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## Supermarket Mentality Causing Declining Church Membership, Says Experienced Pastor

GARLAND, TX – Most church denominations are reporting a declining membership with statistics at alarming rates. Church leaders attribute the decline to a myriad of factors and are struggling to keep churches relevant to the culture. In his new book, *The Vanishing Church*, Bob Pearle, president of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and pastor of Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX, suggests that church solutions for low numbers are actually part of the problem. He says the problem could be because “churches desire more to conform to culture than to be counter-cultural.”

From controversial topics such as cultural relevance to an informative Baptist history lesson, *The Vanishing Church* offers an overarching view of the causes and solutions for church decline. Dr. Pearle, who has served as a pastor for almost 30 years, begins *The Vanishing Church* with an overview of current society and a discussion of whether the church is even needed. He includes topics such as the four ways churches are being deceived (intellectualism, ceremonialism, mysticism and legalism), why churches shouldn't focus solely on love, the foundational Baptist doctrines of membership and Baptism, and how churches should respond to cultural changes.

In *The Vanishing Church*, Dr. Pearle seeks to inspire those in church leadership and church members to follow God's truth. In a powerful statement in the book, Dr. Pearle says, “Baptists need to get more serious about their doctrinal distinctives and quit trying to be an ecclesial supermarket serving the whims of religious consumers.” Those who are not involved in any church will also benefit from this insider's look at the current religious situation.

Jimmy Draper, president emeritus of LifeWay Christian Resources, says in an endorsement of the book, “Bob Pearle has addressed the most distressing issue facing the church today... its general decline in influence and growing irrelevancy to the current culture. This book addresses this issue and challenges us to rethink both the practices and the biblical foundation of the church. It will challenge your assumptions about the church and require a careful examination of the church and its role today.”

Bob Pearle is pastor of Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX, where he has served for 11 years. He received his M.Div and D.Min degrees from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He is president of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

*Paperback (\$14.95) copies of the book are available through online bookstores such as Amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com. Hannibal Books also offers the book through 800-747-0738 and [www.hannibalbooks.com](http://www.hannibalbooks.com). ISBN: 978-1-934749-39-5.*

**Attention Editors:** A photo or interview with the author is available by contacting Public Relations Specialist Jennifer Nelson at 800-747-0738 ext. 709 or [HannibalBooksPR@gmail.com](mailto:HannibalBooksPR@gmail.com). Visit [www.hannibalbooks.com](http://www.hannibalbooks.com) to learn more about all the books we publish.