

Ministers

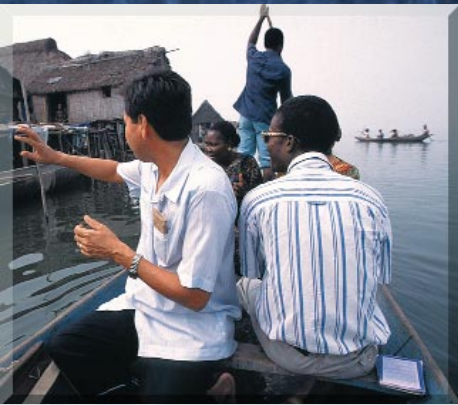
Within the Southern Baptist Convention, the licensing and ordination of ministers is a local church matter. There is no denominational ordination service. The list of Southern Baptist ministers is simply a compilation from the reports of the churches. The Southern Baptist Convention neither frocks nor defrocks ministers.



Points of Contact

Churches are autonomous in selecting their staff members, and they go about their search in a variety of ways. They gather suggestions from a number of sources — from friends, professors, denominational workers, other pastors, and so on. State conventions typically have a “church-minister relations” staff service that gathers and makes available, upon request, material on both needful churches and prospective ministers. Some have questionnaires. All receive resumes. They have no power to place ministers. They simply serve as a clearing house of information. Those wishing to enter the ministry as a Southern Baptist might contact the following state convention offices. Local associations are also a good source of information.

AL	P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery 36111-0870	(334) 288-2460
AK	1750 O'Malley Rd., Anchorage 99516-1303	(907) 344-9627
AZ	3031 W. Northern Ave., Suite 131, Phoenix 85052	(602) 864-0337
AR	P.O. Box 552, Little Rock 72203	(501) 376-4791
CA	678 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno 93710-7704	(559) 229-9533
CO	7393 S. Alton Way, Englewood 80112-2372	(303) 771-2480
DC	1628 16th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009-3009	(202) 265-1526
FL	1230 Hendricks Ave., Jacksonville 32207	(904) 396-2351
GA	2930 Flowers Rd., S., Atlanta 30341-5562	(770) 455-0404
HI	2042 Vancouver Dr., Honolulu 96822-2491	(808) 946-9581
IL	P.O. Box 19247, Springfield 62794-9247	(217) 786-2600
IN	P.O. Box 24189, Indianapolis 46224	(317) 241-9317
IA	2400 86th St., Suite 27, Des Moines 50322	(515) 278-4369
KS-NE	5410 SW 7th St., Topeka 66606	(785) 228-6800
KY	P.O. Box 43433, Middletown 40253-0433	(502) 245-4101
LA	P.O. Box 311, Alexandria 71309	(318) 448-3402
MD-DE	10255 Old Columbia Rd., Columbia 21046-1736	(410) 290-5290
MI	15635 W. Twelve Mile Rd., Southfield 48076	(248) 557-4200
MN-WI	519 16th St. SE, Rochester 55904	(507) 282-3636
MS	P.O. Box 530, Jackson 39205-0530	(601) 968-3800
MO	400 E. High St., Jefferson City 65101-3253	(573) 635-7931
NV	406 California Ave., Reno 89509 -1520	(702) 786-0406
N-ENG	87 Lincoln St., Northborough MA 01532	(775) 393-6013
NM	P.O. Box 485, Albuquerque 87103-0485	(505) 924-2300
NY	6538 Collamer Rd., East Syracuse 13057	(315) 433-1001
NC	P.O. Box 1107, Cary 27512-1107	(919) 467-5100
NW	3200 N.E. 109th Ave., Vancouver, WA 98682-7749	(360) 882-2100
OH	1680 E. Broad St., Columbus 43203	(614) 258-8491
OK	3800 N. May Ave., Oklahoma City 73112-6506	(405) 942-3800
PA-SJ	4620 Fritchey St., Harrisburg, PA 17109-2895	(717) 652-5856
SC	190 Stoneridge Dr., Columbia 29210-8239	(803) 765-0030
TN	P.O. Box 728, Brentwood 37024-0728	(615) 371-2090
TX-BGCT	333 N. Washington, Dallas 75246-1798	(214) 828-5100
TX-SBT	P.O. Box 168585, Irving 75016-8585	(972) 953-0878
UT-ID	P.O. Box 1347, Draper, UT 84020	(801) 572-5350
VA-BGAV	P.O. Box 8568, Richmond 23226	(804) 915-2430
VA-SBCV	4101 Cox Rd., Suite 100, Glen Allen 23060	(804) 270-1848
WV	Number 1 Mission Way, Scott Depot 25560	(304) 757-0944
WY	P.O. Box 4779, Casper 82604-0779	(307) 472-4087
DK (Fellowship)	P.O. Box 6028, Bismarck ND 58506	(701) 255-3765
MT (Fellowship)	P.O. Box 99, Billings 59103-0099	(406) 252-7537
CAN	Postal Bag 300, Cochrane, Alberta TOL OWO	(403) 932-5688



Career Mission Service

Those seeking to be career missionaries should contact either the North American Mission Board (770-410-6000) or the International Mission Board (888-I-CAN-GO-1 [888-422-6461]). Each has a carefully prescribed candidate process.

Insurance and Annuity

The Southern Baptist Annuity Board (800-262-0511) provides avenues for Southern Baptist ministers to insure themselves and to financially undergird their retirement years.



Education

Southern Baptists subsidize seminary education for ministers who are members of Southern Baptist churches which have voted to commend them to a Southern Baptist seminary. For more information about Southern Baptist seminaries, check “Seminaries” under “SBC Links” at our website — www.sbc.net.

For more information, contact:
Convention Relations
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce St., Nashville, TN 37203
1-866-722-5433

The Southern Baptist Convention: A Closer Look



Though this brochure deals with an important topic, it is not the most spiritually important one. The key issue is how a person or church becomes truly Christian — anointed, biblical, fruitful. Not all Southern Baptists are Christian; some have proven to be nominal Christians — Christians in name only. And not all or even most Christians are Southern Baptist. Countless non-Southern Baptists, and indeed, non-Baptists, have received Christ as Savior and Lord. Having said this, we believe that it is a wonderful thing to be a Southern Baptist, and commend the denomination to you. Our aim is not to recruit members from other groups, but to have ready information for those interested.

This brochure is not meant to stand alone, but to be read in conjunction with a number of other introductory pieces, including Meet Southern Baptists, We Thought You'd Like to Know, and a sample issue of SBC LIFE.

Why a Denomination?

Some folks feel that denominations are constrictive, and that when you identify with other churches, you suffer compromise.

Southern Baptists are sympathetic to these concerns and so firmly hold to the principle of church autonomy or self-rule. The Southern Baptist Convention does not ordain ministers, assign staff to churches, levy contributions to denominational causes, dictate literature and calendar, or assign persons to churches according to place of residence. These are local church matters.

Southern Baptists are wary of inter-denominational councils. While Southern Baptists work with other churches on matters such as abortion and pornography, read and hear non-Southern Baptists, and join with other Baptists in the work of the Baptist World Alliance, they do not enter into covenants with others who wish to speak for them.

The Convention is an alliance of churches working in friendly cooperation under the heading “Southern Baptist.” A Southern Baptist church is about as independent as you can get and still be counted as part of a denomination.

Why belong to a denomination? Well, denominations give churches a way to collectively express their convictions and realize their vision. In such a free land as ours, it is natural that churches would take the opportunity to identify with like-minded churches. Denominations allow churches to be a part

of a larger enterprise, pooling their resources to establish and advance Great Commission work. A denomination can have an impact larger than the sum of the impacts of the individual churches.

The Bible pictures financial and operational cooperation among New Testament churches, and virtually all churches cooperate with other churches in some fashion or other. Southern Baptists have merely formalized that spiritually-natural phenomenon, and God has blessed their blend of freedom and cooperation. (See the other publications named in this brochure for evidence of this blessing.)

Within the Body of Christ, there is a great diversity of gifts, temperament, taste, and experience. Churches benefit from this range of qualities within their own fellowship and across the denomination. Churches learn from and complement each other.

This is not a matter of moral or doctrinal compromise. You cannot believe and do just anything and remain a part of the Southern Baptist fellowship. All Baptist bodies have limits. But within those limits, there is room for significant cooperative diversity.

While there is a place for biblical separation, a coming apart for the sake of holiness, separation can go to extremes. No church is perfect. Each will have sinful and wasteful features. The same goes for denominations. Just as with churches, denominations must find their way between putting up with anything and fighting over everything. There

are rocks on both sides and the need for a great deal of patience as we chart our course between them.



Why a Convention?

Isn't a convention a meeting and not a denomination? Technically, the Southern Baptist Convention exists for only two days a year, at the annual gathering. The rest of the year, denominational agencies carry out the instructions of the messengers to the Convention. The authority, then, resides with the messengers elected by churches and participating in the two-day meeting. Still, those churches and individuals who identify with this enterprise typically call themselves Southern Baptist.

Churches

A church technically becomes Southern Baptist by contributing to the mission causes of the Convention. If that contribution is made within the fiscal year (Oct-Sept) preceding a particular annual meeting (June), then the church is entitled to send as many as ten messengers to the Convention. The messenger card, seen below, spells out the criteria. These can be secured from your state Baptist convention. We encourage churches who wish to identify with the Southern Baptist Convention to notify this office (address on back of this brochure). Even if they've not yet qualified to send messengers to the annual meeting, their report of current giving to denominational causes will signal their prospective affiliation and prompt their addition to the convention mailing list.

State Conventions and Local Associations

Though a church may be a Southern Baptist church without affiliating with a state convention or local association of Southern Baptist churches, it is customary to participate in all three. Each has its particular ministries, fellowship, and mission outreach, and there is a great deal of cooperation among them. The state and national bodies have traditionally relied upon local associations to determine the baptistic character of churches. We list the 42 state conventions and fellowships on the back. There are more than 1,200 local associations. A list is readily available at both the national and state offices.



Individuals

Individuals do not join the Southern Baptist Convention per se. Rather, they become Southern Baptists by joining one of the over 40,000 Southern Baptist churches. Each church can tell you their enrollment procedure. Those wanting to familiarize themselves with the denomination might want to look through the publications shown at the bottom of this page. Many of the churches have copies.



SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

(Please Type or Print) _____
(State where church located)

The _____ Baptist Church

located at _____
(Please give full mailing address) (City) (State) (Zip)

has elected _____
(Please give full name of elected messenger.) (Only one messenger per card)

a messenger to the SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION. This appointment is made on the basis of and in agreement with the Convention's constitutional requirement, as follows
(This church has _____ members and gave \$ _____ to convention causes during the preceding year and is entitled to _____ messengers.) Our church elected _____ messengers.

ARTICLE III. Membership: The Convention shall consist of messengers who are members of missionary Baptist churches cooperating with the Convention as follows:
1. One messenger from each church which:
(1) Is in friendly cooperation with the Convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work. Among churches not in cooperation with the Convention are churches which act to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior. And
(2) Has been a bona fide contributor to the Convention work during the fiscal year preceding.
2. One additional messenger from each church for every 250 members; or for each \$250.00 paid to the work of the Convention during the fiscal year preceding the annual meeting.
3. The messengers shall be appointed and certified by the churches to the Convention, but no church may appoint more than ten (10).
4. Each messenger shall be a member of the church by which he is appointed.

Date _____, 19____ Signed _____
Moderator or Clerk

Our church is affiliated with _____ (State Convention) and _____ (Association)

To the Messenger: Be sure to bring this card with you and present it in person at Registration. Your name will be filed for insertion in the Roll of Messengers from your state, and you will receive a badge which will admit you to all sessions of the Convention.

REGISTER as soon as possible.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY and in order that friends may locate you if necessary, please give where you are staying during the Convention.

Phone _____

"Messengers" rather than delegates, for they are free to vote their consciences throughout the Convention.

The Convention has not used the "friendly cooperation/sympathetic with purposes" clause to draw exclusionary lines, except for this issue.

These other affiliations are recommended but not required.

A church contributes to the Convention's work through the Cooperative Program (the Convention's plan of unified giving and action) or special designation, such as to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions or the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions. These funds are sent to and through the state offices named on the back of this brochure.

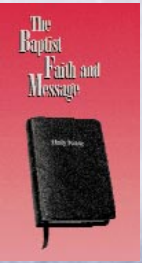
So the church with 25 members may have the same number of messengers as the church with 25,000 members. At present, more than 70 percent of all SBC churches could send the maximum of 10 messengers to the Convention.

Materials, Training, and Service Opportunities

The Southern Baptist Convention offers churches a wide array of literature, workshops, retreats, conferences, consultants, volunteer mission opportunities, video and audio materials, fellowships, and

lists of prayer needs. As one pastor who moved to a non-Southern Baptist church observed, "There's one thing worse than being a Southern Baptist pastor and getting all that material in the mail. It's not being a

Southern Baptist pastor and not getting it." It's great to have such a support system, such a network of resources to assist churches and members in their development.



For further reading:
All of these publications are available from the Executive Committee for a nominal cost. Samples are available at no charge (see address and phone on back of this brochure).