

SBC Executive Committee elects Jeff Iorg as next CEO

March 21, 2024

DALLAS—The SBC Executive Committee unanimously approved Jeff Iorg as its next president/CEO.

Iorg will serve as president/CEO-elect until May 13, when he will assume his Executive Committee role. The delay allows him to complete the semester as president at Gateway Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Trustees entered closed session within ten minutes of noon and arrived at their decision quickly. At 1:30 p.m., the press was invited to return for the introduction of the new president and CEO-elect.

Sixty trustees were present for the vote.

‘A force for good’

Iorg thanked the search committee for their confidence in him and shared he and his wife’s backgrounds in Southern Baptist life. He expressed gratitude for his long-standing relationship of support from Southern Baptists.



Jeff Iorg gives election

remarks. (Adam
Covington/BP)

Iorg described his salvation experience, resulting from the witness of Southern Baptists at a fair. He recounted meeting his wife in a Southern Baptist college and going on to Southern Baptist seminaries. And he detailed his experience in church, denominational and institutional leadership on the West Coast.

Iorg earned his bachelor's degree at Hardin-Simmons University, a Master of Divinity degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He characterized Southern Baptists—and their Executive Committee—as “a force for good.”

“So much of the time, the Executive Committee, rightly so, is asked to deal with the difficulties of Southern Baptist life. We face those honestly, with greater transparency than almost any organization imaginable,” he said.

“So, it's easy sometimes to come to a meeting of the Executive Committee and think it's all problems. Well, it's not. ... We're a force for good.”

Search Committee members included Neal Hughes, chairman; Nick Sandefur, associate chairman; Nancy Spalding, secretary; Drew Landry; Sarah Rogers; Corey Cain; and Philip Robertson, SBC Executive Committee chairman, as voting ex-officio member.

“Today is a new day at the Executive Committee, and I am excited about what God has in store for us moving forward,” Chairman Philip Robertson said.

Iorg responds to questions

During a press conference, Iorg said he was surprised to be there, in some ways. A few months ago, he was heading toward retirement, he acknowledged. But when he was asked to consider taking the leadership role at the SBC Executive Committee, he ultimately decided he would accept.

Iorg said the most challenging part of his role would be “keeping the focus of Southern Baptists on God’s eternal mission and getting the gospel to the nations.”

When asked about primary issues he’ll face, Iorg said the three issues of highest priority are sexual abuse prevention and response, IRS form 990 issues, and issues related to amendments to the constitution about women pastors that will either be before the Executive Committee or might require executive leadership.



Jeff and Ann Iorg upon announcement of Iorg’s election as president and CEO-elect. (Calli Keener/Baptist Standard)

Additional concerns include legal issues and financial challenges that may

relate to a potential sale of the building in Nashville still ahead, but they may not be as pressing, he said.

When questioned about recommendations for the Executive Committee detailed in two appendices to the “bombshell report” by Guidepost Solutions delivered in May 2022, Iorg said he “has a long track-record of promoting women in ministry leadership, supervising women in a ministry organization and doing that effectively.”

Iorg said he would take the report very seriously but declined to identify a specific recommendation from the appendices that he would consider most important to address.

When asked about how he will restore trust in the Executive Committee in light of the many issues facing it since the 2022 report came out, Iorg said, “Organizational trust is earned by two things: sacrificial service and by demonstrating competence.

“You don’t gain trust by asking people to trust you. You gain trust by doing the right thing, serving sacrificially, demonstrating competence, and people trust organizations that do that.”

He pledged to focus on trying to do trustworthy things so Southern Baptists will trust their Executive Committee.

Iorg’s wife Ann said she feels good about their new change of course, adding God gives you what you need for what he has for you. She said they both feel like this is what God has for them, so they are excited.

Bart Barber, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, stated: “Jeff Iorg has already brought unity to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and to the Southern Baptist Convention, as evidenced by the acclaim from far and wide in response to the initial announcement and by today’s unanimous vote.

“Jeff Iorg has said today that the SBC is a force for good. I believe that God will use Jeff Iorg as a force for good, and I will cheer him on and pray toward that end.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: The article originally was posted Thursday evening, March 21, and it was edited online Friday morning, March 22, to correct two typographical errors and to remove one statement that was in question.