

SBC adopts resolution on AI and emerging technologies

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Southern Baptists adopted a resolution calling for “the utmost care and discernment” in the development and use of Artificial Intelligence.

“God alone has the power to create life,” but emerging technologies offer “unprecedented opportunities for advancement,” the resolution stated.

The resolution, adopted by messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in New Orleans, is believed to be the first statement on the ethics of AI from a major denominational body.

“AI raises deep, crucial questions that challenge society’s false assumptions about what it means to be human, which are often rooted merely in human capabilities rather than in divinely granted ontological status,” the resolution stated.

The resolution noted “emerging technologies afford us unprecedented opportunities for advancement across industries and throughout our societies.”

However, the statement warned technological breakthroughs “may also have dangerous and dehumanizing outcomes if not utilized with godly wisdom and discernment.”

The resolution acknowledged “the powerful nature of AI and other emerging technologies, desiring to engage them from a place of eschatological hope rather than uncritical embrace or fearful rejection.”

The resolution stated belief in human beings’ “intrinsic worth as image bearers [of God]—not rooted in what we do or contribute to society—and

that human dignity must be central to any ethical principles, guidelines, or regulations for any and all uses of these powerful emerging technologies.”

The SBC statement calls on “all who employ these tools to do so in honest, transparent, and Christlike ways that focus on loving God and loving our neighbors as ourselves, never seeking to willfully deceive others or take advantage of them for unjust gain or the accumulation of power.”

Resolutions on women and pastors

During an annual meeting dominated by debate over the role of women in ministry and whether churches can call female pastors and still be considered Southern Baptist, messengers adopted two related resolutions.

One focused on “the legacy and responsibility of women fulfilling the Great Commission.” The resolution states men and women “share equal value, dignity, and worth, and are commissioned by God.”

It pointed to women in Scripture and in Baptist history who were “crucial and indispensable” to God’s mission, and it called on Southern Baptists to cultivate an environment “where women are fully respected, valued, and mobilized as co-laborers for the fulfillment of Christ’s Great Commission and the glory of the Triune God.”

At the same time, it quoted the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message: “While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men qualified by Scripture.”

The other resolution related to debate at the annual meeting focused on “the office of bishop/elder/pastor.”

It examined the 19th century New Hampshire Confession of Faith and the Baptist Faith & Message as adopted by the SBC in 1925 and revised in 1963 and 2000, tracing the interchangeable use of the terms “bishops,”

“pastors” and “elders.”

The resolution affirms “the only officers of the local church that the New Testament recognizes are that of deacon and of bishop/elder/pastor.”

It reaffirms the Baptist “confessional heritage, grounded in Scripture, and recognizes that these are the only two offices appointed by Christ to serve along with members of a New Testament church, and we encourage our churches to uphold all the biblical qualifications that the New Testament requires for all those who would hold either the office of bishop/elder/pastor or deacon.”

The resolution was amended from the floor of the convention to remove one key phrase—“while autonomous churches may differ in their uses and categories regarding titles for staff members.”

Saddleback Church in Southern California, which has a male senior pastor, was considered not in “friendly cooperation” with the SBC because it has female staff who are designated as pastors.

Immigration and gender transition addressed

The convention also approved resolutions on immigration, gender transitions and affirming the “unshared lordship of Jesus Christ over every human conscience.”

The statement on immigration stated “governments should promote peace and order, including strong borders and clear immigration policies as well as care for migrants—not sacrificing one for the other or capitulating to the ever-shifting cultural and political values of the day.”

The resolution affirmed “the inherent dignity and value of immigrants and

refugees, regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, culture, national origin, or legal status.”

It also called on government leaders “to maintain robust avenues for valid asylum claimants seeking refuge and to create legal pathways for permanent status for immigrants who are in our communities by no fault of their own, prioritizing the unity of families.”

The resolution on gender transitions stated messengers to the SBC annual meeting “condemn and oppose ‘gender-affirming care’ and all forms of ‘gender transition.’”

The SBC resolution declared “God created humans in His own image as distinctly male and female.”

The convention statement said the “differences between men and women are complementary, determined at conception, immutable, rooted in God’s design, and most clearly revealed in bodily differences, not in self-defined and ultimately false notions of ‘gender identity.’”

The resolution asserted puberty blockers, high doses of hormones and surgery are “not only spiritually destructive but also render otherwise healthy children sterile for life, impairing or destroying their fertility, reproductive organs, capacity for sexual pleasure, and at time causing lifelong medical dependency as well as unknown long-term consequences.”

“Vulnerable children and teens are targets for psychosocial messaging and claims from the medical community that induce and even coerce their participation in escalating, increasingly harmful ‘transition’ interventions,” the resolution stated.

The resolution on Christ’s lordship over the human conscience decried “any effort which seeks to supplant the sole lordship of Christ over consciences through confusing the separate covenants and responsibilities of the

church and the state.”

Other resolutions adopted by messengers:

- Emphasized the importance of church revitalization and replanting.
- Urged care and support for pastors and ministry leaders.
- Expressed appreciation to the host city for the annual meeting.