

God continues working in his mission, researcher says

October 27, 2011

AMARILLO—God's mission in the world is "to be glorified by making himself known" and is source for mission work, said Ed Stetzer, vice president of research and ministry development at [Lifeway Christian Resources](#).

"We have to understand it as God's mission," he said during the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting. "God is the source of the mission."



Ed Stetzer, vice president of research and ministry development at Lifeway Christian Resources.

God's mission, he continued, is "to be glorified by making Himself known." God does this in several ways - first, in the display of his glory in creation. After the fall in the Garden of Eden, God's mission continues in the form of the redemption of the world through the sending of his son, Jesus.

Jesus establishes the kingdom of God by defeating death and saving people. The church is not the kingdom of God, Stetzer said, but a sign and an instrument of the kingdom of God.

"The church is birthed in the wake of the kingdom," he said. "And God sends the Holy Spirit to the church, to us, to empower the church to join Jesus on his mission."

The church's role as an agent in God's mission is to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel to the world. The church is being redeemed in

order to give glory to God. The mission will be completed when all things are restored for God's glory, he said.

"God ultimately wins and is glorified and all things are restored for his glory," Stetzer said.

All who are redeemed by Christ have spiritual gifts given to them by the Holy Spirit, he said, and because all are gifted in some way, all are called to use their gifts to minister in some way—it's simply a question of "where and among whom?"

God intends all people to use their gifts, Stetzer said. The stewardship of gifts is the church's responsibility. He calls for the development of "co-laborers" in the work of the church, rather than consumers.

Stetzner noted a hard truth—the pattern of codependence between needy congregants and pastors who need to be needed must be broken. God empowers us to serve, and church leaders have to empower their members.

Stetzer recalled a family who came to him with their young son after a service when he was an interim pastor, saying, "Brother, could you talk to our son? He's ready to receive Jesus, but he has some questions."

Stetzer told the couple, "No," because he didn't want to deprive them of their opportunity to minister to their son.

Shocked, they said, "But he has questions." They were upset and flustered at first, but two weeks later they returned to church and thanked Stetzer for what he said.

"When we do what God has called *them* to do, everybody gets hurt and the mission of God gets ignored," Stetzer said.