

Christians need to share the full spectrum of salvation, pastor says

November 20, 2009

HOUSTON—Baptists long have demonstrated expertise at telling the story of salvation. “It’s what we do,” said Duane Brooks, pastor of [Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston](#). But Baptists often share an incomplete story.

“The nature of salvation is much richer and broader than the subject of conversion,” he said.

Brooks led a workshop during the 2009 Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting in Houston. His conclusions stem from months of preparation for his upcoming book, titled *This Magnificent Salvation: What Salvation Means in a World Like This*, scheduled to be released in early 2010 by BaptistWay Press.

Duane Brooks

Often, Baptists describe salvation only in terms of the forgiveness received from God through Jesus Christ, Brooks observed. While this is an important aspect of salvation, it is only one aspect, he said.

“If we preach salvation mainly as forgiveness, we are only showing one color of the rainbow,” he said.

Brooks went on to describe the entire spectrum of salvation—realization of the need for a Savior, God’s provision for that Savior, and acceptance of the Savior through conversion. Beyond that, the person experiences regeneration into a new person, sanctification to become more like Christ, new community relationships through the church, the charge to share their

experience with others, the assurance of a final destiny with God and the realization of the hope of eternal life.

At least four basic elements are part of the transformation that happens when a person receives God's gift of salvation—regeneration, justification, adoption and reconciliation, he said.

Regeneration, Brooks noted, is described as a wind in the New Testament, especially in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus in the Gospel of John. While many in the Southwest and along the Gulf Coast understand wind as a destructive force, Jesus uses this example as a life-giving force, the force that brings the dead to life.

The individual experiencing salvation, then, experiences a wind of change that blows away the old and gives new life, just as God brought the dead bones to life in Ezekiel, Brooks said.

"Salvation is nothing less than life," he said.

Justification involves the process whereby the individual is put in right standing with God. However, Brooks suggested, Baptists often see justification too narrowly.

"God not only counts us right," he said, pointing to the work of British theologian N.T. Wright, "but he also makes us right."

Through justification, God begins to use those he is making "right" to make his world "right." He creates "agents of transformation," Brooks claimed, "to help make all of heaven break loose on earth."

A third aspect of the process of transformation is adoption.

"One of the greatest things that I get to do as a pastor is see couples go through the process of adoption," Brooks stated. A child not born of blood becomes a part of the family out of love, providing the child with parents,

he noted.

Brooks connected this with the salvation experience, as believers have a new spirit in them that cries out to God as “Abba, Father,” an endearing, loving term signifying a new relationship with God.

The final experience comes through reconciliation. Reconciliation has nothing to do with God reconciling himself to Christ, but rather God reconciling himself to the world through Christ, Brooks noted. This reconciliation provides a relationship with God the Father in the same way the Prodigal Son had a re-established relationship with his father, complete with a new robe, a ring and shoes on his feet.

“The richness of salvation is a great gift from God that the Scriptures share with us,” Brooks stated. “The more we learn of our salvation, the more we love our Savior.”