

## ***2023 SBC Annual Meeting Report***

1. The messengers dealt with several very key and important issues at the 2023 SBC Annual Meeting.
2. There were a total of 12,737 registered messengers.
3. The vote to sustain the SBC Executive Committee action against Fern Creek Baptist Church, Freedom Church, and Saddleback Church were as follows:

Fern Creek Baptist: (BF&M 2000 Issue)

- For - 91.85%. (9,700)
- Against - 7.63%. (806)

Freedom Church: (Abuse and refusal to cooperate with the SBC for resolution)

- For - 96.46%. (9,984)
- Against - 3.31%. (343)

Saddleback Church: (BF&M 2000)

- For - 88.46%. (9,437)
- Against - 11.36%. (1,212)

4. Messengers voted to amend the BF&M 2000 concerning the role of “pastor.”
5. The amended Article VI on the church now reads:

“In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its two scriptural offices are that of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.
6. The messengers initiated the 2-year process to amend the SBC Constitution following a two-thirds vote to approve a motion brought by Mike Law, a Virginia pastor.
7. The motion is to amend the Constitution by adding a 6<sup>th</sup> point under the first paragraph of Article III that lists characteristics for churches to be deemed in “friendly cooperation” with the SBC.
8. The 6<sup>th</sup> point would include the phrase, “churches that affirm, appoint or employ only men as any kind of pastor or elder as qualified by Scripture.”

9. This motion will be brought before the messengers again at the SBC Annual Meeting to be held in Indianapolis (June 2024). It requires a two-thirds majority in the affirmative to amend the Constitution.
10. The goal of the amendment is to move the SBC toward a unified position concerning the ongoing dispute over complementarian versus egalitarian practice for cooperation.
11. However, following this action, a motion was made from the floor for the President of the SBC to appoint a task force to study the full intent of the wording "friendly cooperation." The motion passed. (Merritt motion)
12. In other words - is it really the intent of the SBC to use the strict language of "must adhere to" versus the word "closely?"
13. The Abuse Reform Implementation Task Force was afforded another year to complete work on a Ministry Check website that is designed to assist churches when hiring new ministers. The work began in 2022. There is concern and question surrounding the implementation of such an office.
14. I believe the Convention demonstrated its position by the rejection of what is "popular" for the standing on what is "Scripturally correct."
15. The highlight of the Convention was the Sending Celebration for 79 new missionaries. Some will be headed to very dark, evil, and isolated places.
16. The 79 missionaries represented 44 churches in 19 different states. They will spread out over 33 countries.
17. A reminder for all that the work of taking the gospel to the nations is the heartbeat of the work of cooperation.