

# Former SBC Peace Committee Chair Charles Fuller dies

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ROANOKE, Va. (BP)—Charles Fuller, a Virginia pastor who chaired the Southern Baptist Convention's Peace Committee, died July 28 in Roanoke, Va. He was 86.

Formed in 1985 in response to a motion at the SBC annual meeting, the Peace Committee was charged to "seek to determine the sources" of controversy amid the convention's division and "make findings and recommendations."

Fuller was thought a natural fit to chair the 22-member group—which comprised conservatives, moderates and centrists—because he was theologically conservative and committed to the SBC but not part of what he called the "machinery" in the movement supporters termed the "Conservative Resurgence" and opponents dubbed the "Fundamentalist Takeover" of the convention.

When asked to consider chairing the committee, Fuller told his wife Pat, "There is no way that I can come away from this a winner personally," he recounted in a 1994 interview with the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, presumably because moderates and conservatives alike were likely to criticize him.

"I remember she said to me, 'Well maybe this is the contribution you are to make to Southern Baptists,'" Fuller said. "So, I agreed to do it."

After 14 meetings over two years, the committee reported at the 1987 SBC annual meeting in St. Louis that "the primary source of the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention is the Bible; more specifically, the ways in

which the Bible is viewed.” Political activities were a secondary factor in the conflict, the committee concluded.

Peace Committee recommendations adopted by messengers included affirmation of a “high view of Scripture” as one of the “parameters for cooperation” within the convention and a request that “all organized political factions ... discontinue the organized political activity.”

The committee voted to disband in 1988 following a final report to the convention that year.

Among Fuller’s other denominational service, he preached the convention sermon in 1985 to the largest SBC annual meeting in history and served on multiple SBC boards and committees, including stints as chairman of the Radio and Television Commission and the Committee on Order of Business.

During Fuller’s 38-year pastorate at First Baptist Church in Roanoke, Va., he saw membership grow from 2,000 to 6,000.

A native of Andalusia, Ala., Fuller earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Richmond and a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was awarded three honorary doctorates.

Fuller was preceded in death by his first wife of 44 years, Pat, and his second wife of four years, Margaret. He is survived by his third wife Carol, three sons, eight grandchildren and five great grandchildren.