

Fred Wolfe dies of complications from COVID-19

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MOBILE, Ala. (BP)—Longtime pastor and Southern Baptist Convention leader Fred Wolfe died Jan. 3 due to complications caused by COVID-19. He was 83.

For 25 years, Wolfe was pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala. During his career in ministry, he also served churches in North Carolina, Texas, Georgia and South Carolina. At age 70, he planted another church, Luke 4:18 Fellowship in Mobile, Ala.

He emerged as a leader in the Southern Baptist Convention during what supporters called the “conservative resurgence” and critics called the “fundamentalist takeover.”

Wolfe was chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, trustee of the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) and president of the SBC Pastors’ Conference, at which he preached four times.

He was nominated for SBC president in 1994 but was defeated by Orlando pastor Jim Henry.

SBC leaders offer tributes to Wolfe

Jason Allen, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, came to faith in Christ as a college freshman under Wolfe’s preaching.

“I was privileged to know Fred Wolfe from childhood as a family friend and as my pastor, and to benefit from his support and encouragement throughout my ministry,” Allen said.

“For me, Brother Fred fulfilled the Romans 10 mandate, and for that I’m eternally grateful,” he continued.

SBC Executive Committee President and CEO Ronnie Floyd called Wolfe a “great man of God with a deep commitment to the Lord,” adding: “At the same time, he was such a winsome personality who truly loved all people, always willing to laugh with others and enjoy life with everyone. He was a dear friend and brother in Christ.”

Wolfe spent half of his years in the pastorate at Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile. During that time, the church added 13,000 members, with 5,000 of them coming by profession of faith and baptism. After beginning and leading the Atlanta-based Barnabas ministry to pastors for 10 years, Wolfe said he felt God calling him back to the Mobile area in 2007.

Later that year, Wolfe started what he called a church for “scattered sheep.” That led to planting Luke 4:18 Fellowship, where he would serve as senior pastor until January 2020. At that point, the congregation’s longtime student pastor, David Bullock, became senior pastor while Wolfe transitioned to founding pastor.

“He truly was one of the humblest men I knew,” Bullock said. “He sought the Lord with all his heart and always gave me biblical council.”