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George Addresses Southeastern Graduates

by Sheri Paris

Wake Forest, NC -- Dr. Timothy George, dean of the Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama delivered the December commencement address at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He began by stating, "You now face tomorrow, the future, a road that winds before you and beckons you forward into the life of ministry and service that God has planned and prepared for you. I want to say to you in the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 6, remember, lest you forget."

George exhorted the graduates to remember their Baptist heritage and their forefathers' commitment "to pass on to the rising generation the rudiments of the Christian faith."

George summoned the gathering in Binkley Chapel to remember to "keep faith with the Word of God." He remarked that many words, including inspired, inerrant, infallible and authoritative, are used to describe the confidence that Baptists place in the Bible. However, "I think that we can put it in a way that any 10 year-old can understand. What the Bible says, God says."

George appealed to the graduates to remember to "magnify the Lord Jesus Christ in all that you do." He declared, "there is no dichotomy between the written Word of God and the Living Word of God. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Scriptures."

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George reminded the audience that two of the most influential institutions in American culture, Harvard University and the University of Chicago, began with the purpose of teaching the truth as revealed by the knowledge of Jesus Christ. "Does this stifle academic freedom? No more so than the emancipation proclamation stifled the freedom of the slaves."

"Christian freedom is not only freedom from, it is also freedom to," said George to the audience. "It is freedom to read any book, study any theory, pursue any line of inquiry within the context of a common commitment that acknowledges that Jesus Christ is the Lord of biology as well as theology; which affirms the priority of the Ten Commandments over the theories of John Dewey; which confesses that all things were created by Jesus Christ and for Jesus Christ."

Lastly, George implored the graduates to remember, "God has left you in this world because He has something for you to do, to reach out to a world that is hurting." According to George any minister that sees only good in the world has "never looked into the eyes of a hungry child or felt the sting of racism, or been moved by the genocidal slaughter of the unborn, or agonized over 1.5 billion people on our planet who have never heard the name of Jesus for the first time."

In his closing charge, George reminded the graduates, "when you walk out of this building today, you dare not walk out on your own - because you cannot make it on your own, but you walk out of here in the power and strength of God who has promised to go with you all the way. Remember that, lest you forget."

Timothy George received his Master of Divinity and Ph.D. from Harvard. He has served pastorates in Georgia and Massachusetts. In 1988 he became the founding dean of Beeson Divinity School. He has published many articles and books including *Theology of the Reformers* and *Faithful Witness, the Life and Witness of William Carey*. He co-edited with David Dockery the compilation, *Baptist Theologians*. He is currently working on the *New American Commentary on Galatians*.