

Southern Baptists: God is the 'Final Authority' on Marriage

Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd told members of the nation's largest Protestant denomination they must look to God as the final authority in their lives and not the U.S. Supreme Court. "Our first commitment is to God and his word – nothing else and no one else," said Floyd, an Arkansas megachurch pastor, speaking Tuesday (June 16) about the court's impending ruling on same-sex marriage. "I want to remind everyone today, humbly, the Supreme Court of the United States is not the final authority, nor is the culture itself, but the Bible is God's final authority about marriage and on this book we stand," he said, drawing a standing ovation. About 5,000 messengers, or delegates, attended the two-day meeting in Columbus, Ohio, at which Floyd was re-elected to a second one-year term as SBC president. He was the sole candidate. Floyd, whose address was titled "Now Is the Time to Lead," said he could only speak for himself but hoped that other pastors would join him. "I declare to everyone today, as a minister of the gospel, I will not officiate over any same-sex unions or same-sex marriage ceremonies," he said. "I completely refuse." He said he expects thousands of pastors in the nation to agree with him. "While some evangelicals may be bowing down to the deception of the inclusiveness of same-sex marriage," Floyd said, "we will not bow down nor will we be silent." Southern Baptists adopted a resolution "On the Call to Public Witness on Marriage" on Tuesday. "No matter how the Supreme Court rules, the Southern Baptist Convention reaffirms its unwavering commitment to its doctrinal and public beliefs concerning marriage," the statement reads. It adds that "Southern Baptists love our neighbors and extend respect in Christ's name to all people, including those who may disagree with us about the definition of marriage and the public good." The meeting will conclude Wednesday with a panel discussion

during which Floyd will interview Southern Baptist leaders about “The Supreme Court and Same-Sex Marriage: Preparing Our Churches for the Future.” “There’s no question we all have a massive concern about the upcoming decision by the Supreme Court, and we’re doing what we can to prepare our churches regardless of what the outcome is,” Floyd told Religion News Service in an interview before the meeting.