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Ronald H. Nash — In Memoriam

Wednesday, March 22, 2006

I withheld my formal comments on the death of Dr. Ronald H. Nash until my statement could be read at the memorial service held in his honor. He was a great friend, and a great friend to the cause of truth.

Here is the statement:

IN MEMORIAM

Ronald H. Nash

The Trustees, Faculty, Administration, and Students of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary mourn the loss of our colleague, professor, Ronald H. Nash. At the same time, we rejoice in the faith "once for all delivered to the Saints," which formed the very basis of Ronald Nash's life, work, and witness.

In a day of theological accommodationism, Dr. Ronald Nash served as an example of Christian courage, Christian scholarship, Christian intellectual engagement, and the role of the Christian teacher: He served the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ throughout decades of teaching and he invested himself in the lives of thousands of young ministers, missionaries, and Christian leaders. Furthermore, through his long years of teaching at Western Kentucky University, he reached thousands of students with a consistent Christian witness and equipped believers to defend the faith and to be more faithful witnesses of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was greatly honored when Dr. Ronald Nash accepted our invitation to serve on our teaching faculty. He brought to Southern Seminary a wealth of teaching experience, a rich legacy of published scholarship, and an international reputation as a Christian philosopher, teacher, and a scholar.

I will never forget my first opportunity to meet Dr. Ron Nash. I had been invited to speak at a joint faculty retreat for Reformed Theological Seminary. The event was held in Panama City, FL and, as I was walking across the parking lot of the retreat center shortly after my arrival, I ran into Dr. Ron Nash as he was entering the building. At long last, I was meeting one of my heroes and I quickly introduced myself and spoke of my appreciation for his work. He asked me a series of short, staccato questions and looked me over from head to toe.

After our brief conversation was over, I had the distinct impression that he thought I had been wasting his time. Many years of teaching at Western Kentucky University, located just 100 miles from Southern Seminary, had led him to expect something less than stalwart witness, even from one who had just assumed the responsibility to recover the school as a confessional institution, fully accountable to the Church and fully established in defense of Christian truth.

Later that evening, after I had delivered the second of my addresses to the RTS faculty, Dr. Ron Nash stood before his colleagues to state that it was his duty to repent before God and his friends of his lack of faith that a theological recovery could happen in such an institution. At that time, he offered some of the warmest, most eager, and most encouraging words I had ever received concerning the mission I had undertaken at Southern Seminary.

Throughout my years here, he has been my encourager, a friend, and a model of Christian scholarship. I am thankful that he was able to teach on our faculty, to reach a new generation of young Christian ministers and scholars, and to know the appreciation of a denomination that has for so many years stood in his debt.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Betty Jane Nash and the Nash family as they grieve the loss of patriarch. Thanks be to God for Ron Nash's hope and confidence in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The example of Dr. Ronald Nash will serve the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ as a source of encouragement, inspiration, and edification. So long as there are believers who treasure the truth, defend the faith, and live in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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