

Jeff Noblit, *Born to Reform* (Florence, Alabama: Anchored in Truth, 2008), 18 pages. Available from: Anchored in Truth, P.O. Box 520, Florence, Alabama 35631.

This past weekend (February 19–21) I had the distinct privilege of being a speaker at the 2010 True Church Conference held at Grace Life Church, Muscle Shoals, Alabama. It was tremendous to meet and fellowship with like-minded brethren and learn a little of the journey that Grace Life Church has taken under the pastoral leadership of Pastor Jeff Noblit. This small booklet summarizes that journey from an all-too typical Southern Baptist congregation plagued with nominalism and a membership inflated with unregenerate members to a truly biblical congregation, ever seeking to pattern itself after the model of the New Testament church life.

Noblit relates the way in which God led him to focus his ministry in the context of the local church. As he often says, “God is most glorified through His church” (frontispiece and p.18). He outlines the foundations laid for his ministry at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, and then the way the Lord gave him the deep—and best—conviction that the local church must do all for the glory of God (p.8–10).

It is noteworthy, after Scripture, that the study of church history—inspired by a question of Mark Dever of Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.—has played a key role in the reformation of the church that he pastors. Noblit relates the way that he began to read J.L. Dagg and James Pendleton (p.11–12, 17), C.H. Spurgeon and James Petigru Boyce (p.12, 17), as well as Puritan literature, and the writings of George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards (p.12, 17). Little wonder that under the impact of the truth of Scripture and the examples of these historical figures biblical discipline was reinstated, eldership restored, and proper membership procedures established (p.13–6).

I was deeply impressed by the spirit of humility that marks this entire booklet. No triumphalism here that Grace Life Church is the perfect model of New Testament life or that it has arrived and nothing more to learn. But this booklet shows so clearly what the broad contours of true reformation look like at the level of the local church and what has to be the main direction a local church must follow if she wants to breathe the same spirit as one of the churches established by the Apostles.

Michael A.G. Haykin.