

# Zinn: Catch vision for Great Commission

June 14, 2007

Posted: 6/14/07

## Zinn: Catch vision for Great Commission

**By Bill Webb**

*Word & Way*

SAN ANTONIO—California Pastor Rob Zinn bemoaned Southern Baptist baptism statistics and challenged messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting to catch a vision for winning people to Christ.

In the annual convention sermon, Zinn, senior pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Highland, Calif., charged that believers have fallen short of the demands of the Great Commission, and many churches deliberately have chosen not to grow.

“God’s never given us the right to vote down what he has called us to do,” Zinn said. “Our commission is to go. There is nothing in the Bible that says you should stay within the four walls (of the church) and the community will come.”

He told messengers that the most recent annual baptism total among Southern Baptists was 364,826 — fewer than the year before, despite a challenge for Southern Baptist churches to baptize 1 million people in a year.

“We’re in desperate need of revival,” he said. “We’re in desperate need of the Holy Spirit filling us, our churches and our convention so we will be what we need to be.”

Southern Baptists biggest barrier to winning people to Christ may be their attitude, Zinn said. “Why are we baptizing less people? The answer is, ‘Our attitudes stink.’”

He suggested churches in the 21st century must learn four attitudes prevalent in the first century church.

“First, we’re going to have to take the Great Commission seriously,” he said. God took the Great Commission seriously; the devil takes the Great Commission seriously.

“Our problem is our attitude toward the word of God. When it takes 45 Southern Baptists a full year to baptize one person, we’re not serious about it.

Second, Christians must take the Great Commission personally, Zinn said. It is not enough to give money so that people far away can come to Christ. Believers must be active personally in evangelizing their own communities.

“Too many pastors do all their evangelism on Sunday morning,” he charged. “We need to make evangelism a lifestyle. Pastor, you’re going to have to get in your car” and go to visit people, he said.

Third, Christians must approach the task of evangelism enthusiastically, Zinn said.

“God said he would go with you and will empower you,” he said, using the Holy Spirit to spark enthusiasm by providing a vision for the task and an attitude of love toward others.

Finally, the believer must approach his task prayerfully, he said. In the

early church, “it was prayer that turned fear to boldness. Prayer is where the power comes from.”

Prayer is necessary to winning the spiritually lost to Christ, Zinn stressed.

Zinn called for churches to be flexible in their methodology if they are going to effectively reach out to the younger generation. “We’ve got to be willing to sing some of their music if we’re going to keep them in our churches.

“My heart is bursting for a generation of people that is lost and dying and going to hell,” Zinn said. “It’s not about you; it’s about (Christ)..., and he loved them all. Let’s get them.”

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention ( SBC ) and around the world.