

Will Southern Baptists Set Down the Law in 2024

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Host: David Wheaton 00:08

Will Southern Baptists Set Down the Law in 2024? That is the topic we'll discuss today right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a nonprofit listener supported radio ministry. Thank you for your notes of encouragement, your financial support, and for lifting us up in prayer. Our website is TheChristianWorldview.org.

Before we get to the preview for today's topic, you've likely heard about the unprecedented news that came out of New York just a couple of days ago with the guilty verdict against former President Trump in New York. This reading from a story from Fox News. Former President Trump was found guilty on all counts in his historic and unprecedented criminal trial, making him the first former President of the United States to be convicted of a crime. Manhattan district attorney, Elvin Bragg, charged former President Trump with 34 counts of falsifying business records in the first degree. Trump pleaded not guilty to all counts. Each count carries a maximum prison sentence of four years. In total, Trump faces a maximum sentence of 136 years. Sentencing for the former President will be July 11, just four days before the start of the Republican National Convention, where he is expected to be formally nominated as the 2024 Republican presidential nominee.

That conviction does not bar Trump from running for President. Prosecutors needed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Trump falsified those records to conceal a \$130,000 payment to Stormy Daniels, a pornographic performer in the lead up to the 2016 election to silence her about an alleged affair with Trump in 2006. In other words, this caused election interference because the electorate wouldn't have known about this because it was hush money payment. Last couple paragraphs.

Moments after the verdict was delivered by the jury, the former President spoke to reporters in the hallway. "This was a disgrace," he said. "This was a rigged trial by a conflicted judge who was corrupt. The real verdict is going to be on November 5th by the people." He added, "We didn't do anything wrong. I'm a very innocent man. I'm fighting for our country. I'm fighting for our constitution. We don't have the same country anymore," Trump said, "We have a divided mess. We are a nation of decline, serious decline." Now, I'm not qualified to give expert analysis on legal matters, so I'll defer to legal minds who have a conservative worldview. I'll play audio of Judge Jeanine Pirro analysis of this in just a second. That really is the big problem here. Our justice system is so partisan now that the New York prosecutor, Alvin Bragg, ran his campaign for District Attorney

promising to go after Trump and was financially supported by leftist George Soros. Bragg put together an anti Trump judge and jury from an anti Trump district to create a show trial when in fact, this is nothing more than trying to eliminate Joe Biden's political opponent this November.

All the Democrats wanted here was a guilty verdict because now Trump is a "convicted felon." That's a powerful pejorative label during this campaign for most Americans who don't pay very close attention. After the last election, when many Christian and conservative Americans added up all the inconsistencies in the voting, none more obviously suspect than Joe Biden getting the most votes in US presidential history when he can't even draw a sizable campaign crowd, we are all but sure the elections in our Constitutional Republic are now suspect. But now we know that our justice system is suspect and fraudulent when the former President is tried and convicted in this way. Here's what Judge Jeanine Pirro had to say about this.

Audio Sound Bite: Judge Jeanine Pirro 04:18

I, as a former prosecutor and a judge who knows the state courts and knows the state law, I know that there was no basis to charge this alleged crime and to resurrect dead misdemeanors based upon non unanimous federal violations of the election law or of the tax law. You've got that, but there's also a gut punch to the criminal justice system in the United States. We've got the former President of the United States who can be taken down by a George Soros funded prosecutor on a crime that doesn't exist. We have a judge who wasn't picked out of the wheel or out of the drama as all of us judges are.

This is an anti-Trump judge, an anti-Trump prosecutor. We want to see politicians fight. We don't want to see what they do in third world countries. To have one side start indicting and jailing the other side. This is not American. This isn't what we do to our political enemies. This is what they do in kangaroo courts and third world countries. God help America after what I've seen in the last few weeks.

Host: David Wheaton 05:22

Now, if you turn the television over to CNN or MSNBC, they'd be talking about how just and how right this decision was. That's how partisan our media is, and how partisan our justice system has become. Taking this all together, the raid of Trump's home in Florida last year, and all the various legal battles he's going through, after the last four years of the Biden administration and all the wreckage they have committed on this country, horrific withdrawal from Afghanistan, rampant inflation, gross immorality, lying about COVID and the vaccine, reckless illegal immigration, wars around the world and the list goes on, even with all that, I have strong doubt that Donald Trump will be able to win this election.

The media, the deep state, the election system, and the justice system will make sure they get in the way to not allow him to win. After all, he stands in the way of their Marxist objectives. Trump is no

saint. But he pales in comparison to the evil that has captured power in our country. I'm just thankful the believers home is in heaven and our hope is in the Lord, because I have very little reason to be optimistic about the future of our country at this point. It pains me to say that. The Lord puts rulers in power. He raises and lowers nation's. He will do what He pleases. I believe we're under God's judgment, and He's put evil leaders like Biden over us to judge our nation. So Christians, we need to stand firm in the Lord. Because with these wicked people in power, things will likely get much more difficult, especially for Christians in this country.

Now to our topic of the day. Will Southern Baptists Set Down the 'Law Amendment' in 2024?

The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest Protestant denomination in North America with six seminaries, 47,000 churches, 13 million church members, and entities like the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, the ERLC, Lifeway Christian resources, the North American Mission Board, and more. Some of the most influential churches and pastors in America are part of the Southern Baptist Convention. SBC churches are expected to give to what's called the Cooperative Program, which uses the funds for all their various entities and endeavors. In 2023, the Cooperative Program budget was nearly \$200 million. Any organization this size with this much influence and funding is going to be a battlefield of agendas. The Southern Baptist Convention was once moving to the left theologically, but made a "conservative resurgence" in the 1980s. In recent years, certain elements of the SBC have become wobbly on issues related to social justice, Critical Race Theory, female pastors and more.

At stake in this year's upcoming Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, June 9th to the 12th in Indianapolis is a proposed amendment to their constitution called the "Law Amendment" named after Mike Law, the Virginia pastor who submitted it, that SBC cooperating churches do not "affirm, appoint or employ a woman as a pastor of any kind." Many SBC churches currently do employ female pastors in clear violation of God's Word that only men of high character be pastors and elders. We'll read those passages in just a moment. Tom Ascol, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida, and President of Founders Ministries joins us for the fifth year running to discuss issues within the Southern Baptist Convention that have impact across broader Christianity. Before we get to the interview with him, those passages I was referring to with regard to male only pastors come from 1 Timothy 2 and 3 and Titus 1. 1 Timothy 2:11,

"A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self restraint."

In 1 Timothy 3 Paul writes, *"It is a trustworthy statement if any man aspires to the office of overseer, [or pastor elder] it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money."* Notice all the male pronouns? *"He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the Church of God?)"*

For the sake of time, I won't read Titus chapter 1. You can read it for yourself. But Paul says basically the same thing as he does in 1 Timothy 3. So with some context, let's get to the interview with Pastor Tom Ascol of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida as we talk about the Southern Baptist Convention and will they pass the "Law Amendment" and have male only pastors within their denomination?

Tom, thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. I look back on our past programs of when you were on the program. It turns out you've been on the program every year since 2020, talking about what is going on within the Southern Baptist Convention. There's been lots of different issues that you've encountered there over the years. So as we approach the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, which takes place in Indianapolis this year on June 9th through the 12th, why is this an important issue to discuss what takes place within the Southern Baptist Convention, even for those who are listening, who are nondenominational evangelicals, maybe reformed Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, anyone else?

Guest: Tom Ascol 11:59

It does matter because it is what you said, the largest Protestant denomination in North America. A rising tide lifts all ships, and a lowering tide can draw down all ships, too. So what happens, the SBC has ramifications way beyond the SBC. I forget the exact stats now, they've shifted some in the last couple of years, but there was a time when Southern Baptist seminaries were training about a third of all evangelical candidates for pastoral ministry in the United States. We have the largest missionary sending force that's available in North America by far. We have a presence in Washington, DC lobbying arm. We have a massive church planting network, and a disaster relief ministry that the Red Cross has acknowledged is as good if not better than anything else that exists.

I'm down here in hurricane territory and I can tell you that the Southern Baptist Convention disaster relief is here before the Red Cross gets here and they stay after the Red Cross has left. It's just brilliant. Those things are all good and they benefit society way beyond the SBC. They benefit other ministries and churches as well. So a healthy SBC is good for the testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ and all evangelical ministries in the United States and an unhealthy SBC drags down that testimony, that witness. So it does matter and it's worth fighting for to try to make it as healthy as possible for all of those reasons.

Host: David Wheaton 13:46

Tom Ascol with us today, here on The Christian Worldview, the senior pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida. We're going to focus mainly on the issue of female pastors today in light of the amendment that Mike Law, a pastor from Virginia has proposed about further clarifying the Southern Baptist Convention constitution regarding male only pastors. Before we get to that, give us a quick update, Tom, on some of the issues we've discussed in the past about the Southern Baptist Convention with regard to the push for social justice as a gospel issue, and the use of Critical Race Theory, the resolution that was put forward, I think it was in 2019, about using CRT as an analytical tool, and also the ongoing investigations over sexual abuse and cover up within the Southern Baptist Convention. What is the status of these things that we've discussed in past years?

Guest: Tom Ascol 14:44

What happened is finally Southern Baptist pastors got educated. It was the 2019 convention that you're referring to a resolution that was passed. Now the resolution couldn't have any binding authority, fortunately, but the chairman of that committee was a professor at Southern Seminary at that time, and he made the statement that this is a gospel issue and these are helpful analytical tools. That professor doesn't teach at Southern anymore. The next year, depending on who you talk to, he was either released or resigned. But there are still people, even at Southern and Southeastern seminary, especially, who had been proponents of various aspects of Critical Race Theory and intersectionality. So they've gone quiet.

You couldn't pass that resolution today, I've had a couple of different Southern Baptist leaders tell me that if that resolution was submitted today, that there's enough awareness now to stand against it. I believe that's very true. I think that's an accurate assessment, but that doesn't mean the problems have gone away. It just means they're not as bold. One of the men who was on that committee that proposed that resolution said to an associate of mine, the four founders started talking about Critical Race Theory being produced By What Standard Documentary, that everybody at Southern Seminary was a pro CRT, but that afterwards, nobody was and they threw him under the bus.

Again, I don't know how true that is, but that was his assessment as being someone who was in the very thick of it promoting it. So praise God that those lights have come on more brightly. The ChurchToo/MeToo Movement, it's just been revealed, that the SBC spent like \$14, \$15 million since 2021 I guess. Nothing's been done. It's just a sad commentary. I don't know if one victim of any kind of sexual abuse issue that has been helped by that \$14 to \$15 million. Now the awareness has been heightened. Churches need to be on guard and need to train their people to watch out for folks that would come in to groom and other things like that.

But it's just sad to me, because the people who have been banging the drum, saying, Oh, we've got an epidemic, or a pandemic, or this is a holocaust; it's just not true. It has never been true. Whenever you compare statistically, if you do an honest statistical analysis of all Southern Baptist churches and church members and volunteers and leaders, and compare it to the national average, it's way below the national average, the incidences that have been made known, even the accusations, compared to the national average, just in general. If you compare it to the public school system, it is multiple times better than that sad scenario. So there's been a lot of bad actors that have driven these things. It's unfortunate.

I don't know if Southern Baptists will wake up and finally say enough is enough and stop all that or not. There's been some proposals made that are just a bridge too far. Because we're independent churches, we're autonomous churches, and we're not a top down Roman Catholic or United Methodist denominational structure, there are people who would love to make it that way so that all churches have to pay for what anything that might happen in any church. And that's just ludicrous, Baptists are never going to lay down for that.

Host: David Wheaton 18:15

Thank you for giving an update on some of these issues we've discussed over the years. It's good to know that they haven't taken further route. But as you mentioned, there are still people who are proponents of these things. In any big organization, there's going to be a lot of different dynamics and their rope being pulled in different directions. But it's good to hear that it hasn't gotten more traction, at least from a standpoint of being set down into the law of the land within the SBC.

He wrote, "I write concerning my motion to amend the SBC constitution to include an enumerated sixth item under article three, paragraph one. The enumerated sixth item would read; Does not affirm, appoint or employ a woman as a pastor of any kind." He goes on. There's a much longer letter. We have it linked at our website, [The ChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org). He had seen so many Southern Baptist churches in his area near where he pastors, that have women as pastors and he said, "This is not biblical. This is not right." So he wanted to put this amendment forward.

Now, I looked up the Baptist Faith and Message under the church and it said, It's two scriptural offices for the church, are that of pastor/elder/overseer. In other words, those are considered the same office, pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. Not the same office, but the two scriptural offices they see are pastor/elder/overseer, number one, and deacon. Well, both men and women are gifted for service in the church it says. The Office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture. That's what the Baptist faith and message says right now. Why does that need further clarification or a further amendment to it? And does it actually disfellowship Southern Baptist Convention churches, if they don't adhere to that, if they do have female pastors?

Guest: Tom Ascol 23:28

I need to clarify a little bit here. The Baptist Faith and Message is the doctrinal statement of the Southern Baptist Convention. So churches have to be largely in substantive agreement with that. You don't have to adopt that confession, but you have to be able to say, yes, that generally is what we believe. The Constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention, which we've had since 1845, is what is being proposed to be amended. In order to amend the Constitution, the amendment would have to be voted on in two successive years by a two thirds majority.

So Mike's proposal came up actually three years ago. It was referred to the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, which is a standing committee. They didn't even want to bring it to the convention last year to vote on, but they were basically shamed in doing so because so many pastors like myself, called out to them. We've got to be given the opportunity to vote on this, of course we must vote on this. So finally, they brought it out, and to my mind, I'm subject to being corrected on this, but I cannot find one example, in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention where the Executive Committee has brought forward a motion, in this case, a motion to amend, while at the same time saying, We think you ought to vote this down.

Anytime they brought something it's always been, Yes, we think you ought to approve this. But they brought this motion forward saying, we're not for it, we're against it. So that's the leadership of the SBC, the convention ad interim. The executive committee makes decisions there in the year when we're not meeting in our annual meeting, and the Southern Baptist Convention messengers last year in New Orleans, overwhelmingly voted for this law amendment, and did so by many estimates, at least 80% of the messengers voting for it. It needs two thirds to approve it two years in a row, so it's been approved one year. Now we're coming to the second year, which again, I can't think of a situation where we've made a motion to amend that has not passed in two successive years. But the leadership of the SBC who I think was caught off guard last year by the overwhelming positive vote, they have come out in force against this law amendment.

We always hear this rhetoric from the President- Barber this year, and others in the SBC that we want to do the will of the messengers, we want to do the will of the messengers. Well, the will of the messengers was overwhelmingly clear last year. 80% of the messengers said, We want this amendment. And now then, it's like a who's who of SBC leadership that has come out in opposition of the amendment saying, No, we can't do this. One executive committee member said, Let's just call this what it is. It's a war on women. Others said this will ruin our autonomy, this will make us a top down denomination. Those aren't even credible statements. Those are juvenile statements to make.

It's hard to believe that any thinking, understanding baptist, much less baptist leader, to try to convince people that those are credible statements. There are some arguments against the law amendment and concern about how this will be administrated. Do we have the mechanisms in place to actually do this? Well, we do have them in place. They haven't been utilized too much, but all this

is doing is adding to the Article Three of the SBC constitution about what does it mean to be in friendly cooperation? What does the church have to do? You must have a faith and practice that identifies with the statement of faith-Baptist faith and message closely identifies with it. You have to agree to cooperate with the SBC. You don't act in a manner that's inconsistent with beliefs of the SBC regarding sex abuse, that's one, and you don't endorse any kind of discriminatory behavior on the basis of ethnicity. That is another. And then what's being proposed is an additional qualification that Mike came up with.

Mike's original is quite better than the substitute amendment that we now are acting on. You read the original. It does not affirm women in any capacity as pastors. The substitute motion that was received as a friendly substitute last year, and so now this is what we adopted, is that the church affirms, appoints, or employs only men as any kind of pastor or elder, as qualified by Scripture. It's straightforward. It's simple. It agrees with what you read from the Baptist Faith and Message. We shouldn't even need this. If we had people with integrity leading churches, they would acknowledge, yes, okay, we believe in women pastors, so we're not going to participate in the SBC, or we can't be in friendly cooperation.

What's happened, is over the last 20, 30 years, however long, these churches have started appointing women in pastoral roles and then started calling them pastors, like Rick Warren did two years ago, very loudly ordained women as pastors, and the Convention voted his church out last year. And they're saying, but we're Southern Baptists, we're autonomous and we cooperated in the mission, we want to be a part. Well, you can't be a part if you're not in friendly cooperation with what our confession of faith says.

So this amendment is necessary, because it's estimated that we have as many as 2000 churches or well over 1000 churches that have women pastors in some capacity serving on their pastoral staff. It shouldn't be that way. Because it is that way, we need a mechanism that is unequivocal, that enables us to say, You know what, if you're going to keep women pastors, you cannot keep your membership in the SBC. That's what this amendment will do. And yet we've got all kinds of SBC leaders that are just lining up telling horror stories of what will happen if this amendment is ratified this year. It's just grievous to me to see it happen like that.

Host: David Wheaton 29:44

Tom Ascol is our guest today here on The Christian Worldview. We are discussing this new "Law Amendment" being considered this year at the Southern Baptist Convention. It's really on a big issue of female pastors. I often go to the website gotquestions.org to get a little background on any given subject, and you see the number one question of all the hundreds of 1000s of questions that website receives about things related to the Bible and so forth is, Can women be pastors of churches? The number one issue. You just wonder what is behind that particular issue that it is so compelling? The Bible is so clear, as I read earlier in the program, about the fact that it's men that

should be pastors in churches and not women. Now, speaking of leaders within the SBC, a really well known leader is J. D. Greear. He's the pastor of Summit church in North Carolina. He did an interview recently, I think it was the Baptist Press. I'd like to play the audio of what he said about this "Law Amendment," that he is not in favor of this being put into the constitution of the Southern Baptists. Let me play this and then let you comment on what he has to say, here's J. D. Greear.

Audio Sound Bite: J. D. Greear 30:59

I have no theological disagreement, even with the proposers of this amendment or those that are supporting it. I believe, and I think the majority of Baptists believe that there are two offices that are given in the current New Testament Church. One is that of pastor/elder/overseer/bishop, whatever word you want to use there. That's all one office. Then the only second office is the Office of Deacon. I do believe that the role of pastor/elder/overseer is reserved for men, as explained by 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Timothy 3. I think that is very clear. I think the case for pastor/elder/overseer all being the same office, I think that is very clear in 1 Peter 5 and other places. I don't have any theological disagreement with it. What I have is a constitutional concern. I think generally, when it comes to how Southern Baptists have approached doctrine, we all recognize that we need to be united on those core doctrines.

At the same time, we try to allow latitude in some of the applications of those doctrines. One of the approaches the way one of my seminary professors said it is, Southern Baptists historically have affirmed the center rather than really tightly policed the borders when it came to some of the secondary things. So I actually believe, I would be very much in support of affirming that our Baptist faith and message, what it means is it means that pastors and elder overseer that's one office and deacon is the other office and that we believe only men should be in that form. I'm all for affirming that. That is affirming the center and I believe what you would find is, is you would find that trend amongst Southern Baptists, which is already overwhelmingly in the direction of seeing it as one office. I think people find that strengthen rather than constitutionally policing the borders in a way that creates a structure for fellowship that I'm just not sure it's consistent with how we have operated, how we've operated as Southern Baptists in the past,

Host: David Wheaton 32:55

That was J. D. Greear, Tom, and he's not in favor of this amendment. But I think what he just said there was that he affirms what Scripture says about male only pastors and that should be a core belief of the Southern Baptist Convention.

But he's not in favor of sort of enforcing that with cooperating churches. So I think he was intimating that this is not a primary issue. This is a secondary or tertiary issue. But what is he saying there? And what is your response to that?

Guest: Tom Ascol 33:26

Well, he is saying that, yes, this is what the Bible says. This is what I believe. I think we ought to affirm this. This is what our confession of faith says. But we shouldn't make this a constitutional issue, which I think is equivocation, quite honestly. Because if it's what the Bible says, if it's what our confession teaches, what in the world does it mean then that if for a church to be in friendly cooperation, you must closely identify with the conventions adopted statement of faith? Which is exactly what Article Three of the Constitution says.

I think this is equivocation. I think it's a play, quite honestly, to try to allow egalitarianism to take further route in the SBC, because J. D. would never say that about these other things that have been added over the last 10 years. Does he believe that proving or endorsing discriminatory behavior on the basis of ethnicity is a secondary tertiary issue? Well, I think he could probably say that yes, a guy could be a bigot and be a Christian and go to heaven. Okay, well, then why don't we allow bigots? Why don't we let those who are racists stay in the convention? Yet we have kicked churches out of the convention, we disfellowship them because they wouldn't allow certain ethnicities to be members of their churches, and that's the right thing.

I'm happy to be a part of the convention that does that. But to say, oh, yes, we believe the Bible teaches only men, qualified men, can be pastors. And yet if you have women pastors, you can also be a part? That's nonsensical. It's frustrating to me because that's the kind of pandering that we see coming from many of our leaders talking out of both sides of their mouths confusing the issue. But they didn't make these kinds of objections. They didn't raise these concerns whenever we were voting to do the exact same thing to the Constitution to insert that a church cannot endorse discriminatory behavior on ethnicity. A church cannot engage in covering up sexual abuse, that if you do that, you can't be in friendly cooperation. Where were those arguments? Wherever those arguments back then? Well, we know what the answer is. Oh, no, those are very socially acceptable matters to take a firm stand on.

Women in ministry? We have one of our executive committee members saying, Well, this is just a war on women. And the feminist movement has been so effective for so long, it has permeated every area of our society, that it is all throughout many of our churches as well and organizations and I think you're seeing guys who are afraid of it, and kowtow to it. I don't know any other way to read it.

Host: David Wheaton 36:01

I want to play one more audio clip from that interview with J.D. Greear, because I think he takes it a bit of a step further here, almost using the argument you did. So why don't we apply this to issues like predestination? If everyone isn't the same on election, let's say. Calvinism, should we be allowing to be fellowshiping with them? I'll play the soundbite. It's about two minutes long and you can answer again.

Audio Sound Bite: J. D. Greear 39:36

The Twitter handle, the website, SBCEAmendment.org, put out a tweet recently that just said something like, We dare not compromise a single word. In fact, that was the response that they gave to some of us that we're raising the question of, Is the constitution putting it in there that mandates disfellowship? Is that the place that we ought to do this? The response was, We must. We dare not compromise a single word of God's Word. Here's why I have a major problem with putting that kind of language around the aspects of this discussion. I would say it's the fundamental problem that I see behind the amendment.

The logic of that tweet that if we don't pass this amendment, that we're compromising the Word of God, supposes that allowing any divergence in how churches interpret and apply scripture is compromising the Word of God. And see, the problem with that is Southern Baptists have a long history of agreeing on primary and secondary things, even as they allow freedom in tertiary things or how we apply things even when we believe that those tertiary things or our applications, we believe that they have biblical warrant. For example, some Southern Baptists passionately believe that the Bible teaches predestination, limited atonement and irresistible grace. They believe that for biblical reasons. Other Southern Baptists passionately believe the Bible does not teach those things.

Well, the logic of this tweet insists that each side, by allowing the other to coexist in our convention is compromising the Word of God. We believe what we believe for biblical reasons. But that doesn't mean that coming together with a basis for unity that allows some divergence of how things are applied means that you're compromising the Word of God.

The question is absolute conformity in all biblical convictions, both great and small, is that what's required for fellowship, lest we compromise the Word of God? That is not in my opinion, I think historically, that is not biblical faithfulness, that is fundamentalism run amok. And I believe that will undo the Southern Baptist genius of cooperation that has led to our mission vitality. I mean, we're not just talking about this issue. We're talking about what's the next issue. About which we're gonna say, Okay, here's my tertiary application of that, and I haven't heard biblical reasons. Now I'm gonna declare everybody that's not in agreement with me outside of God's Word and say that for me to even not have this as a test for fellowship as compromising the Word of God. That is not how Southern Baptists have operated, and it's not what has led to our mission, mission vitality over the years.

Host: David Wheaton 42:16

Again, that was J.D. Greear. Tom Ascol is with us today on The Christian Worldview. What is your response to his line of reasoning that if you take this issue on, female pastors, and you give the application that you believe is the right one from Scripture, well, shouldn't you apply that to the

other doctrinal issues where Christians have good standing so to speak, and have different interpretations and different applications of it?

Guest: Tom Ascol 42:38

First of all, I think his argument is disingenuous, because as you read from the Baptist faith and message statement that we all acknowledge, which he himself says he believes, it doesn't say whether you have to believe in predestination or limited atonement. It does unequivocally say that the only two offices in a New Testament Church are those of pastor and deacon and the elder pastor bishop office is to be filled only by qualified men. So it's a confusion of issues here.

I hate the fact that this kind of duplicity is being used in arguments on this issue. It's like these folks who say, I'm a complementarian, but I'm an inerrantist. I want you to call me an inerrantist, but I believe the Bible has some errors in it. Or, I'm a complementarian, but I think it's okay for women to be pastors. That's what they're asking us to believe.

I'm a Cessationist, but I believe in tongues and that there's prophetic visions being given to people every day. Well you can't have it both ways. That's equivocation. Let your yes be yes. Your no, be no. J.D. has told us that he believes, and I think he meant his word, that only qualified men can be pastors. He's told us that's what the Baptist faith and message says. Okay. Well, then why in the world would we hesitate to say that churches that disagree with that shouldn't be recognized as in friendly cooperation with this association of churches known as the SBC? We're not talking about Calvinism. We're not talking about particular redemption. We're talking about what we have agreed to surround ourselves around in terms of doctrinal commitments. And it's not a an exhaustive doctrinal statement, obviously, but it is one that has borders.

So this is where we disagree with his earlier statement. Confessions of faith have always been about protecting the borders, their borders. You can't believe anything and be a Baptist. You can't believe anything and practice anything and be a Southern Baptist. We have mailed our colors to the mast and said, This is who we are. This is what we believe. If you want to join with us on these terms, you're welcome. But don't come join with us and say, Yes, well, but we want to have women pastors, or we want to practice racial discrimination, or we want to cover up sex abuse. That's not who we are. You can go do what you believe God would have you to do, but I think all those things are reprehensible.

But you can't do that as a Southern Baptist. We're not infringing on the autonomy of anybody's church. Your church before Jesus can believe and do what you think Jesus would have you do, but this is what we have all collectively agreed Jesus would have us believe and do and we've said it without equivocation. So now then, the people that are trying to unravel it, are simply being disingenuous.

Host: David Wheaton 45:30

There's a lot of confusion. So much is being written in the podcasts and videos. Even preparing for this program, this interview, there's so much content out there to sift through. In some ways that makes it even harder to understand. Really what's at stake is that there are many within the Southern Baptist Convention that do not want to hold to the biblical view of male only pastor's. Tom Ascol is with us today. What happens if the law amendment doesn't pass? What does this do to the Southern Baptist Convention?

Guest: Tom Ascol 46:01

We have had an exodus, a significant exodus of churches over the last three years because of frustration with these agendas that are pulling this leftwards. I've got friends, a lot of friends, who contact me and say, Sorry, we can't take it anymore, we're gone. And I get it. I don't try to talk them out of it. After this convention, one way or the other, the SBC is going to be smaller, because if the Law Amendment passes, and you're going to have all the egalitarians and all those who really believe the kind of scare tactics that have been sounded forth the last few months, many of those will leave, some of them have announced that they're going to leave. If they need to do that to honor Jesus, God bless them, let them go. Or, if it fails, you're going to have people who are frustrated, who say, Well, there we go again.

These leaders who we pay their salaries, have steered the convention in a further leftward direction. The effort we made last year has been thwarted because of all kinds of tactics that they've employed here at the last hour. I think many of them will leave. There will be others, however, that recognize, okay, this is a long game. The Southern Baptist Convention has 47,000+ churches, 13 million+ members. If we get 12,000 to 15,000 messengers show up at a convention, it's considered to be a good turnout. What we need to do is get 20% of our churches to send two or three messengers each. There's no way I will believe right now that the majority of our churches want to have women pastors. I simply refuse to believe that knowing Southern Baptists the way I do.

But we must awaken and get them showing up and voting. Until we show up and get in the room and vote, this isn't going to change. I'm hoping this year will be that because we will elect a new President, which is a good opportunity for us to get a conservative man in. Two of the six candidates of seven candidates I know are solid rock ribbed conservatives, and if one of those gets elected, that'd be a good thing. Regardless, after Indianapolis, this year's annual meeting, the SBC will be smaller because good churches will leave if the amendment passes, and some churches that want to be more egalitarian will leave if the amendment passes. If it doesn't pass good churches will leave. If it does pass, these other churches will leave.

Host: David Wheaton 48:18

Who are the two contenders that you really like, strongly biblical candidates, for the SBC president this year?

Guest: Tom Ascol 48:26

The two rock ribbed conservatives candidates are David Allen and Jared Moore. David is a theology professor. He teaches preaching at Mid America Baptist Theological Seminary. He taught at Southwestern seminary for years, and he's been a pastor. That's a good thing. Jared Moore is a pastor and is more of a typical Southern Baptist pastor. He pastors a regular sized church in Tennessee, who has been plodding away faithfully, like most Southern Baptist pastors do. Both of those men understand the issues. Both of them will make good appointments. Both of them will not stand for the nonsense that has been taking place in some of the upper echelons of the SBC the last many years. So either one of those men, I would be happy to follow and would be delighted if God were to put one of them in the office of President of the SBC.

Host: David Wheaton 49:15

Pastor Tom Askol from Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida is with us today. Final question for you, Tom. For people listening today who aren't Southern Baptists, who are just listening to this issue and it sounds like inside baseball within a denomination, in some ways it is, but the bigger issue here is a biblical issue of what has God said in His Word about who should be pastors. Female pastors, from the way I understand the Bible to teach and what you understand the Bible teach is a clear rejection of what God has clearly stated in his Word, as we read earlier.

But experience says that if you go down that route, you look at other denominations and churches who have, it's a slippery slope to more compromise. Some people will say, Well, that's not really truly the case. Not with everyone. Some charismatic churches, for instance, they still get the gospel right, they don't get into homosexuality and homosexual ministers and so forth. How would you answer the question that if you crossed this line, this rubicon to female pastors, it's a slippery slope to all kinds of other compromise?

Guest: Tom Ascol 50:16

It's a hermeneutical issue. So whatever hermeneutical principles that you come up with to justify going against the clear teaching of Scripture about only qualified men can be pastors, those same principles will serve you to justify having homosexual pastors and transgendered pastors. It's the same hermeneutical principle. If you're not going to take God's Word literally, seriously, then you're opening up a can of worms to basically justify any kind of view that you want it to. It's not that you're doing it legitimately, it's just that you figured out a way to approach the interpretation of Scripture that violates it's simple, concise, clear, meaning.

Again, we have lots of evidence historically. Look at the PCUSA and where it was in the early 20th century versus where it is today. Look at what's most recently happened with United Methodist Church. My goodness, if you want a cautionary tale, just study them for the last 30 years and you'll see that yes, this is the trajectory. Denominations, institutions never drift right. They always drift left.

If they're going to be recovered, they're going to have to be jerked back to the right and that's what the SBC needs right now.

Host: David Wheaton 51:31

Tom, we so appreciate your faithfulness to the church, faithfulness to Scripture. Thank you so much for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. I know we and our listeners will be praying that the right decision, the right vote is made in favor of God's Word for the Southern Baptist Convention because it does have impact even beyond the Southern Baptist world. Thank you so much for coming on The Christian Worldview today.

Guest: Tom Ascol 51:54

David, thank you so much for having me on.

Host: David Wheaton 51:55

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview. We'd be grateful if you would consider supporting this nonprofit radio ministry. It makes it possible for us to stay on the air. We just had to make the hard decision to pull the program on four of the stations we launched on 18 months ago in Denver, Phoenix, Washington DC and Atlanta. We didn't receive enough listener support from these 14 stations to keep up with our weekly cost of airtime. It underscores how important it is that if you benefit from The Christian Worldview, that you consider a donation or becoming a Christian Worldview Partner. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or get in touch with us. Our information is given immediately following today's program. Let's remember Jesus words. You must be born again by repenting and believing the Gospel and once saved, Think biblically, Live accordingly, and Stand firm!

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript or find out "What must I do to be saved?" Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, become a Christian Worldview Partner, order resources, subscribe to our free newsletter or contact us, visit TheChristianWorldview.org, call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.

Featured Resource: Indoctrinating Our Children to Death 51:57

Christians with discernment know that the US public education system is humanistic to the core. That is because subversives have successfully removed from government schools, the most important

subject to understand truth and reality God, while Americans were once educated at home or privately in an explicitly Christian way, today, government schools are radically anti Christian propagandizing children with evolution, graphic sexual content, gender confusion, and globalism.

Alex Newman's book, *Indoctrinating Our Children To Death* is our new featured resource is softcover. 276 pages and retails for \$17.99. You can order the book for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to the Christianworldview.org Call toll free one triple 8646 2233 Or write to box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

UPCOMING TCW EVENTS:

The Overcomer Course, June 21-22, 2024 at Stone House Farm

The Overcomer Course for young adults is now just five weeks away on Friday and Saturday, June 21st and 22nd. There are about a dozen spots remaining. Even if you're not from our area in Minnesota or the upper Midwest, if you are an 18 to 28 year old or know of someone that age, we would invite you and encourage you to come to Minnesota.

It's easy to fly into Minneapolis/St. Paul airport. Stone House Farm, where the course is being held, is located about 45 minutes from the airport. There's inexpensive lodging nearby. You can arrive Thursday evening, the course is on Friday and Saturday. We'd love to have you come to church with us on Sunday and you could fly back home Sunday afternoon. This is an in person only course. It won't be streaming online.

The purpose of this course is to help young adults gain clarity and conviction on God's plan and their purpose in it. So for instance, on the first day, in the morning:

Session 1: Believing God and the Gospel is the Gateway to Being an Overcomer. That's a very important session to kick things off because it sets up for all the rest of the sessions.

Session 2: Handling God's Word Accurately is the bBasis for Wise Thinking and Living.

Session 3: Understanding God's Plan and Purpose Brings Stability, Joy, and Hope. That's understanding God's meta narrative of history.

Session 4: Pursuing God's Means to Grow in the Faith and Share it with Others. That's about sanctification and discipleship. The second day we have sessions on Embracing God's Design on Gender, Sexuality, Singleness, and marriage. Stewarding God's Design for Time, Work and Money. Engaging God's Design in the Local Church and Employing God's Weapons to Overcome the World.

This is something we are very much looking forward to and are excited about the potential for impact in our lives and those who come to the course. Again, only about 12 spots remaining. So if you know an 18 to 28 year old during that highly transitional time in life, or perhaps just mention the course to your pastor at your church, maybe they know of some young adults who would be benefited by coming to this course. So if you need more information, go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org/overcomercourse, or give us a call toll free 1-888- 646-2233.

This Course is already 70% full and it's pretty evenly divided between men and women. We're talking young adults 18 to 25, 26, 27. In that age range during that highly transitional time of life. By the way, you can come from out of state and we'd encourage you to do so. This is a beautiful time of year in Minnesota. There's lots to do in the area. Hope you consider that and spread the word about the Overcomer Course June 21 and 22. Learn more and register at the Christianworldview.org Or by calling one triple 8646 2233

The Overcomer Foundation Cup:

September 16, 2024 at Hazeltine National Hazeltine National Golf Club Also. Registration is now open for the Overcomer Foundation Cup, our annual golf event in September. This year it's going to be at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minnesota.

If you need more information, go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org/overcomercourse, or give us a call toll free 1-888- 646-2233.