



# *Green Run Tidings*



SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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**Green Run Baptist Church**

May 2013

## *The Challenge of Same-Sex Unions*

In the world but not of the world? From the very beginning, the church has faced the challenge of responding to external events, trends, ideologies, and controversies. By definition, the church does not get to choose these challenges, but they have been thrust upon Christians by the world. The question always comes down to this: What now?

That question seems especially urgent in light of the emergence of same-sex unions and marriage in the United States and the world over. How must the church answer this challenge?

To answer that question, we need to think about the speed of the moral revolution that has pushed this question to the forefront of our culture. In less than a generation, homosexuality has gone from being almost universally condemned to being almost fully normalized in the larger society.

We are facing a true moral inversion — a system of moral understandings turned upside down. Where homosexuality was even recently condemned by the society, now it is considered a sin to believe that homosexuality is wrong in any way. A new sexual morality has replaced the old, and those who hold to the old morality are considered morally deficient. The new moral authorities have one central demand for the church: get with the new program.

This puts the true church, committed to the authority of God's Word, in a very difficult cultural position. Put simply, we cannot join the larger culture in normalizing homosexuality and restructuring society to match this new morality. Recognizing same-sex unions and legalizing same-sex marriage is central to this project.

Liberal churches and denominations are joining the project, some more quickly and eagerly than others. The cultural pressure is formidable, and only churches that are truly committed to Scripture will withstand the pressure to accommodate themselves and their message to the new morality.

What, then, is the true church to do? *First*, we must stand without compromise on the authority of the Bible and the principles of sexual conduct and morality that God has revealed so clearly in His Word. The Bible's sexual morality is grounded in the creation of humanity in God's image; we are created as male and female and given the gift of sex within the marriage covenant — and only within the marriage covenant between one man and one woman for as long they both shall live.

The easiest way to summarize the Bible's teaching on sexuality is to begin with God's blessing of sex only within the marriage covenant between a man and a woman. Then, just remember that sex outside of that covenant relationship, whatever its form or expression, is explicitly forbidden. Christians know that these prohibitions are for our good and that rejecting them is tantamount to a moral rebellion against God Himself.

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## *The Challenge of Same-Sex Unions*

We also know that the Bible forbids all same-sex sexual acts and behaviors. Thus, we know that homosexuality is a sin, that blessing it in any way is also sin, and that normalizing sin cannot lead to human happiness.

**Second**, we must realize what is at stake. Marriage is first and foremost a public institution. It has always been so. Throughout history, societies have granted special recognition and privileges to marriage because it is the central organizing institution of human culture. Marriage regulates relationships, sexuality, human reproduction, lineage, kinship, and family structure. But marriage has also performed another crucial function — it has regulated morality.

This is why the challenge of samesex unions is so urgent and important. Redefining marriage is never simply about marriage. It leads to the redefinition of reproduction and parenthood, produces a legal revolution with vast consequences, replaces an old social order with something completely new, and forces the adoption of a new morality. This last point is especially important. Marriage teaches morality by its very centrality to the culture. With a new concept of marriage comes a new morality, enforced by incredible social pressure and, eventually, legal threats.

**Third**, we must act quickly to teach Christians the truth about marriage and God’s plan for sexuality in all its fullness and beauty. We must develop pastoral approaches that are faithful to Scripture and arm this generation of believers to withstand the cultural pressure and respond in ways that are truly Christian.

**Last**, and most important, this challenge must drive us to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christians must be the first to understand this challenge in light of the gospel. After all, we know spiritual rebellion when we see it, for we ourselves were rebels before God’s grace conquered us. We know what moral confusion means because without the light of God’s Word, we are just as confused.

There is no rescue from the self-deception of sin except for the salvation that is ours in Jesus Christ. While doing everything else required of us in this challenge, the faithful church must center its energies on the one thing that we know we must do above all else — preach, teach, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ. ~ **Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr.**, serves as president of *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

## *Proclaiming Life to Captives*

I am writing this on the twenty-fifth anniversary of President Ronald Reagan’s release of the “Personhood Proclamation.” On January 14, 1988, Reagan released the following declaration: “America has given a great gift to the world, a gift that drew upon the accumulated wisdom derived from centuries of experiments in self-government, a gift that has irrevocably changed humanity’s future. Our gift is twofold: the declaration, as a cardinal principle of all just law, of the God-given, unalienable rights possessed by every human being; and the example of our determination to secure those rights and to defend them against every challenge through the generations... .

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## *Proclaiming Life to Captives*

“One of those unalienable rights, as the Declaration of Independence affirms so eloquently, is the right to life. In the 15 years since the Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade*, however, America’s unborn have been denied their right to life. Among the tragic and unspeakable results in the past decade and a half have been the loss of life of 22 million infants before birth; the pressure and anguish of countless women and girls who are driven to abortion; and a cheapening of our respect for the human person and the sanctity of human life... .

“That right to life belongs equally to babies in the womb, babies born handicapped, and the elderly or infirm. That we have killed the unborn for 15 years does not nullify this right, nor could any number of killings ever do so... . Our nation cannot continue down the path of abortion, so radically at odds with our history, our heritage, and our concepts of justice. This sacred legacy, and the well-being and the future of our country, demand that protection of the innocents must be guaranteed and that the personhood of the unborn be declared and defended throughout our land... .”

President Reagan’s words are sobering, particularly as we consider how much more they are needed today than in 1988. In America and throughout the world, the church of Jesus Christ must rise up to defend the rights of all individuals—children in the womb and abused children outside the womb, kidnapped girls forced into sex trafficking, men captured and sold into slavery, and the aged, infirm, or unwanted murdered through euthanasia and genocide. Our triune God is the Almighty Creator and Sustainer of life, He has bestowed dignity on every person, and He alone has defined personhood. The barbaric murder, abuse, and slavery of our fellow human beings ought to bring us to tears, to our knees in prayer, and to action in behalf of the least of these as we preach the gospel to the nations and fight for the life and freedom of all individuals so that they might live and hear the gospel of eternal life. ~ *Burk Parsons - Editor of Tabletalk Magazine and Co-Pastor at Saint Andrew’s Chapel in Sanford, Florida*

## *The Voice of the Church*

When Planned Parenthood adopted a strategy to win the debate on abortion and establish the legal right for women to have abortions on demand, it asked a strategic question: “From where will our strongest opposition come?” The organization anticipated that opposition would come most fiercely from the Roman Catholic Church. In order to offset the impact of the Roman community, Planned Parenthood adopted a strategy to encourage Protestant churches to support a woman’s right to abortion on demand. It encouraged the use of the mantras “A woman’s right to choose” and “A woman’s right over her own body.” A further part of the strategy was to use the slogan “prochoice” rather than “pro-abortion.” In other words, the effort to legalize abortion on demand was wrapped in the flag of personal liberty.

The Planned Parenthood strategy was eminently successful. For the most part, the mainline liberal churches backed the feminist crusade in favor of “choice.” What was most distressing was the silence of evangelical churches, churches committed to the authority of the Bible and the classical Christian faith. It took many years for the evangelical church to come to a consensus on the evil of abortion but, more tragically, many evangelical churches still refuse to speak out against the destruction of babies made in the image of God.

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## *The Voice of the Church*

Several years ago, I produced a series of video lectures, out of which emerged my book on abortion. We made an effort to get these educational materials to evangelical churches, to help them instruct their members concerning this profoundly serious ethical issue. I was saddened to receive the same response over and over again. Innumerable evangelical pastors told me they could not use our materials in their churches because the issue of abortion is so controversial. If they took a stand against abortion on demand, they said, they would divide their churches. What? Divide these churches? What could be a greater evil than such a division? The answer is this: Remaining silent on the most serious ethical issue that the United States has ever faced.

If the slaughter of millions of unborn babies is to stop, the church must once again become the church. Those who hide behind the idea that the church should never speak to political issues have missed the scriptural accounts of what we would call *prophetic criticism*. It may have been politically incorrect for Nathan to confront David over his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah (**2 Samuel 12:1–15a**). It may have been politically incorrect for Elijah to confront Ahab for his sinful confiscation of Naboth's vineyard (**1 Kings 21**). It may have been politically incorrect for John the Baptist to challenge Herod the Tetrarch's illicit marriage (**Matthew 14**). In these and other examples from sacred Scripture, we see representatives of the church not trying to become the state but offering prophetic criticism to the state—despite the potential consequences. The church is not the state, but it is the conscience of the state, and it is a conscience that cannot afford to become seared and silent.

The state is an instrument ordained by God. It is also governed by God. The church does not need to be the state, but it must remind the state of its God-given duty. The principal reason for the existence of any government is to maintain, sustain, and protect the sanctity of human life. When the state fails to do that, it has become demonized. And it is the sacred duty of the church and of every Christian to voice opposition to it.

The evangelical church's chief strategies to end abortion have been to put pressure on abortion clinics and on elected officials. There is nothing wrong with these strategies; however, one strategy that has not been used or adopted widely is that of protesting those churches that support the ghastly murder of unborn babies. It is time for Christians to give prophetic criticism to the church, specifically to those churches that support abortion on demand or remain silent on this major issue.

In my own city, one of the largest evangelical churches has publicly welcomed the woman in America who is the most visible and vocal supporter of partial-birth abortions. That's a scandal to the Christian community. It's a scandal to the cause of Jesus Christ. That church needs to be called to account.

It is time for churches that see the evil of abortion to stand up and be counted—no matter the risk or the cost. When the church is silent in the midst of a holocaust, she ceases to be a real church. Wherever human dignity is under attack, it is the duty of the church and of the Christian to rise up in protest against it. This is not a political matter, and neither is it a temporary matter. It is not a matter over which Christians may disagree. It is a matter of life and death, the results of which will count forever. ~ **Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.**

# Green Run Tidings

## *The Unjust Condemnation*

“Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; what do you think?’ They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death!’” ~ *Matthew 26:65-66*

**Like many through the centuries, members of the Sanhedrin rejected Jesus Christ without fairly judging all the evidence.**

Lynching is an activity we don’t hear much about today. But during earlier generations, the heinous crime occurred quite regularly. Innocent people, or those merely presumed guilty (prior to any trial), were tortured and killed, usually by angry, hateful mobs. Often the person lynched was a victim of racial or political prejudice or some other irrational fear held by the perpetrators.

The members of the Sanhedrin certainly held blind prejudices against Jesus. No amount of evidence would open their eyes to the truth of who He was. Those unbelieving leaders of Israel discounted Jesus’ claims to deity long before they placed Him on trial. He had even pleaded with them, “If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father” (John 10:37-38).

In the current passage the high priest Caiaphas reacts forcefully to Jesus’ agreement that He is God’s Son and the Messiah (see Matthew 26:64).

Caiaphas’s mind was made up; he was convinced that Jesus had blasphemed, and he was determined to rush forward with this “evidence” to condemn Jesus to death. Caiaphas and the Council could barely wait to render a verdict. The high priest asked for their opinion on Jesus’ guilt, and immediately the Council members asserted, “He is deserving of death!”

The irony of the Jewish leaders’ condemnation of Jesus was their blind insistence that He was a blasphemer when in reality they were the blasphemers for their rejection of the Lord and His message. Even more sobering is that every person who has ever finally rejected Christ is also guilty of blasphemy and will suffer the same fate as the chief priests and elders: “He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36). ~ *Dr. John MacArthur*

## *Enduring Trials in a Christ-like Manner*

The true Christian in the present day must never be surprised to find that they have constant trials to endure. Sinful human nature never changes. So long as they serve the world, and walk in the broad way, little perhaps will be said against them. Once let them take up the cross and follow Christ, and there is no lie too monstrous, and no story too absurd, for some to tell against them, and for others to believe. But let them take comfort in the thought that they are only drinking the cup which their blessed Master drank before them. The lies of their enemies do them no injury in heaven, whatever they may on earth. Let them bear them patiently, and not fret, or lose their temper. When Christ was reviled, “*He reviled not again*” (1 Peter 2:23). Let the Christian do likewise. ~ *J.C. Ryle*

# Green Run Tidings

## *An Explanation of Trials*

The path of the Christian is not always bright with sunshine; he has his seasons of darkness and of storm. It is true that God's Word says, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace";<sup>1</sup> and it is a great truth that faith is calculated to give a man happiness below as well as bliss above. But life confirms that if the experience of the righteous is "like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day,"<sup>2</sup> sometimes that light is eclipsed. At certain periods clouds cover the believer's sun, and he walks in darkness and sees no light.

There are many who have rejoiced in the presence of God for a season; they have basked in the sunshine in the early stages of their Christian life; they have walked along the "green pastures" by the side of the "still waters." But suddenly they find that the glorious sky is clouded; instead of the promised land they have to endure the wilderness; in place of sweet waters, they find troubled streams, bitter to their taste, and they say, "Surely, if I were a child of God, this would not happen." Do not say that if you are walking in darkness. The best of God's saints must drink the bitter potion; the dearest of His children must bear the cross. No Christian has enjoyed perpetual prosperity; no believer can always keep his heart in constant tune.

Perhaps the Lord gave you in the beginning a smooth and unclouded path because you were weak and timid. He moderated the wind on account of your weakness, but now that you are stronger in the spiritual life, you must enter upon the riper and rougher experience of God's full-grown children. We need winds and tempests to exercise our faith, to tear off the rotten branches of self-reliance, and to root us more firmly in Christ. The day of evil reveals to us the value of our glorious hope. ~ *C.H. Spurgeon* ~ <sup>1</sup>*Proverbs 3:17* <sup>2</sup>*Proverbs 4:18*

## *How do we determine which doctrines are more important and which are less important?*

The answer to that question depends on how closely related to the gospel a doctrine is and how much practical impact it has on the Christian life.

1. Doctrines like the Trinity, the full deity and humanity of Christ, justification by faith alone, and the authority of Scripture are all intimately bound up with the gospel. Without them, we either lose crucial aspects of the gospel or the gospel itself. Such doctrines are therefore of utmost importance. Disagreements here divide the church from the non-church.

2. Doctrines like the proper subjects of baptism and the biblical form of church government are less closely related to the gospel, and therefore less central to the faith. Still, such doctrines are not totally unrelated to the gospel. For example, baptism is a picture of the gospel and defines the membership of the church, the people of the gospel. Other theological issues, such as our understanding of the roles of men and women in marriage and the church, have huge practical implications and are therefore very important even though they are not directly related to the gospel. Disagreements here may divide one church from another, like the differences between a Baptist and a Presbyterian. But such differences need not hinder embracing one another as fellow Christians.

Some doctrines, such as the meaning of the thousand years in Revelation 20, are far removed from the gospel and have little practical impact on the Christian life. This is not to say that such doctrines are entirely without importance, but disagreements here can still allow for cooperation between Christians to the highest degree, namely, fellow membership within a local church. ~ *Mark Dever - Senior Pastor - Capital Hill Baptist Church - Washington, D.C.*

# Green Run Tidings

## *Receiving Christ's Wounds*

*Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me" (Matthew 5:10-11).*

Savonarola has been called the Burning Beacon of the Reformation. His sermons denouncing the sin and corruption of the Roman Catholic Church of his day helped pave the way for the Protestant Reformation. Many who heard his powerful sermons went away half-dazed, bewildered, and speechless. Often sobs of repentance resounded throughout the entire congregation as the Spirit of God moved in their hearts. However, some who heard him couldn't tolerate the truth and eventually had him burned at the stake.

Jesus said, "A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). Sinful people will not tolerate a righteous standard. Prior to Christ's birth, the world had never seen a perfect man. The more people observed Christ, the more their own sinfulness stood out in stark contrast. That led some to persecute and finally kill Him, apparently thinking that by eliminating the standard they wouldn't have to keep it.

Psalm 35:19 prophesies that people would hate Christ without just cause. That is true of Christians as well. People don't necessarily hate us personally but resent the holy standard we represent. They hate Christ, but He isn't here to receive their hatred, so they lash out at His people. For Savonarola that meant death. For you it might mean social alienation or other forms of persecution.

Whatever comes your way, remember that your present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory you will one day experience (Romans 8:18). Therefore, "to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing" (1 Peter 4:13). ~ **Dr. John MacArthur**

## *Conforming to the Image of Christ*

The obvious fact that we all sin can create an atmosphere of false security among us, leading us to accept with ease the idea that sin is so commonplace that we ought not to be too bothered by it lest we surrender our mental health to a self-deprecating neurosis. Yet in our desire to console ourselves and maintain a good self-image, we may push to the back burner the mandate of God, "Be you holy, even as I am holy."

Evangelical Christians are most vulnerable to succumbing to this distortion. We stress the fact that our justification is by faith alone and insist that our righteousness is found in Christ alone. Though these assertions are true, it is equally true that the faith by which we are justified is a faith that brings forth fruit in our lives. The slogan of the Reformation was that we are justified by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone.

The instant true faith is present in the heart of the believer, the process of sanctification begins. Change begins at once. The Christian begins to be conformed to the image of Christ. We are becoming holy. If we are not becoming holy, then Christ is not in us and our profession of faith is empty. ~ **Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.**

# Green Run Tidings

## *Trinidad Mission Trip*

The team is coming together. Please be in prayer for the following people who are working on being able to participate in this trip.

Jerrod Arnold (Faith Bible Church)  
Rebekah Crews  
Nancy Jones  
Carol Raymond  
Steve Watkins

Ken Bradby  
Scott Holley  
Theresa Jones  
Tiffany Rogers  
Alex Watkins

Rick Crews  
Lexis Holley  
Maureen Kimbrough  
Brian Tooley  
Abby Watkins

Coordinating the details of the trip is Ken Butler who will not be going with the team to Trinidad. Pray that the Lord will continue to lead him as he serves the team in this way.

## ***CALENDAR OF EVENTS***

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b><i>May 3-4</i></b>    | <b>Marriage Seminar - Jeremy Ruckstaetter</b>               |
| <b><i>May 5</i></b>      | <b>Trinidad Trip Training</b>                               |
| <b><i>May 12</i></b>     | <b>Baby Dedication</b>                                      |
| <b><i>June 16</i></b>    | <b>Father's Day Breakfast (No Bible Fellowship Classes)</b> |
| <b><i>June 16</i></b>    | <b>Balance due for Trinidad Trip</b>                        |
| <b><i>June 17-21</i></b> | <b>Vacation Bible School</b>                                |
| <b><i>June 30</i></b>    | <b>Trinidad Trip Meeting</b>                                |

## ***Ministerial Staff Assistant***

The congregation has approved the recommendation by the elders to begin the process of looking for a Family Life Pastor for Green Run Baptist Church. This ministry position will have responsibility over discipleship, children, students and adults. Please begin to pray for the deacons and elders as they review resumes. We will keep the congregation updated as the process moves along.

## ***Summer Intern***

Christine Scott from Charlotte, N.C. will serve at Green Run as a Children's Ministry intern over the summer. Please be in prayer for her as she prepares to come and be a part of our GRBC family.



# Green Run Tidings

GREEN RUN BAPTIST CHURCH - SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

## Anniversary and Birthday Celebrations for May 2013!

### *Anniversary*

Robert and Cynthia Beasley - 5/2  
Margaret and Willie Thomas - 5/23

### *Birthday*

Benita Padua - 5/6	Marla Miller - 5/19
Howard Mullen - 5/8	Janis Blimling - 5/20
Edith Miller - 5/11	Lea Baskerville - 5/24
Lula Sawyer - 5/14	Richard Lipscomb - 5/25
Barbara Franklin - 5/15	Abraham Edwards - 5/25
Sheleen Mathews - 5/16	Geneva Moyer - 5/26
Cynthia Beasley - 5/19	Rick Crews - 5/30

## *London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*

### *The Fellowship of the Saints - Chapter 27*

All saints are united to Jesus Christ their head by His Spirit and by faith. But this does not mean that they become one person with Him. Yet they have fellowship in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. Also, as they are united to one another in love, they enjoy fellowship in the gifts and graces one of another, and are under obligation to render such services, public and private, as promote their mutual well-being, in both spiritual and temporal matters.

By their profession of faith, saints are committed to the maintenance of a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God and in the performance of such other special services as promote their mutual well-being. They are also bound to relieve one another in their temporal concerns according to their various needs and abilities. According to the rule of the gospel, this type of fellowship, while it particularly applies to the family and church relationships of saints, is to be extended, as God gives opportunity, to the whole household of faith, that is to say, to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. At the same time, however, it must be understood that such a sharing one with another as saints, does not deprive any man of the title and proprietorship which he has in his own goods and possessions, nor does it infringe such title.



Green Run Baptist Church

The Green Run Tidings is a monthly publication of Green Run Baptist Church.

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Submit information to Walt Lawrence by the second Sunday of the month preceding publication by e-mail, in person or at the church office. The editor reserves the right to edit for content or space. May the Father be glorified in every word.