

REPORTERS: To help you accurately report the Southern Baptist Convention (May 18-21, Miami) we respectfully submit the following "Baptist Terminology" which we trust will be of value to you.

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A GUIDE FOR NEWSPAPER MEN

1. It is never "the Baptist church," except when it refers to one particular church. It is the "Baptist churches" when referring to a collective unit, (e.g. the Southern Baptist churches, or the Southern Baptist Convention).
2. The title of the convention is "Southern Baptist Convention," not "Southern Baptist General Convention" or "Southern Baptist Convention of Churches."
3. The Convention has "sessions," not meetings or conferences.
4. This is the 98th session of the Southern Baptist Convention, although the convention was organized in 1845. With some exceptions, sessions are held once a year.
5. The churches send "messengers" to the Convention, not delegates, representatives or spokesmen. (However, the women do send delegates to their Woman's Missionary Union Convention.)
6. The individual messenger may speak and act only for himself. In no way may he commit his church to any program or plan of the convention. But most of the churches go along with what the Southern Baptist Convention decides to do. Most of the convention work is accomplished through committees, boards, and various agencies. In the same way, even a Southern Baptist executive can not speak for any church or for the Convention. He speaks for himself.
7. Funds from the various churches except those kept for local expenses are channeled through the BAPTIST COOPERATIVE PROGRAM, when such money goes for activities of a general nature (i.e. foreign missionaries, home missionaries, educational institutions, hospitals, etc.). Mission funds not channeled through the Cooperative Program are usually classified as designations.
8. The title of "executive secretary" in Baptist terminology means that the individual is the top executive for that particular group.
9. There are also twenty-five state conventions, independent of, but in co-operation with the Southern Baptist Convention. The state conventions own many institutions such as orphanages, hospitals, and colleges.
10. Nothing the convention does is binding on any of the 29,899 churches or any of the 8,169,491 members. They are free to co-operate or not to co-operate.
11. Purpose of the convention is stated in the constitution as follows:

"to provide a general organization for Baptists in the United States and its territories for the promotion of Christian missions at home and abroad, and any other objects such as Christian education, benevolent enterprises, and social services which it may deem proper and advisable for the furtherance of the kingdom of God."
12. For many years the convention has followed a policy of separation from the National And World Council of Churches. There is no hostility, only the feeling that the cause of our Lord can be best served through independence, also because of the complete independence of the churches the convention feels that it cannot commit them to co-operation. It also has followed a policy of separation from other organized national Baptist bodies, except on a few specific projects where Southern Baptists and one or more other Baptist bodies co-operate.
13. Each commission, committee, or agency receives its directions from the Convention and is responsible to the Convention for carrying out these policies and instructions.
14. The fact that one organization of Southern Baptists is called an agency, another a board or commission, or an institution, does not indicate that one holds a superior rating over the other.

Guide for newspapermen

Change site + year

Reporters - change it to May 30 - June 2

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4. - 99th session

9. - twenty - six

10. - 30,377 churches & 8,474,741 members
