

William Carey unveils statue of its founder

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William Carey was a man of "incredible effectiveness," according to Tom Elliff, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board.

One testament to his effectiveness? Officials at his namesake university unveiled a 7-foot bronze statue Thursday called "Carey Turns to the World" in front of the Sarah Gillespie Museum of Art.

Sculptor Ben Watts of Columbia is the creator of the statue weighing 500 to 600 pounds.

"I'm speechless," said junior Hunter Fletcher, who stood in attendance. "I wish I was creative enough to make something like that."

The sculpture is the fruit of a year's labor and features many symbols of the famed missionary's life.

"I want you look at the unfinished shoe with shoe tacks, tools and his cobbler's apron laying aside," President Tommy King instructed observers. He carries "nothing but the Bible and his eyes fixed firmly on the world which is his mission."

During the ceremony, King presented to Elliff one of 15 sculpture miniatures created by Watt.

Elliff, in turn, explained the difference between mere success and effectiveness - one especially applicable on a cold, windy morning.

"If I took a stick of dynamite today and lighted the fuse and threw it up in the air, it would explode successfully," said Elliff. "With the wind blowing like it is, within a few minutes you would never know that it occurred."

"Now we could take that same stick of dynamite, find a rock quarry, drill a hole in a rock seam. Same dynamite, same potential," he said. "Place the dynamite there in that hole, light the fuse, and weeks later we would still be carrying away the debris from that explosion."

The legacy of the fuse Carey lit can be seen in the contemporary mission work that follows the model of his Indian service.

In fact, the university hosted an IMB International Missionary Appointment Service Wednesday at Temple Baptist Church that

appointed 77 new missionaries.

But, while William Carey is celebrating the 250th anniversary of the school's namesake throughout the year, King also took time Thursday to put events in their proper context

"I do want to make one final comment, lest someone see this beautiful statue and think that we worship William Carey. We certainly do not," said King, before noting the other prominent statue on the Carey campus: The Risen Christ in the Chain Garden.

"It is Christ that we worship and Carey's example that we follow," he said.

But for Fletcher, who's studying to join the ministry, it's quite an example to follow.

"Somebody who's Godly," said Fletcher, when asked what Carey means to him. "Somebody that you can follow in their footsteps as a legacy."



Dr. Thomas Elliff, left president of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, posed for a photo with Dr. Tommy King, president of William Carey University, in front of the newly-dedicated statue of William Carey. / Submitted photo