

FAQ DOCUMENT | CALLING A NEW PASTOR-TEACHER

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

Our Elders, in accordance with our church Constitution, have enthusiastically and unanimously agreed to select Dr. David Platt to be MBC's next Pastor-Teacher and to place this selection before our members for formal confirmation at our September 27th Congregational Meeting. This Thursday, September 21st, we will hold an all-church Town Hall Meeting so that David can further inform you about himself and can receive your questions.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THESE MEETINGS?

Q: Where is the Town Hall Meeting and what time does it start?

A: The Town Hall Meeting is this Thursday, September 21. You can participate at any of our main campuses – Loudoun, Montgomery County, Tysons, or Prince William. We will begin at 7:00 pm so that we can pray together locally at each campus. At 7:30 pm we will join all locations together via satellite just as we do for our congregational meetings. We plan to conclude the formal part of the meeting at 9pm.

Q: What is the format of the meeting?

A: An informative briefing will kick off the meeting. This will bring everyone up to date and will provide a common foundation for the rest of the meeting. Because of the potentially large number of questions for David or the Elders, we will collect your questions, group similar questions, and present them for discussion. (By the way, we hope that many of your questions can be answered right here in this FAQ document.)

Q: What happens if every question cannot be discussed in the time allotted to the meeting?

A: If any substantive questions are not addressed due to limits of time, we will attempt to post them (for example by updating this FAQ document) for your subsequent information. You can also approach your Campus Pastor or an Elder or other Senior MBC leaders for more information.

Q: Why are we having just one “all-church” town hall?

A: This is our only fully combined meeting. However, over the past several weeks, David has spent time at most campus locations where additional scheduled interaction occurred. Also, David and our staff, particularly our senior leaders, have spent considerable time together as a part of this process. He has visited various classes and groups in the church in order to get to know us better.

Q: Where and when does the Congregational Meeting occur?

A: Just as with the Town Hall Meeting, you can participate at any of our main campuses – Loudoun, Montgomery County, Tysons, or Prince William. We will also begin the Congregational Meeting at 7:00 pm so that we can pray together locally at each campus. At 7:30 pm all locations will join together via satellite and we will call the business portion of the meeting to order. We plan to conclude the formal part of the meeting at 9 pm.

Q: What is the format of the Congregational Meeting?

A: This is our regularly scheduled quarterly church business meeting. We will follow the same format we use in every meeting and bring before the church such items of business that need to be reported or processed. However, a significant portion of this meeting will be used to receive the Elders' unanimous selection of David Platt as our next Pastor-Teacher and to vote to confirm this selection (as our Constitution directs).

Q: Who can vote on the motions that come before the Congregation, including the expected motion to confirm the Elders' selection of Dr. David Platt?

A: While anyone is welcome to attend, only members of McLean Bible Church can vote. Be sure that you check in with us to verify your membership status as you enter the meeting.

Q: What if I have recently been through the full new member process and am waiting for the Congregation to approve me as a member at this meeting?

A: It is our practice to vote on new members before any other important business is brought before the Congregation. So, you will be able to vote on all matters requiring a vote after your approval as a member by the Congregation. This will include voting on whether to confirm David Platt as our next Pastor-Teacher.

Q: How many votes are required to confirm the Elders' selection of Dr. David Platt?

A: Our Constitution requires that "The pastor-teacher shall be selected by unanimous vote of the Board of Elders...The elders' selection shall be confirmed by the congregation at a regular or special congregational meeting by three fourths (3/4) majority of the votes cast." This means that David's selection can be confirmed by 75% of those members present and voting.

WHAT ABOUT DAVID PLATT'S ROLE AT MBC? HOW DOES THIS MESH WITH HIS ROLE AT THE IMB?

Q: What is the status of David's role at MBC? What will he do with his International Mission Board (IMB) responsibilities if he comes to MBC?

A: The Elders of McLean Bible Church (MBC) have asked David to consider becoming Pastor-Teacher of the church. According to MBC's Constitution, the primary duty of the Pastor-Teacher is "to preach and teach the Word of God." As Pastor-Teacher, David would serve alongside Dale Sutherland, the Lead Pastor of the church, who is and has been responsible for overall day-to-day leadership at MBC. David will be charged with vision casting and strategy leadership as an integral part of his role with us. In fact, David has already stepped up to this responsibility, assisting us even as our Interim Teaching Pastor.

Q: What will David do at his IMB job if he comes to MBC?

A: David has communicated his commitment to continuing to lead the International Mission Board (IMB) along with his potential leadership role at MBC. The IMB is an international missions organization representing over 40,000 churches who cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). These churches pool together varied resources to fully support and serve alongside over 3,500 missionaries who are making disciples and multiplying churches around the world.

Q: Isn't this unusual? Do we know this can work?

A: There is not just one leadership model that works. In fact, with men having David Platt's gifts, anointing, and abilities, what is proposed for MBC and IMB is not all that unusual. In his very recent article for Christianity Today titled, "David Platt to Be a Teaching Pastor—Is it a Bridge Too Far for the IMB President?," Ed Stetzer, who holds the Billy Graham Distinguished Chair of Church, Mission, and Evangelism at Wheaton College and is Executive Director of the Billy Graham Center, lists many who have held more than one important responsibility:

Harry Ironside, the pastor of Moody Church, was also the president of the African Inland Mission... The Ironside years are considered some of the most fruitful years in Moody's history—and the Africa Inland Mission thrived as well.

Furthermore, Charles Blanchard was the pastor of Moody Church as well, while serving as the president of Wheaton College.

Recently, Louie Giglio ran Passion and started Passion City Church.

Chuck Swindoll led an institution while preaching at a church.

Or we go back a bit when Jerry Falwell ran Liberty University and Thomas Road Baptist Church.

Or a bit further back when Harold Ockenga pastored Park Street Church while serving as founder and president of Fuller Seminary (in another state!).

He concludes: "In all cases, they were accountable to leaders and boards in both places, and it was not without challenge, but it worked."

MBC is uniquely ready to embrace this model since we already have the supporting leadership structure in place to enable this approach and have been using a very similar internal dynamic for 3 years. We can only view this as the Lord preparing us well ahead of time for just this moment!

THE IMB IS A PART OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION. HOW ARE WE ASSOCIATED WITH THE SBC?

Q: Is the SBC a "denomination"?

A: As stated on the official website of the SBC, it is officially organized as a "convention," a "missional organization designed to facilitate maximum impact for Kingdom missions and ministries, designed and sustained by a network of autonomous churches working in cooperation with one another." The SBC is "not a hierarchical, top-down denominational structure, and it does not unite local churches into a single denominational body." Instead, it stresses the full autonomy of every local church. That said, the SBC does define certain characteristics that it expects its affiliated churches to have. Without any change whatsoever, MBC matches extremely well with these characteristics.

Q: Please define MBC's relationship to the SBC.

A: In 2016, MBC became a cooperating church with the SBC. Like other cooperating churches, MBC remains fully autonomous (i.e., MBC leaders and members have authority under Christ for all the affairs of MBC). And like other cooperating churches, MBC has chosen to work with this coalition of like-minded, Bible-believing churches for Kingdom ministries and purposes in North America and around the world. MBC initially became a cooperating church in 2016 in order to more effectively engage in church planting across Metro DC. Since then, numerous other doors have opened for increased partnership in the spread of the Gospel both locally and globally in cooperation with the SBC.

Q: Are there other aspects of this relationship?

A: Yes. There are a number of great synergies. If an MBC missionary is fielded via the IMB, their expenses could be fully paid, and they would not have to raise individual support. Also, we have access to many outstanding resources to further evangelism. Our current church planting initiative is heavily using SBC resources. The SBC extends reduced expense benefits to approved seminary students. Due to their scope and size, they also offer certain financial programs to cooperating churches (insurance being one).

Q: Has anything changed in our governance as a result of affiliating with the SBC?

A: No. MBC, like all cooperating SBC churches, is independently responsible for its governance and operations. We associate ourselves with the SBC for mutually beneficial reasons to further the spread of the Gospel, but remain autonomous at the local level.

OTHER

Q: Why have we not posted the information in this FAQ previously?

A: There are really two answers to this question. First, we were consolidating feedback and answers to specific questions that have already been asked. Second, we have been working together with senior IMB Board leadership to do things in good and right order. To honor them and their process, we waited until their board had met, taken action, and released their explanatory statements. We then affirmed our part of this process and quickly released the information contained in this and other communications to you.

Q: Will David Platt lead MBC for the long term? What is his track record with other ministries up to this point?

A: David Platt is 39 years old. After attaining two degrees in college, he was committed to building a firm biblical and theological foundation for ministry through seminary, and he finished three seminary degrees, including his Doctor of Philosophy, by age 26. At age 27, he became the Pastor of the Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, AL, which flourished under his ministry leadership. He stayed there for over 8 years until he was asked to lead the International Mission Board. He has served in this role for 3 years. Being only 39 and having completed a Ph.D. alongside many years of pastoral ministry in one local church, he has a strong record of stability. Lord willing, he and his family desire and expect to be a part of MBC for a very long time.

Q: Did David Platt sign a petition for a mosque in NJ?

A: No, he did not sign a petition for a mosque in New Jersey. In 2016, IMB's Legal Counsel joined with other evangelical organizations, including the National Association of Evangelicals, to file an amicus brief in support of religious liberty. This brief happened to specifically pertain to a New Jersey mosque, but it did not convey any direct support to those applying for permission to build the mosque. The issue was stopping a local governmental agency from applying its coercive power through unequal application of land use (zoning) to deny the religious freedom we are guaranteed in this country. The IMB is supportive of freedom of religion for all people both in the US and around the world.

Q: Does David Platt advocate "open borders"?

A: The short answer is no. David has written extensively on biblical responses to pressing social and political issues in his book, Counter Culture. Specifically regarding refugees, Dr. Platt joins with every follower of Christ in a desire to share the Gospel with any and all refugees. Regarding immigration, David has written, based on Romans 13:1-7, that "we have a responsibility before God as citizens under a government to work together or establish and enforce just laws that address immigration." He has clearly stated that "such laws should involve securing our borders."

We hope that this FAQ document has answered many of your questions. To hear more from David Platt, Dale Sutherland, and the Elders, please join us for the Town Hall Meeting. We are very excited about the way God has directed the Elders' nomination of David Platt. We pray that God will continue to lead MBC as He has for over 50 years.

"HE WILL BE OUR GUIDE EVEN TO THE END." PSALM 48:19