

JD Greear Warns SBC It's 'Unwise' to Ban Female Pastors

Former Southern Baptist Convention President J.D. Greear, a pastor based in Durham, North Carolina, explained this month he is "convictionally opposed" to a ban on female pastors.

While The Summit Church preacher said it's not that he is "a closet moderate or soft on theological issues," Greear argued in a blog post on his website that the so-called Law Amendment to the SBC's constitution permanently banning women from serving as pastors "as qualified by Scripture" would "undermine our historic principles of cooperation."

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"It overturns a system that works," he explained. "I am concerned that the missional, cooperative balance that has characterized our Convention since the Conservative Resurgence is about to be overturned."

The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 defines "pastor" as "one who fulfills the pastoral office and carries out the pastor's functions" and later notes, in Article VI, that "[w]hile both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."

At the SBC's annual meeting in June of last year, Pastor Mike Law of Arlington Baptist Church in Virginia brought forth the amendment, clarifying that women cannot serve in pastoral roles. The proposal passed with roughly 80% of the vote from more than 12,000 messengers.

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It will become permanent if it gains majority support at this year's annual meeting, which began June 9, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The amendment was sparked by Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California. Messengers of the SBC voted last February to remove Saddleback—the second-largest congregation in the convention—for employing a female pastor. The SBC voting members reaffirmed that decision last summer.

A vote on the Law Amendment came just a handful of hours after 88% of messengers voted to uphold the removal of Warren's church from good standing in the SBC.

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