

SOUTHWIDE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP AND ED STETZER

In 2009, Ed Stetzer was invited to speak at the Southwide Baptist Fellowship meeting. They even sent a plane to fly him from Nevada, but because of severe weather he was forced to land in Albuquerque and missed the meeting (Stetzer, “Wednesday: Southwide Baptist Fellowship and Independent Fundamental Baptists,” www.edstetzer.com).

Stetzer has also spoken to the students at Trinity Baptist College in Jacksonville, Florida, via video. Stetzer, head of the Southern Baptist Convention’s LifeWay research department, holds to the “in non-essentials liberty” philosophy, despises separatism, and associates with pretty much anybody and everybody. He is a bridge to the “broader church” that is filled to the brim today with ancient and end-times heresies (such as baptismal regeneration, popery, Mariolatry, sacramentalism, anti-Trinitarianism, universalism, Catholic mysticism, kingdom now dominionism, charismaticism, word-faith creation power, Fourth Dimension prayer, neo-orthodoxy, the downgrade of hell, latter rain apostolic miracle revival, theistic evolution, panentheism, the non-judgmental “Shack” god, and Christian homosexuality). As far as I know, Stetzer, as a “conservative evangelical,” doesn’t hold to these heresies, but he is a bridge to the broader “evangelical church” where an individual can easily be influenced by any and all of these. (Most of these things are represented in any LifeWay Bookstore.)

Consider some of Stetzer’s direct associations. He is closely affiliated with Mark Driscoll, who is “culturally liberal” (e.g., ushering in the New Year through champaign dance parties), hates the doctrine of the pre-tribulational Rapture, and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism, among other things. Stetzer is affiliated with fellow Southern Baptist Rick Warren, who in turn is closely affiliated with many New Agers and universalists (e.g., Tony Blair, Mehmet Oz, Daniel Amen, Mark Hyman, and Leonard Sweet) and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism.

Stetzer is also affiliated with the most liberal of emergents, who deny the infallible inspiration of Scripture, the substitutionary atonement, a literal Hell, and many other fundamentals of the faith. Though Stetzer criticizes their heresies, he does so in gentle terms and refuses to

disassociate from them. For example, Stetzer participates in Shapevine, an emerging church blog that features liberal emergents such as Brian McLaren, Tony Jones, Sally Morgenthaler, Alan Hirsch, and Leonard Sweet. Shapevine is called “a global community of collaborators”; and “conservative Southern Baptists” like Stetzer are right in the middle of this unscriptural collaboration (Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 Timothy 3:5).