

David Platt to transition out of IMB presidency

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—David Platt announced plans to transition out of his role as president of the International Mission Board but will continue to serve until a new president is selected.

Preach and teach in a local church

Platt told trustees, missionaries and staff that during his nearly four-year tenure at the board, he has been “burdened to continue preaching and leading in the local church,” which led to assuming a teaching pastor role at McLean Bible Church in northern Virginia, alongside his leadership of the IMB.

“I am more passionate today than I have ever been about getting the gospel to the nations, and I want to spend what little time I have left on this earth with urgency toward that end,” Platt said. “This passion is what drove me to become IMB president, and I have sought to honor him and you in this role over the last four years.”

He added: “I have come to the realization that it is not viable long-term for me to lead as president of the IMB while serving as teaching pastor in a church. This realization has been sobering, for I don’t believe I can choose between preaching and leading in the local church, and mobilizing and shepherding people in global missions. Therefore, I have come to the conclusion that if I am going to serve in this way in the local church, then I need to serve in different ways for the cause of global missions.”

In 2017, Platt began serving as a teaching pastor at McLean. The IMB

trustee executive committee agreed in August to evaluate Platt's involvement at McLean during a provisional period.

Platt "has no timeline for his departure," according to a Q&A posted on the IMB [website](#). However, he asked that the search for a successor "begin immediately."

Southern Baptist Convention President Steve Gaines praised Platt's IMB service.

"I have known and loved David Platt for many years," said Gaines, pastor of Memphis-area Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn.

"I am very grateful for the service he has provided as the leader of the IMB. His love for our Savior and passion for the spread of the gospel are both well known to all. He has served Southern Baptists well. We will continue to pray for him and his precious family as they faithfully serve our Lord in the days and years ahead."

An IMB presidential search committee will comprise board trustees appointed by trustee chairman Rick Dunbar, according to the IMB release.

Platt said "trustee leaders have communicated a desire" for him "to serve with the IMB in the future in some capacity." Platt indicated willingness to do that "if the Lord so leads."

Among other SBC leaders to react to Platt's announcement:

- Frank S. Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee, said: "I love David Platt and thank God for him. I wish the best for him and his precious family during this time of transition. I look forward to working alongside him in the future as well as the new president of

the IMB.”

- Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, tweeted he is “grieved and saddened” by Platt’s announcement. Akin added, however, that he is “grateful our sovereign God is in control! Our trust ultimately is always in him.”
- Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, where Platt is an alumnus, tweeted: “I am grateful for the hard work” of Platt and the IMB. “They work diligently each day to serve the kingdom. Join me in praying for David and the IMB as they begin this leadership transition. Great work has been done, and will be done! To God be the glory!”
- Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, tweeted, “I am grateful to God” for Platt and the IMB “and for their common commitment to reach the nations with the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Among highlights of Platt’s IMB tenure were establishing new channels for professionals, students and retirees to enter the mission field and collecting a record \$165.8 million for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions in 2015.

Balanced the IMB budget

Under Platt’s leadership, IMB trustees adopted a balanced budget in 2016 following a six-year period in which the board’s expenses exceeded its revenue by \$210 million.

Previously, the IMB had overcome the shortfall by using reserve funds to make up the difference—including global property sales—as it gradually reduced its missionary force. But beginning in 2015, IMB trustees and staff instituted an “organizational reset” to put the board on stable footing for the future.

Consequently, voluntary resignation and retirement incentives were offered beginning in 2015, and 1,132 missionaries and stateside staff accepted, bringing the board's total number of missionaries under 4,000 for the first time since 1993, according to SBC Annual reports. As of Dec. 31, 2017, the IMB reported 3,562 overseas missionaries, according to SBC.net.

“By God’s grace over recent years, we have come to a stable, healthy financial position, we have clarified our mission, and we have recalibrated our internal systems and structures around that mission,” Platt said.

“We have set the stage for a limitless mission force that is focused on the missionary task with urgent motivation and strong biblical, theological, ecclesiological and missiological foundations.

“We have sought to create collaborative processes in the IMB such that what we do doesn’t revolve around one leader, but around all of us working together. Consequently, our vision for the future remains the same: we will continue partnering with churches to empower limitless missionary teams who are evangelizing, discipling, planting and multiplying healthy churches, and training leaders among unreached peoples and places for the glory of God.”

Author of the bestselling books *Radical* and *Follow Me*, Platt was pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala., from 2006-2014. He also founded and leads Radical, a ministry that provides resources to support disciple-making in local churches worldwide.

Platt and his wife Heather have four children—Caleb, Joshua, Mara Ruth and Isaiah.