred Wolfe. How can the Southern Baptists lose?” I thought that was real neat, his response.

JIM HENRY: Jerry was very kind to me afterwards. And most of our people were. I got a lot of affirmation, I got so many nice notes and cards. There were just some that I
knew were hesitant and afraid that I would do the wrong thing. And that was the farthest thing from my heart, to do something wrong.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could change the function of the office of president, how would you change it? In other words, from your experience, is there some way it could be streamlined, or is there some responsibility that could be given to the presidency or taken from it that would make it more effective as a position?

JIM HENRY: I don’t know, the way we’re set up if we could, not thinking through this a lot, Darrell. And I haven’t thought this through a lot. There’s a lot you could do because in one sense it’s a figurehead responsibility. You carry influence but you’re not a president, like in a political structure of a governor or something. You don’t carry that because of the way we’re structured, with trustees, etc. That’s where the power lies in our denominational setup, which is probably as it should be. You’re kind of limited in that you are an influence player. I think perhaps, and this is something else that we could set up denominationally, that if the president, because now that we’re so large, and he’s such a public figure, that he could have a leave of absence from his church, a sabbatical. Then the president could lead Southern Baptists, he could really give his time to go to all the really large framework of institutions that we are. Plus, getting on the local level of which Bobby did a lot with the bus tour, getting out where the people are, and see he could do that, if he had that time. His impact and influence in pulling us together as a people could be far wider and somebody’s going to come along and some church may have a co-pastor. Now, Bobby has a co-pastor. At that time, ten years ago, that was not a big thing. Today, more of the younger guys do that more, have a preaching pastor/co-pastor. But in the future, I believe it began with Bobby and a few others; he said if I’m elected, I want to go at it for two years because the impact of our denomination goes far beyond our local church. I’m a pastor first, but if they give me two years we could touch the world more, which we have the capability of doing. And, I’ll preach some, but just let me go out with the pastors and the people and the laymen and love on them and tell them who we are and what we’re about. We could generate probably more good will and dollars and understanding; if that could happen, I would recommend it.

DARRELL ORMAN: How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ?

JIM HENRY: I think that would be it.

DARRELL ORMAN: In light of your experience, as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the S.B.C.?

JIM HENRY: It exerts more than I imagined and, I didn’t realize it until I was in the office. Well, you’re a gorilla spiritually. You walk into a meeting of other groups and you represent sixteen million people, it’s the largest protestant denomination in America; in the world. You immediately have the floor. The second thing is, now, and the other guys before me began to experience it, and I did in my two years, the press and the media come in there first. Anything that happens, in the national or international level, they’re
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going to try to get to you as representative of the largest protestant denomination to quote you.

DARRELL ORMAN: So you’re like an evangelical pope?

JIM HENRY: Just about, that’s close to it. I had a media guy on standby full-time. He took all the calls, from the television, radio, newspapers, magazines. It was a constant flow, wanting a quote. “What do you think about this” or “what are you all going to do about that” or “will Southern Baptists be on this” or “will you be on this program or that?”

DARRELL ORMAN: Now constant, how often? Every day?

JIM HENRY: I’d say, my guess is, I’d really have to look at my diary but, my guess is at least weekly you get some requests. Sometimes you get maybe five, six, seven or eight in a day. That happens. You know, if you’re going to be quoted, you have to realize and be well read, kind of gotta know what’s going on, you gotta catch your breath and say “Lord, help me say the right thing” because if it goes off wrong then millions of people heard it or read it.

DARRELL ORMAN: I guess that’s Bailey Smith’s difficulty with the “does God answer the prayers of Jews?” That caught him early on.

JIM HENRY: And certainly Bailey did not mean any harm by it, but the press and particularly what the media buys today, I didn’t realize how much that was going to be. And that’s been ten years. It’s more today than it was then. The fact that we see our guys like Bobby and Al Mohler, people on Larry King and Fox News, that says the impact and influence of who we are and the potential of good in that is enormous. I feel like our guys have done a really good job, they represent us well, and I’m proud to say “that’s who we are; you’re listening to us, that’s who we are. That’s what Southern Baptists are about.” Yes, it affords a magnificent opportunity as well as an awesome responsibility.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you think that’s an important consideration for future presidents? In other words, wouldn’t it be difficult for a young rural pastor to be thrown into that, get elected then get thrown into that loop?

JIM HENRY: I would say, I was in a large church and it kept me on my knees, I was calling up people and getting counsel. I wanted to say the right things, and do the right things. I had enough experience with the press, of course, with the different things we’d gone through in our church, and other leadership positions that I’d had that gave me some background of criticism, and dealing with our church and how it influenced where we were. That helped me, because I’d had some experience. I think, I would say, to have some of that background is certainly a plus in today’s society. I would want that man to respond, or at least have people around him that could help him respond in a way that would bring credibility and understand the complexity.
DARRELL ORMAN: This kind of goes back to the front of the questionnaire a little, but did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life, when you were that young rural/urban pastor, was there a destiny feeling early on?

JIM HENRY: No, Darrell, I did not. I guess the only sense of destiny was when I went to Orlando. I left a wonderful church, it was going wonderfully with two television programs, the church was growing by leaps and bounds; I was at home, everything that you could ever dream of to want to be a pastor, was happening....and then Orlando called. And I had some other churches call, but I never sensed anything like that. Then Orlando called, and I struggled more with that call more than anything in my life. And God showed me in what I feel like was a supernatural way that I was to go to Orlando. When I went, because of some of the struggles that we went through in the church, relocating, and changing some things.....

DARRELL ORMAN: Were there times when you thought you'd made a mistake?

JIM HENRY: Nope, because I knew God sent me. That was the sense of destiny. That kept me through agonizing moments that we experienced, I believe that’s why He gave me a supernatural sense of Him sending me, because He knew I was going to go through that, and I believe that if I hadn’t of had that, I don’t know if I’d have cracked, or if I would have gone to another church thinking I’d made a mistake...I don’t know. Outside of all the speculation, I do know that He sent me and that kept me steadfast.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, you know in that sense, you’ve been an influence on a number of other mega ministries, like Bellevue. Adrian told me he’d studied your relocation before they relocated, in that sense your influence has impacted some other major ministries.

JIM HENRY: So I guess we were one of the first. John Bisagno in First Houston was the first church to do something like that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you study them before you did yours?

JIM HENRY: John’s had been several years before and he had a thing going, when they took off and went without any trouble, that’s when I started getting gray-headed. But I knew God wanted to do something in that church. And then, of course, the other things like the destiny of that, but I think the destiny part was that God wanted to do something in that church. I prayed that it was going to influence other churches positively. For instance, raising that large amount of money in one day helped people financially, got lots of letters, we decided we were going to raise a lot of money, a lot of churches came and looked, I think that was the kingdom of God thing. Which I didn’t realize at the time, I had no idea, didn’t do it for that, and then God used that. I was just thinking First Baptist of Orlando, and God used that. Then subsequently I got the privilege and joy of pastoring the Southern Baptist people a couple of years and I think that came out of it. In fact, if I’d stayed at Two Rivers, as much as I loved it, I don’t think that would ever have happened. If I had stayed in my county, my state, my home, if I hadn’t left, not that God
wouldn’t have blessed, look what I would have missed. But it was those things that enabled me, when I became president. I had been through the firing squad, you know, I’d had the gun held to my head, and it enabled me to be strong.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, this kind of covers a lot of where we’ve been, but how did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency denominational positions? Were there any of the positions you held along the way that pastors hold that you felt like assisted you? You had been president of Florida Baptist Convention, hadn’t you?

JIM HENRY: No! Well, in the ‘80’s I had the privilege of putting the Southern Baptist Pastors program together and working with organizations, some of the intricacies, you know that was back in the early ‘80’s. I had that opportunity as a young guy to do that, then I was a trustee at Belmont College, University now. Then I became a trustee at the International Mission Board before I was president. So I had those denominational experiences that prepared me, and of course, church experience, being a large church with multiple staff and beginning to learn that a church like ours was in the public view and we were going to be called on. We talked about radio and television, those experiences in dealing with learning to say the right thing in the right way without compromising. I believe all those things prepared me.

DARRELL ORMAN: That’s a difficult line to walk isn’t it? Knowing your scriptural convictions and knowing what the media is going to do with it?

JIM HENRY: Yes, well, the media will not print scriptural convictions; the people reading it will tell you that. They don’t understand what you mean by those words. And that taught me something by talking to them, I learned that I had to phrase some things, saying the same thing, but using different words, you know, the language of Zion. And then I learned, also, a couple of things. One of them was to be nice to the press and not to avoid them. But also in talking to them up front, tell them that I want to be accurate. And I would tell them, “Now I’m going to trust you with what I’m going to say, and if it doesn’t come out, then don’t call me back, because I’ve got a responsibility to my church and to my people.” So I think I was able to, but because of my experiences early on, they helped me when I got hit with this broad side all of the sudden, in one minute.

DARRELL ORMAN: If there was one, which denominational position helped you the most as president?

JIM HENRY: Before I was president, probably International Mission Board, for the scope it gave me. But, of course, each one of them taught me something. For instance, I was with LifeWay and we went through the Broadman Commentary controversy with Genesis. I go back to that history, and I was there the night we prayed through that. Volume 1 was to be printed; here I was in my late 30’s, in a huge denomination, that was some of the first, that was pre-Peace Committee. That was where the edge of the fire was coming earlier on. We didn’t realize it, I don’t think, at the time, but that was the first shot of the civil war firing back then.
DARRELL ORMAN: Then you have Kings with Honeycutt, the Kings Commentary.

JIM HENRY: Right, then I was, of course, on the Peace Committee. That was another plus. I learned a tremendous lot, who we were institutionally, and the give and take on that peace committee.

DARRELL ORMAN: And that was before you were president?

JIM HENRY: Yes, that was in the ‘80’s.

DARRELL ORMAN: Would that have equipped you more for the domestic side of the presidency, the Peace Committee experience?

JIM HENRY: Well, it did both. I got to watch Charles Fuller work as a chairman and he was excellent. He was just a sweet, noble, godly man. I got to watch his debate within that committee, and then I got to be with the institutions and some of the other institutions that were reporting into the Peace Committee, so I got into all the dynamics of that. I’d say probably the Peace Committee maybe even more than I.M.B. because we were halfway, at that time the thing was bubbled to the top and with the others I learned structure with I.M.B. because I saw how well-run it was and I watched that. I watched reports. I learned some of the criticism that travels around the nation early on, saw some of the controversy there, but the Peace Committee probably capped it, because I got to see what was really going on.

DARRELL ORMAN: Can a group of young pastors be trained and mentored to possibly serve as president of the S.B.C.? Would that in anyway circumvent God’s sovereignty in the selection election process?

JIM HENRY: My sense is, that mentoring goes on maybe without the man knowing it, like in my life. I think I was being mentored and prepared, and I didn’t even know it, through experiences. And I believe that when a man, and it could even be a layman, because we’ve had layman there as leaders, too, but we have some great men who qualify to be president. I think if you tried to train somebody, it might not be well received. That’s the way we’ve operated, you know. You gotta be careful that you don’t want this job too much, but at the same time if you’re doing your job at your church, by the experiences of life and if you’ve participated in Southern Baptist life and if you also reach across your hands to other denominations that aren’t in step with us in spirit and heart and scripture level, you’re going to hear it and learn from others. And if you’re doing that in the normal pattern of life, then you’re being prepared. And you may not even know it. I think, probably, it’s something I would have done more of if I’d known at the time, I would try to work harder at knowing brothers and sisters in Christ in other denominations who come to Christ and who are really more like us than we think, and I think that’s happening now. But I would have been much richer spiritually and emotionally, and probably leadership-wise, if I’d known some of these people earlier and
seen the greatness of God's family on Southern Baptists. I was pretty localized with Southern Baptists. I'm not putting it down, but I think we've expanded our borders a whole lot. And I think if I were a young man now, I would pray that someday I would as a pastor, really work to know guys and gals who are of the stripe and sense and whose heart beats with ours to get people to know Jesus and help them be discipled, work and be at home with other churches. That's healthy! But I think if he's doing his job, and he's fulfilling what God's calling him to be there, he kind of becomes like David, how he learned on the job how to be king. But he was out there doing what his earthly father told him to do, taking care of the sheep. He had those brothers to deal with; he was learning on the job. Then he had to run for a while. All these experiences, these crises that he'd been going through, He's preparing him one day to bring the kingdom together. Then He came along and anointed him, but even then it was a while before he didn't even know if he was going to make it alive, but God was preparing him through all those things. I think that's the way He does with folks today.

DARRELL ORMAN: Again, for you personally, you probably only really came to an awareness about it a year before or in that time frame?

JIM HENRY: Yeah, right, of course it was in the back of my mind because for several years people have been saying, "He's going to be our president!" or "When are you gonna let your name be up?" I was so involved in loving pastor, that I didn't really sit around and think about it. When somebody would mention it, I'd say, "Well, Lord?" But it was about a year before, when Ed was in his second year and people, the drums started beating right after your first year as president, for the next president. Right after the election. Then I'd get letters, phone calls, and people would see me at different meetings, then I thought maybe...I should do something...then coming to Orlando, this was a natural time. God blessed us, we relocated, I've got a wonderful staff.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you attend the mega conferences?

JIM HENRY: Yeah, yeah, I do.

DARRELL ORMAN: So, you've attended them. Would those be a breeding ground for future presidents? Would that be any informal training, not an official training?

JIM HENRY: Well, I think that in one sense. You know, years ago we used to have conferences, we didn't call them mega conferences, and I went to meetings when they first started doing that. They had guys there, Dr. Dehoney was there then, Luther Thompson, First Baptist, Chattanooga, Cecil Sherman would come, Bill Self, so those kinds of guys. The churches are just beginning to grow and they are getting larger churches.

DARRELL ORMAN: Was that a precursor too?
JIM HENRY: So I would go, and these guys were teaching me. I had a young growing church, but these guys were pastors.

DARRELL ORMAN: Was Adrian coming to those meetings?

JIM HENRY: He came later.
DARRELL ORMAN: I’m with Dr. Tom Elliff. It’s June 20th, 2005. He is the ninth president of the conservative resurgence. And it’s good to be with you Dr. Elliff.

TOM ELLIFF: Thanks, Darrell.

DARRELL ORMAN: How would you personally define success in the ministry?

TOM ELLIFF: Well, you know, that is a question that I’ve been asked many times, and I think the use of the word “success” probably doesn’t describe or do justice to what I think a minister ought to be concerned about. I think a minister ought to be concerned about effectiveness. Darrell, you can take a stick of dynamite, you can light it, stand out in the parking lot and throw it into the air and it will do everything that dynamite was designed to do. It would explode, there would be noise, heat and light. If you come back in a few minutes, you won’t even know what happened. But if you take that same stick of dynamite, drill a hole in the right place, say in a granite quarry, where it is not just successful, it’s effective. It does something. It leaves an impact, an impression. So I would have to say most men I know who focus on success, they probably think they influence more than they do, but men who focus on effectiveness probably influence more people than they think they do. The issue is that the impact, the permanent, spiritual impact you leave on the lives of other people, is how God can use you.

DARRELL ORMAN: Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

TOM ELLIFF: I struggled with that, because never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine that I would be president of the Southern Baptist Convention. However, I was privileged to be in the arena when the first salvos of the conservative resurgence were fired. We were living in Kansas City at the time, early 60’s, and my dad was pastor of Bethany Baptist Church. The book came out, the infamous book from the professor at Midwestern Seminary, Elliot, and my dad began to take these guys on. This was 1962-63. He actually had a debate there in our church, filling the church up with seminary students, going toe-to-toe on the issue of the inspiration of the scripture, and along with all of that we had our First Baptist Faith and Message Statement in California. But I viewed it from that perspective. After leaving there, my dad went to be a State worker in Arkansas, and so, all the way through, having been a third generation Southern Baptist preacher, and all the way through, I’ve been able to view the conservative resurgence. My grandfather was a great doctrinal preacher. In fact, he was asked 121 questions at his ordination. He asked those questions of me when I was ordained. He was a doctrinal preacher, back in the days when they would go into a town and put up a brush arbor and debate in the Campbellites for a week, then for two more weeks they’d preach anyhow. And all of this, I was impaired to these discussions, you know, Christian doctrine, the whole issue of the Scripture, the inerrancy and infallibility of the scripture, so I got to view that and I got the benefit from the legacy of my dad and my granddad.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, I was aware that you were a kind of pedigreed Southern Baptist family, like the Drapers, and I guess the Pattersons, too.
TOM ELLIFF: Yes, very much so.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

TOM ELLIFF: I do not know. You know, one of the greatest ironies in the world to me is how that happened. I had gone to a meeting in Atlanta, of conservative leaders of various sorts, and that was the meeting that was taking sort of a straw poll. And Dr. Patterson and I were the ones that ended up in that straw poll. I asked them, and they said, “Well, do you know which of you would consider this?” I said, “Well, let me talk to Dr. Patterson, and we stepped out.” I said, “Paige, you ought to do that.” He said, “No, you ought to do that.” And I said, “No, I’m not going to do that unless the Lord gives me some leadership.” And God did. He actually gave me a Bible promise that I should do that. The ultimate irony is that I went to that meeting actually, initially, planning that year not to attend the convention. I rarely ever miss a Southern Baptist Convention; and haven’t in many, many years, but we were in the middle of some big programs in our church and things were happening to some of our staff, there were some transitions. So I just decided I wasn’t going to convention that year; to get elected president at a convention that you had not intended to attend is an irony to me.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, I had the opportunity to hear the mirror side of that from Paige Patterson the night before last, and he said that he told you that he was kind of a man of blood....and had been in the battles, and you were a missionary and there was the mission emphasis, and ..

TOM ELLIFF: I urged him to do that and he said “no” with as much certainty as you had when you decided not to accept the presidency of the International Mission Board; and I said, “I’m not supposed to accept this responsibility.” That’s how that happened really.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, on that note, the International Mission Board, was a lot of that just your desire to stay in ministry and stay away from the bureaucracy side of the convention?

TOM ELLIFF: No, it was just God. You know, Darrell, I love missions and my heart is missions and we’ve served for a time on the mission field. The committee had talked to me on more than one occasion about this. And I’d say no. And then they’d come back, and finally I don’t know whether I just wore out, or just what, but there was that brief moment there when I had agreed to do it. After meeting with the committee, and flying home that night, I said to my wife, “Does being a man of integrity mean that you never pretend?” And she said “Of course.” And I said, “Well, I can’t pretend; there is not something in my heart that is wrong.” So for three days she and I prayed and fasted, and early on Monday morning, just hours away from when this was all going to be released, I sent a fax to the committee saying that “you may consider this a cheap shot from a Baptist preacher, or you may see it as the sovereign hand of God, you probably will think the first but it’s really the latter, I’m not to be president. I don’t believe that I’m the one
that’s going to do that.” Of course, they immediately then went to Dr. Rankin who has proven eminently so that he was the guy.

DARRELL ORMAN: He did an excellent job. Absolutely, a wonderful Statesman! During your tenure as president, what do you see now as God’s unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time? Before your election?

TOM ELLIFF: Well, I certainly was not aware of it before the election except that when I knew that I was going to be nominated, I began to ask the Lord what agenda.

Because really the president of the convention is mostly a bully pulpit and there was an issue on my heart and you heard that because of this meeting today, and that is for revival. And so the first year that I was president we went to all the seminary campuses and we had convocations, “a call to the cross” we called them. Henry Blackaby, Avery Willis, Ron and Pat Owens, and myself; and much to my surprise, all the seminaries cancelled classes for a full day. We got all the students together, along with pastors, and we prayed for revival. So that was the first year. The second year, we had the emphasis on the family. That was in the Salt Lake City Convention. Those were the two big issues in my life. What’s happened to our family, and what’s happening to our churches?

DARRELL ORMAN: Say that again, what you just said.

TOM ELLIFF: The covenant that was made between our seminaries and the convention, you know when those men stood up there at that desk and as they read it to sign it, people stood and wept. You see, that was a call to the nation in many ways in terms of the resurgence. The issue was our seminaries. Here we had our seminary presidents. I called Al Moehler and asked him, he was head of the Seminary Council at that time, if he thought they would be willing to do that. He not only thought so but he was willing to write that; and took it to the presidents and they said “We would love to sign it.” I was really thrilled. That was a great thing.

DARRELL ORMAN: I’m still, knowing the way it was before remembering some of the literature way back that we were using years ago, it’s amazing. Even when I go to Executive Committee and just hear Morris talking about wanting to see revival in the nation, I think, “How many denominational leaders, of other denominations, are speaking like that and have those kinds of passions?” And Bobby with the bus trip; and let’s try to baptize 1,000,000. We’re dear friends and he said, “Darrell, what do you think? I said, “Bobby, how can you lose, trying to win a million people for Christ?”

TOM ELLIFF: Right, at least you’re better off than if you didn’t even try.

DARRELL ORMAN: Absolutely, and it’s showing up in this convention. That’s why there’s such a big turn out here; his “Everybody can” thing. Tom, are you a
goal setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?

TOM ELLIFF: I don’t want to blow smoke here to you, but I will say that on an organizational side of our church, and of course everybody sets specific goals, but I really believe in terms of early on and all the way through, I have desired this. My desire is to be a living illustration that God is faithful to any man who will take Him at His Word. If I define my goal in life, that is to be a living illustration of God’s faithfulness to men who take Him at His Word. In terms of numerical goals and so forth, we could talk about the pros and cons of that, I’m absolutely not against them; in fact, I’ve set them. But I did not set those for the convention so much as I felt like, in that specific instance, the desire was for revival, and for historic families, and so forth.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could serve again would you do anything differently the second time around with retrospect?

TOM ELLIFF: The day that I was elected, I said to my associate, I’m going to run this as a sprint. I’m not going to look back. I’m going to run as fast as I can, as hard as I can for these two years. I don’t know what I would have done differently. I think I’m more aware now of how much influence there is with that position, and I might have used it in a little different way. But I ran flat out for two years. You know, the church was very gracious to me. First Southern was very gracious to me. Of course, it was not anything new for them. They had a pastor before that had been president of the convention, so they pretty much knew what to expect. But I ran it with my tongue hanging out.

DARRELL ORMAN: That’s good. In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?

TOM ELLIFF: Most rewarding was this. I discovered that out there in every direction of our convention, from the trenches all the way up through denominational leadership, there are some really wonderful saints of God who are serving. There are pastors in humble places who love God with all their heart. We have some people in the denominational leadership, people joke about being a denominational servant, you know. But we have men whose desires, I mean, they in fact, take the heat sometimes for the good of the convention rather than try to get involved in little off the scene battles, they’re willing just to swallow their pride and just go on because they have bigger intentions. And I’ve discovered there are some truly godly people out there in the pew, in the pulpit, in the denomination, State buildings; in our national convention there are some people who truly love Jesus. And that, to me, well, I knew that, but it was such a wonderful thing to get to know them and to walk with them and to pray with them. I have really loved getting to know them, and I have friends all over the convention now.

DARRELL ORMAN: What about the least rewarding aspect, or the down side?
TOM ELLIFF: I don’t know that I feel that there was anything about, I feel like when I got to the end I realized how much more we could do for world missions, for instance, as a convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: In what way? What would be some suggestions?

TOM ELLIFF: We could be sending more, we could be giving more, we could be beating that pulpit, we could be 10,000 missionaries, not 5,000. There is so much more that we could be doing. There are a lot of resources out there. And I was absolutely staggered to discover how much our churches are in debt, in building debt, and how much interest we pay. We pay more interest every year than we do for Cooperative Program. We pay more millions of dollars of interest every year. And as that has escalated, our baptisms have not gone up; mostly they’ve gone down. So debt is not the insurance for them. We’re paying all this interest and all this money and yet, we need to win the world. There’s a world out there that needs to be won. So that was not disillusioning to me, it was just a challenge to me.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, sure. If you could change the function of the office of president, how would you change it? One of the things I want to do with this dissertation, if it comes out okay, is let it be a kind of manual for future presidents and possibly if it can do anything constructive, even for the position itself.

TOM ELLIFF: I saw that question on there. I really believe that there is not much that I would change. The job really is what the man makes of it. So you can’t say “I’d give him more authority” or “I’d give him less authority”; he has all the authority. He has whatever resources he uses. So I’m not sure that there’s much about it that I would change.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did your church have to pour through a lot of its personal resources into your presidency?

TOM ELLIFF: Oh, of course. I say of course. They provided a man, one of our staff members who received a salary. The convention would pay his way. I determined I would never travel alone. I either had my wife with me, or someplace near by there was an assistant. Our church paid him a salary, and I was grateful for it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Jim Henry said he feels like the endowment for the presidency is growing, providing the monies to assist in those supportive type things. So everything else, pretty well you feel like the one year term at a time, possible two, two year limitation.

TOM ELLIFF: Absolutely. I wouldn’t change that. I think if we tampered with that, we’d be setting ourselves up for either more or less control or authority than we need. I don’t think, for a pastor, for instance, it would be healthy.

DARRELL ORMAN: Because in two years, you’re pretty well wrung out.
TOM ELLIFF: You know what it was, Adrian said what it was that caused him not to run that second time, when he was first elected, is that he closed his invocation one Sunday morning by saying, “Sincerely yours in Christ, Adrian Rogers.” He’d written so many letters.

DARRELL ORMAN: I hadn’t heard that.

TOM ELLIFF: Well, that is a legend. But, it is very consuming. You know, I can go back and look at my records and we’re talking about every year, thousands upon thousands of letters. Thousands!

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you read them all?

TOM ELLIFF: I’m talking about letters that I wrote, answering letters that were personally directed to me. I sat here and read them, my assistant read them, and then if there was one that could be answered by some correspondence that we’d already taken, you know like the Disney issue, or something like that, but when they would ask specific questions, I would give them specific answers.

DARRELL ORMAN: How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ?

TOM ELLIFF: Well, to remember it’s for Christ. It’s not about you. You gotta question down here about grooming, I think that would be the worst thing in the world. I think it would be awful. Well, I think something like this seeks the man; the man doesn’t seek it. If you have a man who’s seeking it, then you don’t have the man you want. So I would say to remember that it is for Christ. It’s all about Jesus. It’s all about Jesus.

DARRELL ORMAN: In light of your experience, as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the S.B.C.?

TOM ELLIFF: Well, considerable. When people think of the S.B.C. it is the president. There are two things they think of. They think of who the national president is. Now we have Al Moeller, Richard Land, and so forth, and these men are relatively new faces in terms of political influence. But along with that, now, goes the president of the convention. And the other thing that speaks to the world, our resolutions. Now that’s really funny because most Baptists don’t think of the resolutions as big. They know they’re not binding. The world doesn’t understand the Southern Baptist Convention. But what the world doesn’t understand about the convention and resolutions, they think we pass a resolution; that’s why Wiley Drake brought the resolution to not go to Disney, but ended up going to Disney. Don’t quote me on that.

DARRELL ORMAN: What are the unique pressures and responsibilities of serving in one of the most influential evangelical positions is the world?
TOM ELLIFF: I didn’t realize this until the day after I was president. A unique blessing is that there are thousands of people praying for you. And the moment that you stop being president, they shift that to somebody else, and it is literally a physical, spiritual conscious awareness that these people are not praying for you the next day.

DARRELL ORMAN: The next day? You know, there have been several of the men I’ve talked to who have said the same thing. Did you all discuss that with each other?

TOM ELLIFF: Not that much. Not really formally.

DARRELL ORMAN: It’s amazing because I’ve heard that over and over again.

TOM ELLIFF: The other thing is that you’re standing there shaving the day after your presidency and all of the sudden you realize that you are not preparing for something because for two years, every day has its press conferences, every day has its television interviews, every day has its telephone calls, every day has its letters to be written on the fly, you’re never at a moment when you are not preparing for the next place. Sometimes six or seven times a day, different places along the way. And you are in a constant state of preparation so that when you go to bed at night you’re thinking about tomorrow morning because you never know if the east coast is going to call at about 5 o’clock am and talk about abortion or perhaps they may want you on the “Today” program or some other later program, so you are constantly preparing. In your mind you are constantly going over how you will address that issue or label. It represents somebody’s problem. You don’t want to make a bozo out of yourself, but more than that you don’t want to shame the convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did they do those mock press conferences with you in your first time around?

TOM ELLIFF: No, they were already past that. And I never really had problems, I asked them if any of them needed prayer, asked them if they had needs, sort of disarmed them a little bit.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have problems with any misquotes during your presidency?

TOM ELLIFF: Of course, you know, I’m from Oklahoma. Will Rogers used to say that when the press came in they always took two pictures just in case one of them came out good. And the old saying, “What smells out?” So really, the way you handle that is that you listen graciously to whatever question they ask you, and you say what is on your heart. It doesn’t even have to relate so much to their question but you’ve got your message and you have to stay on the message. They could ask you about the war or some other place in the world. You know Billy Graham always said, “If you listen to their questions you might be lying to Christ” and that’s what you don’t need to do. Another thing that is important to realize is that generally, the initial questions that are asked are
to get your head out of the trench; the next thing they ask you is to blow it off. So you just need to be pretty careful.

DARRELL ORMAN: I prayed at the opening of our House for the State of Florida, and prayed for unborn babies, the sanctity of marriage, and closed in the name of Jesus. Fifteen of the legislators walked out and called a press conference. Primarily, they were democrats, Jewish democrats.

TOM ELIFF: Well, did you see where this Nobel nominated neurologist has examined Terry Schiavo and said that she was conscious and she was well aware, in fact she was aware of what was happening to her. They said when the whole family came in she would respond, and he said for this man to say that she was in a vegetative state, it was a common lie. This man was probably the most prominent neurologist in America.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, even when the family came in with the press, we saw that she would look at them, and she would smile.

TOM ELIFF: Uh-huh, he said she could speak. But the bottom line is, yes, of course you get these problems, but if you spend your time trying, because they would like you to come back and straighten these things up, but that really gets to be too much. That’s like saying that I believe they can hurt me by what they say. The best thing to do is to just let it go, do your article, not to fight and not try to straighten it out. As they used to say, “Never get in an argument with any enemy that buys paper by the box carload and ink by the barrel.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, they were interviewing me as far as the TV, and they turned the camera off and said it was the end of the interview but I noticed that the light was still blinking, and I asked “Is the audio still on?” And he said “Well, yes.” Because they started asking real pointed things after the interview was finished.

TOM ELIFF: Yeah, I had a man come out to interview me at the church in Salt Lake City from the Desert Rag or Desert News and he tried that. In fact, he had the microphone on, and said, “Okay, that’s all I need.” Then he said, “Well, what do you think about so and so?” And I said, “I know the mike is on and you know the mike is on.” So he just blushed.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, I wasn’t aware of that but I saw the light blinking on the thing, so I knew something was still going on. Oh, my word. Well, did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life?

TOM ELIFF: You know, when God called me to preach, one of the things I understood was that He had a plan for every man. He has a destiny for you and He has a destiny for everyone. I would hope that everybody lived with that thought in their mind. I never have perceived myself as destined to be president of the convention. I appreciate what the man said when somebody asked about what makes a man great. Well, he said, it’s not about doing something great, it’s about doing everything in a great way. I believe
that we have to approach life like that. We ought to do everything different but yet with certainty. Of course, I believe that everybody has a destiny. I believe that God promises that promotion doesn’t come from the north or the south or the east, rather, but that God raises up the one He chooses. We’re all just a breath, anyway.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency?

TOM ELLIFF: Well, I don’t know that I really ever met any difficulties or problems or issues in being president of the convention that I had not met in some way in my pastoring experience. Incidentally, I have a great, great praying congregation. They love the pastor and the pastor loves them. They’re so faithful. I mean, they are great. So they love their pastor, I’ve been there 20 years now, longer than any one of those guys. I can say that I have met churches that don’t love their pastor but this one does.
DARRELL ORMAN: I’m with Dr. Paige Patterson, the 10th president of the conservative resurgence, currently president of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and viewed as one of the engineers of the conservative resurgence. It’s good to be with you, Dr. Patterson, and I’d like to begin by asking you, how do you personally define success in the ministry?

PAIGE PATTERSON: I’m a relatively simple man when it comes down to it, so many of my answers will probably reflect that. I define success in the ministry as, at the end of all it, having the Lord say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” I doubt that there is any real success that can be attributed to numerical growth or pulpit oratory. I think we should try to do our best in all of those and many other fields, but in the end, the only thing that’s going to matter that will actually define success is whether or not we have met God’s standards and hear Him say, “Well done, you good and faithful servant.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Amen! Excellent! Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

PAIGE PATTERSON: Well, that perhaps will be an interesting question with me, because it goes all the way back to my childhood. I had the good fortune of growing up in the home of a prominent Baptist pastor, who eventually himself became a denominational leader. Dr. T. A Patterson was pastor during all my growing up years in First Baptist Church in Beaumont, Texas, which at that time was the 6th largest church in the convention. Dad was very much involved in denominational affairs, and eventually became Executive Secretary for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, where he served until his retirement. As a result of that, I understood how the convention worked, from almost as early back as I can remember. Dad had prominent pastor, prominent missionary, prominent evangelist after prominent figure in the church and in our home and I had opportunities to mix with them and learn about them. And Dad believed stupendously in the work of the Southern Baptist Convention, although he warned me repeatedly that there was going to come a day when there would be a great confrontation and that I must prepare myself for that. He never dreamed, of course, that at that particular stage, that his son would be involved in it prominently, but he did try to prepare me for that because he said every great denomination in history has eventually drifted to the left and we are already doing it. He said there will come a day when you will have to decide whether you are going to go with the crowd or whether or not you’re going to stand, maybe alone. So Dad and my home and my home church prepared me very much to understand the convention, and to understand Baptist churches and Baptist people, and Dr. Land always like to say that “Patterson was born a Baptist Prince.” And so, I suppose there was this much truth in that. I certainly was not born into monied aristocracy but I certainly was born into denominational aristocracy, after a sense. So I just grew up with it and in that sense of the word, probably even had enjoyed some advantage over the men who served as president who came into it without that kind of a background.

DARRELL ORMAN: Absolutely. How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C. process?
PAIGE PATTERSON: Well, if I didn’t believe that God was truly omnipotent and omniscient and all those things, I’d say He must have made a mistake on this one. But I guess He certainly didn’t, since He doesn’t make mistakes. But the process of it was actually quite unusual, because being one of the two who were involved in setting off the fire alarm in Southern Baptist life, when I made the decision to be involved in that in 1978, I knew that it doomed any desire that I might have to serve in any capacity in the denomination, let alone the presidency of the convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: You thought you’d be ostracized?

PAIGE PATTERSON: I knew I would because I did know a lot about the denomination, and I did know about the “good old boy” system, that protected its own wonderfully, it found ways to forever alienate anybody who did not go along, who was a troublemaker, and I’d watched it happen with many others, some for good reasons and some not good reasons, but nevertheless, very thoroughly. So I knew that my decision to do this was a decision to count myself expendable. And I fully made that decision, knowing that was the case. I did go to my dad. I told him what I was going to do. He was not in good health by that time, and I asked him, I said, “Dad, I’m not sure I can back out of this, even if you tell me but I want to know what your will is on it.” And he wept, and he said, “Son, I know what’s going to happen to the man who does this.” And I said, “I understand that, and I’m heading that way anyway,” because somebody has to do it. And I said, “What I want is your blessing.” And he said, “Son, you always have my blessing when you attempt to do right in front of the Lord.” So I never thought that this would happen. To his credit, Judge Pressler always believed we would win. I never did believe that we would win. Again, I knew too much about how the denomination worked, and I only did it because I didn’t want to have to tell my kids and my grandkids that I didn’t have the courage to try. So I did so, thinking that we would lose. But confident that I still knew how to win people to Christ and could still preach on the corner, and that I could go to church, in any event, and that God would use me if I were faithful to Him. I just didn’t know it would be in the denomination. So imagine my surprise when things turned around in such a way that we began to win. And once we had begun to win, there was considerable movement, constantly people coming to me who obviously were supporters and who were kind in their regard for me and pressing me to allow my name to be put up as president. But I found that to be very unwise and did not even consider it until the year that Tom Elliff was actually first elected and we met together with a group of men as we usually did. In those days I remember there were probably 50 or so present, and they did a secret ballot that didn’t count for anything but just who they would like to see and strangely enough, there were only one or two votes difference between Tom Elliff and me. So I suggested at that point that they allow Dr. Elliff and I to go out of the room by ourselves. We left the room, and talked, and I said to Dr. Elliff, “Look, you need to be the one to go, because, again, my name is a red flag, my name is instant divisiveness and you’re coming back and we’re having missionary emphasis and you’re a former missionary, I really believe you should go. So, Tom, at length, relented and agreed to allow his name to be nominated. Of course, he served two wonderful terms; however, he kept in the back of his mind what had been done and
unknown to me, he worked most of that second year to set it up for them to come back and say “we want you to do this.”

**DARRELL ORMAN: Was there a little bit of a pull then, Dr. Patterson, that it should only be active pastors?**

**PAIGE PATTERSON: We heard a little bit of that. It was actually the other side of the coin that probably was a bigger problem. The convention would be happy to have a layman as president, too. We haven’t had a layman for years and years and years; it is a good thing occasionally for us to do that. The bigger problem was it was a denominational servant, and there is a conceivable conflict of interest involved in this in that the president appoints the Committee on Committees, which then appoints the Committee on Nominations which then appoints the Trustees, for some institution or entity. There was precedent, however, because two other seminary presidents had been president many, many years ago, but there had been two. I reflected very honestly about it with all the people on that list that you have there, the former presidents and others also. And not all of them thought that it was a good thing, but the majority overwhelmingly did, so, finally I did yield to that in Salt Lake City, and was elected without opposition either term.**

**DARRELL ORMAN: I’ve had an opportunity through the years to attend I guess what would be Lieutenant Meetings; you know, several years ago a couple of them were and I’ve seen you at Two Rivers Baptist Church, and so forth, and heard some of the different hall discussions that come up about these things. That’s neat, that’s exciting.**

**Well, on to #4, during your tenure, as president, what do you see now as God’s unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time or before your election?**

**PAIGE PATTERSON: I think there were two or three things that happened during my presidency which were important; and they were mostly matters of timing. Now from the very first of the conservative movement, I had had my bead set on the Baptist Faith and Message, the confessional statement. I felt that there were neoorthodox elements that had crept into the ‘63 version which had not been present in the original convention.**

**DARRELL ORMAN: Interpreted scripture by Jesus....**

**PAIGE PATTERSON: I also felt like it was the time for us to make a statement about racism, which we had never made confessionally. And I felt that questions about the family, we had adopted a family amendment under Tom Elliff, but we had not really dealt with the whole gender question. And with the question of being a denomination favoring life in quite the ways I felt like we should have. There were other questions arising, for example, questions with regard to God with the openness of God movement. It was in its infancy then, but it was already clear where it was going, and I felt like we needed to make some clarification there because, in my opinion, your doctrines never**
change but the issues that you must address doctrinally do change from time to time. Former generations, for example, would have been unaware of any abortion, any necessity for life, because abortion was not considered a possibility, but in our generation it is, so we need to say something. And for all those reasons, it was critically important to me that we get the issue of a reassessment of our confession before the people. And particularly, of course, on the first article which was on the Bible. I’ve been angling for that for a long time, I confess, I will confess that I worked to get a motion on the floor of the convention a year before that the newly-elected president would appoint the committee that would bring revision; and so as far as I’m concerned maybe the most important thing that happened during the years of my presidency, was the appointment of the committee to revise the Baptist Faith and Message Statement and the bringing of that, and I do think that the one hour debate that occurred at the time when the presentation was made is also one of the signal moments in Southern Baptist history; because more clearly than any of us would have ever believed to hope for, all the issues got out on the table. And Dr. Chuck Kelly and Dr. Richard Land and Dr. Al Mohler came as close in my estimation in their answers to being as divinely inspired as anybody has ever come since the Bible itself. They were just incredible in the way they fielded the questions and handled them. I would have to say that was a high point. There were some other things that we tried to do that were very important. We established strategic focus cities, and got ourselves refocused on planting churches in the big cities of America where we didn’t have any, and that was a major emphasis. I also worked very hard during those years to get us refocused on all the various ethnic groups that made up the Southern Baptist Convention, and bring some of their leadership into prominence in the convention, from the African-Americans, from the Hispanics, and various groups of the Asians, and what have you. Had all the presidents from about 22 or 23 different groups that make up the convention ethnically, I had them come to a common meeting on the campus of Southeastern Seminary to encourage them. So those were some of the things that I think history will probably regard the most significant that happened during our presidency is that we codified all that had been going on since 1979.

DARRELL ORMAN: Are you a goal setter and did your ministry path follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?

PAIGE PATTERSON: You know, I suppose it will be fair to say that I’m a general goal setter, but not much of a specific goal setter. Let’s take the conservative resurgence, for example. The real goal there, in my mind and heart, was never doctrinal conformity. I suppose I’m too much of a Baptist for that to begin with; and I just think that there is room for discussion of whether we’re dichotomist or trichotomist and so forth and so on. The real goal was that I, being something of a student of history, had observed that every time a denomination lost its confidence in the Word of God, that it wasn’t long until it was evangelistically and missionarily dead also. My one big concern, the only thing that ever wakes me up in the middle of the night, is 6.5 billion lost people in the world. And so my goal in my presidency, my goal in the whole conservative resurgence was the same, and that is to deliver a church as pure as possible doctrinally for the sake of winning the world to faith in Christ. So does the journal go.
DARRELL ORMAN: I had the opportunity to have lunch with D. James Kennedy, a decent historian in his own right, several years ago; well, it was like fourteen years ago. And he pointed out, “Darrell, it’s never happened in church history for a major denomination to go back to inerrancy and missions and evangelism like the convention’s doing.” He said, “If you have any influence in the process, help them push it all the way.” That was his commentary on it.

PAIGE PATTERSON: The goals were also general in nature. I realized fairly early on that our ability to do any of this was dependent upon keeping our own lives pure. For an old Irish Texan like me, that was hard for many reasons. But, I knew that I had to be sure that in my own life I was exemplary and that I walked with God; and that it would be apparent even sometimes maybe to my enemies that I was, in fact, walking with God, even in all my weakness. I attempted to do that; I attempted to maintain my own personal witnessing in my life, that’s been a goal I’ve always believed. I always teach my young preachers that there are only really two things necessary to avoid burn-out and failure in the ministry, including moral failure. You have to keep your personal walk with God, no matter what else you lose in the process, you gotta keep that. And you gotta keep witnessing to people. Those two things will hold your feet to the fire. So those have always been goals!

DARRELL ORMAN: Amen! That’s good. If you could serve again, would you do anything differently the second time around?

PAIGE PATTERSON: You know, I’ve given a great deal of thought to that and the temptation is to say “no” and probably that’s really where I stand. But, I would say this. I would work even more diligently than I did to try and keep people from being hurt. I do not like to see people hurt, even if they’re on a wrong side of an issue. I have enough sense of church history to know it’s unavoidable. If you’re talking about the Christological controversies of the first seven centuries, or if you’re talking about the reformation, in any religious squabble, folks get hurt. You can’t avoid it. But I think I would have worked a lot harder to try to do my best to see to it that at least it wasn’t inflicted by anything I personally said or did. And I also said, and some of this I’ve said in public discourse now, I mean in written discourse in the Southern Seminary Journal, when they asked me a similar question. I do think that I got so busy in the things with the denomination, so busy trying to pull the denomination out of the tail spin that I assumed it was in, that I probably didn’t witness as much as I should have and, that I probably should have prayed more than I did. And I definitely regret that at times my wife had a greater faith probably than I did. So those are some things that I think I would do differently. I’d trust God more, and I think I’d work harder to try to keep people from being hurt.

DARRELL ORMAN: In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?

PAIGE PATTERSON: Well it’s hard to say a least, but to start there, I suppose the least enjoyable and rewarding part of it is the fact that you have people writing to you by the
untold hundreds, wanting you to become the champion for their cause. And often times, they are good causes, yet you realize you can’t do all that. You can’t fight other people’s battles and the necessity of saying no to them in a way that doesn’t discourage them from the good and the noble. It was always difficult for me. Probably the thing that was the most difficult single thing to handle during my presidency, was the Arizona Foundation scandal. And that proved to be so difficult because your heart went out to all these people you were receiving letters from in Arizona demanding that the Southern Baptist Convention do something, that they lost their whole nest egg, their whole retirement was gone, etc., etc., etc. There were hundreds of letters that came in like that, and you were almost prevented even from being able to act in any way to be helpful because your convention lawyers are telling you the danger of ascending liability if we say or do anything’. I violated some of that; I went ahead and tried to do some things to help, scared the convention lawyers to death probably. But that was a very difficult particular matter that I had to handle then which was quite unpleasant.

DARRELL ORMAN: Plus the individuals out there don’t know the distinction between the state convention and the national.

PAIGE PATTERSON: Exactly. The most rewarding thing? Probably was that one hour debate during the convention over the question of biblical inerrancy. I probably had more fun moderating it; I probably had too much fun moderating it. At the end of it I had to confess to the Lord that I really wanted it to go on for another hour, because I thought the other side was ruining itself and I thought our guys were so brilliant in their answers. I just felt the presence of the power of God in the whole situation and I probably had more fun than I should have.

DARRELL ORMAN: It’s the Irish in you. My middle name is Patrick, so there’s that natural competitiveness. Several of the men have mentioned the grace that they experienced from having hundreds of thousands of people praying for them for two years. Did you sense that as well?

PAIGE PATTERSON: I did, and you indeed miss it once it’s gone.

DARRELL ORMAN: Right.

PAIGE PATTERSON: You want it to transfer on to the next guy, but still ..... 

DARRELL ORMAN: Even so, remember me?

PAIGE PATTERSON: Yes, that’s exactly right. You are cognizant that you have an ounce of spirituality about you, you’re cognizant of, I will call it a prayer cushion maybe.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you sense it the very next day after your first day of election?
PAIGE PATTERSON: Actually, I think I sensed it even going into the Utah Convention because I knew that Salt Lake City, of course, was likely to take place and
that many were praying that way. So I think I even was aware of it some days, maybe even weeks prior to actually being elected president.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** If you could change the function of the office of president, how would you change it? I’m sure you’ve given that a lot of thought, you’re very analytical. Any thoughts about the function of the presidency, term lengths, you know, there’s really no assigned staff for them. They either have to use their own staff from church or in your case school, or whatever, any of those kinds of things?

**PAIGE PATTERSON:** In all candor, there is probably not a thing I would change. I think our church fathers were brilliant in what they set up. They set up a situation in which the president has uncommon influence while he is in the office, but not unfettered influence; he’s not out there where he can do anything he wants to do; almost everything is a process of involving others, and yet he does have uncommon influence during those days if he’s willing to use it for good and for God.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** Would you say he has influence and not particularly authority?

**PAIGE PATTERSON:** He has influence more than authority; what authority he does have, or what my old daddy used to say is, “moral ascendancy.” If he has an authority, it’s because people are convinced that he is genuinely a godly man and that they should follow him. He has, perhaps, that kind of authority, but it is that, it’s moral in scope, not written, not codified in any way. It is a difficult time because the way the thing has evolved, it used to be almost purely honorary; all he did was just preside over the convention and that was about it.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** All of the agency heads pretty much influence their own outcomes?

**PAIGE PATTERSON:** That’s right, but due to the age of electronics, and with the press suddenly becoming aware of us in a way in ‘79 that it was not ever aware of us before, it has greatly increased, so that the man effectively is going to do two jobs, two full-time jobs for two years. But, I think that’s the wisdom of no more than two years. At that point, he can go back to being human. I think that that’s very wise, that that limitation is on there, not only because it limits him and his ability to work in that kind of a place, but also because it opens the way for many people eventually to serve. Not many as a percent of the whole but nevertheless many more, more than would serve in most denominations.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** It seems like historically, years ago around the turn of the last century and so forth, that some were seven years, ten years.

**PAIGE PATTERSON:** And I think that was changed because people sensed that that gave undue power and influence to one man. I think that they didn’t want to do that and I
think they saw the wisdom of passing that around to others. I really like the present system very well. I admit the difficulty of it during the time that the man is president. He has some financial burden. It cost Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary a ton of money. The Executive Committee paid some, very generous in many ways, but it didn’t begin to cover the expenses. So, yes, Southeastern had a lot they had to bear, the president himself being out a lot of money, personally he certainly was, but I still don’t think it’s exorbitant. I don’t think it’s something that can’t be handled and I frankly think that this is a classic case of “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

DARRELL ORMAN: I know they’re raising kind of the stipend for it a little bit, but should they endow it more for …

PAIGE PATTERSON: I think if somebody came along and said, “Look, I see this as a great need and I want to put the money there to endow it”, that would be fine. But with the people we have around the world who still haven’t heard the gospel for the first time, I wouldn’t lift a finger to get out and try to do it; we’re making it, we’re doing okay with it.

DARRELL ORMAN: In conferring with these other men, have their churches all born those types of financial sacrifices?

PAIGE PATTERSON: Unquestionably, every one of them sacrificed, some much more greatly than others.

DARRELL ORMAN: How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ?

PAIGE PATTERSON: I believe that one of the most important things that future presidents can do is to be absolutely certain that they understand the system going in. I think if you understand the system going in, and if you have some people on your staff who can work with you on the minutia of it, that you can alleviate yourself of a lot of the problems that come along just by not knowing. You have to know the system; you have to know the constitution bylaws well. You have to decide what two or three things that you would like to emphasize in your presidency, such as our present president has magnified evangelism and said, “This is what we’re going to do.”

DARRELL ORMAN: How would you rate his performance so far?

PAIGE PATTERSON: Well, I warmly commend him for the excellence of being a one issue guy right now. I think we were ready for that. I think we’ve been struggling through all of this for so long, now’s the time to say this is going to have a product in the end which is going to be the souls of men, and the growth of our churches. So I warmly commend him for that and tried to do everything I could to encourage him. I believe that a president better be sure that he is prayed up every day he faces, because he’ll be called by the press about if a sub-minister of the Iranian parliament has an ingrown toe nail and has to go to the hospital. The president of the convention will be called for a comment
about that. And one of the most important things, in fact, that he will have to do in my estimation, is to have somebody on his staff, that the first thing they do every morning is to find out what everything going on in the world is that he may have to make a statement about, and sit down with him very early in the morning, and say, “Mr. President, here’s what’s happening in the world. We’ve got a girl missing in Aruba. We’ve got five killed in Baghdad today;“ and just give him, just bring him up to date so he knows everything that’s happening so that he can formulate some sort of a comment in his mind in case he is called and asked by the press. I think that’s very important, and again, when you’re being asked by everybody in the world about things, it is so easy to make a mistake. It may be innocent enough, but just the least little thing where you can hurt a lot of people. And that’s where I think his prayer for wisdom and his people’s prayer that God will give him wisdom becomes strategically important.

DARRELL ORMAN: Is that difficult with this sound bite system we’re in? Like even Dr. Vines on the “Mohammad was a pedophile.” They just jerk that right out of context, and beat him up with it.

PAIGE PATTERSON: Yes, exactly. That’s the uniqueness of television that’s worse than radio or news print. And, so one of the things that we used to do, (unfortunately we’re not doing it right now but we used to do it all the time,) every one of these men, who were president before me, and I did it too; we had a mock press conference with them on the telephone. All of us became the press, we even had some fun out of it. We would assign roles, one guy would be Dan Rather, another would be the New York Times, and we would just plaster the guy on the phone. We’d have long phone conversations, sometimes maybe it lasted three or four hours. We would hit him with everything in the world and every time that he said something that could get him in trouble, we’d stop right there and somebody would say, “Well, now, let me tell you, you may want to think about the possibility of saying this.” We just played “meet the press.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, that has helped Blair compared to Bush, wouldn’t you say?

PAIGE PATTERSON: Yes, definitely, definitely. So I think it is an important thing and I would urge incoming presidents, before they are nominated even to do that!

DARRELL ORMAN: That’s good. When did they stop doing that, do you know?

PAIGE PATTERSON: You know, I know we did it with Jim Merritt. I can’t remember doing it with Jack Graham and I’m sure we didn’t do it with Bobby. I think the feeling among all the former presidents at that point was we don’t have as tough a situation so maybe we won’t do it. It’s really probably a good thing to do.

DARRELL ORMAN: I know. It sounds great. That’s a great suggestion. It’s a great practice. This leads into the next question. In light of your experience, as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the Convention?
PAIGE PATTERSON: Well, there might be a real surprise to a lot of people. To be President of the Southern Baptist Convention in the minds of the average public out there, is not quite the same as being Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. But it carries much of the same ambiance and consequently, when you are introduced in any situation, suddenly it changes the whole thing. You’re either immediately hated and despised and all kinds of baggage put on your back, or else you’re overwhelmingly respected, welcomed and more of the latter than the former. Case in point: Richard Land came up to me just after I was elected and said, “Well, are you ready to go to the White House?” Now you will remember that President Clinton was in the White House during those years, and I said, “No, I’m not.” And he said, “Oh, yes, every single president of the convention has been invited to the Oval Office,” which was accurate, up until then. And I said, “No, I’ll not be invited.” I said, “The president knows me very well and he will not invite me to the Oval Office.” “Oh, yes he will.” So we had a big discussion about that, but he did not invite me. But the very fact that each of my predecessors was invited, and I suspect everybody since has been invited, though I don’t know that for sure, is an indication of the fact that the nation understands the size of the Southern Baptist Convention. The politicians understand the impact of a quasi block vote coming out of the Southern Baptist Convention. The whole rest of the world as you alluded to Jim Kennedy a while ago, is cognizant of the fact that something’s happened here that’s not happened since the reformation, and that was unlikely to happen. So all those things go together to make the position of the president much more powerful in some ways with the outside world than it is with Southern Baptists. Southern Baptists know us and just say, “Oh, yeah, so and so...”

DARRELL ORMAN: You’re a familiar face.

PAIGE PATTERSON: But that is not true with the outside world and that’s why the press calls you all the time and asks you to comment on every little thing that happens.

DARRELL ORMAN: Of course, our people know in the area of grace, that we may growl like grizzly bears, but they know we’re teddy bears.

PAIGE PATTERSON: Exactly. They know it very well.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life? I mean, when you were with your dad, and growing up there, did you think “God’s going to use me somehow big?”

PAIGE PATTERSON: Yes, I suppose I did; however, I would not have conceived it in any means to be construed as political.

DARRELL ORMAN: How old were you in 1978?

PAIGE PATTERSON: In ’78, well let’s see. I was born in ’42 so I was about 37 or 38. I always saw myself as a pastor, an evangelist, a soul winner, and I thought that God had maybe even been kind enough to give me just enough ability that if I could really stay
within the circumference of His will, that He would greatly use me to point people to Christ. And that’s the only real goal I had. So I suppose in that sense destiny, yes, in the sense of ever serving as president as the convention or the seminary, I had to eat a lot of crow because I was widely on record as saying one thing I would never do is be anybody’s president of anything. So at the end of being president of the third school now, and the convention, in addition, I’ve had to say, “Well, okay, it didn’t go like I thought.”

DARRELL ORMAN: How did your presidency at Southeastern and Criswell uniquely prepare you for the presidency? Denominational positions?

PAIGE PATTERSON: I had also been pastor of four churches, including First Baptist Church of Fayetteville, Arkansas, which was not a mega church by present definition, but did have 2300 members. It was just off the campus of the University of Arkansas, so it was a very influential, prominent church in the State of Arkansas.

DARRELL ORMAN: How many years were you there?

PAIGE PATTERSON: I was there five years. Then went directly from there, and my assignment at Dallas, of course, was for seventeen years; I wasn’t only president of the Criswell College but I was also associate pastor to Dr. Criswell.

DARRELL ORMAN: Didn’t you help found the Criswell College?

PAIGE PATTERSON: No, I didn’t. It was already in existence albeit miniscule, nothing but a Bible Institute when I went there, February 7th, full-time. So, I was not involved in the founding of it for all practical purposes, but was involved in all its major growth and direction. How did all that uniquely prepare me for the presidency in denominational positions? Well, to use your little outline here, speaking, yes, without a doubt, of course; preaching week after week after week. Literally preaching all over the United States, in fact, having preached now in more than a 100 countries, and even at that time having preached in probably 55 to 60 when I was elected as president. Naturally, you develop some facility on your feet and you learn to assess situations so you don’t get up and do something that’s totally inappropriate to the particular circumstance that has called forth your opportunity to speak. It had a lot to do with that. Administration, yes, of course, because you have to learn to administer; it’s that part of the work of God that probably none of us particularly enjoy. But it does say we’re bishops, that we’re episcopal and that refers to the administrative oversight that we have to give to the church of God. So, yes, you develop your administrative skills that way. Your critics can be a very big deal, of course, it certainly was in my case. By the time that I got to be president of the convention there, I had about eighteen years of being bombarded with everything in the world. As I often say, if half of what I read about me is true, then I don’t even like me.
DARRELL ORMAN: On that note, you shared with me in the hotel room down in Broward, years ago, with Neil Treme, about sending shirts and ties to critics and enemies. How many shirts and ties would you say that you sent?

PAIGE PATTERSON: No shirts, but I would say more than 100 ties. Fruit baskets, flowers, green plants, I don’t know, probably another couple of hundred of those altogether.

DARRELL ORMAN: Do you send them to just people within the denomination or would it be a head of state or senator?

PAIGE PATTERSON: Usually. I’ve done it with others, too. But, you know what I discovered? When the Bible says to return good for evil, I puzzled over that for a while. Some people think that I do that in order to heap coals of fire upon the head of the critic. But that’s not true; because critics could even be right in some cases. The only reason I did it was, I discovered that it did something to me. I was just like every other human being, especially an Irish Texan.

PAIGE PATTERSON: I had enough anger in me if somebody said something really ugly about me or about my family or somebody I loved, the tendency to go after him or something like that was definitely present. At least resenting, and at least not to love him in Christ’s behalf, and what I discovered was that when I would go to the trouble to go to the store, (and I used to never send anybody for me, I used to go myself,) make the purchase with my own dollars, I would get a secretary to address it and everything but I’d always put a note in there and the note was never about anything that they’d done to me. It would just say, “My dear brother so and so, I was thinking about you today and I paused to ask God’s graciousness toward you. I wanted you to know that I remembered you before God by this little gift.” And I would send it. And what it did was, it broke any antagonism I had towards them. And it enabled me then to be able to pray for them, because I did what I said I had done, I would pray for them before I sent the gift, and I would try to remember to pray for them again and ask God’s blessings upon them. This worked something in me to keep bitterness, for I believe that bitterness is one of the great destroyers of preachers. And it broke the bitterness in me and kept me from becoming bitter toward those who said things about me that were hurtful.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you see changes in their spirits after those gifts?

PAIGE PATTERSON: In some cases. One man who’s now with the Lord, somebody complimented him on the tie that he had on, and he said, “That’s one of twenty-three that Dr. Patterson has sent me.”

DARRELL ORMAN: Twenty-three! Was that a fact? That’s good.

PAGE PATTERSON: Yes, it was. So I know that it must have softened them somewhat but I really didn’t do it for their sakes, I did it for my sake to break the bad spirit in me. Dealing with the media, yeah, sure, because that’s an art that is hard to
learn; and you’re nowhere more vulnerable than right there. Particularly if it’s going to be television, they’re going to interview you for twenty minutes and then take a twenty-five second sound bite. You better have found out exactly what you want to say and then find twenty-five different ways to say it to be sure they get it right.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** Would you script yourself sometimes? Would you read a prepared statement so you have documentation?

**PAIGE PATTERSON:** No, I never did. I would commend those who can do that. I’m an extemporaneous guy. I don’t preach with notes. I don’t do weddings with notes. I don’t do funerals with notes. I’m extemporaneous in my total approach. No, I never scripted anything but a man might be well wise to do so. Vision casting, yes, probably to a large degree that just comes with the ministry of leading a church, of leading in an institution, vision casting, certainly so. Goal setting, I’ve already told you I’m not very good at. So I don’t know that it had much to do with that. But the others, yes.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** Denominational positions. From the beginning, did you hold associational positions? State convention positions? Did you go that route? Did you gain some of your experience that way?

**PAIGE PATTERSON:** I did a few, but yeah, I’d have to confess to you that I was not often called on in those respects because the denomination never trusted me.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** One of my spiritual fathers, Adrian Rogers led me to Christ, but Brother Bobby Moore in Memphis, I’m sure you know Brother Bobby, he was viewed as independent because he was Bus Ministry, Evangelism, and because he was so strong in those things, he felt ostracized, back then.

**PAIGE PATTERSON:** Well, I was distrusted. I served while I was in Arkansas briefly on the Board of Trustees of what is now Williams College. Once in a very great while I’d be invited to preach at an associational meeting, something like that, but I would say it was pretty rare because they pretty well sized me up and said “He’s a fundamentalist at heart.” Generally speaking, the denomination would do everything they could to keep me on the curb, not in the middle of the street.

**DARRELL ORMAN:** So that excluded a lot of the denominational stuff along the way. Well, the last formal question, can a group of young pastors be trained and mentored to possibly serve as president of the S.B.C.? And if so, would this in any way circumvent God’s sovereignty in the selection election process?

**PAIGE PATTERSON:** Well, I wouldn’t do it. Or at least let me back up and put it this way. Every young preacher I’ve got in my training is in training to be president of the convention, potentially, or whatever else it is that God calls them to do. To be honest, I think I’d put it to you this way; I don’t think there are any particular talents that are called for in the president of the convention that ought not to be a part of what every pastor experiences. After all it’s only a question of how many people, because even in my
position as seminary president, I accept the title of president because that’s what we do. I view myself as a pastor. I’ve got a kind of an unusual church made up of a lot of people going into God’s work, but I’m useless if I’m not a pastor. So I don’t ever think of myself in terms of president. I just see myself as there to train these young preachers to be ready for whatever God calls them to do. So ideally, each one of them, of course they all don’t have the talents that will be noticed in that way, but many of them will. It’s just like in our convention now, somebody told me one day, he said “Who do we go to next? We just don’t have any people in the convention that are capable of serving as convention president.” I said, “Well, I just slightly disagree with you.” They said, “You do?” And I said, “Yes, I think we probably have somewhere in the neighborhood of 5,000 that could be fine convention presidents. It’s just a matter of what God opens up.” On that point, I am an ardent advocate of the sovereignty of God. He does what He does.

DARRELL ORMAN: I appreciate that statement. In one of my seminars for my degree, one of the seminary leaders made the statement that years ago when he was in a position at another institution, the president would say, “Well, that’s a 100 people guy. This is a 500 people guy, based on the ministerial students at the school.” I really reacted to that. I said “I don’t think any man should be putting that label on people. It’s up to God to determine that.” And I really appreciate your statement that way.

PAIGE PATTERSON: Well, you take those guys right there. Out of the whole list of them, I am the only one that was born into aristocracy of any kind. The rest of those guys were all so common, in their birth and in their upbringing, that you would have never picked them out in advance.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, Bailey was real clear about that with me, talking to me personally about being so poor going to Ouachita he couldn’t buy clothes and so forth.

PAIGE PATTERSON: So I just look at it and say, “Well, this is what God has done.”

DARRELL ORMAN: One word that you would use to describe. Listening to you, especially the highlights, the one hour debate, the Baptist Faith and Message, scholar, would that be?

PAIGE PATTERSON: Oh, I don’t really think so.

DARRELL ORMAN: Because of the group, I view you as, so far in the interviews, seven of them so far, I’ve used scholar.

PAIGE PATTERSON: This would be one word to describe my presidency? Is that what you want?

DARRELL ORMAN: Yes.
PAIGE PATTERSON: Grace, both of God and of the people. In terms of academic preparation, I don’t think there is another who has an earned doctorate or PhD.

DARRELL ORMAN: I believe James Merritt has a PhD.

PAGE PATTERSON: That’s true!
DARRELL ORMAN: How do you personally define success in the ministry?

JAMES MERRITT: I define success in the ministry as following biblical principles in building your ministry (the preaching of the Word, personal evangelism, making disciples, etc.) and then leaving the results to God.

DARRELL ORMAN: Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

JAMES MERRITT: I believe that God prepared me through (to serve as President of the S.B.C.) His providentially appointing me to certain key positions in the S.B.C. (chairman of the Executive Committee, chairman of the Resolutions Committee, chairman of the Tellers Committee, etc.) as well as allowing me to become friends with many of the former presidents of the S.B.C.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

JAMES MERRITT: I was asked by unanimous consent of the former presidents to pray about running. After talking over with my family, who encouraged me to do so, I then allowed myself to be nominated for president.

DARRELL ORMAN: During your tenure, as president, what do you see now as God's unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time? Before your election?

JAMES MERRITT: My unique purpose most likely was to promote the cause of missions around the world. Becoming the only president in the history of the S.B.C. to visit all of the regions of the world (as named by the IMB), I was able to raise the awareness of world missions as well as use the presidency as a platform to preach the Gospel around the world. I was not aware of this at the time or before my election.

DARRELL ORMAN: Are you a goal setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?

JAMES MERRITT: I am a goal setter, but my ministry path only followed those goals to the extent that I got a PhD., which was my primary educational goal and only after that to simply preach the Gospel. I established these goals early on.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could serve again would you do anything differently the second time around?

JAMES MERRITT: Assuming you mean as the president of the S.B.C., the one thing I would do is spend more time trying to develop younger leadership and involve younger pastors.
DARRELL ORMAN: In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?

JAMES MERRITT: The most rewarding aspect by far was visiting all of the regions of the world under the auspices of the IBM and meeting our missionaries and doing mission work. The least rewarding was the endless number of meetings that you needed to attend to represent the convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could change the function of the office of president, how would you change it?

JAMES MERRITT: I would change it by having the president have more direct input (if it would be accepted) both with the Executive Committee and with the Great Commission Council.

DARRELL ORMAN: How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ?

JAMES MERRITT: I think always by putting the cause of the Great Commission, evangelism, and winning people to Christ at the forefront.

DARRELL ORMAN: In light of your experience, as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the S.B.C.?

JAMES MERRITT: Surprisingly, a great deal. The access to the media is greatly intensified and depending upon your ability as a spokesman, can gain a very wide exposure for the S.B.C.

DARRELL ORMAN: What are the unique pressures and responsibilities of serving in one of the most influential evangelical positions in the world?

JAMES MERRITT: Knowing that every word you are answering is scrutinized by outside influences (such as the press) and realizing that even though it is technically not true, many people see you as the spokesman for eighteen million Southern Baptists.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life?

JAMES MERRITT: Yes and no. I had a strange suspicion that one day I might be considered to be the pastor of the FBC of Dallas Texas (which indeed I was) but I never dreamed I would ever be president of the S.B.C.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency? Denominational positions?

- Speaking
- Administration
• Dealing with critics
• Dealing with Media
• Vision Casting
• Goal setting

JAMES MEFFRITT: Basically in all the areas you just mentioned, in public speaking, in administrating a staff, in learning how to deal with critics; especially having a television ministry help you in dealing with the media and, of course, in vision casting and goal setting.

DARRELL ORMAN: Can a group of young pastors be trained and mentored to possible serve as president of the S.B.C.? Would that in any way circumvent God’s sovereignty in the election selection process?

JAMES MEFFRITT: I would not conceive of ever training or mentoring anyone to serve as president or anything. I do believe it would circumvent God’s sovereignty. I believe “the office should seek the man” – the man should not seek the office.
DARRELL ORMAN: I’m with Jack Graham, the pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church and the 12th president in the conservative resurgence. Good to be with you, Jack.

JACK GRAHAM: Thank you.

DARRELL ORMAN: Jack, first question. How do you personally define success in the ministry?

JACK GRAHAM: Live your life with integrity, accomplishing God’s goal for evangelism and ministry in the local church and through the ministry of the local church.

DARRELL ORMAN: Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

JACK GRAHAM: The role of being president of the S.B.C. is somewhat like being a pastor in the sense that it is a pulpit ministry. It’s a ministry which you’re expected to give leadership and vision, and I create interest and inspiration for a larger context of the convention. So in that sense, I always view my role as president as a pastoral role and the fact that it is my responsibility to give voice to Southern Baptists and in behalf of Southern Baptists, so in that sense being pastor of a local church and in all these years that’s all I’ve done, and as preparation currently with multiple staff and in recent years the opportunity to develop a ministry from the local congregation. I feel it’s an opportunity to say to the convention at large what the expectations, goals and advantages of the convention could be.

DARRELL ORMAN: You mentioned your church preparation. How large is Prestonwood now?

JACK GRAHAM: 25,000.

DARRELL ORMAN: 25,000? And what are you averaging in attendance on the weekend?

JACK GRAHAM: 16,000, 17,000.

DARRELL ORMAN: Excellent. Excellent. How did God select you to serve as president of the S.B.C.?

JACK GRAHAM: Yes, I’m trying to reflect on that. You know the essence really is the leadership lead, and I think every president of the Southern Baptist Convention in some way has expressed leadership at the local church level and beyond that at the national Southern Baptist Convention level. I believe just based on my involvement through the years, my interest through the years, I determined a long time ago at the local level as well as the national level that if I was ever asked to serve, I would do my best to never
say no, to always say yes, in Southern Baptist life. So I’ve done that. And when pastors and denominational executive directors in some of our states began to ask me to consider it, to pray about it, again, I took the position I’m willing to say yes if, indeed, Southern Baptists asked me to serve. I don’t think any of us who served as president of the S.B.C. has any kind of career path or any kind of personal goal in this, but rather it is just a spiritual, natural process in which leadership steps up to the challenge of the day.

DARRELL ORMAN: In that process, is there any consultation with the previous presidents?

JACK GRAHAM: Consultation in what sense?

DARRELL ORMAN: Just, I know, in fact I only have Charles Stanley to interview after you, but many of them have said that they had conferred with the other presidents, the previous presidents and they’ve become more and more close along the way. Is there a consultation or anything like that?

JACK GRAHAM: There is certainly a paternity within the core presidents in the resurgence. I don’t believe there are any formal meetings or conversation. The way it went down directly with me is Ed Young gave me a call and said that the former presidents, and again, of course the former presidents are not a nominating committee or anything like that but he said it was their view that I should be nominated and that I should consider to be nominated. So once you get a call like that and you have others telling you the same thing, then you have to be willing to say yes or no, and I was willing to say yes.

DARRELL ORMAN: During your tenure as president, what do you see now as God’s unique purpose for your presidency? Were you aware of it at the time or before your election?

JACK GRAHAM: My presidency, I believe, was centered on being a voice for Southern Baptists in a time of national crisis. We, of course, were in the post 9/11 generation, I was elected right in 2002, the year after we became involved in the beginnings of the war on terrorism, the beginnings of going to Iraq again, and during my term the space shuttle, the Challenger, went down. There were many national events and more and more, the national press as well as the religious press wants to know what do Southern Baptists think about everything? The war in Iraq? The Marriage Amendment? You walk in a mall, your phone rings and it’s the press, and they want to know what your response is to the space shuttle going down. In that sense, because of my friendship and relationship with President Bush, before he was governor, when he was governor, and now that he is president, I view my role is to support conservative value at the national level, try to support our nation in its time of crisis and try to get spiritual leadership and counsel in that. In one sense, because I view the role of the Southern Baptist president, at this point at least, I didn’t see my role as being one of changing programming. I mean, you couldn’t really change programming if you wanted to. It’s not a matter of trying to direct the Southern Baptists or Southern Baptist entities but rather to come alongside to support,
to give vision, to give voice to Southern Baptists, but also to speak in behalf of the Southern Baptists. We all know of course no one speaks for the Southern Baptists, but to speak as president of the Southern Baptist Convention to the issues of our time. I had a lot of that going on. I believe there were seven missionaries killed by terrorists during my term. It was the largest number of missionaries lost during a twenty-four month period in Southern Baptist Convention history, in that short a framework.

DARRELL ORMAN: Were they the ones working on that water purification system?

JACK GRAHAM: Over there in Iraq, and then we had one of our missionaries to the Philippines killed. But, actually he and his wife had stayed in our missionary home at our church, there were seven or eight, I'm not sure. So again, calling or responding to the press, we live in this world of mass media, so from radio, pop radio, news, television, the role of the president of the Southern Baptist Convention during my term was asked to respond as to the conservative Biblical evangelical viewpoint on life and on issues of the times. That was a big responsibility and I cared for that quite a bit.

DARRELL ORMAN: Jack, are you a goal setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?

JACK GRAHAM: I think I will have to answer that yes and no. I don’t set short-term goals in terms of personal goals for ministry. I have general outlines of where we should go and what we should do in church and certainly me as a pastor. I believe in goal-setting, I do. I believe it’s vital to success. Now, I’m not one of these who sit down with a piece of paper and say that this year we expect a certain amount of increases in Sunday School, membership, or even baptism. You know, I have always kind of set the goal as the ultimate goal of the world as reaching as many people as possible as quickly as possible. If within the framework of our church, certainly our staff has intermediate goals and short-term as well as long-range goals, and these things don’t just happen. I mean the rural location of our church didn’t just happen, we obviously set parameters, purposes and had plans, but if you’re asking me am I the kind of a guy who sits down at the first of the year and writes down ten goals and strikes them off, no, I don’t do that. I’m more spontaneous and free flowing, and I trust, I think my role there is more visionary. I’m a big picture guy. And I sort of set the big picture, and then I ask others to come along side of us and fill in the blanks and we put the picture together.

DARRELL ORMAN: Speaking of big pictures, what was the cost for your relocation? What was the final cost for that?

JACK GRAHAM: Well, let me think. We haven’t added that up in a while, it’s too scary. Let’s see. The first phase was $60 million, the next phase was $36 or $37 million, and we’re over a $100 million now.

DARRELL ORMAN: Over $100 million. And what’s your seating in your current sanctuary.
JACK GRAHAM: 7,500.

DARRELL ORMAN: Why did you not go for the ten like some have?

JACK GRAHAM: We studied that, we looked at that closely, and you know, I’m very pleased with the size of the building. We knew going in that we wanted to use the building more than just one time and have one large service. We thought ten thousand was a stretch, in smaller venues of course. I’m not sure how we ended on 7500, but it’s worked out beautifully for us. We have two Sunday morning services, one Saturday night service, the way it’s designed fits comfortably into the church and also gets us room to grow with multiple services, so I guess I would say rather than build a massive building that we would use one time a week, we determined to build, I mean it’s a big building obviously, we determined to build the kind of building that we could use multiple times.

DARRELL ORMAN: Was Adrian an influence in that? You know that what he told the deacons there? He didn’t want to look at 7,000 empty seats on Wednesday nights.

JACK GRAHAM: No, I’m sure we talked. I know we went over and looked at Bellevue. You know, I went down and looked at that 10,000 seat building in Florida, in Lakeland, a bunch of us went, and we took a tour of all those big buildings. But you know, I just felt that at some point you lose connectivity, you want to build a building that you can truly communicate with as best as possible with that number of people, and at some point, I’m not sure what that point is, whether it’s 7, or 8 or 9 or 10 or 12 or whatever, but you lose connectivity with the capacity of seating, you fail to connect. I see it on television, I see it on the new building down there at Lakewood, where they took that arena and turned it into a church and obviously, are being successful, and the building holds 16,000. I don’t know what the number is, 7,500 is a good number and we’re pleased, and if I was to make the decision again today, I’d make the same decision.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could serve, Jack, again as president, would you do anything differently the second time around?

JACK GRAHAM: I don’t think so. Let me reflect on that a minute. You always thought you had more time than you do when you’re serving. The years pass by very quickly. In one sense you’re ready to lay it down and you’re glad that someone else is picking up the responsibility, but you do see so many things that you could have done or should have done or wished you had done. I can honestly say that I gave it the best that I had. I just didn’t stay home and talk to the press. I went to every state convention, either for an evangelism conference or a state convention. I worked with every board and agency entity, so I tried to do the internal things, in speaking. At the time of my presidency was when the Executive Committee launched the Kingdom emphasis, so I had some things that I maybe would have liked to have focused on, but I felt it was more important for me to support what the Executive Committee or the convention itself had
chosen to do for the kingdom. So I tried to give voice and vision to that, spoke about that quite a bit, wrote of that. I wish I could have done a better job at helping Southern Baptists understand the Kingdom agenda and getting as many people together for the sake of the kingdom as possible. But you know, there was one disappointment that I felt was related to the Kingdom agenda. My desire and the desire of many others across the denomination, was the study of a potential name change and that did not happen. The convention was not ready for that or responsive to that. This is about the fourth or fifth time they tried that and the convention said no.

DARRELL ORMAN: Ed Young referred to that yesterday. He said that’s a big regret for the convention.

JACK GRAHAM: I don’t regret it for me, I’m pleased to be Southern Baptist, Baptist pride, born and all that, but in talking to others, I got around to Montana and New York and places like that, I just know it’s an issue and what’s happening, more and more of our churches are taking Southern Baptist off their materials and signs and so on. And with it they’re losing their Baptist distinctive. What I was trying to say was, “Look, you guys need to continue to say you’re Baptists or something else Baptist like United Baptists or whatever it was going to be. I was thinking in the practical sense we could get more of these guys who want to take Baptist off their name, be supportive of Baptist, if it wasn’t Southern Baptist.

DARRELL ORMAN: Like North American Baptist, like we have the North American Mission Board.

JACK GRAHAM: Oh, the suggestion was the North American Baptist Convention. You know, the problem is you go to a convention like that, and when we took that vote and I didn’t get a very good feeling from it, if we had 3,000 people of the 10,000 registered messengers in the room, you know, all my friends and buddies said, “I think probably I wasn’t even in there.” We had lost by about 300 votes according to the committee, but there were 4,000 or 5,000 people standing out in the hallways. That was frustrating.

DARRELL ORMAN: It always is. Sure. You know Charles Stanley, during his term, said if during the Pastor’s Conference they didn’t come to vote, he was going to resign. You know, he’s tough.

JACK GRAHAM: You know, a regret I have is that we weren’t able to get it accomplished. At least they have a stake in it. So I think, at least in my case, what does that say to all those guys, up north and in the west, that Southern Baptists won’t even think about it. We won’t even study it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Right. I think you’re right. In your opinion, what was the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What was the least?
JACK GRAHAM: The convention, under my term, was a unity in terms of our purpose and was on track for evangelism and missions. I think the most rewarding moment personally for me was being with the regional leaders of the International Mission Board, sixteen of them, working with the regions around the world and I spent an afternoon with those gentlemen. It was like being in the upper room. It was just an incredible experience seeing what God is doing around the world, just being able to see the worldwide influence and impact of Southern Baptists, and the fact that we have through the conservative resurgence, we have been pruned and prepared now to be fruitful as never before in missions and evangelism. Bobby Welch, of course, has been carrying the torch for evangelism, which I certainly obviously support. My time was a time of peace within the convention, and yet war in the world. It was significant in the sense that we are riding smoothly within the denomination, although that doesn’t mean there were no issues, conflicts or whatsoever, but at least our purpose is set, we have pruned the vine and we are prepared for the future. At the same time, we have all this in the world swirling around, I think it would be extremely rewarding now that whoever is president, that the people want to know, the press wants to know what do you say the Baptists think. We are now viewed as the heavy weight in the evangelical Christian faith and in the news of this strange world in which we are living, we have, and I had an opportunity to speak into needs and current events of our day. That was again, to support my friend, George Bush and his presidency, some of the goals that were compatible with our nation certainly our denomination. I think I did mention I’ve worked extensively with the White House while I was president, since I’ve been president on the faith based initiatives, and I see now that with Katrina and the response for Katrina, the Southern Baptist response, the mechanism that we have, and the current president certainly understands that and in the cooperation that exists between Southern Baptists and our government in the proper stance to the faith-based initiative programming, I was pleased to be a part of that in its beginning stages and in its initial advance.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you sense the grace of having millions of people pray for you as you were approaching your first election?

JACK GRAHAM: Oh, no doubt about that. I think it was Tom Elliff who said, “Jack, you will sense God’s grace and protection because so many people are praying for you.” I do think that is absolutely true. He went on to say, “When you’re out, you’ll sense a loss because that many people are not praying for you.” You know, I don’t know that I sensed that, but I surely was buoyed by the prayers of people everywhere I went, to hear people say, “We’re praying for you.” That is very important.

DARRELL ORMAN: Most of the men expressed they did sense the loss of that grace, like the day after the new guy was elected on his second term. It was just like a vacuum all of a sudden.

JACK GRAHAM: Well, I don’t know that I could say that, but I do know that I was strengthened by the corporate prayers of Southern Baptists.
DARRELL ORMAN: What was your least rewarding aspect of your presidency?

JACK GRAHAM: Well, I think I already mentioned that. It was my disappointment over the name change. I would say the unwillingness of Southern Baptists to even study a name change; I was unable to communicate the need to give it a thorough evaluation.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could change the function of the office of president, how would you change it? You know, examples, like two years instead of one? Or change a procedure?

JACK GRAHAM: Unless you’re willing to do what Bobby Welch was willing to do, which is practically go be president of the convention full-time. I don’t think it’s practical, for someone like me, to serve four years as president of the convention, if that’s the idea. Multiple terms of two. I can think of many people who are certainly capable of being Southern Baptist president, I don’t think we need extended tenure.

DARRELL ORMAN: Are there any other things that you experienced that would have been helpful, if procedures were different, or expectations were different, or anything like that?

JACK GRAHAM: You know, Darrell, I don’t have anything that I would suggest be changed. I think our system has worked well for a long time. I don’t have any need to change it. I think the president is given plenty of latitude to do most everything he feels led to do. I never felt shut out from anybody’s meeting, or group or any of the denominational leaders or executives, I always felt welcome. I was always treated with respect. I see the presidency as a responsibility, I accepted the responsibility. I counted it a privilege. I was humbled by the whole thing. I counted it a basic privilege. I didn’t leave with a sense that I couldn’t do this or that or the other. Nobody wouldn’t let me do what I wanted to do. I had no sense of that. I just think its wide open and you’ve got 24 months to do something as God would enable you and help you to do it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Now, how much money were they allocating for you to cover the expenses of being president?

JACK GRAHAM: I don’t know the answer to that, but I will say, now that you mention it, I know that the budget, if you expect the president to travel, my church picked up a lot of the travel expenses that were related to the S.B.C. because there’s just not enough budget if you’re really going to be out there, doing what you need to do. So I think that is something that needs to be evaluated.

DARRELL ORMAN: What would you say would be, just for suggestion’s sake, because this will be published, and ……

JACK GRAHAM: I really hate to say, Darrell, because to be honest with you, I don’t even know what I spent in two years. Our staff handled that.
DARRELL ORMAN: Would you say that whatever it was, it should have at least been doubled?

JACK GRAHAM: Yes, I think it should be at least doubled.

DARRELL ORMAN: Bailey had recommended that they pick up the cost of the presidents going to the convention the rest of their life, as kind of a, you know, for serving, that was one of his footnotes.

JACK GRAHAM: Wow!

DARRELL ORMAN: But ......

JACK GRAHAM: Hey, you know, I don’t have any suggestion like that. I don’t think the budget is kept up to the cost of what it really takes to be president of the convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: Don’t you think that the convention should cover the cost, if a man is willing and the church is willing to let the man serve, that at least the convention should cover their expenses so it is not financially falling back on their church?

JACK GRAHAM: Sure, but that’s all within reason. The presidents are always going to be doing it different ways.

DARRELL ORMAN: As you know, you and I are serving on the Executive Committee. One of the staffers came in and proposed that we submit to that new accounting practice that would have cost us a couple million dollars just to comply which no one was requiring it legally. So a lot of times like this, seems like when someone has an agenda and they find a way to try to fund it.

JACK GRAHAM: I don’t know, I presume, there’s Bobby and that bus, the way he spent a lot of money, somebody had to help fund it. I guess Lifeway helped a lot.

DARRELL ORMAN: Actually Executive Committee contributed and Lifeway and several of the agencies; that was prearranged, they made commitments before hand.

JACK GRAHAM: The annuity, too. O.S. gave them money on the bus.

DARRELL ORMAN: The annuity, right.

JACK GRAHAM: That was good, it all worked out.

DARRELL ORMAN: What do you think, Jack, as far as the way Bobby’s doing it? He has a co-pastor, and taking a sabbatical, actually moving to Nashville for six months or a year, what do you think about that approach after being president?
JACK GRAHAM: I commend Bobby for doing that. He is giving it heart and soul and life. Ministry is important. It’s been a great sacrifice for his church. He is their pastor and I certainly salute him and commend him for doing it. But I couldn’t have done that; I wouldn’t have made that kind of call, obviously unique in that approach. Most pastors probably, if elected as president, would not have that kind of latitude or ability to do that. Obviously, Bobby has given his all for that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, Ed had mentioned the total opposite of that. He said he did not miss a Sunday at his church those two years.

JACK GRAHAM: Me either.

DARRELL ORMAN: Oh, you didn’t either. Wow.

JACK GRAHAM: I did not miss a single Sunday because of convention travels or business or preaching. One of the things that I had prayed is that our church, in the two years that I was president, would flourish. And I think maybe some of the guys had experienced some tough times for their church because they were worried about disconnection with their church and you do, there’s no question. You have to divide your time, you’re somewhat disconnected with convention responsibilities, as well as your pastoral, but due to the fact that I have a wonderful staff, and also due to the fact that there were key moments in the life of the church, certainly, weekend services, and I was present and accounted for, we had the two best years we’ve ever had in the history of the church while I was president.

DARRELL ORMAN: Really? Would you attribute some of that to the prayers of the convention? Two of your best years?

JACK GRAHAM: Absolutely; not two of but the two best years without question. One right on top of the other.

DARRELL ORMAN: Have you ever talked with the other past presidents about that aspect. Have they experienced that in their churches as well?

JACK GRAHAM: I don’t know. I’ve never talked about that with them.

DARRELL ORMAN: That would be an interesting study.

JACK GRAHAM: I just heard that some of the pastors, their churches had a tough time during their tenure because of absence and so on but I don’t have any facts.

DARRELL ORMAN: That would be an interesting little side study right there.

JACK GRAHAM: Yeah, there’s no question about that. We had the two, 2002 and 2003, to that point, we’ve exceeded that. We’re grateful. Each year just keeps getting
better and better. Statistically, spiritually, for our church, those were the two best years in terms of baptisms, growth, attendance, relating church spirit, life in church.

DARRELL ORMAN: Jack, if you could sit down, say with the next four or five future presidents of the convention, which obviously no one can do that because they don’t know who they’ll be necessarily, maybe even just the next two or three, but if you could sit down with them and they said, “Jack, how can we maximize our presidency for Christ?” What would you tell them?

JACK GRAHAM: On the spiritual side, I would say, “Depend upon the prayers of people starting with your own congregation, assuming you’re a pastor.” And I would say, “If your faith doesn’t work at home, don’t export it.” I would say, “Pray and pray hard that your local ministry flourish so that you could be a model for other churches or other ministries.” I don’t think it would give very good testimony for me, for the church, for the convention, if during my tenure the church wasn’t reaching and baptizing people and doing what I’d expect everybody else to be doing. I’ve been blessed with a congregation that is willing to do whatever it takes to reach the community and beyond. I would say strengthen the ministries of your life and let your presidency be the overflow, the extension of your life and leadership. Because I view the role of the president as a pastoral role, that’s obviously the way I would advise someone. You can’t be somebody or something you are not. You can’t all of the sudden turn into a CEO or an administrator. That’s not my view of the role of the president anyway.

DARRELL ORMAN: In light of your experience, as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the convention? Now you had mentioned the shuttle blowing up, you mentioned the 9/11 event.

JACK GRAHAM: The marriage amendment, you’ve got life issues, you’ve got all of issues of the day. That’s what I was saying. In the current culture, now more than ever, the Southern Baptists should be speaking to the issues of today and there is no more important spokesperson for the Southern Baptists than the president of that convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: Should the president have a staff member, if they couldn’t have someone hired to do it, like a reader or as they call them in the newspaper, a librarian, should they hire someone who could give them an update on world political issues on a daily basis? Would that be helpful?

JACK GRAHAM: I don’t know about daily. You know, early on in my presidency I met with a gentleman by the name of Larry Ross. Larry Ross is Billy Graham’s publicist and has been for twenty years. He’s the one who sets up Billy and his press conferences, his responses and all that. And I had several key meetings with him early on just in terms of dealing with the press, dealing with current events and issues, and he was kind enough to give me some guidance. I certainly think no one is prepared if they haven’t done it, for the press, and responded appropriately. I would recommend you get all the preparation you can get for that role and responsibility. It comes early.
DARRELL ORMAN: You mentioned how widely accepted we are now because of our size and influence. Could a president if he is personally evangelistically aggressive, could he use the position to witness to heads of states in other countries? I mean, would he get a hearing immediately with any of the kings in Africa or presidents in Europe?

JACK GRAHAM: Sure, sure. Absolutely. Now, there’s no question about that. Even as a former president, I was just recently in Romania with our men. I did a pastor’s conference over there, and met with the heads of state in Romania and the Secretary of State but the president was out of the country. And when I was introduced as the former president of the world’s largest denomination, the Southern Baptists, with that manner it gives you an immediate weightiness, a moral leadership, that you can now talk to them. What I wanted to talk to those leaders in Romania about was religious freedom for evangelicals because so often evangelicals are oppressed by the Orthodox church in Romania and the government is in cohoots with the Orthodox church. Here in our own country, of course, I had the opportunity on numerous occasions to be at the White House, be in the Oval Office, and that’s huge, that’s a big deal today.

DARRELL ORMAN: I had the opportunity on our last mission trip to Brazil, I was in President Lula’s office. They said I was the first non-head of state to be in that office in years. I tried to witness to him. But he’d been fighting off an impeachment, and he was in crisis session, but I was able to give him a Bible and kind of leave a witness that way for him. It is huge. Now, some of these you’ve already addressed, but maybe there’s something else you want to add. What are the unique pressures and responsibilities of serving in one of the most influential evangelical positions in the world? You may want to say you’ve already covered that. But is there anything else you want to add?

JACK GRAHAM: Let me think.

DARRELL ORMAN: Could a pastor of a small church become the president of the Southern Baptist Convention?

JACK GRAHAM: Yes. He would have to organize, he would have to be a strong leader and organize support with jobs in making your appointments. I had a couple of people on that, just that aspect of it, the appointments, the phone calls. Even with that, we don’t do it alone, we ask people all over the country to help us, with recommendations. So, yes, a pastor of a small church. We’ve had lay people in the position in the past.

DARRELL ORMAN: David McKinley helped you quite a bit with some of that, didn’t he?

JACK GRAHAM: David’s assignment with me was to work with me on programming with in terms of the convention itself, you know speakers, and programming, and Todd Bell, of course, he did our music. Our executive pastor, and then another pastor on our staff who does our missions here, he’s a real “dot your I’s and cross your T’s” guy,
actually worked with me on the appointment side. Then my assistant, Jerri Brady, worked with me on all arrangements and that was huge. She gave a lot of time. So I put together a cabinet really of about five or six people. If you were pastor from a smaller church that didn’t have that kind of staff, you’d have to do it with volunteers and lay people, and definitely need more than one person to try and get this job done.

DARRELL ORMAN: They’d have to be quality people wouldn’t they?

JACK GRAHAM: The Executive Committee was very cooperative and very helpful, Morris’ office, and they would certainly assist a pastor for someone who didn’t have the experience or the staff of a large church. The Executive Committee staff would be very helpful for a person in that situation.

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life relating to Prestonwood or being president of the convention?

JACK GRAHAM: I don’t believe that I had any sense of destiny serving. I didn’t start a ministry with that intent. Many people have asked me did I ever expect to be pastor of a church like Prestonwood, and my answer is “You’ve gotta be kidding!” You know, thirty years ago, churches like this didn’t even exist. I just set out, again, going back to kind of my big world big picture personality. I said look, I’m going to try to reach as many people as possible in my lifetime and grow the church through evangelism. I’ve never prayed and asked God to give me one more member in terms of transfer. I just don’t ever remember praying before a Sunday, “Oh, Lord, give us new members today.” I have prayed for conversions and changed lives, and worked for that end, and knowing that Christians will come along side of you and transfer in, but I focus on evangelism in a church that exists for people that are not yet here, created an environment and atmosphere for the congregation as pastor so that growth can happen. Most church growth doesn’t happen because of barriers, hindrance and obstacles. One of the pastor’s biggest assignments is to tear down those obstacles and hindrances and to open doors so that our God can work. Now back to your question, with all that, I would simply say I set out as a purpose to reach people for Christ, as many as possible. I think every pastor starts out that way. I want to be used of God in a great way, but I never sat down and said to myself or anyone else, “Okay, now if I do this, that or the other then maybe I could be president of the convention.” I actually heard of a pastor, if I mentioned his name you would know him, who said to his staff, he was cussing at his staff because they hadn’t baptized enough. It’s a true story, and he said to his staff, “If we don’t baptize more people, I’m never going to be president of the convention.” And of course that kind of crass ambition is not what would be a sign of leadership. I’ve kept my ambitions holy and humble at the same time and I’m certainly not without fault. We all deal with ambition and ego and keeping that under control, but I can honestly say I have no sense of divine right or destiny to be president of the Southern Baptist Convention or the pastor of a 25,000 member church.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, actually even on the president thing, when you nominated Jim Henry that might have been moving in the opposite direction.
JACK GRAHAM: How about that?

DARRELL ORMAN: You wouldn’t have played that game?

JACK GRAHAM: You’re going to have to be careful how you print all this, buddy. My ambition, I would have played the game, but I was convinced it was the right thing to do, to nominate Jim. And history would judge whether it was right or wrong but I did that based purely on what I believed was the right thing to do. You know some people. They didn’t understand it, and I understood why they didn’t understand it. I mean, some people thought that I’d betrayed them, I’m sure, or that I’d betrayed the conservative cause in some way, or that I wouldn’t be cooperative or that I was running my own plays, or whatever.

DARRELL ORMAN: I’ve had the opportunity to speak up for his election. I’ve been invited and attended a few of the Lieutenants meetings; I’ve been to Two Rivers and other places. At one of those, Pressler was there and Dr. Patterson was there and I basically asked the group, I said “if Jim Henry had been elected....”, Paige Patterson wasn’t being critical and Pressler wasn’t being critical but there were some there that were, and I said, “If this had been pre-1979 and Jim Henry had already been elected, wouldn’t that have been considered a great win for conservatives? The judge spoke up and said, ‘Absolutely, positively.’ It’s interesting how all those things kind of pull back and forth after the conservatives got control of it.

JACK GRAHAM: It is, and of course I’ve had a couple of former presidents who were pretty upset with me for nominating him but since then, you know what? It was the right thing to do.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, it helped our missionaries! I go on mission trips every year...

JACK GRAHAM: That’s why I did it, and also the one thing it didn’t do that I hoped it would do, was to bring in some of the borderline conservatives. You know in Texas, we were out of the polls in, when was that: ’94, ’96?

DARRELL ORMAN: Jim’s first was ‘94.

JACK GRAHAM: So ’94 we were right at the throes of the BGCP, we were split 50-50 in Texas. I had hoped, probably wrongly, now this was one thing that didn’t work out in Texas, in fact, I know it didn’t. I had hoped it would tip us in Texas, to get a conservative vein, that Henry’s election! We have just fired Dilday over here, so my thinking was that it was that whole broadening of the tent kind of deal and that Henry could work to do that, but certainly in Texas that didn’t happen. It had nothing to do with it as it turned out.
DARRELL ORMAN: Sure. But I do believe there are true moderates, you know, there are the guys who are conservative in their theology and kind of have the attitude “don’t slap mother” about the convention years ago.

JACK GRAHAM: I think they all loved the fact that Henry was elected but, again, I’m not sure that it ended up changing anything. In Texas, we’re as split as we can be.

DARRELL ORMAN: Of course some of them still view Jim as just a fundamentalist, probably.

JACK GRAHAM: That’s probably true, as well. But in my speech, you know, and I got this directly from Jim, would you appoint anyone who is not an inerrantist. I asked him that point blank, I said, “Would you knowingly appoint anyone who is not an inerrantist?” He said, “Not on your life.” That’s in my speech. They applauded and cheered.

DARRELL ORMAN: Right. I was there.

JACK GRAHAM: As far as I know, some of the guys weren’t happy with some of his appointments, but I don’t think Jim Henry would have knowingly appointed someone who thought there were errors in the Bible.

DARRELL ORMAN: I think that’s true, too. I want to commend you on your spirit, Jack. I was just south of you in Broward County for several years, I don’t know whether you knew that or not.

JACK GRAHAM: Yes, sure!

DARRELL ORMAN: But your spirit has always been a man of God. You’ve been humble and approachable, and I’ve always wanted to commend you for that so I just want to take this opportunity to do it.

JACK GRAHAM: Well, I’m sorry its been a hassle for you to get this interview. I must be terrible if Charles Stanley is the last one and I’m next to Stanley. Because trying to get a hold of Charles Stanley is like he lives on the North Pole or something.

DARRELL ORMAN: He’s reclusive, that’s for sure.

JACK GRAHAM: I’m sorry that I didn’t get to talk to you earlier. I was not feeling well at the convention, so I left early. I was going to Greece two days later anyway. We had to cancel that appointment anyway.

DARRELL ORMAN: That’s all right, that’s fine.

JACK GRAHAM: I’m glad I got to talk with you, I’ve enjoyed it.
DARRELL ORMAN: Let me hit two last things with you and we’re done. You’ve covered quite a bit on the mega church side. How did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency? You’ve covered that. Secondly, denominational positions, have you held any?

JACK GRAHAM: Yes.

DARRELL ORMAN: Associational?

JACK GRAHAM: Yes, all of the above, Darrell. From State Convention Board in Florida, Baptist College Boards in Oklahoma Baptist University, of course I was on Liberty University Board, which is quaisi Southern Baptist Board, Palm Beach Atlantic College which was an independent board but still Baptist related; so colleges, of course, Executive Committees, served as chairman of the Teller’s Committee back when I was in Florida. Let’s see, what else?

DARRELL ORMAN: Were you elected president of the Florida Baptist Convention?

JACK GRAHAM: No. I wasn’t. I was president of the Pastor’s Conference in ‘92.

DARRELL ORMAN: Right, I’ve done that one, too.

JACK GRAHAM: President of the Pastor’s Conference of the SBC and I didn’t do that at the state level either. Again, as I said early on in this interview, my inclination always when asked to serve was to say yes. I’d have to have a really good reason to say no. I said no very few times when I’ve been asked locally or nationally with Southern Baptists to serve.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could choose one term to describe your presidency, just one word, or it could be your presidency or your ministry, what would that one word be that could describe you? Here are some examples. Adrian Rogers had pretty much chosen either dogmatic or leadership; then for Bobby Welch, evangelism; some of the other men have mentioned family life and prayer life or things like that.

JACK GRAHAM: I would say speaking to the culture.

DARRELL ORMAN: Culturally relevant?

JACK GRAHAM: Well, now I don’t know about relevant. Again, one of my convention sermons was, a lot of people talk about that and the fact that I was delivering that message and kind of speaking into history at that point, one of my messages was “Salt and Light,” the whole theme of being salt and light in the culture and influencing culture. I would say if you would want to get it down to one word, salt and light and the culture being the influenced, I would say that whatever influence I had as a pastor,
through the radio and television ministry, this relationship. I think my presidency was one of influencing the culture, speaking to the culture.

DARRELL ORMAN: Some culture influence, something along those lines.

JACK GRAHAM: Again, if you’re writing this up look back to what was happening to the culture; war on terrorism, war on Iraq, conservative president moving towards faith based initiative, dealing with people in the streets, the cultures. You know, all those cultural questions.

DARRELL ORMAN: Can a group of young pastors be trained and mentored to possibly serve as president of the S.B.C.? Would that in anyway circumvent God’s sovereignty in the selection election process?

JACK GRAHAM: I don’t know that anyone could be trained to be president of the S.B.C. I certainly think mentoring needs to take place and is taking place with younger pastors in terms of denominational service, involvement, encouragement to that end. That’s probably a role of the seminary. I know Adrian is now mentoring, I’m going to do a similar kind of thing taking fifty or sixty young pastors at a time, breaking them in for a week, half a week, whatever. I think the mentoring that needs to take place would not be for an office but in terms of character and the ministry of the individual, and if you do that with the young generation, you’ll have plenty of people who can serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: Sure, sure. Could that circumvent God’s sovereignty in any way?

JACK GRAHAM: Not at all. Not any more than you have training a person in the seminary is circumventing God’s authority or sovereignty. Did you get my point? I’m saying mentor them for life and leadership, mentor them for character and their core convictions. It is important and we need to make sure we do a good job. Our generation and the former side of the president’s said, that we pass the torch and that we give the younger generation and leaders the opportunity. Now, you ask me earlier if I had other regrets on my list to try to get done. One was to connect the younger generation with the S.B.C. That’s still an issue right now. I had hoped to have some meetings and get together but I ran out of time. Of course, Jimmy Draper is the guy meeting with some guys now and that creating a little bit of a furor, but I do think I would have had the joy and appreciate the opportunity as president to have worked with younger pastors, to bring them into denominational service and leadership. Of course, I think some of us as former presidents can do that sort of thing as we influence their lives and build relationships with the younger generation.
DARRELL ORMAN: I’m with Bobby Welch, the pastor of First Baptist Daytona Beach, our 13th president in the Conservative Resurgence. Brother Bobby, how do you personally define success in the ministry?

BOBBY WELCH: Three words. Good. Faithful. Servant. That’s what I try to orient my whole life to, and that’s what I attempt to give advice to others to do. The reason I have done that is because, of course, that’s what the Bible says and we all want to hear Him say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.” Well then, that ought to be the goal while we’re here. I have had several men now, fine well-known pastors, who have retired, and I’ve asked, “Okay, you’ve gone the distance, now what’s the big deal at the end of the road?” And each of those men, unbeknownst to the other, has said the same thing: faithfulness to the Lord and family. None of them told about how many books they read; none of them told about their average in Sunday School; none told about how many conferences they’ve gone to; none talked about positions they’ve held. They told about being faithful to the Lord and their families. And the other reason that is my heart is because everybody can do this. It has nothing to do with the size of the church, or the type of ministry. Everybody can be a good, faithful servant.

DARRELL ORMAN: Looking back, how did God prepare you to serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention?

BOBBY WELCH: That’s a pretty thought-provoking question. It took me a little time to think about that because I thought about God, not just how I got prepared but what did God do to prepare me, and I think, probably, the large part that I identify as God’s preparation is I had a dynamic salvation experience which had everything to do with my first ministry. I got saved with no spiritual background almost. I did not grow up in a church, and I got saved on the spot without understanding much of anything except trusting and believing. And I got radically changed! Of course, that makes me believe that you can be radically changed on the spot, and that has everything to do with how I approach the ministry. And then that moved into a dynamic rededication of my life years later when I got away from the Lord in my experience in the war. Because, there again, instantaneously almost, when I called on God, He showed up in no uncertain terms. And those two dynamic experiences in my life of instantaneous, overwhelming moves of God, has prepared me to believe that God is ready, able and willing to do that with anybody, any time. That has shaped my entire philosophy of ministry, and I think my philosophy of ministry has had to do with me becoming president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Also, my adult choice to be a Southern Baptist. I was not raised as a Southern Baptist. As an adult, I chose to become a Southern Baptist, and I think because I had those sort of thought-through commitments, convictions about Southern Baptist life. I didn’t grow up as one, I wasn’t grandfathered in by anybody. I believe that was a preparatory step that the Lord was working in my life, because I had thought through that. Also, my clear call to ministry. I think today it is critical that pastors/preachers have a clear call to ministry, and it’s surprising that more and more do not. But I believe that’s one of the things God did that prepared me for it. The other thing is, I only have one spiritual gift that I can identify, and that is the gift of encouragement. Some people think that I have others, but most of those are learned skills that I have gone to school for.
and I can do them. They look like a gift but they’re not. I have the spiritual gift of encouragement. At this time in our convention’s life, that is an important thing. I think also the fact that I have been in a soul-winning ministry for over thirty years in one place, is God’s preparation for the job. I believe also the Faith Evangelism strategy. I do not believe I would have likely been elected to be president of the convention if it had not been for FAITH, because that is what drove me to criss-cross the country, no telling how many times, through the last eight years. I averaged speaking, over the last eight years, in two to three states per week. Well, of course, that allowed me to be in a lot of places and it identified me with evangelism and let people know, and that was what the Lord has done. And then I think of other places of service that I have been in. I think about being president of the Florida Baptist Convention, I was second Vice President of the Southern Baptist Convention. I’ve been on a number of boards and agencies, and then the other thing is that God has put me into connection. There is a connectiveness of needs among a number of these boards and agencies that has been an on-going relationship, the FAITH and these other things I’ve talked about, which was the Lord who put me in those places. But you put all that in the bowl and mix it up, it’s a pretty strong concoction that only the Lord could have done. Now there were a lot of those things that happened along the way that got me to be president, but those were the things that were uniquely God preparing me.

DARRELL ORMAN: Just so you know, today I had the opportunity to share the FAITH outline. I was talking to two of the men on the island in the cabana, and two more came into the cabana to listen and when I interviewed the two that I was talking to, the one said, “I thank you, but I’m a Hindu.” The other one said, “I was a Christian but I’ve given it up.” Then, when I asked the next one in the back, he said “I’m Catholic and I sort of believe that way but I’m abandoning. Then there was the Indian man who was one of our pursers, who came over to listen. He prayed to receive Christ. And then I shared during the rain storm; we were on the beach and I went under one of those blue covers, and one of the life guards was there, who was a Bahamian, Durran was his name. I witnessed to him and Durran prayed to receive Christ. So I used that outline twice today. That’s 40 percent, two out of five.

BOBBY WELCH: Jesus only said to expect 1 out of 4. Amen! Well I think that’s what God did and has done in my life, and the culmination of that was a large part that I can observe that caused me to be in a position to be president of the convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: During your tenure as president, what do you see now as God’s unique purpose for your presidency? You’ve alluded a little bit to it with the encouragement, and were you aware of it at the time of your election last year or before the election?

BOBBY WELCH: I want to answer that, but you’re aware you skipped to number 3?

DARRELL ORMAN: Oh, that’s right. Let’s do three. How did God select you to serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention? How did He select you?
BOBBY WELCH: Well, now, how did God select me? That’s what makes the question hard; not how did I get selected but how did God do it? It’s my sense that God, of course, is aware of our greatest need in this convention right now, and that is to have evangelism. That is our greatest need in the convention today, and that’s where we’re losing the most, the fastest, and that is what accounts for every gain we’ve ever made in any of our history. And now we are losing what made us great in history. So, I know that the Lord saw that need now. Also, I believe that the Lord put in my heart that He saw this would require the need for a huge unity of purpose among the people. And, He has put into my heart the unity of purpose for evangelism and it’s amazing how many people out here, whether they realize it or not, and many of them do, who are really continually going to see the discord and disconnect and disunity within our convention and our fellowship. Although they are good people and well meaning, we need somebody to go to the high ground and try to pull our crowd together. Therefore, I believe that God, of course, is aware of that need and knew that that was in my heart. The other thing was the human agency thing.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yes, the human agency of your selection. How did that occur?

BOBBY WELCH: Yes, next He took a most unlikely fellow, by the name of J. D. Grant, up in North Carolina. I’m not even sure J.D.’s church is a full-time church. I’m not sure about that, I know he runs dump trucks on the side to make a living. J.D.’s a big, burly North Carolinian, and J.D. came up to me a couple of years ago and asked me would I consider ruling for president of the convention. I said I would not! In fact, I said if you had the bubonic plague in one hand and the presidency in the other, I’d take the plague. Because I know there’s an antidote for that but I don’t know if there’s anything to help you if you become president of the convention. Time went on and he returned and asked the same thing. But this time he said would you at least consider praying about it for the sake of evangelism. And I said, “Now you’re hitting below the belt because you know when you say evangelism I’m gonna be concerned.” And he said, “Will you pray about this?” I said I will pray and he said, “No, no, I mean will you earnestly pray?” And I said I will. And I did. Several other things happened along the way, but the long and short story of it is, I’d say that about six months before that time to come around to be nominated, if you’re going to likely to be nominated, I became more and more aware that there was a great possibility and maybe even a likelihood that I would be elected. Consequently, I started at that time to entertain the thoughts and the ideas that I believe the Lord was putting in my heart to try to help this convention. And, of course, by the time I got to the convention, I’d already turned everything I was going to do if I was elected over to the Lord. There were about six things that the Lord had placed on my heart to do, and they started at the convention, actually started before the convention. I decided that I was, not that anyone else was, but I was not going to be pretentious or superficial about it. I wasn’t going to say, “Well, golly, I’m going to be elected president.” I said before I went before the Baptist Witness, “If I’m elected in Nashville, here are the things I’m going to do.” That’s probably unprecedented and maybe almost smacks of arrogance. But I found myself at six months out, three months out, somewhere
a cross between ignorance and arrogance if I refused to think about what I would do and make any plans, that meant that if I got elected I'd be standing there with nothing in my hands to do, which would cost me six months to get started. If I begin to make plans, then it would seem arrogant that I was counting my chickens before they hatched. But I chose to go the route of going ahead and making plans. I just didn't talk to everybody about it. And those that I did, it was a very, very tight circle. So I told the Florida Baptist Witness first, it was a hometown paper, what I was going to do. And that was on the floor of the convention when I got elected. Then the second thing that I had decided to do, I was going to speak when I was introduced to the convention. Presidents do not do that. That is not part of the protocol. It's a very short-sightedness on behalf of the format of the convention. The president who has just been elected does not get to speak to the convention until he's been president for a year. But on the way to the election I had whispered to either Jack or to Morris, or to somebody, I said “Don’t get in a hurry, I’m going to say something.” I wasn’t arrogant about it and I didn’t take advantage; we were already ahead of schedule. So I spoke six minutes after they introduced me. It was as you may know, extremely well received, which made me happy. Several applause and ovations during the six minutes, but I quickly during those six minutes, outlined four or five or six things that I intended to do. I did not want anybody to go home from that convention wondering, “What is he going to do?” So then, of course, the next thing that happened was the bus trip, and the next thing that I did was all the convention and pastor conferences across the state. One of my goals was to talk to 400 church leaders across the convention within the first 100 days that I had gotten elected. I did that. I went to every state and Canada in twenty-five travel days. Plus, I preached a tent meeting of about 2,000 a night in the middle of that, and did an Executive Committee meeting in Nashville and the first committee on order of business meeting in Nashville. I got right back on the bus immediately and went west for the second half. When that was over, I did pastor conferences for the convention which brought me back to some of the states for the second time within about six or eight weeks. Then I was to go to Iraq. While I was packing my bags, I got a call from Iraq saying it was too dangerous; it would put us at extraordinary risk and also it would put the missionaries at risk, so in order to be free from any flack, we backed off. That gave me a few days off. I’m here now in January; my schedule when we get off the boat goes into the most intense phase of the first year. It’s unbelievable from here to the end of April. By the end of April, I will have spoken somewhere over 200 times in seven months on behalf of the convention. I’ll move to Nashville the last week-end of February, my wife and I, and I’ll camp out in middle Tennessee, making about ninety speaking stops in middle Tennessee and about sixteen out-of-state calls.

DARRELL ORMAN: How long will you be there?

BOBBY WELCH: Two months. I’ll do within a fifty mile circle ....

DARRELL ORMAN: So the church has given you a sabbatical?

BOBBY WELCH: Well, no, ahh, well, yeah, we haven’t talked like that. They just know I’m gone doing the convention stuff. Yeah.
DARRELL ORMAN: About your bus tour, my First Executive committee meeting, I’m on the business committee, they brought up your tour, and said we had to vote on it; I think, awarding $20,000, I think that’s what they said, or something like that to it. And I said, “Well, this isn’t enough for what he’s doing.” They said, “Well, Lifeway is doing twice as much as this, so they said there would be other tributaries coming in.”

BOBBY WELCH: The interesting thing about that is that most of this has never, ever been done before, so it’s all new waters. But our church funded everything until after the September Executive Committee meeting, which meant I was half-way through the bus trip by the time I got there. I was already way down the track by faith. Had I waited on that, I would never have gotten there. But that’s the nature of how it worked, no complaint on that. That’s different. Somebody told me, one of the people on Executive Committee, they said that meeting was the first time, I don’t know whether it’s true or not, that really doesn’t matter, other than to say that I think our people understand what’s happening right now and they said that was the first time they have any memory of a president speaking at the Executive Committee, getting a standing ovation. I don’t think they were making an ovation for my speaking, I think that was a show of approval of getting out here and trying to do more than maybe we had thought was possible.

DARRELL ORMAN: Brother Bobby, are you a goal-setter and did your ministry . . .

BOBBY WELCH: Did you forget #4, remember? You skipped that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, actually you got into it, life goals. Is there anything you want to add to it?

BOBBY WELCH: No I just didn’t want to mess you up.

DARRELL ORMAN: No, we’re good to go.

BOBBY WELCH: I thought of an interesting thing for you. On #4, well on mine...the first part I said earlier was unity of purpose, and on the second part... “When were you aware of it at the time,” . . . I was aware of it at the time. I came to the conclusion that if I were elected, there was no doubt about it that I had received a mandate from God. I was never going to say that publicly; this is the first time that I’ve said it near publicly. But, I believe that if God allowed me to get elected it would be a mandate from God to press as hard as I could across this convention for unity of purpose for evangelism. So I did, and I guess when you say, “Did you notice before you were elected?” to the extent of what I just said, I did. But I thought what would be an interesting exercise for you, I was wondering if you could go, I looked through the names, and I wondered could you put out beside each president’s name when you get through, one word that this president could be remembered by. That might be too hard or it might be too narrow...
DARRELL ORMAN: That’s a good thought. I like that.
BOBBY WELCH: Well, I was just thinking about you.

DARRELL ORMAN: What would be your one word?

BOBBY WELCH: Well, I would say if you could keep it down to one or two words, in other words, you could go down that list of thirteen, and look to the left hand side of their names, and there in one or two words you would know what these men have given as president.

DARRELL ORMAN: That’s good, I’ll try.

BOBBY WELCH: For instance, I think wouldn’t you suspect that somewhere in the narrowing down for Paige Patterson the word would be the 1998 Baptist Faith and Message revision. He pushed that forward, that might be the thing that would never be forgotten from that day. And I just thought that would be interesting. What are these guys going to be remembered for?

DARRELL ORMAN: That’s good. Yeah, I’ll work on that and see what happens with that.

BOBBY WELCH: Okay, well, now we go move on to #5.

DARRELL ORMAN: #5, are you a goal-setter? Did your ministry path follow your goals? At what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?

BOBBY WELCH: I am a goal-setter. Number two, “Did your ministry path follow your goals?” I would say pretty much so because my goal initially was to be a good and faithful servant to the Lord. And the answer to that would be, yes, I tried to follow that path. I’ve had plenty of opportunities. And, “at what point did you establish these goals for your ministry life?” It was early on. But they have evolved through the years and gotten narrower and narrower in focus, and one of my goals as I said was to be a good, faithful servant wherever I was going to be. And that’s been some interesting places. And the second thing was: as I was a good and faithful servant or attempted to be, I wanted the net result to be reaching people who were lost to be saved. One of the most memorable experiences of my life, just about everything good that happened in my life that now I can trace back to that point, was when I became the director of the bus ministry in Nashville, Tennessee, at Park Avenue Baptist Church. I left seminary, where I pastored a full-time church for two years. I took the associate preaching job at Park Avenue Baptist in Nashville, Tennessee. Immediately they came up with no bus director and asked me would I do that. I had never ridden a bus in my life. Not a school bus or any other type of bus, but I was there to help the pastor, and I said I would. In a little over a hundred days, we went from seven buses and 185 riders to 20 buses with 1,165 riders. But that was very, very trying and hard work.

DARRELL ORMAN: You did that in a hundred days?
BOBBY WELCH: Yes, actually less than a hundred days. But that wasn’t the thing I remember most. I remember one day, I would never go home until all the buses were in, too much liability out there, and I wouldn’t leave until all of them came in. And I would wait by the phone because that was before cell phones, and I’d often get a call where I had to go out and get somebody because the battery went dead or something, and that was the case on this day I’m telling you about. I was getting a battery out of one vehicle and taking it out to where a bus had gone dead with some kids on it, to try and get them home. And I remember going across the parking lot, I had on a new pair of shoes, I had taken off my jacket, I had on a blue suit, and I rolled up my white shirt sleeves, and I was carrying this battery out in front of me as much as I could. And there was a large reinforcing bar driven up in the ground with about four inches of it sticking up. I couldn’t see it for the battery, and I jammed my foot into it with my shoe and it just ripped the top of it open like a knife, ruined the shoe, a brand new pair of shoes, and just as I looked down at those shoes I heard a car horn blowing on Charlotte Pike Boulevard and I looked and two earloads of my preacher friends were headed home with their families in their cars. The windows rolled up, they were laughing, just having a good time, eating lunch. And they were waving, nothing sarcastic about that at all; they were just waving at me. Well, when I saw that my heart broke. I thought, “Well, here I am, a seminary graduate; I can preach.” I’d already had people say, “Why are you doing that bus stuff, you ought to be preaching? You could be in a church, did God call you to preach or to drive a bus?” That day there was a real moment, just a moment, of depression that came over me and I thought, what am I doing with my life? I thought I could be home with my wife and kids now, and here I am with a torn up shoe, carrying a battery, trying to fix a truck, and God came to me and said, “I know exactly what you are, I’m getting you ready for what I want you to do. Just trust me.” And I thought it was very interesting that thirty-something years later that I get back on a bus to go all the way across the country as president of the convention.

DARRELL ORMAN: Yeah, that’s neat. That’s a great contrast.

BOBBY WELCH: I thank the Lord for those days of trying to help me get ingrained in my mind that no matter where I was, if I would be a good and faithful servant, He would take care of the rest of it. I never thought about being president of anything, but I have thought a lot about wanting to be a good and faithful servant. That’s how I settle things.

DARRELL ORMAN: Amen. That’s excellent. Well, you’re unique from these others.

BOBBY WELCH: My answer to that is for #6, what would I do over, of course, I’m in the latter half of my first term, and so far, I would say nothing. I do not know of anything that I would do differently. I think I’ll probably say later that I wish I could do more.

DARRELL ORMAN: In your opinion, what is the most rewarding aspect of your presidency? What is the least?
BOBBY WELCH: I would say the most rewarding is being encouraging and urging our pastors and people on. I’m content. I preached a message called “The Greatest Pastor and the Greatest Church in the World”, where I lodge on being a good and faithful servant and I am absolutely convinced some of our greatest preachers have chosen to be up here in pretty insignificant places. They’re great Bible teachers, they’re wonderful godly men of God, they’re better husbands than most others are, better fathers, they read the Word more, they pray it back, but they’re where they feel like they need to be. It’s been great to come along side of them and find many of them feel badly because maybe they haven’t measured up to their peer group’s expectations. And remind them just what I told you about the bus parking lot. If God has His eye on them, to encourage them on to where they are, to do all they can with all they have now, that’s why I wrote that on the side of that bus. That’s the best part of it. What was the least is my inability to do more. I’m amazed that people think that this approach is so astounding, what I’m doing. Because it seems so little given what we need to do.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could change the function of the office from your experience thus far, how would you change it?

BOBBY WELCH: Well, I’m going to say some things that I do not intend to say publicly at this point, but by the time this is paper gets published I probably will have said them. It is likely that it is time for a fresh, new review of several things. The expectations of the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, that’s in writing, and it probably needs a fresh look at it right now. The length of the term. I am interested to do some fact finding about: Just what you said in #1, the expectations of the president in the future. Should the president be elected for two years instead of one? Maybe the president of the convention should be president-elect one year before he begins his term whether it’s one year and re-elected or whether its two years, because, given all that’s thrown on you immediately.

DARRELL ORMAN: It would give you a learning curve.

BOBBY WELCH: Sure, but not only that. Your calendar! I mean, your calendar is completely ripped to shreds. Anybody that’s going to be elected president of the convention is going to have a full calendar as it is. They just need a “heads up,” it seems to me. But I do intend to, before this year is over, get into that. In fact, I’ve already started digging around a little on it. Now where it needs to go, I really don’t have the answer, but I do know it needs a look.

DARRELL ORMAN: How can future presidents maximize their presidency for Christ? I think some of what you’ve already alluded to covers this.

BOBBY WELCH: Yes, of course, they’re helpless due to the format given because you have to follow that. And harkening back to your previous question, #8, is that you know, everybody says well you’re going to get elected to your second term, you know you are, you know you are, that’s the way it always is. However, it is presumption to make a two-year plan, almost, because it comes across wrong. It sounds arrogant and presumptuous.
However, if you were elected for two years, you’d have time to run that ramp on out there. Now see, I have a second-year plan but I don’t feel at liberty and I won’t attempt to say, “If I get elected again, here’s what I going to try to do.” Rather than stand up the first year and say, “Now over the next two years,” you say that and somebody going to say, “What’s he talking about?” You see what I’m talking about? It really does put you in a quandary. But for #9, I would say arrange to have more time to devote to the job of being president. That’s a hard thing because most pastors pastor large churches with very demanding schedules. Most of those people, if you’re elected president, I mean if you just run and are elected without something going on back behind the scenes, then you’ve got to be known from coast to coast. You can’t just be known in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, North Carolina and Texas, you’ve got to be known coast to coast. Especially conventions held in a place out of that area, like California or Indiana where I was, and you get out of that area, you get to be known. People who are known from coast to coast have busy schedules. They have a large church, a busy schedule, a managed schedule, so you’re out there on your own schedule what are you doing between times? The challenge is to be able to clear that schedule so you can devote time to the job of being president. And further I thought about arranging time to be gone from your church. Now many presidents feel, if not most, that really one of their big goals is to stay in their church while they’re president. However, that is not my goal. My feeling was that if I, myself personally, were elected president, that was God’s signal for me to get out here and extend myself for the sake of the convention, and the kingdom of God and lost souls. So I have, to some degree, placed my church at risk, doing this. But I’ve made arrangements for it not to be an uncalculated risk. But a president, if he can clear his calendar and if he can find ways where he could be absent to give more time to the convention, that would be good. The other thing I would say about a president is I would encourage him to see their opportunity as big. Now everybody doesn’t want you to see that opportunity as big, because sometimes it rocks the boat. Sometimes it goes contrary to the drift. But I don’t believe that a man who could remember, and it’s such a vital thing to remember, that the president of the convention is the absolute only person elected by the people at the convention. Now that is huge. No other person is elected by the people; he is the only representative of the people. The rest of them are all elected by boards and agencies.

DARRELL ORMAN: With the exception of the vice president and recording secretary....

BOBBY WELCH: Yeah, yeah, but I’m talking about the one who is the agent of God. He has the responsibility to see whatever he’s there as bigger than just maintaining or kissing babies and collecting wall plaques. It is extremely hard to rise above the norm due to the way the election works, and the uncertainty of the times. It almost pulls down the possibility of the potential of a president making a profound help to the convention. It’s very hard to do that.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, as you know, Adrian had three years because of a split term and I thought that was unusual but looking back in the history, the older presidents at the turn of the century, some of them served ten years.
BOBBY WELCH: Yes, and when you think of how many we have in the past, it’s interesting that we only have 53 past presidents. That’s very interesting. And also you have to remember when you look at their exploits in those days; many times there weren’t sixteen states in the convention at that time. This today is a new thing.

DARRELL ORMAN: And the Southern Baptist Convention would convene with several hundred people sometimes, years ago.

BOBBY WELCH: And today, one of the things that would be interesting to pursue on your behalf would be how the office has changed over the years as president. Because with internet, Fox News, CNN, computers, laptops, all of that, the president is much more in circulation than they have been in the past.

DARRELL ORMAN: Are you having people personally e-mail you a lot?

BOBBY WELCH: Oh, yeah. Big volume.

DARRELL ORMAN: Coming to your home?

BOBBY WELCH: Oh, no, no, they come to the church. And they come with everything imaginable.

DARRELL ORMAN: In light of your experience, as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, what influence does this position exert morally and politically outside of the S.B.C.?

BOBBY WELCH: It is my view at this point that the position of president is not positioned to impact much outside the S.B.C. They’re not in a position to do that. If you do it, it usually has to do with; do you have outside efforts on television, the news media, or efforts like the bus trip. That sort of goes back to what I said earlier. The way it’s structured, it doesn’t have a platform. You see, you have no office, no budget, except for traveling expense, you have no help, anything you use you’re piggy-backing on something else. There’s no public relations office for you except Baptist Press that serves everybody in the country and it’s sort of doing it’s own thing.

DARRELL ORMAN: They give you $10,000 for stationery...........

BOBBY WELCH: No, no, the budget is, I think, $30,000 for everything; I think that throws in your convention expense, travel expense, everything including letterhead, everything you come up with. And if a vice-president has to go in your stead or if he goes somewhere else and you go here, it comes out of that. All the vice-president’s expenses come out of that. Whatever they do comes out of that.

DARRELL ORMAN: It’s gone up a lot. Jim Henry’s was $10,000.
BOBBY WELCH: Yeah, right, so what I’m saying is, to make any forays outside the convention, you’re almost at the mercy of who outside the convention would invite you in the arena to do that. Now what I did is, I took the initiative to go into that arena with a bus. That was one of the large reasons for the bus. And we got tremendous press coverage. . . just tremendous. CNN covered it, they were on the bus with us, the Boston Globe, the Chicago Tribune, the California papers, and the Orlando Sentinel, the Associated Press. . . it drew them to that. But that was by initiative outside the position of president, but it was my initiative, it wasn’t theirs.

DARRELL ORMAN: Since your election last summer, have you been accessed quite a bit by the media on moral issues?

BOBBY WELCH: Not really. Not really. You know, they’ll give you the standard questions, just sort of drive through on what’s your position on homosexuals, and what’s your position on gay marriages, and what’s your position on the family, whatever is the hot topic at the time.

DARRELL ORMAN: So you got calls as to what’s your response to the Tsunami or current events....

BOBBY WELCH: Yeah, yeah, I got calls, but that wasn’t moral or political. Just saying what do you think is going on? What are you all doing? Did any of your missionaries get hurt? Sort of general conversational stuff. And you ask well it’s news, but what does it affect and how does it move us toward our goals? Or how does it have anything to do with what we’re really here to do? I mean its good news, but does this also have opportunity outside the convention to move in the direction of our goals?

DARRELL ORMAN: Did you have any White House access?

BOBBY WELCH: Yes, we’ve had long, running conversations with them, but they have been preoccupied during my time with being re-elected. I got a lot of questions. Well, one of the things you’ll find is the media wanting to try to politicize you. I’m convinced that some of the press coverage we got on the bus was they had already predetermined that that bus was a clandestine way to help win the election. But when they got on, they discovered it wasn’t and often they got right back off. I had a number of questions about Kerry while I was gone, stuff like that. They were tickling that topic.

DARRELL ORMAN: What are the unique pressures and responsibilities of serving in one of the most influential evangelical positions in the world?

BOBBY WELCH: I think probably the most unique pressure and responsibility is what you say and what you do is an extremely high profile way. Again, you have to remember that you are the only person who is in there speaking, and when you speak you are considered speaking for all the people of the Southern Baptist Convention. Now we know, and certainly every Southern Baptist knows, that you don’t speak for them, but the world believes you do. So it moves you into a whole new arena. You know it’s one
thing to be out here and saying “Hello, world” on a 10 watt station. It’s another thing to have a television ministry. It’s another thing to speak around the country. But it’s another thing when you are seen as the leader of 16,300,000 people and 43,000 churches. They do want to tie you to what you are saying and they want to tie everybody else to it, whatever it is. So that’s a very humbling and a very important thing to remember every time you open your mouth, millions of people are going to get tagged by what you say right now.

DARRELL ORMAN: I had Bailey Smith speak at our church a few times. He had the “Does God answer the prayers of Jews?” question and after it exploded, he got hate mail from China.

BOBBY WELCH: Oh, yeah, I can’t remember. What was his line? He just said no, right? He hem-hawed around a little bit, but he came out and said, “No.”

DARRELL ORMAN: He said “Yeah, God answered the prayers of saved people only.” Which we all believe, you know, it’s Biblical.

BOBBY WELCH: Oh, yeah, and you know, today he still remembers this. And I pray a lot that the Lord would please protect me from that. Because you really, really have to be guarded by the Holy Spirit of God because you realize that you can say something and it just might not come out right, you can say something and think you said something else, you know, we’ve all been there.

DARRELL ORMAN: I was watching you during the Pro-Life debate a few years ago, when you were on national news. You made an able defense and all, but they did not want to hear it. You cannot win if you share scripture.

BOBBY WELCH: One of the things that I find it best to do is I try never to be tired when I deal with the press, because you’re trapping yourself. I try to be rested, but that’s not always possible. On the bus trip that was an extraordinary challenge. Because they stayed on the bus, some of them even slept on the bus. But God was good. That is a huge challenge. You look at the Pope; he doesn’t utter a sound that it doesn’t go through four or five lawyers and everybody else. We don’t have that luxury, and I don’t know that we want it, and anybody that doesn’t understand that probably should ask themselves: “Should I be president of the convention?” They need to understand that. And I think everybody that I know that has been president does. Then, you could understand it, but you could slip and say something that you don’t mean or it comes out the wrong way or is translated the wrong way.

DARRELL ORMAN: True. Did you have a sense of destiny early in your ministry life? I wanted to ask you before I forget. Churches. You’ve mentioned the bus ministry, you mentioned you pastored a church before you took the associate position, how many churches have you pastored or been on staff of?
BOBBY WELCH: First Baptist in Daytona Beach is the only church I have ever pastored outside of seminary. It’s my one and only church. I won’t ever pastor another church. It’s sort of like my wife; I fell in love with one woman.

DARRELL ORMAN: I’ve already written my name for you, “Faithful witness”.

BOBBY WELCH: Or “evangelism.” I pastored a full-time church for two years while I was in seminary. I went from there to Park Avenue Baptist and was associate pastor for almost exactly two years, and then 31 years ago this coming August, I moved to Daytona, almost two years to the day, and I’ve been there for three (or whatever it is) decades.

DARRELL ORMAN: How did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency?

BOBBY WELCH: Well you asked me about destiny early in my ministry. I would say the answer to that is mostly a deep sense of calling from God and a certainty of His guidance and blessing that would be my rendezvous with destiny, if there was any hint of a call early. I really believe that God had spared my life in Viet Nam; there is no doubt about that. There has never been a day since that day that I didn’t intend, in whatever I did, to counsel with the Lord. When I planned to start a chain of businesses across the southeastern part of the United States, that was back before vanity tags, and I had already decided that across the back of my sports car would be “all because of Jesus”. I decided that in front of our huge home would be a big sign that said “all because of Jesus”. There was never a day after that that I didn’t understand that I was living because He chose to let me live for His sake.

DARRELL ORMAN: Borrowed time.

BOBBY WELCH: That’s right. I said it this way. I really do believe that God came to end my life that day. And He wrote “the end”. He wrote “the end” and I hollered “God help me.” And He laid down the pen and said, “Okay, I’ll give you another chance.” So when He comes for me this time, it’s not going to be drawn out. He just has to put the “d” and a period and it’s over. So then when the Lord called me into the ministry I still felt that my goals had been spared, that I was called of God for whatever I did to live for Him. When I went to Nashville, and I thought that I would be a preaching associate and the pastor asked me would I do the bus ministry, I never stuttered, I said, “Yes sir.” If he’d asked me to serve in the nursery, I’d have said exactly the same thing. And I feel that way today. It is an overwhelmingly humbling thing for me to be among the nine who have been president of the convention in the past. When you read their biographies and their backgrounds, where their momma came from and where their daddy came from, or their church background, I don’t have any of that. I came in the side door. But I think that should bring hope and excitement about the fact that God can use anybody if they’ll just try.

DARRELL ORMAN: Amen, that’s wonderful. How did your mega church pastorate uniquely prepare you for the presidency or denominational positions?
Like a moment ago, you mentioned the Florida Baptist presidency, and then, also one addition after you finish those, your personal strength in leadership.

BOBBY WELCH: I made my own list, I did agree with some of yours. Speaking, of course, that did help me there. Administration, I don’t make that connection. Dealing with critics and dealing with the media, absolutely; the little experience that I had in church life of dealing with the media that did help me a good bit. Vision casting, absolutely! Goal setting, yes! In addition to that I made my own list. And that is simply communicating complex tasks to many people. That is a big deal. This thing about “Everyone Can, Win, Witness and Baptize a Million in a Year,” pushing these six points across 16,300,000 people within a year, that is a huge thing to do. And to simplify that, what was the most challenging thing for me was to figure out a way to offer six things to this many people that could be in place immediately and that everybody could buy into immediately. And that’s why these six things, you don’t have to do them at any certain time, but somewhere in twelve months and nobody’s going to tell you any of these six things but must do all six-i.e. train and equip. Train them any way you want to, equip them any way you want to, you don’t have to do FAITH or E.E., but you have to do something. It took me three months to get at, to figure out a way to successfully communicate the complex task to multiply to millions of people where they could immediately buy in. Well, this wasn’t the first time I had to do something like that. Processing through the thing.

DARRELL ORMAN: Now did you relocate at First Daytona?

BOBBY WELCH: We’re on the verge. We now have 226 acres on I-4, at the intersection of I-4 and 95.

DARRELL ORMAN: Wow! What’s the total amount?

BOBBY WELCH: $50,000,000. Well around there, maybe a little bit more.

DARRELL ORMAN: What’s your time frame?

BOBBY WELCH: I believe that we will be in the phase one building twenty-four to thirty-six months.

DARRELL ORMAN: How are you doing on your fund raising?

BOBBY WELCH: Great. We don’t owe anything so far. We own all the land and everything.

DARRELL ORMAN: How much of the $50,000,000 have you raised?

BOBBY WELCH: Well, we’re starting into that phase. We need $15,000,000 more to do the first phase. And we believe that we will come up with all of that except maybe $6,000,000 before we start building or before we get finished with it. The other word is
delegation, you know, delegating jobs out. That’s a big deal. Communicating vision is a big deal. That is what I’m doing in this first year. I’m communicating vision, building expectation, that’s why this trip all over our country is all about. That’s why I’m not going overseas. I’d rather be right here. Willful determination to get it done. Focus. I have a set of new mule blinders in my office that I had brought in. Brought everything with me so I wouldn’t lose focus, I would remember to stay on my focus. And I’m not going to lose focus with God being my Helper. Building a coalition, how to build a coalition of people who may not agree on everything and how to rally the troops to the cause. All those things have come out of my past experience of a large church, which are having to be brought into play now.

DARRELL ORMAN: If you could pick one denominational position that you feel might have equipped, like the different trustees and all the other things you had, which one do you think is probably going to help you the most? Only pick one.

BOBBY WELCH: That will help me the most to be president? And you said denominational? Because the truth of it is being pastor is going to help me the most. But, denominationally, I guess I’d have to say being President of the Florida Baptist Convention, and I say that only limitedly. Because what that has done is make me not be preoccupied with carrying out the actual convention session in June. With someone who has not done that before, I can imagine they would have a healthy dose of anxiety about carrying on that meeting in June. But having done that, and I think we made some humongous number of bylaw changes in the constitution that year, you could only be president one year when I was president, and it was controversial that year anyway with a lot of things going on. Having lived through that and worked through that and came through it very smoothly, it has caused me to have confidence that I’ll be able to do exactly the same thing. I’m looking forward to the June convention meeting in Nashville and hope to bring something to that convention that I’m offering. I hope I’m not surprised. But, that’s taken a load off. Now, nothing of what I’ve done other than being a pastor has equipped me better for the positive offensive action I’ve taken about the bus trip across the country and all this other stuff. Now the big thing that probably I would be remembered by, if I am in fact remembered by anything, will be doing all this stuff and that came out of the pastor’s heart.

DARRELL ORMAN: Of all the different leadership things you were involved in, that you’ve done, what one leadership strength do you think is your personal strength? Just one.

BOBBY WELCH: Well, never thought about that. Don’t know how many of them I have. I may only have one.

DARRELL ORMAN: The one you feel more anointed in, God blesses the most...

BOBBY WELCH: I would just repeat what I’ve been told, being a passionate visionary. That’s what I’ve been told. I don’t know whether that’s true or not.
DARRELL ORMAN: Well, we could tell you. Look at your church.

BOBBY WELCH: And passionate is the important word in there. Because that’s the sense of urgency in getting things done.

DARRELL ORMAN: That goes back to when you came up to me when we were in a break at the Executive Committee and you said, “Darrell, what did you think of the presentation?” I said, “Bobby, how can you lose? You’re trying to win a million people to Christ. That’s big, big vision. You know, that’s wonderful.”

BOBBY WELCH: And see, one of the great thoughts I have about it, is that I have no interest in talking about not making a million because that is totally doable. If we don’t do it, it’s because we have failed to do it.

DARRELL ORMAN: Well, I’ve been working on our deacons and our leadership and our people to make it like a mission trip to come to the rally, and do the door-to-door, I’m trying to bring a busload.

BOBBY WELCH: And I believe at the conclusion of that convention you’re going to be compelled to go home and do like you’ve never done before. This convention is not just going to be a knock around either. We’re on a mission and we want a direction. But you know, when I was in Minnesota on the bus trip I need to go back and capture the names and all because it’s important, I probably should use it in what I’m going to say at the convention. A man came up with gray hair, and said to me, “I like the slogan Win, Witness and Baptize A Million In A Year.” He said, “Do you really think you will do that?” I said, “I do! I think we can.” He said, “Well, let me tell you, are you old enough to remember ‘A million more in ’54’?” And I said, “I only know it because I read about it, but I do know that happened in 1954 when they tried to get a million new members in. He said, “Well, they didn’t. But I want you to know that because of ‘A million more in ’54,’ the next door neighbors to our house came over and invited me to enroll in Sunday School with their little boy. I was about 8 at the time. And I went and enrolled, and as a consequence I got saved and my mother and daddy got saved and now I’ve been serving the Lord ever since, and I’m an executive director in the State of Minnesota. I want you to know that what you’re calling us to do is going to pay huge dividends regardless.”

DARRELL ORMAN: That is a great word. Can a group of young pastors be trained and mentored to possibly serve as president of the S.B.C.? And if so, would that in anyway circumvent God’s sovereignty in the selection election process?

BOBBY WELCH: Good question. My response is young pastors would be best trained and mentored to be good and faithful servants and to major on kingdom evangelism then God can win servants of His choice for His reason, in His timing for the president of the convention. I guess you could turn that coin over and read my answer to be: I think that would be terribly risky business and likely to be seen as presumption.
DARRELL ORMAN: In a sense, that’s what we talked about that one day at lunch, about the batting order.

BOBBY WELCH: Yes, exactly. You know, we know the King of the Kingdom. Adrian said to me on the way over here, we were talking about something, we stopped in Jacksonville, and he said something to the extent that back in his time, people kept saying to him “you need to put these people in leadership.” He said, “You don’t put people in leadership. Leaders rise to the surface, and they rise to the occasion.” And I believe God is able to find them and call them in His timing.
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VITA

Darrell P. Orman

PERSONAL
Born: December 3, 1956
Married: Kim C. Orman, January 1, 1959
Children: Cherith Lynn, born September 16, 1982
        Darrell Joshua, July 22, 1986

EDUCATIONAL
Associate Degree in Business, Northwest Junior College, 1976
BS in Pastoral Ministries, Liberty University, 1979
Master of Divinity, Liberty Baptist Seminary (Last 15 hours of degree
Completed at Mid-America Seminary), 1984

MINISTERIAL
License: January 18, 1976, Broadway Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee
Ordained: April 12, 1981, Broadway Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee

PROFESSIONAL
Associate Pastor, Faith Baptist Church of Atoka, Atoka, Tennessee, Summer of 1980
College and Career Pastor, Berean Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia, 1980-1982
Youth Pastor, Oakhaven Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee, 1983-1985
Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Stuart, Stuart, Florida, August 1992-Present
PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges, 1978-1979
President, Missions Club, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1984
Outstanding P.A.C.T. Congregation Award, Home Mission Board, SBC, 1989
First Vice President, Florida Baptist Convention, 1990
Southern Baptist Convention Nominating Committee Member, 1993
Executive Committee, Florida Baptist Family Ministries, 1995-1999
Trustee, Florida Baptist Family Ministries, 1995-1999
Evangelism Chairman, Indian River Baptist Association, 1995-2004
President, 1996 Florida Baptist State Convention Pastor’s Conference
Vice Chairman, 2000 Florida Baptist State Convention Nominating Committee
Vice President, Southern Baptist Convention Pastor’s Conference, 2001
Florida Baptist Convention Nominating Committee, 2001, 2005
Southern Baptist Convention Teller Committee, Phoenix Arizona, 2003
Southern Baptist Convention, Executive Committee, 2004-2005