

## “An Encouraging Conference”

April 12-15 three of us from this congregation, along with the pastor of a church in Arapahoe, attended a conference in Louisville, Kentucky. This every-other-year conference, called *Together 4 The Gospel*, was started in 2006 by four friends: Mark Dever (Capital Hill Baptist Church Senior Pastor), C.J. Mahaney (head of Sovereign Grace Ministries), Ligon Duncan (Senior Pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi) and Al Mohler (President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary). Each of the three T4G conferences has been held to encourage participants to see the gospel of Jesus Christ as central to all we do. This year's 7,000 attendees heard messages by these four men (as well as by John MacArthur and John Piper) on the theme of “The Unadjusted Gospel”. In other words, these questions were answered: What is the gospel? And also, how do we make sure we do not alter it?

You might ask, “Why is it worth the time and expense for our pastor and others to attend a conference 14 hours away?” First, it is important since such conferences are wonderful opportunities for training, continuing education, and for refreshment. A conference of this caliber gives people the opportunity to hear God's Word taught and topics discussed by those who not only specialize in certain areas of study, but also have been gifted in explaining the Scriptures. Similarly, many of these conferences give away a significant amount of books for free and also have books and DVD's for sale at a reduced rate.

The second reason conferences like this are worth the time is because of the nature of the participants. There are several conferences across the country (T4G, The Gospel Coalition, Desiring God Conferences, The Shepherd's Conference, the Ligonier Conferences, and the Philadelphia Conference On Reformed Theology) which provide teaching and training that are very much Gospel-focused, theologically-sound, center upon a view of God that understands we exist for His glory and which understands that God sovereignly working through His Word in response to prayer is far more crucial than a focus upon mere pragmatism or methodology (the diet found at many other Christian conferences across the country).

This conference was particularly encouraging to me since there were so many young men and women in attendance. Though there are some bad trends among young Christians, as there are every generation, there is a large movement among believers in their twenties and thirties back to a God-centered, Christ-exalting, Word-grounded, missions-practicing faith. Though my generation saw people like this here and there, we did not see the ground swell that is out there now. This movement is not only motivating people to fellowship together more around solid theology and practice as opposed to mere denominational affiliation, it also has the potential of returning the Church to a joyful sobriety and awakening which could bring about much lasting God-honoring fruit in years to come.

So, be on the lookout for opportunities each year to attend such conferences. You will not be sorry you invested the time and resources!