

Willie McLaurin named interim leader of SBC's executive committee

by [Adelle M. Banks](#) in the [March 9, 2022](#) issue



(Photo courtesy of Baptist Press)

The Southern Baptist Convention's executive committee has appointed Willie McLaurin to serve as interim president and CEO, marking the first time that any entity of the predominantly White denomination has been headed by a Black person.

McLaurin was named just over two years ago as the committee's vice president for Great Commission relations and mobilization, a new role meant to focus on spreading the gospel and fostering relations with various demographic groups of Southern Baptists.

Prior to his work for the executive committee, McLaurin worked at the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board for 15 years and previously held pastoral roles in churches in Tennessee.

Ronnie Floyd, the committee's former president and CEO, resigned in October 2021, citing the committee's decision to waive attorney-client privilege in the SBC's sexual abuse investigation as a reason for his departure.

"My prayer is that this season will bring healing and unity to our Convention," McLaurin said in a February 1 announcement. "When we love each other the way Jesus loves people then we create the atmosphere for cooperation."

Some Southern Baptist leaders have long called for greater diversity at the top ranks of the denomination, which dates to 1845.

"To God be the glory," tweeted Dwight McKissic of Arlington, Texas, who has urged the SBC to place minorities in top executive positions.

SBC president Ed Litton also hailed McLaurin's appointment, saying in a tweet that he was an "exemplary choice" and a "faithful and distinguished leader." —Religion News Service