

Pastors' Conference to encourage leaders 'to stand in the gap'

By Staff

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)-Focusing on the need for revival, "Build up the wall, stand in the gap" will be the theme of the June 19-20 Pastors' Conference preceding the June 21-22 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Nashville's Gaylord Entertainment Center.

Pastors' Conference President Steve Gaines of First Baptist Church in Gardendale, Ala., said the theme is drawn from Ezekiel 22:30, which begins: "I searched for a man among them who would repair the wall and stand in the gap...."

Gaines noted that the passage ends with a "haunting thought" -- that God found no one to lead in building a spiritual wall to protect the people of ancient Israel.

When he has read that passage, Gaines said, "I can remember just saying, 'Lord, I want to be at least one who will be a spiritual wall builder.'

"I really believe that the way we do it is through praying and preaching and worshipping the Lord and letting the church do what we're supposed to do -- to make disciples, baptize them and teach them all that God has commanded us."

Gaines said he hopes the Pastors' Conference will encourage pastors to see themselves as a key force "to bring America back to where it needs to be."

"I'm all for political involvement and everything else, but I believe America is beyond the political process alone being able to help us," Gaines said. "America needs more than just putting the right man in the White House, although I'm not diminishing the importance of that. But I am saying that we're beyond that.

"We need revival. We need spiritual awakening."

Gaines added that the Pastors' Conference will not be a time to "showcase preachers," although the 11 featured speakers are men who "love the Lord, love the Word and love pastors, and who also love this country."

"Everything we're doing is going to be one big worship service ... to connect with the Lord Jesus," he noted. "We really want the presence of God to be in that room."