

Megachurch Pastor Ronnie Floyd Elected to SBC Executive Committee

Ronnie Floyd, an Arkansas megachurch pastor and former Southern Baptist Convention president, has been elected to head the denomination's Executive Committee.

Meeting in Dallas, Executive Committee trustees approved Floyd's nomination by a vote of 68-1, according to Baptist Press, the SBC's official news service.

"It's a great privilege for me to be able to accept the opportunity to become the president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee," said Floyd in a news conference after his election Tuesday (April 2).

Floyd is pastor of Cross Church, a congregation of about 9,000 that has campuses in Arkansas and Missouri. He is also president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force.

Floyd has filled a number of leadership positions in the SBC, the nation's largest Protestant denomination, including serving as president from 2014 to 2016. He served as chair of the Executive Committee in the mid-1990s.

In his new role, Floyd will head the Nashville-based Executive Committee, which acts on behalf of the SBC in between its annual meetings. One of his major tasks will be promoting the SBC's Cooperative Program, which funds missions, seminary education and other ministries.

Cross Church has given more than a million dollars annually to the Cooperative Program since 2015, according to Baptist Press.

Floyd said he had much to learn and hopes to spend his early days on the job listening and learning.

“I don’t have all the answers,” he said. “Who does but Christ?”

During the news conference, Floyd was asked if he would continue as part of an informal group of evangelical advisers to President Trump. Floyd didn’t answer directly but said his involvement with the White House has been minimal since the 2016 election aside from some conference calls and a 2017 visit to the Oval Office, at which he led a prayer for Trump.

Floyd said he would go back to the White House if invited by Trump or any other president. “If that would have been Hillary Clinton – if she would have asked me to do that in the Oval Office, I’d be glad to go and meet with any president,” he said.

Ed Stetzer, executive director of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, called Floyd “a strong and courageous leader.”

“We need new ideas and new leaders at the Executive Committee, and Ronnie will lead the way,” Stetzer said. “His election will bring confidence to Southern Baptists as they know he will take the decisive actions the Executive Committee needs to right itself in this tumultuous time.”

Dean Inserra, pastor of City Church in Tallahassee, Fla., also approved of Floyd’s election.

“He has a deep love for the SBC and my hope is that he will use this position as a way to model leadership that puts the gospel above all,” he said.

Floyd’s nomination comes at a difficult time for the SBC.

Recent news reports have detailed alleged abuse at Southern Baptist churches. J.D. Greear, the SBC president, has called

on the convention to investigate churches that have covered up abuse.

A proposed amendment to the SBC's constitution that would allow the denomination to remove churches that show clear "indifference to addressing the crime of sexual abuse" will be discussed at the SBC's annual meeting in June.

Bill Leonard, professor of divinity emeritus at Wake Forest University's divinity school, said Floyd represents a move by the SBC to "solidify its base."

Leonard, a longtime observer of the SBC, said the convention faces a number of challenges, including declining membership, struggles in attracting young people, recent reports of abuse and other issues.

Floyd will likely be charged with helping address these challenges.

"They need someone who inspires their base and might try to slow the demographic hemorrhaging," Leonard said.

In a Facebook Live address, Floyd said that as president of the Executive Committee he plans to focus on evangelism. He will resign from his church this weekend, according to Baptist Press.

Listen to the podcast to hear an interview with Floyd.

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