

First Baptist Church - Weymouth
FAQ
Regarding the Southern Baptist Convention

Why are we doing this?

Aligning ourselves with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) gives us a great number of opportunities to minister and be ministered to that are currently unavailable to us. Many of these come into play when we consider Vision 2020 and what God would have us do over the next decade.

For instance, we would love to see church planters and missionaries go out from FBC. At this point we would not be able to use the SBC as a resource in doing these things. But as part of the SBC, church planters and missionaries (who go through the SBC channels) would be fully funded, and not have to raise support of any kind.

There are other benefits as well: statistical and demographic resources, consultation and training, leadership development, crisis and emergency aid, tuition discounts for SBC colleges and seminaries (sometimes up to 50%!), low-interest building loans, health insurance options, and access to Baptist camps and retreat centers at discounted rates (or free).

This is just a small sampling of some of the opportunities that come with joining the SBC. A more comprehensive list can be found on the *Greater Boston Baptist Association* page included in this packet.

Isn't it selfish to align with the SBC just because of what we would get out of it?

It would be if we were trying to build our own kingdom, but we are using all of our available resources to advance the Kingdom of God. We would not use SBC opportunities or resources selfishly; we would use them to give glory to Christ.

I've heard many negative things about the SBC. Why would we want to align ourselves with them?

There have been many negative things said of the SBC. Most of these are unfounded, untrue, or blown out of proportion by the media. Consider these facts.

The SBC *last year*:

- Planted over 1,700 churches in the US.
- Supported almost 5,000 missionaries in 153 different countries.
- Gave over \$200 million in funding to missionaries, ministries, and seminaries.

Aside from these, SBC leaders such as Al Mohler, Mark Dever, Tom Ascol, Johnny Hunt, Paige Patterson, and Danny Akin, are all united in striving towards biblically advancing the Gospel to every tribe and tongue on earth.

Aren't we a part of the *Conservative Baptist of America*? Will we have to leave the CB?

Yes, we are part of the *Conservative Baptist of America*. We do not have to leave the CB to become part of the SBC. For instance, Brookville Baptist is currently part of both the CB and SBC.

Does the SBC make you believe/adhere to certain things?

Yes. The Southern Baptist Convention asks churches to do three things:

1. Churches must "sign off" that they are in agreement with the SBC statement of faith, the *Baptist Faith & Message* (attached). This does not become our doctrinal statement; we keep our own. There are currently no contradictions between FBC's doctrinal statement and the *Baptist Faith & Message*.
2. Churches must not ordain or hire women as pastors.
3. Churches must not endorse or hire practicing homosexuals.

What sort of governing role will the SBC have over FBC?

None whatsoever. If one of the three points mentioned above were not adhered to, the SBC can only remove that church from the convention; they have no ecclesiastical jurisdiction over any of the participating churches.

The SBC plays no part in hiring/firing of staff, budget allocations, or what types of ministries to be involved in. In short, they will/can in no way "tell us what to do." We remain autonomous.

I heard that the SBC doesn't believe in the inerrancy of scripture anymore. Is this true?

No, this is not true. In the late 1970s, there was a battle for inerrancy within the SBC, but those fighting for the truth "won out" and pastors/churches who did not believe in the inerrancy of scripture are no longer apart of the SBC. All current leaders and pastors within the SBC infrastructure are conservative and fundamental.

What steps does FBC have to take to become part of the SBC?

1. FBC votes to align with the Southern Baptist Convention and the *Baptist Faith & Message*.
2. FBC sends our doctrinal statement to the *Greater Boston Baptist Association*, which is the local expression of the SBC for review.
3. FBC gives an annual donation of \$500 to the *Greater Boston Baptist Association*. This money is used to help the SBC minister in the metro-Boston area.
 - a. FBC is encouraged to send delegates to participate in GBBA meetings, which determine (among other things) how monies are allocated.
4. FBC participates in the SBC Cooperative Program (see attached).

- a. There is no set dollar amount or percentage that FBC must give.
- b. Many churches do this by participating in one or two of the annual special offerings: the Annie Armstrong (Easter) and the Lottie Moon (Christmas).

Don't we have to give a portion of our missions budget?

No. See point 4 above.

What happens to the missionaries we currently support?

Nothing. We are free to support whomever we desire.

However, as part of the SBC, if any FBC members wanted to become missionaries, they would have the *option* of going through the *International Mission Board* or the *North American Mission Board*, although this is not required. These two SBC mission agencies have a great advantage in that their missionaries are not required to raise funds - they are given a salary and insurance for their tenure. This option is only available to Southern Baptist Churches.