

Resolution



Pastoral Ministry

The installation of women as pastors is becoming increasingly commonplace in evangelical churches.

Numerous theologically liberal denominations for years have ordained women as bishops (denominational leaders) and pastors (see Pew Research Center chart).

Churches within the realm of conservative evangelicalism are naming female staff members as “Pastors.”

The Southern Baptist Convention deemed at its recent annual business meeting one of its most prominent churches, Saddleback Community Church, as “not in friendly cooperation” due to Saddleback’s placement of women in the pastoral office.¹ This action is due to Saddleback Community Church’s refusal to abide by the Baptist Faith and Message (doctrinal statement), which states of the local church, “Its scriptural officers are pastors/elders/overseer and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.”²

Present within evangelicalism is an increasing rejection of complementarianism and an acceptance of an egalitarian view of gender roles in both the home and church.

Debate over the place of women in the church and the home increases both in secular culture and the church, with conservative, Bible-believing churches increasingly ridiculed for their supposedly obscurantist view of reserving the pastoral role for men.

Pastorless churches within evangelicalism and fundamentalism abound, with many unable to find suitable candidates after years of searching. To address this lack of qualified men, churches will face increasing external and internal pressure to employ women in the role of pastor.

Therefore, we, the messengers of the GARBC, meeting in annual conference June 27, 2023, in Salem, Oregon, commend the Southern Baptist Convention for the Biblical stand they have taken, and resolve to:

¹ Saddleback Community Church, an SBC church, “hired Andy Wood and his wife Stacie as ‘Pastors Andy and Stacie Wood,’ according to the church website, in 2022.” Source: Baptist Press, 2/21/23.

² Baptist Faith and Message, Article VI, The Church.



- call upon the families in our churches to believe and practice Scripture’s teaching regarding gender roles in the family—the husband serving as loving and knowledgeable head of the family (Ephesians 5:25–33), giving honor to his wife as God’s gracious gift (1 Peter 3:7).
- call upon our churches to identify, train, and install men called by God to serve as Christ’s undershepherds in the office of pastor. These men must bear the marks of God’s call: (1) the display of godly character and abilities (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:3–7; Ephesians 4:11–16); (2) an inward, God-given desire to serve in the pastoral office (1 Timothy 3:1; 1 Corinthians 9:15–18); (3) current fruitful service as a disciple-maker in a local church (2 Timothy 2:2); (4) the agreement of the local church as it examines the beliefs, life, and service of the man aspiring to serve as a pastor (1 Timothy 5:22); and (5) the God-given opportunity for pastoral ministry expressed by congregational vote (Acts 14:21–23).
- call upon our churches to believe in and practice the sufficiency and wisdom of Scripture for our families and our churches, especially in view of the present secular and religious culture’s departure from life rightly ordered by God’s eternal, unchanging Word. The Word of God is the product of the Holy Spirit’s influence upon the writers, equipping the man of God, believers, and God’s church for every good work both in our families and His church (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Together we affirm our belief in and practice of God’s Word for pastoral leadership—male elders who will shepherd and oversee God’s flock, serving not from compulsion but eagerly, not as despots but as examples to the flock entrusted to their care. These men—God’s undershepherds—serve under the call and authority of the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ, with the promise of great reward (1 Peter 5:1–5).

Ordination of Women

Whether major religious groups generally allow the ordination of women

American Baptist Church	Yes
Buddhist	Yes
Episcopal Church	Yes
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Yes
Jewish: Reform and Conservative Movements	Yes
Jewish Orthodox	No
Latter Day Saints (Mormon)	No
Missouri Synod Lutheran Church	No
Muslim	No
Orthodox Church in America	No
Presbyterian Church (USA)	Yes
Roman Catholic Church	No
Southern Baptist Convention	No
Unitarian Universalist	Yes
United Church of Christ	Yes
United Methodist Church	Yes

Source: Staff reports

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